STEALING *from the* GODS

Temple Robbery in the Roman Imagination

ISABEL K. KÖSTER

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Note on Translations, Editions, and Abbreviations

Unless stated otherwise, translations are my own, though I have kept an eye on the Loebs and other published translation. This book uses material from both the Greek and the Roman world, and I have not attempted to impose any consistency in the spelling of names. Greek and Latin names for the gods are used depending on the original language of the source. For texts of literary authors, I generally follow the Oxford Classical Texts edition, where available, and the Loeb edition in other cases. Exceptions are indicated in the notes.

Abbreviations of ancient authors and works follow the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, supplemented with *LSJ* and *TLL*. Abbreviations of journal titles are those found in the *American Journal of Archaeology*. The following are used in addition:

AE	*L'Année épigraphique*. Paris, 1888–.
BNP	H. Cancik et al., eds. *Brill's New Pauly*. Leiden, 2002.
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin, 1893–.
DS	C. Daremberg and E. Saglio. *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romains*. Paris, 1877–1919.
EDCS	M. Clauss, A. Kolb, W. Slaby, and B. Woitas. *Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss/Slaby*. https://db.edcs.eu/
FD III	*Fouilles de Delphes III. Épigraphie*. Paris, 1929–.
FIRA	S. Riccobono et al. *Fontes iuris Romani antejustiniani*. Rev. ed. Florence, 1940–43.
FRH	T. J. Cornell, ed. *The Fragments of the Roman Historians*. Oxford, 2013.

I.Ephesos	*Die Inschriften von Ephesos*. Bonn, 1979–84.
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae*. Berlin, 1892–.
IGR	R. Cagnat et al., eds. *Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes*. Paris, 1906–27.
I.Olympia	W. Dittenberger. *Die Inschriften von Olympia*. Berlin, 1896.
I.Smyrna	G. Petzl. *Die Inschriften von Smyrna*. Bonn, 1982–90.
LSJ	H. G. Liddell and R. Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Revised by H. S. Jones. Oxford, 1996.
LTUR	E. Steinby, ed. *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*. Rome, 1993–2000.
OCD	T. Whitmarsh et al., eds. *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Digital Edition.
OLD	P. G. W. Glare. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford, 1996.
ORF	E. Malcovati. *Oratorum Romanorum fragmenta liberae rei publicae*. Turin, 1967–.
RE	F. Pauly. *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Edited by G. Wissowa. Stuttgart, 1894–1980.
RIB	*Roman Inscriptions of Britain*. https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/
RS	M. H. Crawford, ed. *Roman Statutes*. London, 1996.
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*. Amsterdam and Leiden, 1923–.
SIG^{3}	*Sylloge inscriptionum Graecarum*. Leipzig, 1915–24.
TAM	*Tituli Asiae Minoris*. Vienna, 1901–.
TheDefix	*Thesaurus Defixionum*. https://www.thedefix.uni-hamburg.de/
TLL	*Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1894–.

Introduction

In 66 BCE, Cicero asked the Senate to give Pompey an extraordinary command against Mithridates VI Eupator. When arguing for why the general should be put in charge of the long-standing conflict with the mighty enemy in the East, the orator emphasizes the failures of other Roman military leaders. He has an especially troubling tale to tell about L. Licinius Lucullus, the consul of 74 BCE; Lucullus had enjoyed great success and had forced the king of Pontus to retreat all the way to Armenia, but then met too much local resistance to continue his campaign. The reason for this failure, according to Cicero, is to be found in assumptions about the intentions of Lucullus and his troops: "There was the serious and powerful notion, which had spread through the minds of foreign peoples, that our army had been brought to those shores to plunder the richest and most revered shrines."[1] The Romans, so the rumor went, are not in the East to liberate people from a tyrannical king, but to enrich themselves with the treasures of the gods. Lucullus' well-known fondness for luxury goods lends further credence to this explanation.[2] Despite the former consul's obvious military skills, Cicero argues, someone with an impeccable personal reputation must take over from him.

Because it alienates friends and allies and makes a mockery of the stated goals of Roman warfare, temple robbery is, as Cicero presents it here, a concern that should inform political decisions at the highest level. The mere suggestion that soldiers might plunder sanctuaries could jeopardize even

1. *Erat . . . gravis atque vehemens opinio, quae animos gentium barbararum pervaserat, fani locupletissimi et religiosissimi diripiendi causa in eas oras nostrum esse exercitum adductum* (Cic. *Leg. Man.* 23).

2. Plutarch accuses Lucullus of corrupting his soldiers with his expensive tastes (Plut. *Luc.* 7.1 and 30.4).

well-funded military expeditions. Yet, for a conquering army in need of resources far from home, sanctuaries were tempting targets. In many ways, temple robbery was the equivalent of a modern bank robbery. With their thick walls, imposing doors, and—occasionally—armed guards, temple buildings often functioned as repositories of treasure.[3] In addition to dedications to deities, sacred spaces housed other property as well. Temples protected the treasury and acted as safe deposit boxes for the precious belongings of individuals. While private valuables were not necessarily considered sacred property, they were still objects whose safety the gods would care about.[4] Their placement was religiously, if not legally, significant, and the implied promise of protection made temples an attractive space to store wealth. Thus for thieves, roving bandits, and attacking armies, plundering a sanctuary was often the best way to obtain a large pile of riches. For those looking for opportunities for small-scale thefts, too, sacred spaces were attractive. It was unlikely that anyone would notice if a few coins or a small statue went missing. For the Romans, a self-proclaimed empire of pious people, all this was a complication.[5] Temples were the target of thieves and armies alike.

In this book, I explore how Cicero and other Roman authors attempt to solve the problem of Roman temple robbery, at least rhetorically. There is a sharp distinction between good appropriations of sacred property, which benefit the state, and bad ones, which are the work of irredeemably greedy individuals. My focus is on the latter. I argue that narratives of temple robbery give us a deep insight not just into relationships with the gods, but also—and perhaps more importantly—into the creation of Roman moral codes and group identities. Roman temple robbers are often prominent individuals who abuse their political access and high standing to steal from the gods. They have failed to behave like Romans in every possible way; they are strangers to the conventions of religion, cruel, uneducated, and generally unable to function within their society. The temple robber, as he is presented in Roman literary texts, is the ultimate outsider.[6] His attacks

3. See, e.g., Baratte 1992 and 1996; Caillet 1996; Crawford 2003.

4. On the legal status of such objects in the Roman world, see, e.g., Marcian at *Dig.* 1.8.6 and Paul at *Dig.* 48.13.11.1 with the discussion in Mommsen (1899) 1955, 762–63.

5. On the rhetorical trope of Rome's outstanding piety, see, for example, Driediger-Murphy 2014 with further references.

6. Except for a woman who pretends to be a temple robber in Sen. *Controv.* 8.1 and Cleopatra VII, whom I discuss at the end of this book, all temple robbers in extant Roman literature are male.

on sanctuaries are part of a life lived in opposition to fundamental Roman values. A Roman who aims to behave properly, on the other hand, cannot be a temple robber. Hence, while (alleged) temple robbers must be identified and dealt with, temple robbery is not something to worry about on a large scale. It merely indicates the depravity of isolated individuals. Since most accounts of temple robbery are set within the context of Roman warfare or imperial rule, authors can use these narratives to reflect on the pernicious aspects of imperial expansion, but always with the understanding that the act is the result of an individual's failure to be a proper Roman, not a matter of collective responsibility.

Defining Temple Robbery

The Latin word most closely associated with temple robbery is *sacrilegium*, a combination of *sacrum* and the verb *legere* (in the sense of "to take") and hence a calque of the Greek ἱεροσυλία.[7] While *sacrilegium* at its core means "the taking of a sacred thing," the word also has a broader meaning. The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* provides two definitions: "The robbery of sacred property" and "A profane or impious act, sacrilege."[8] *Sacrilegium*, therefore, describes both the physical removal of sacred objects and an act that diminishes the sacred status of something or someone. The second, extended meaning of the word is especially important for the Roman jurists. There is no discussion of *sacrilegium* in surviving legal texts prior to the *Digest of Justinian*, where the term refers to a broad range of crimes including blasphemy and insulting the emperor.[9]

My focus is on texts that accuse prominent Romans of tearing down the walls of sanctuaries and breaking open temple doors in order to steal piles of treasure. I therefore limit myself to the first type of *sacrilegium*, the stealing of sacred things, and do not engage widely with legal sources, since it is doubtful that the jurists subscribe to such a narrow definition of the offense. Hence, while I call temple robbery a crime throughout this study, I do so in a nontechnical sense and without implying anything about the legal reality

7. Benveniste 1956.

8. *OLD* s.v. *sacrilegium*. While examples of *sacrilegium* meaning "impiety" are already attested in the Republic (e.g., Nep. *Alc.* 6.4), ancient etymological discussions focus exclusively on the meaning "temple robbery" (see Maltby 1991, 537).

9. Robinson 1973.

of the treatment of *sacrilegium*.[10] In fact, our sources do not allow us to infer to what extent temple robbery was a legally recognized offense. There is no unambiguous evidence that anyone faced prosecution for *sacrilegium* in the roughly five hundred years of Roman history that I cover in this book.[11] My goal is to explain why, despite the paucity of evidence for legal ramifications, it was so common for members of the Roman elite to accuse each other of temple robbery, the vilest of crimes against the gods and the state.

The reason for the popularity of the invective motif, I argue, lies in the characteristics associated with the temple robber. From its earliest attested uses, *sacrilegus* designates not just a temple robber, but a generically wicked person.[12] An exchange of insults found in Plautus' *Pseudolus* is informative. When the pimp Ballio fails to adhere to an agreement with Calidorus, Calidorus and his slave Pseudolus shower him with abuse. Ballio is gleefully unconcerned:

> CAL. Bustirape. BAL. Certo. PS. Furcifer. BAL. Factum optume.
> CAL. Sociofraude. BAL. Sunt mea istaec. PS. Parricida. BAL. Perge tu.
> CAL. Sacrilege. BAL. Fateor. PS. Periure.[13]

> CALIDORUS: "Grave robber!" BALLIO: "Certainly!" PSEUDOLUS: "Scoundrel!" BALLIO: "Well done!" CALIDORUS: "Cheat!" BALLIO: "That's me!" PSEUDOLUS: "Parricide!" BALLIO: "Go on!" CALIDORUS: "Temple robber!" BALLIO: "I admit it!" PSEUDOLUS: "Perjurer!"

The list of insults alternates between things that Ballio has actually done, such as cheating, and more far-fetched accusations such as grave robbery and the plundering of temples. The exchange, therefore, shows that *sacri-*

10. On defining Roman crime in a technical sense, see Riggsby 1999, esp. 1–20.

11. Q. Pleminius, who frequently appears in this book, may have been charged with temple robbery in the late third century BCE (Diod. Sic. 27.4.6–7 and Livy 29.22.7–10). A prosecution for *sacrilegium* is possibly referenced in [Sall.] *Cic.* 14, but the accuracy of this interpretation has been persuasively called into question (see Rives 2006, 63; and Santangelo 2011).

12. On this point see also Lilja 1965, 59–60. On unsubstantiated accusations of criminal behavior as insults more broadly, see Opelt 1965, 131–37; Dickey 2002, 163–85; and Bork 2018, 27–74.

13. Plaut. *Pseud.* 361–63.

legus can be used to accuse someone of broadly unethical behavior. Along similar lines, in Terence's *Eunuchus*, the courtesan Thais calls her maid *sacrilega* as part of a catalog of abuses that also includes terms such as *scelesta* ("wicked one") and *venefica* ("poisoner").[14] The accusation of temple robbery once more designates someone as a bad person rather than an actual plunderer of sacred spaces. As a pimp and an enslaved person, respectively, Ballio and Thais are already social outsiders. The insults further increase their marginalization by emphasizing that their behavior, too, does not match that of a proper member of society.

Along similar lines, the temple robber of rhetoric, biography, and historiography, the most prominent genres that I discuss in this book, is never only a plunderer of sacred spaces. As an example, we can look to the beginning of *Philippic* 11, where Cicero claims that Mark Antony and P. Cornelius Dolabella are the worst politicians that Rome has ever seen. An important part of the orator's case against Antony's co-consul of 44 BCE is the brutal murder of C. Trebonius, then serving as governor of Asia. After detailing how Dolabella had Trebonius tortured to death, Cicero makes the case that he should be considered a public enemy:

> Cum hoc hoste bellandum est, cuius taeterrima crudelitate omnis barbaria superata est. quid loquar de caede civium Romanorum, de direptione fanorum? quis est, qui pro rerum atrocitate deplorare tantas calamitates queat? et nunc tota Asia vagatur, volitat ut rex.[15]
>
> We must go to war with this enemy whose most disgraceful cruelty surpasses all barbarity. Why should I speak about the slaughter of Roman citizens, about the plundering of shrines? Who is it who, given the horror of the matter, could [adequately] lament such disasters? [Dolabella] now wanders through all of Asia; he flits about like a king.

Cicero accuses Dolabella of savagery and acting like a king, both well-recognized Roman invective tropes.[16] These charges cast him as someone who does not understand the limits of his powers and does not behave like a proper Roman official. The murder of Trebonius serves as evidence of cru-

14. Ter. *Eun.* 829.
15. Cic. *Phil.* 11.6.
16. See esp. Erskine 1991; Keitel 2007; and Baraz 2018.

elty; Dolabella's unwillingness to stay in Syria, where he had been assigned as governor, proves his disregard for the law. Finally, the allegation of temple robbery, although the orator does not further substantiate it, shows that the consul is truly a public enemy (a *hostis*, as Cicero calls Dolabella at the beginning of the passage). Calling someone a *sacrilegus* is an accusation of deliberate un-Romanness.

Approaching Temple Robbery

The depravity of the *sacrilegus* finds an illuminating conceptual parallel in narratives of medieval relic thefts. In *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, Patrick Geary points to a seemingly paradoxical situation: On the one hand, stealing the remains of saints was strictly prohibited by law and subject to severe penalties. On the other hand, the thieves were often celebrated, and the acquisition of stolen relics could become a matter of pride for church communities. Venice, for example, took great pride in the fact that a group of monks had smuggled the remains of Saint Mark out of Alexandria so that the saint could now be worshiped in their home city. The apparent contradiction can be resolved because of the widespread belief that relics could not be successfully stolen unless the saint was willing to have his or her cult relocated to a new community.[17] Relic theft could even present an opportunity for the saint. The thieves often targeted neglected or forgotten cults, which were then given a chance at proper worship in a new community. In such cases, the thief was a pious person of impeccable character who was not interested in his or her own glory, but was looking out for the interests of the saint. If the act was motivated by personal greed, however, the saint resisted the removal and could even injure or kill the would-be thief. The successful relocation of relics was therefore proof that no crime had been committed; even though the episode had some of the narrative characteristics of a theft (relics were often stolen at night and with considerable subterfuge), it was viewed as a pious individual saving a saint from neglect.

In the Roman world, too, the removal of sacred objects from a sacred space could constitute a despicable temple robbery or an unproblematic (and

17. Geary 1990, esp. 108–28. While I concentrate on transgressive thefts in this book, I explore the value of Geary's work for ancient accounts of cult transfers in Köster 2024.

even pious) act.[18] Unlike medieval saints, however, the gods in Roman texts are not reliable guides as to the interpretation of a narrative. They sometimes take violent action, but even despicable acts of temple robbery often do not spark a divine response.[19] Details about the character and motivation of the temple robber nevertheless allow us to distinguish with certainty between *sacrilegia* and inoffensive actions. Tautological as it may sound, Roman temple robberies are committed by temple robbers. To prove that a *sacrilegium* has been committed, an author can choose to give a dramatic narrative in which doors are broken down and statues are dragged from their pedestals, but, most importantly, he must show that the act was committed by a *sacrilegus*—an irredeemably greedy individual with no regard for commonly agreed-upon standards of behavior.

It follows that the sacred identity of a place or an object is not absolute. If sacredness were a fixed characteristic, every removal of an object that does not have the explicit consent of a god would constitute a temple robbery. The motivations of the thief would be irrelevant; his actions alone would be sufficient for determining whether a *sacrilegium* has been committed. The fact that not all Roman attacks on sacred spaces are problematic has been well-recognized. In particular, it has been argued that removals of objects from foreign or provincial sacred spaces should not be treated as temple robberies since Roman legal thought did not consider them sacred.[20] While it is true that legal sources do not consider the property of foreign gods automatically sacred, stealing from sanctuaries—even abroad—is often presented by authors as a reprehensible act that is much more serious than simple theft. No matter what the legal reality, Romans are regularly accused of committing temple robberies outside of Rome.

I therefore use a theoretical model that allows the precious objects in a temple to be sacred in one context (when attacked by a villainous individual), but not in others (when targeted by an upstanding Roman general during a military campaign). Much recent work in the study of religion holds that sacred spaces derive their sacred status from social consensus.[21]

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18. See, e.g., the arrival of Cybele in Rome (Ov. *Fast.* 4.255–349; Livy 29.10–14).

19. See chapter 1, in particular under "Challenging the God."

20. See, e.g., *DS* 4/2 p. 981 s.v. *sacrilegium* (E. Cuq); Pape 1975, 36; Dillon 2013, esp. 91; Dillon 2016, 326–27; Frateantonio 2003, 124–34. The most important Roman passages for such arguments are Gai. *Inst.* 2.5 and 2.7, which I discuss in chapter 5 below.

21. See, e.g., Smith 1993, 289–309; Knott 2005, esp. 11–34; Vásquez 2010, 261–90; Tweed 2011; Kinnard 2014. Bendlin 2013 offers an approach to the Roman religious landscape that is predicated on a social construction of sacred space.

Societies determine what should be considered sacred or nonsacred, and these agreements can be destabilized by changing social circumstances. Such studies are a reaction against the idea that sacred and profane spaces are inherently different and can be clearly separated from each other. This essentialist model was popularized by Mircea Eliade, whose views on the nature of the sacred are neatly summed up in his discussion of the consecration of space: "In actual fact, the place is never 'chosen' by man; it is merely discovered by him; in other words, the sacred place in some way or another reveals itself to him."[22] Work on the social construction of sacred space, by contrast, holds that sacrality is the product of a sometimes fragile community consensus. In the words of Jacob Kinnard in *Places in Motion: The Fluid Identities of Temples, Images, and Pilgrims*, "sacred is a designation, an argument to be made. Individuals and communities make places sacred."[23]

Objects, too, derive their sacrality from context and consensus. The studies gathered in Arjun Appadurai's essay collection *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* show how, depending on their social context, objects can change their identity over time. As things are traded or exchanged, they acquire new meanings. Invaluable treasures are transformed into commodities and sacred objects into profane ones, or the other way around. As a result of these processes, objects acquire biographies that chart their changing social and cultural circumstances.[24] The complex fortunes of sacred objects, too, can be charted using this approach.[25] Once more, "sacred" emerges as an unstable category.

A study of temple robbery in the Roman world is therefore also an investigation into how Roman texts construct and remove the sacred identity of objects and places. The understanding of what is sacred shifts to accommodate the narrative. An accusation of temple robbery is not just an argument that someone has behaved in an un-Roman way, but goes deeper than that. The *sacrilegus* does not view the world as a Roman should. He is unwilling or unable to recognize consecrated objects and spaces. By choice or profound ignorance—we find evidence of both—he exists in conflict with his community's fundamental religious and social values. He also does not understand the concept of property and considers everything to be his for the taking. As

22. Eliade 1996, 369; see more fully Eliade 1959, esp. 8–65, and Eliade 1996, 1–37 and 367–87.

23. Kinnard 2014, xviii. On the fragility of this consensus and the desacralization of spaces, see della Dora 2018.

24. Kopytoff 1986. See also van Oyen and Pitts 2017, esp. 12–14.

25. As outlined in Moyer 2016.

a result, his behavior is both a religious and a social problem and shows how deeply these two categories are intertwined in the Roman world.

Most temple robbers choose to be temple robbers. In this, their actions depart from most Roman accounts of religious violations. These fall largely into two paradigms. In the first, there is an accidental error, often a ritual mistake.[26] The focus then turns to appeasing angry gods. In the second paradigm, which is far rarer, someone has chosen to commit an offense and is immediately punished either by the gods or by the community as a means of expiating their crime.[27] How an individual or the community can apologize effectively for an error is at least as important as the offense itself. *Sacrilegi*, by contrast, often choose to initiate a conflict with the gods and, even if their actions are accidental, do not apologize for them.[28] Their actions are therefore distinct from most acts of religious wrongdoing. By refusing to recognize the gods and their authority, temple robbers opt out of conventional Roman religious procedures.

The narratives present temple robbers as larger-than-life villains. At their core, therefore, all stories of temple robbery in ancient texts are works of invective. As has long been recognized, rhetorical invective aims to exclude people from the community by detailing how they have failed to live up to Roman behavioral standards.[29] A catalog of invective tropes supplies possible topics; someone may dress or speak strangely, have dubious ancestors, or, more troublingly, engage in a wide range of criminal behavior.[30] At one extreme, comparisons to animals or mythological monsters deny their target a place not only in Roman society, but among humanity as a whole.[31] A fully developed invective is a spectacle of insults that dehumanizes and others its subject. In the case of accusations of *sacrilegium*, the author makes the case that his subject is not actually Roman.

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26. For narratives of violated rituals, see foundationally Cornell 1981; Scheid 1981 and 1999. Most of the instances of ritual pollution discussed in Lennon 2013 also fall into this category. Scheid 1981, 137–42, and Scheid 2001, 35–45, treat the unauthorized removal of sacred objects as ritual violations, but only very few instances of temple robbery can be interpreted as such.

27. This is the case with Vestals who violate their oath.

28. As I discuss in chapter 1, the importance of the temple robber's agency makes him similar to the mythological *theomachos* who chooses to challenge the gods. Others, however, may feel prompted to expiate the temple robber's behavior; see Wells 2010.

29. E.g., Opelt 1965, 17–19; and Corbeill 1996, esp. 3–13. For restraint and proper behavior as the normative core of Roman identity, see Edwards 1993, 20–28.

30. A useful list can be found in Craig 2007, 336–37.

31. As shown most comprehensively in May 1996.

There is disagreement about the extent to which insults had to be provable.[32] This issue is particularly acute in forensic speeches where accusations often seem improbable or outright dishonest. Roman courtroom oratory trades in likelihoods; it presents the defendant in such a way that it is (or is not) likely that he has committed the crime he is charged with.[33] An accusation of temple robbery, therefore, lends itself to a general argument that someone is a thoroughly bad character. It invokes the gods and hence stirs up sentiments of piety and perhaps also a fear of divine retribution. Since temple robbers are motivated by greed and a desire for luxury, the accusation triggers Roman anxieties about corruption, a loss of self-control, and impulsive behavior. *Sacrilegi* are without moderation in every regard. They look to stuff their houses with treasure at any cost and do not recognize any constraints on their actions. They are therefore destructive threats to all who subscribe to Roman values and the orderly functioning of society.

Sallust sums up the view that *sacrilegi* are a danger to Rome when he includes them among Catiline's followers in 63 BCE:

> In tanta tamque corrupta civitate Catilina, id quod factu facillumum erat, omnium flagitiorum atque facinorum circum se tamquam stipatorum catervas habebat. nam quicumque inpudicus, adulter, ganeo, manu, ventre, pene bona patria laceraverat quique alienum aes grande conflaverat quo flagitium aut facinus redimeret, praeterea omnes undique parricidae, sacrilegi, convicti iudiciis aut pro factis iudicium timentes, ad hoc, quos manus atque lingua periurio aut sanguine civili alebat, postremo omnes, quos flagitium, egestas, conscius animus exagitabat, ei Catilinae proxumi familiaresque erant.[34]
>
> In such a great and so corrupt a state, Catiline had what was very easy to achieve; throngs of all vices and crimes to surround him like a bodyguard. For whoever was unchaste, an adulterer, a glutton who had wasted his ancestral wealth with his gambling, feasting, and lust, anyone who had run up great debt with which to purchase vice and crime, and, besides, all the parricides from everywhere, temple robbers, those convicted by the courts or those fearing judgment

32. Riggsby 1997; Craig 2004.

33. Presenting the defendant as a stock character is particularly effective; see Vasaly 1985; Riggsby 1999, 59–64. For the temple robber, as we have already seen, the most applicable stock character is the tyrant (see also Frazel 2009, 173–82).

34. Sall. *Cat.* 14.1–3.

> for their deeds, moreover, those whom hand and tongue sustained through perjury or the blood of citizens, finally, all those whom disgrace, poverty, and a guilty conscience stirred on; these were closest and most friendly to Catiline.

All the corrupt elements of Rome come together for a great project of social upheaval. The scene is reminiscent of a passage in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* in which the author of the handbook gives advice on how to present a case against a group of alleged traitors and stir up anger against them. Here, Rome's enemies, grave robbers, temple robbers, murderers, and the like band together and threaten to plunge society into chaos.[35] Sallust is therefore not unique in his assessment of who stands to gain the most from the fall of civilization. Temple robbers thrive in lawless environments.

Sallust's remarks are a rare example of temple robbers appearing as an anonymous group. Bands of criminals have long been at the center of investigations into criminal behavior in the Roman world, especially piracy and banditry.[36] Scholars have been particularly interested in what motivates these outlaws. Although the sources disparage them as entirely lawless, these groups often subscribe to coherent social philosophies that offer alternatives to Roman norms. These anonymous "others" live at the margins of Roman society and cannot be integrated into it. Their strong group identity allows them to carry out crimes and sustain their way of life.

Temple robbers, too, challenge social conventions, but in most narratives they do so in an entirely different way. They may have assistants, but they do not band together with other criminals for mutual aid. Temple robbery as portrayed in literary texts, unlike other examples of large-scale criminal activity in the Roman world, is largely a solo effort and the work of prominent Roman individuals. Although none of the works that I will discuss are explicitly fictional, the accusations that these texts put forth can rarely be substantiated. We do not have robust documentary evidence for the extent of temple robbery in the Roman world in our extant sources, nor do we necessarily have proof that a certain historical episode was widely viewed as a temple robbery. What we have, however, is evidence for a narrative paradigm that can be used to make powerful arguments about people and their achievements.

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35. *Rhet. Her.* 4.8.12.

36. Shaw 1984; Habinek 1998, 69–87; de Souza 1999; Riess 2001; Grünewald 2004; Sintes 2016.

Sources and Overview

In the chapters that follow, I examine representative episodes of temple robbery in Roman narratives written between the first century BCE and the second century CE, a period in which many writers reflect on Rome's rapid imperial expansion and the vastly increased opportunities for plundering that came with it. Within this broad chronological scope, my focus is on when and how historical Romans are accused of temple robbery. Most of my sources are therefore prose texts, especially works of oratory, historiography, and biography. Because temple robbery is also of interest to Greek authors writing about Roman warfare and imperial rule, I have included such texts as well. While I do not provide a comprehensive catalog of all alleged temple robberies from the early days of Roman expansion to the sack of Jerusalem in 70 CE, I aim to illustrate the range of approaches that authors take when writing about thieving Romans.

Although I cover a period in which the Roman political, social, and literary landscape undergoes drastic changes, my approach throughout is synchronic. Roman ideas of what temple robbers are like, how and when they commit their offenses, and why they are a problem for society remain largely fixed across the sources that I analyze. The offender is almost always a prominent Roman—a general or governor during the Republic and later often an emperor. He lives in conflict with Roman values in more than one area of his life, for example, by being overly cruel or too devoted to a luxurious lifestyle. His attacks on sacred property are just one way in which his leadership threatens the stability and success of Rome. Authors differ in how they construct their narratives and describe the motivations of the temple robbers and the community's reaction to them, but someone reading an account of *sacrilegium* from the Antonine era will find much that is familiar from Cicero.

The broad literary continuity of the temple robbery motif means that it is possible to identify common features across authors. Narratives of temple robbery are especially likely to occur within the context of Roman imperial expansion, during either active warfare or the consolidation and administration of the empire. Most authors use accusations of *sacrilegium* for one of four purposes: to sum up the qualities of Rome's enemies, to highlight a moment of crisis for the Romans, to facilitate a character assassination, or to comment on the history of a particular object or site. In all of these cases we get a clear separation between the temple robber and Roman society. No matter what their opponents might say, Romans would never plunder a temple as a matter of policy.

A passage by Diodorus on the relationship between proper conduct and military success highlights the contrast between temple robbers and generic Romans. It takes us to Rome's conflicts in the eastern Mediterranean at the beginning of the second century BCE. Here, Rome faces two major antagonists, Philip V, king of Macedon, and Antiochus III, the ruler of the Seleucid empire. Diodorus presents the two as a close-knit pair with common interests and vices:

> Φίλιππος ὁ τῶν Μακεδόνων βασιλεὺς χωρὶς τῆς πλεονεξίας οὕτως ὑπερήφανος ἦν ἐν ταῖς εὐτυχίαις ὥστε τοὺς μὲν φίλους ἀκρίτως ἀποσφάξαι, τοὺς δὲ τάφους τῶν προτετελευτηκότων καὶ πολλὰ τῶν ἱερῶν κατασκάπτειν. Ἀντίοχος δὲ τὸ κατὰ τὴν Ἐλυμαΐδα τέμενος τοῦ Διὸς συλᾶν ἐπιβαλόμενος πρέπουσαν τὴν καταστροφὴν εὗρε τοῦ βίου, μετὰ πάσης τῆς δυνάμεως ἀπολόμενος. . . . οἱ δὲ Ῥωμαῖοι καὶ τότε καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα δικαίους ἐνιστάμενοι πολέμους καὶ πλεῖστον ὅρκων καὶ σπονδῶν ποιούμενοι λόγον οὐκ ἀλόγως συμμάχους εἶχον τοὺς θεοὺς ἐν ἁπάσαις ταῖς ἐπιβολαῖς.[37]
>
> Philip, the king of Macedon, aside from his greed was so arrogant that in times of good fortune, he put his friends to death without trial and also destroyed the tombs of the dead and many sanctuaries. Antiochus, on the other hand, when he set out to plunder the temple of Zeus at Elymaïs, found a fitting end to his life. He perished with his entire army. . . . The Romans, however, both at that time and after conducted just wars and valued oaths and treaties. For good reason, they had the gods as allies in all their endeavors.

The success of the Roman empire, then, depends on treating the gods with respect. Having *sacrilegi* in leadership positions threatens good relations with the gods and can lead directly to disaster. The identification of temple robbers and their exclusion from the highest ranks of Roman society reinforces Roman behavioral norms and safeguards the state's interests.[38]

Incidents of temple robbery also allow Roman authorities to show their

37. Diod. Sic. 28.3.

38. Diodorus' passage fits within the broader discourse about the *pax deorum*, which postulates that good relationships with the gods maintained by properly carrying out rituals are the foundation of Roman success. On the *pax deorum*, see *BNP* s.v. "Pax deorum (deum)" (Linderski); MacBain 1982; Rosenberger 1998, esp. 127–96. For the literary treatment of disruptions to the *pax deorum* caused by incorrect rituals, see Shannon-Henderson 2019, esp. 169–73 and 259–60.

potential allies that they can successfully manage a crisis. This kind of episode is particularly favored by Livy, who regularly describes rogue individuals whose actions abroad violate Roman norms. One example is the praetor C. Lucretius, who, in 171 BCE, is involved in the conquest of central Greece. Lucretius is a capable commander, but has a penchant for brutality. During the capture of Haliartus, he makes a point of killing children and old men. Then, after plundering the city, he has it razed to the ground.[39] Even more troublingly, the praetor does not bother with distinguishing between Rome's enemies and allies when he maltreats the citizens of Greece. Eventually matters escalate to such a degree that Rome's Greek allies send an embassy to the Senate to report what they are experiencing. Part of the accusation made by the citizens of Chalcis on Euboea reads:

> Apud se templa omnibus ornamentis spoliata; compilataque sacrilegiis C. Lucretium navibus Antium devexisse; libera corpora in servitutem abrepta; fortunas sociorum populi Romani direptas esse et cotidie diripi.[40]
>
> [They said that] in their town the temples had been plundered of all their ornaments; that C. Lucretius had taken his plunder away to Antium with sacrilegious ships. Free people had been snatched away into slavery; the property of allies of the Roman people had been taken away and was still being taken away every day.

There is a close connection between the disrespectful treatment of temples and of humans. According to the ambassadors, Lucretius acts like a tyrant and must be stopped by Roman authorities. The senators agree that there is cause for concern and summon Lucretius to Rome, where he is put on trial for illegal enslavement and imposing excessive demands on the people by billeting troops in private houses. He is unanimously found guilty and compelled to pay a steep fine.[41] While the accusation of temple robbery does not play a role in the trial, it nevertheless performs an important rhetorical function. Since temple robbers are thoroughly bad, the reference to Lucretius' plundering of sacred spaces lends credibility to the ambassadors' arguments. Only a wicked person would attack a temple, much as only a wicked person would illegally enslave Roman allies.

39. Livy 42.63.10–11.
40. Livy 43.7.10.
41. Livy 43.8.

Lucretius' actions in this brief passage may remind readers of the most famous temple robber in Latin literature, C. Verres, who was governor of Sicily from 73 to 71 BCE. His trial in 70 BCE was Cicero's first big case as a prosecutor. As Thomas Frazel has shown, the characterization of Verres draws heavily on stock figures from rhetorical handbooks.[42] Cicero uses them to create the embodiment of the Roman *sacrilegus*, which later authors will draw on heavily to create their temple robbers. The orator's approach is particularly remarkable because the governor was not formally accused of temple robbery. Upon his return to Rome, Verres faced charges *de repetundis*. *Repetundae* are funds acquired illegally (usually through extortion) by a Roman provincial official.[43] By the middle of the second century BCE, it was not uncommon for governors to face prosecution under this charge, though with an overall conviction rate of only 30 to 40 percent.[44] The trials showed that accusations of excessive greed on the part of provincial officials were taken seriously and were subject to investigation, if not necessarily conviction.

Verres' trial came at a time when the judicial process for *repetundae* cases was in flux.[45] Cicero therefore faced pressure not only to mount an effective prosecution, but also to show that the current system was working well. He had to convince the jury that a prominent, well-connected politician who apparently boasted about his ability to bribe his way out of legal trouble could be convicted.[46] To accomplish his goal, Cicero accuses the defendant of far more than extortion. Verres rapes, tortures, and murders; he consorts with pirates. He uses the authority of his office to turn Sicily into a lawless land where everything and everyone caters to his desires. The image of *sac-*

42. Frazel 2009 passim.

43. The bibliography on the development and scope of legislation *de repetundis* is vast. Representative discussions may be found in *OCD* s.v. "repetundae" (Badian and Lintott); Lintott 1981 and 2008, 81–83; Richardson 1987; Damon and Mackay 1995; Riggsby 1999, 120–50; Williamson 2005, 301–3; Prag 2013; and the discussion of the *lex repetundarum* portion of the *Tabula Bembina*, the oldest surviving piece of *repetundae* legislation, in *RS* 1.39–112.

44. For the period between 149 and 50 BCE, Lintott (1981) finds 49 trials with 23 acquittals or dismissals, 20 convictions, and the rest of uncertain outcome. For the same period, and including doubtful trials, Alexander (1990) puts it at 55 trials, 35 acquittals or dismissals, 15 convictions, and the rest of uncertain outcome. The evidence for many of these trials is problematic and the outcome is open to interpretation. For the difficulties with establishing an exact number of trials, see Alexander 1993.

45. For the political background of the trial, see Vasaly 2009.

46. Verres' confidence in his financial resources: Cic. *Verr.* 1.3.

rilegus Verres, as Juvenal would go on to call him, develops in this context.[47] The defendant has a constant desire for new precious objects and finds that sanctuaries give him access to an unlimited supply of riches. More than that, Verres is an enemy of all that is good and holy.[48]

The *Verrines* fall into three parts. A preliminary speech, the *Divinatio in Caecilium*, secured Cicero the right to prosecute the former governor by offering a compelling preview of his approach to the trial. After the first speech of the main trial (the first *actio*), the defendant opted to depart into voluntary exile, which ended the formal legal proceedings against him. Cicero, however, had ample additional material, which he published in a second *actio* in five parts. Here we learn more about Verres' crimes prior to his arrival in Sicily (*Verrines* 2.1), his general misdeeds as governor (2.2), his financial manipulations (2.3), art robberies (2.4), and peculiar ideas about crime and punishment (2.5). The second *actio* purports to be a continuation of the trial and even leaves space for the reading of evidence and the appearance of witnesses. It is therefore customary to read the *Verrines* as a continuous prosecution as if all parts of the speeches had found their way into court, as I will do in my analysis.

The first three uses of narratives of temple robbery—commenting on Rome's enemies, creating moments of administrative crisis, and providing vivid accounts of corrupt individuals—suggest that authors are primarily interested in the criminals. Other authors, chiefly Pliny the Elder and Pausanias, turn our attention to the objects stolen and the sanctuaries attacked. With these texts we can begin to chart object biographies as items move around because of conflicts or individual greed. Such sources do not necessarily include comment on the moral dimension of temple robbery, which is so important to other authors. Instead, they focus on the movement of wealth between different parts of the empire and thereby act as uncomfortable reminders of how much of Rome's splendor depends on stealing from the gods.

This book is divided into six thematic chapters. The first three chapters focus on how authors construct narratives of temple robbery. In chapter 1, I

47. Juv. 8.106. Cicero himself uses the word *sacrilegus* sparingly in the *Verrines*. It occurs at 2.1.47 (where Verres is said to have impious and temple-plundering hands); 2.3.69 (where his henchmen are identified as temple robbers); 2.5.4 (where Verres is called a *sacrilegus*); 2.5.188 (where he is accused of waging a *sacrilegum bellum*).

48. Cicero's depiction of Verres is widely recognized as the most comprehensive portrait of villainy in a Roman oratorical text; see Koster 1980, 113–15; May 1988, 31–47; Steel 2001, esp. 22–47; Frazel 2009; Gildenhard 2011, esp. 74–98; Hammar 2013, 131–68.

put accounts of temple robbery from literary prose in dialog with the scant evidence of the offense that we have from other sources to show how authors cast *sacrilegium* as a deliberate act in which the temple robber disregards the possible consequences of his actions. In particular, the possibility that the gods may mete out brutal punishment leaves him unconcerned. Authors thereby create a dichotomy between *sacrilegi* and the rest of society, which consists of people who know that it is best to avoid divine wrath.

The second chapter continues to explore the idea that temple robbers have a unique way of perceiving the world around them. I use Cicero's *Verrines* to chart how a *sacrilegus* proceeds through the various stages of a temple robbery, from the initial planning stage to the display of the plunder. His actions put the criminal on a collision course not just with the gods, but also with his fellow mortals as he takes objects of high local significance and damages or destroys sanctuaries in the process.

Chapter 3 also centers on the narrative tropes of Cicero's *Verrines* and asks where Verres goes to steal things. This chapter shows that *sacrilegi* in literary texts are connected through objects and places. By stealing from the Acropolis in Athens, for example, Verres follows in the footsteps of Xerxes, among others. The temple robber's itinerary, as I call it, facilitates comparisons between *sacrilegi* and reveals that most are serial offenders. It also reminds us yet again that temple robbers should not be considered proper Romans; their actions mirror those of foreign tyrants.

The remaining chapters shift to Roman warfare and primarily focus on historiography. In chapter 4, I turn to a chronological fantasy. Roman authors are confident that we can pinpoint the exact moment when the Romans first became interested in plundering foreign temples. These writers picture the start of Roman temple robbery as a process in three stages. First, there are the Romans of old who have no desire for luxury goods or the contents of foreign sanctuaries. Then a general plunders a temple and brings the loot back to Rome. From there his fellow citizens acquire a lust for treasures. The sources date the first looting of a temple to the end of the third century BCE or later, an implausibly late date for the arrival of foreign luxury goods in Rome. The narrative has considerable benefits for Roman self-representation; it casts temple robbery as an act that does not come naturally to Romans. Plundering foreign sanctuaries has to be learned, and it will always be an activity for individuals who cannot keep their greed in check.

Chapter 5 examines the practicalities of dealing with sacred plunder both during a military campaign and back in Rome. The property of foreign gods has no inherent right to sacrality in Rome, but can be treated as

sacred in certain rhetorical contexts. Authors can therefore use the narrative tropes found in accounts of *sacrilegia* to indicate whether they think that a certain campaign has been conducted properly.

The final chapter pulls together the arguments of the book into a reading of temple robbery in Caesar's *Bellum Civile*. Caesar exploits the rhetorical dichotomy between good Roman plunderers and evil temple robbers. He repeatedly accuses his opponents of using illegally acquired sacred property to fund their military campaigns against him. The effectiveness of this rhetorical move is founded on the repeated deployment of stereotypical associations with temple robbers and a clever distortion of major differences between how Greeks and Romans interact with divine property at a time of crisis. In the Greek world, as is amply demonstrated in inscriptions, sanctuaries regularly offered loans to communities in need of funds for war. In the Roman tradition, however, citizens avoided using sacred property in such a way at almost any cost. Caesar portrays the actions of Pompey's followers not just as incomprehensible to his Roman audience, but as temple robberies. His enemies are strangers to the customs and conventions of Rome. Caesar must save the Roman world and its sanctuaries from such a dangerous and destructive power.

ONE

The Gods and Their Property

Ovid's *Fasti* includes a prayer recommended for a shepherd who wants to ensure the goodwill of the gods and the well-being of his flock. A series of provisional apologies follows the initial invocation:

"Sive sacro pavi, sedive sub arbore sacra,
pabulaque e bustis inscia carpsit ovis;
si nemus intravi vetitum, nostrisve fugatae
sunt oculis nymphae semicaperque deus;
si mea falx ramo lucum spoliavit opaco,
unde data est aegrae fiscina frondis ovi,
da veniam culpae: nec, dum degrandinat, obsit
agresti fano subposuisse pecus.
nec noceat turbasse lacus: ignoscite, nymphae,
mota quod obscuras ungula fecit aquas."[1]

"If I grazed my flock on sacred land or sat under a sacred tree, or if my sheep out of ignorance plucked its meal from graves, if I entered a forbidden grove, or if the nymphs and Pan fled at our sight, if my knife deprived a grove of a shady branch, out of whose leaves a small basket was fashioned for a sick sheep, pardon this fault. And let it not be an insult that I gave my sheep shelter in a rural shrine during a hailstorm. And let it be no offense that they stirred up mud in a pond; pardon, nymphs, that the moving hoof clouded the water."

1. Ov. *Fast.* 4.749–58.

The shepherd perceives his surroundings as, to borrow Keith Hopkins' phrase, "a world full of gods."[2] He is powerless in this space and has no way of knowing which activities might offend a divine power. His prayer attempts to mitigate the possibility of facing divine anger in a potentially sacred landscape. In order to do so, the shepherd casts himself as a violent offender who has to ask for forgiveness. When he describes clipping a branch in line 753, for example, he uses the verb *spolio*, which carries strong associations with violence and plundering.[3] He acknowledges that he should be punished and expresses hope that the gods will choose not to do so.

In this chapter, I take the shepherd's anxieties as a starting point for exploring the unique attitude that temple robbers in Roman literature bring to their interactions with the gods. These individuals choose to attack divine property and are unconcerned with possible consequences. Other inhabitants of the Roman world may reconsider their actions if they fear being confronted by angry gods, but *sacrilegi* ignore the cultural consensus regarding the horrors of divine punishment, which I explore in the first part of the chapter. I then demonstrate that literary narratives of temple robbery do not concern themselves with unintentional violations of sacred property. Authors describe deliberate actions and give us insights into the temple robber's psychology; he has no fear of the gods. Unlike upstanding inhabitants of the Roman world, temple robbers do not acknowledge that they live in "a world full of gods" and should act accordingly.

How Gods Punish

The strongly apologetic stance of his prayer indicates that Ovid's shepherd expects that any divinely inflicted consequences for violating the grove will be severe. The prayer attests to the belief that deities protect certain sites. They can do so of their own accord or because they have been enlisted by humans. An inscription from Puteoli, for example, expresses confidence that the gods are looking after a gravesite:

2. Hopkins 2001. Hopkins' imaginative reconstruction of encounters with the gods in a Roman city (7–42) provides a sense of the fluid boundaries between sacred and nonsacred space, the problem confronting Ovid's shepherd. Ovid's prayer has been central to discussions of sacred spaces within nature (see, e.g., Fantham 2009, 87–89 and Bodel 2009, 24).

3. *OLD* s.v. *spolio*.

D(is) M(anibus)
Claudiae Fortu-
natae et Fortuna-
to et Laeto fili(i)s eius
bene merentibus
Abascantus conliber-
tus fecit quisque Ma-
nes inqu(i)etaberit habebit illas ira-
tas.[4]

To the shades of the dead. For Claudia Fortunata and her sons Fortunatus and Laetus, well-deserving, Abascantus, her fellow freedman, made [this]. Whoever disturbs the shades of the dead will find them angry.

A similar inscription from Rome is explicit about prohibited activities:

C(aius) Caecilius C(ai)
et Ↄ l(ibertus) Florus
vixit annos XVI
et me(n)sibus(!) VII qui
hic mixerit aut
cacarit habeat
deos superos et
inferos iratos.[5]

Gaius Caecilius Florus freedman of Gaius and a woman lived for sixteen years and seven months. May whoever urinates or defecates here find the gods above and below angry.

Unlike a modern "beware of the dog" sign that tells its audience that any intrusion will have dire consequences, the ancient texts merely express a hope for angry gods.[6] When humans enlist the gods to protect spaces or

4. *CIL* 10.2289, dating to the second century CE. Similarly, *AE* 1967, 42 from Rome (first century CE) wishes angry gods on whoever violates the grave of two freedpeople.

5. *CIL* 6.13740 (pp. 3513, 3912).

6. On the tendency of ancient curses to avoid declarative statements but rather position themselves as wishes, see Kropp 2004, esp. 92–97.

property, divine action is not guaranteed. Even in a sacred or quasi-sacred environment, such as a cemetery, the gods have a choice about whether they step in. Divine punishment, whatever its form, is proof of wrongdoing, but the lack of it does not imply innocence. As will become clear below, this principle also plays an important role in narratives of temple robbery.

Nevertheless, people invoke the hope of divine retribution even to protect spaces that have no obvious connection with the gods. A *dipinto* from the Domus Aurea in Rome echoes the concerns of the epitaph for Florus. The painted inscription reads:

> Duodecim deos et Deanam et Iovem
> Optumum Maximu(m) habeat iratos
> quisquis hic mixerit aut cacarit.[7]
>
> May he find the Twelve Gods and Diana and Jupiter the Best and Greatest angry, whoever urinates or defecates here.

The threat of divine wrath is an attempt to police behavior and safeguard public and private monuments.[8] It seems far more effective to threaten people with angry gods than to simply tell them to not do certain things.

Prohibitions with curses rarely specify exactly what happens when a god becomes upset with a person. This is assumed cultural knowledge, and the mere threat is seen as an effective deterrent against bad behavior.[9] Other types of inscriptions, most notably curse tablets (*defixiones*) and "prayers for justice," are more forthcoming about what divine punishment looks like.[10] Unlike the inscriptions discussed so far, these are privileged communications between a mortal and a specific deity or deities. They are usually

7. *CIL* 6.29848b; cf. *CIL* 4.7716 (p. 1496), a graffito from Pompeii threatening divine wrath for defecating in a doorway. Several similar inscriptions from private houses in Pompeii can be found in Varone 2016.

8. Thus a *dipinto* honoring two gladiators from Pompeii wishes an angry Venus Pompeiana on whoever might damage it (*CIL* 4.538 [pp. 195, 461, 1225]; for a detailed description, see Wachter 2019, *ad* no. 451).

9. There are some notable exceptions; a grave inscription from Maktar (ancient Mactaris) in Tunisia specifies that if anyone destroys the site with fire, he or she should be met with angry gods and be burned alive (*CIL* 8.11825 [p. 2372]). An epitaph from Rome is less violent in its desires; it wishes that anyone who violates the grave should find sacrifices to Isis unsuccessful and unanswered in future (*CIL* 6.21129 [pp. 3526, 3916]).

10. For the term "prayers for justice" and the case for treating them as a distinct genre, see Versnel 1991 and Versnel 2010, 278–79.

inscribed on thin sheets of lead, folded or rolled to keep their content hidden, and then cast into wells or buried. The major differences between *defixiones* and "prayers for justice" are the choice of addressee and the occasion of the prayer. *Defixiones* invoke demons or underground spirits.[11] "Prayers for justice," by contrast, address conventional deities. A person who commissions a *defixio* knows who has done him or her wrong—for example, an unfaithful lover—and can target their curse accordingly. "Prayers for justice," on the other hand, usually cannot name the person to be harmed. People commission them when they do not know who is responsible for their misery. The gods therefore have two tasks; they are asked to identify the criminal and to bring him or her to justice.

Unlike *defixiones*, which can take a wide variety of forms, "prayers for justice" are formulaic; they describe the injustice that the commissioner of the tablet has suffered and call on the god (or, at times, a group of gods) to right the wrong by inflicting specific violent penalties.[12] A tablet from Uley in Britain addressed to Mercury is illustrative of the genre and its conventions. Here, a man named Biccus asks for help with the recovery of an unspecified item:

Biccus dat M-
ercurio quidquid
pe(r)d(id)it si vir si m-
ascel ne meiat
ne cacet ne loqua-
tur ne dormiat
n[e] vigilet nec s[a]-
[l]utem nec sa-
nitatem ne-
ss[i] in templo
Mercurii per-
tulerit.[13]

11. See, for example, the impressive list of allegedly Egyptian demons invoked in two curses from Carthage (Audollent 1904 no. 250 [= *TheDefix* 96] and no. 251 [= *TheDefix* 97]).

12. Regarding the formulaic nature of these texts, see Tomlin 2010 and Versnel 1991 and 2010. Kiernan 2004 provides a useful catalog of the various punishments called for in "prayers for justice." The generic features of these texts remain broadly constant across cultures; for "prayers for justice" beyond the Greek- and Latin-speaking world, see, e.g., Massarelli 2019 (Etruscan) and Saar 2021 (Hebrew and Aramaic) with further bibliography.

13. Uley 4 (= *TheDefix* 904; *RIB Brit.* 19.2) ll. 1–10. Text and translation (slightly modi-

> Biccus gives Mercury whatever he has lost [provided that the thief] whether man or male[14] may not urinate nor defecate nor speak nor sleep nor stay awake nor [have] well-being or health, unless he bring [whatever has been stolen] into the temple of Mercury.

Instead of calling for the outright death of the thief, Biccus asks the god to stop his bodily functions. As a result, the miscreant would display strange physical symptoms that would defy an easy explanation. Onlookers might well conclude that the suffering is divinely inflicted and that the person suffering must have committed some serious wrong. The punishment is therefore both vengeance and an act of public shaming. The inexplicable physical suffering brands him as someone who has run afoul of the gods and prompts speculation as to what he might have done.[15]

Biccus does not reveal what has been stolen from him, but it is difficult to imagine a theft that would merit such harsh treatment. "Prayers for justice" generally are not interested in a proportionality between crime and punishment. Any offense, no matter how trivial, triggers a wish for physical disfigurement, a loss of bodily functions, or violent death. Another tablet from Uley dating to the third century CE illustrates this principle well:

> carta qu(a)e Mercurio dona-
> tur ut manecilis qui per[i]erunt
> ultionem requirat; qui illos
> invalavi<i>t ut illi sangu(in)em [e]t santita- 4
> tem tolla[t]; qui ipsos manicili[o]s tulit
> [u]t quantoci<ci>us illi pareat quod
> deum Mercurium r[o]gamus.[16]
>
> The sheet (of lead) which is given to Mercury, that he exact vengeance for the gloves which have been lost; that he take blood and health from the person who has stolen them; that the god Mercury

---

fied) are taken from Tomlin 1993, 124–25.

14. The phrasing *si vir si mascel* is perplexing and unparalleled. Tomlin suggests that "the scribe has conflated two variants of the 'whether man or woman' formula common in British curse tablets" (1993, 125).

15. For the tendency to attribute suspicious illnesses and deaths to supernatural causes, see Kiernan 2004, esp. 128–31; and Edmonds 2010.

16. Uley 80 (= *TheDefix* 932; *RIB Brit.* 27.1) ll. 1–7. I reproduce the text and translation from *RIB*.

provide what we ask as quickly as possible to the person who has taken the gloves.

Based on this tablet and the one commissioned by Biccus, it stands to reason that any confrontation between gods and mortals is going to have horrific consequences. Furthermore, the gods do not consider the nature of the offense in determining how to react. What matters is that a mortal has committed a crime. In light of such sentiments, it is unsurprising that Ovid's shepherd is so nervous about his presence in the grove and its potential consequences.

Other texts make it clear that it is not only the criminals who face the possibility of divine anger. Those who aid them or otherwise benefit from their actions can also be targets, as in a text concerning some stolen money found at Hamble in southern England:

Domine Neptune,
t(i)b(i) d(o)no (h)ominẹm qụị
(solidum) invọḷạỵ[it] Mụ-
coni et argenṭị[olo]ṣ
sex. ide(o) dono nomi(n)a
qui decepit, si mascel si
femina, si puuer si puue-
lla. ideo dono tibi, Niske,
eṭ Neptuno vitam, vali-
tudinem, sanguem eiụṣ
qui conscius fuerit eiụṣ
deceptionis. animus
qui hoc involavit et
qui conscius fueriṭ ut
eum decipias. furem
qui hoc involavit sanguem
eiius consumas et de-
cipias, doṃiṇ[e] Nẹ[p]-
tune.[17]

17. *AE* 1997, 977 (= *TheDefix* 667; *RIB Brit.* 28.1), dating to the second half of the fourth century CE. Text and translation from Tomlin 1997, 455–57.

> Lord Neptune, I give to you the man who took away the *solidus* of Muconius and the six *argentioli*. So I give the names of the person who took them away, whether male or female, whether boy or girl. So I give to you, Niskus, and to Neptune the life, health, blood of him who has been privy to that taking-away. The mind which stole it and which has been privy to it, may you take it away. The thief who stole this, may you consume his blood and take it away, Lord Neptune.

The tablet is dedicated to Neptune and the local deity Niskus. Muconius briefly identifies himself and then calls for the harsh penalties characteristic of the genre. As far as he is concerned, even merely being aware of the crime merits divine retribution. He does not differentiate between what the thief and those who aid him should suffer.[18]

The tablets that I have discussed so far do not indicate why the gods might be interested in helping the wronged party. Other texts are more informative in this regard, such as a tablet from Baelo Claudia in Spain:

> Isis Muromem [i.e Myrionyma], tibi commendo
> furtu(m) meu(m). mi(hi) fac
> tuto numini, ma(i)es-
> tati exemplaria,
> ut tu evide(s) immedi-
> o qui fecit, autulit,
> aut (h)eres: opertor(i)u(m)
> albu(m) nov(um), stragul(um) novu(m), lodices duas me(o)
> uso. rogo, domina,
> per maiestate(m) tua(m),
> ut (h)oc furtu(m) repri-
> ndas.[19]
>
> Isis Myrionyma, I entrust you with what has been stolen from me. Make me proofs of your divinity and majesty, so that you publicly take away the life of the man who did this theft, indeed who stole my property: a new white coverlet, a new rug, two used blankets. I ask you, Lady, by your majesty, that you punish this theft.

18. Roman legal practice takes a dim view of accomplices (see Robinson 1995, 19–20; McKie 2022, 66–67). In this regard, Muconius' tablet reflects wider cultural ideas about who should be punished for a crime.

19. *AE* 1988, 727 (= *TheDefix* 570), dating to the second century CE. Text and translation from Tomlin 2010, 258 and 260.

Only a powerful deity would be able to track down and punish the thief, so Isis is asked to prove that she is worthy of worship. The tablet suggests that "prayers for justice" work by appealing to a god's sense of pride.

As is clear from these texts, angering the gods is dangerous business. While the deities may choose not to act, they can inflict violent and distinct punishments. Furthermore, even if humans do not know who committed a crime, the gods do. For anyone looking to abscond with divine property, the cultural discourse about divine punishment would function as a powerful warning. Some inscriptions that inform potential temple robbers of the consequences of their actions have survived, especially from the Greek-speaking part of the Roman world.[20] When we turn back to literary narratives, we see that *sacrilegi* do indeed experience divine consequences, but that these are not effective deterrents.

Punishing a Temple Robber

Authors can draw on a variety of ideas for how to respond to *sacrilegium*. Legal sources are split on the preferred method. The oldest extant provision for the punishment of temple robbers is found in the *Lex aedis Furfensis*, a set of regulations concerning the temple of Jupiter Liber at Furfo in central Italy.[21] The inscription, dating to 58 BCE, specifies that anyone caught stealing from the sanctuary would face a fine imposed by the local aedile.[22] This sentence could have substantial monetary, social, and political consequences for the criminal, but carried no risk of physical humiliation or death.[23]

Much later, the jurists whose pronouncements on the *Lex Iulia peculatus et de sacrilegis et de residuis* (the Julian Law on the embezzlement of public funds, *sacrilegium*, and the moneys remaining) are compiled in the *Digest of Justinian* treat *sacrilegium* as a capital offense.[24] Ulpian, for example, states

20. For example, an inscription from Smyrna expresses the colorful wish that anyone who harms the sanctuary's sacred fish should die and be turned into fish food (ἀπόλοιτο ἰχθυόβρωτος γενόμενος, *I.Smyrna* 735.5–8), presumably with the help of the deity.

21. *CIL* 1^2 756 = *CIL* 9.3513 = *FIRA* 3.72.

22. *Sei qui heic sacrum surupuerit, aedilis multatio esto | quanti volet* ("If anyone steals something sacred from this place, let him be fined at the discretion of the aedile," *CIL* 1^2 756 ll. 14–15). Similarly, the *Lex Tarentina* from the early first century BCE, states that those who remove public or sacred funds without authorization or misuse them should be fined (*RS* no. 15 col. I, ll. 1–6). For fines as a punishment for temple robbery, see also *Dig.* 48.13.5.

23. For the social consequences of fines and other punishments that could be imposed along with them, see Piacentin 2022, 94–112.

24. For a summary of the law, see Robinson 1995, 83–84. As Marcian states at *Digest*

that offenders should be thrown to the beasts or burned alive.[25] For him, *sacrilegium* most closely compares to treason (*maiestas*).[26] It is an offense that threatens the very foundations of society and should be punished accordingly.

These very different approaches to *sacrilegium* mirror Roman legal thinking on the alienation of property more broadly. In the case of thieves, too, the legal system can impose a fine and demand restitution, sentence the criminal to be flogged, or call for an execution.[27] Context matters; who commits the crime, why, and at what time of day make all the difference. As I discuss in more detail later, those who arm themselves before attacking another's property or who commit their offense at night face particularly harsh consequences. At least one jurist suggests that there should also be gradations of punishment for those who steal from the gods.[28]

For Roman literary authors, however, the question of how the courts treat temple robbery rarely presents itself. In these accounts, *sacrilegi* do not usually pay fines.[29] They also do not face execution by human authorities. Instead, they suffer horrific fates at the hands of the gods and their proxies or, puzzlingly, seemingly experience no consequences whatsoever. In literary texts, temple robbery is a confrontation between a human criminal and a divine power. While human authorities sometimes become involved, their actions are ancillary to the divine response. If they choose to do so, the gods impose severe penalties that result in the painful death of the miscreant, similar to what Ulpian has in mind for *sacrilegi* and what we observed in the inscriptions about divine punishments.

48.13.5, a prosecution *de residuis* is warranted when someone has been entrusted with public funds to make an official purchase and keeps any unspent portion for himself. It is therefore a misappropriation of public money.

25. *Dig.* 48.13.7. From the Severan period onward, *damnatio ad bestias* appears to have been the customary punishment for *sacrilegi* (Garnsey 1970, 31). As discussed in the introduction, the jurists employ a broader definition of *sacrilegium* than just "temple robbery."

26. *Dig.* 48.4.1. Treason, according to Ulpian, should be defined as any crime committed "against the Roman people or against their safety" (*adversus populum Romanum vel adversus securitatem eius committitur*).

27. All of these options are mentioned in the highly fragmentary Table 8 of the Twelve Tables, which discusses *furtum* (theft) (*RS* no. 40 ll. 17–22).

28. This is suggested by an intriguing pronouncement from Paul, who states: "Those who have attacked private dedications and unguarded shrines deserve greater punishment than thieves, but a lesser punishment than temple robbers" (*qui privata sacra vel aediculas incustoditas temptaverunt, amplius quam fures, minus quam sacrilegi merentur, Dig.* 48.13.11.1).

29. For an exception, see the discussion of C. Lucretius in the introduction.

The story of Q. Pleminius, Scipio Africanus' legate in Locri Epizephyrii from 205 to 204 BCE, is a good example of the secondary role played by the human community when it comes to the punishment of *sacrilegi*. The accounts provided by Diodorus, Livy, and Valerius Maximus differ in details, but share the same narrative core.[30] During his time in Locri, the legate decides to plunder the local sanctuary of Proserpina. When the matter is brought to the attention of Roman authorities, he is arrested and brought to Rome for trial. There he dies in prison.

The cause of Pleminius' death provides the biggest variation across accounts; he dies of unspecified causes (Diodorus and, as one possibility mentioned in 29.22.7–10, Livy), or he is executed for a different crime (Livy again), or he dies of a mysterious illness (Valerius). Of these options, Diodorus' and Valerius' narratives closely reflect the ideas about divine punishment found in the "prayers for justice" and related texts. Diodorus emphasizes that it is not just the legate who suffers at the hands of "the divine power."[31] All those who helped him are also tortured by a guilty conscience, and even trying to discard the stolen goods does not stop the punishment.[32] Proserpina ensures that the *sacrilegi* are driven mad as a result of their actions. Valerius broadly concurs with Diodorus' interpretation. He concentrates on Pleminius, whom he considers to have received just retribution for his actions. While awaiting trial in prison, the legate is killed "by a most foul sort of disease."[33] Everyone around him knows how to interpret the event, and so the Senate pays a large sum in restitution to Proserpina's sanctuary. The legate's physical suffering has confirmed his guilt and proven that he is a temple robber.[34]

The connection between temple robbery and divine punishment becomes particularly complex when the temple robber himself is not harmed. When Cicero recounts L. Calpurnius Piso's time as governor of Macedonia from 57 to 55 BCE, he takes the opportunity to accuse his political opponent of plundering sanctuaries:

> A te Iovis Vrii fanum antiquissimum barbarorum sanctissimumque direptum est. tua scelera di immortales in nostros milites expiaver-

30. Diod. Sic. 27.4; Livy 29.8–9 and 16–22, 34.44; and Val. Max. 1.1.21. On the differences between the various narratives, see Köster 2014.

31. τὸ δαιμόνιον (Diod. Sic. 27.4.2).

32. Diod. Sic. 27.4.8.

33. *Taeterrimo genere morbi consumptus est* (Val. Max. 1.1.21).

34. Looking beyond temple robbery, ancient texts often treat a death by some horrible disease as proof of the victim's wickedness; see, for example, Africa 1982 and Scheid 1984.

> unt; qui cum novo genere morbi adfligerentur, neque se recreare quisquam posset, qui semel incidisset, dubitabat nemo quin violati hospites, legati necati, pacati atque socii nefario bello lacessiti, fana vexata hanc tantam efficerent vastitatem.[35]
>
> By you, the shrine of Jupiter Urios, most ancient and sacred to foreigners, was plundered. The immortal gods have avenged your crimes on our troops. When they were afflicted by a new kind of illness and when no one was able to recover once affected, no one doubted that the injured hosts, murdered legates, friends and allies hurt by wicked war, and ravaged shrines caused this great devastation.

Piso's soldiers suffer for his decision to misuse his provincial command. They are punished for aiding in his crimes, since the provincial governor could not have carried out any of his nefarious designs without the support of the military. As in Pleminius' case, their mysterious illness serves as evidence of their guilt. That Piso himself is spared is consistent with other narratives of temple robbery that I discuss later in this chapter; as in the "prayers for justice," divine punishment is never guaranteed. For whatever reason, the gods can choose not to take action.

In my examples so far, the gods inflict horrific physical ailments from a distance. They can also make use of proxies to stop or punish temple robbers. A particularly striking set of stories concerns animals who confront robbers. Animals are a visible and expected element in many sanctuaries. Guard dogs are particularly common.[36] Temple robbers usually do not consider them a deterrent and simply ignore them. This decision can lead to their downfall. Even if the human guards do not notice the theft, the animals pursue the criminal with relentless determination.[37] Kapparos, a guard dog at the sanctuary of Asclepius in Athens, is a particularly famous

35. Cic. *Pis.* 85. I give the text of Clark's *OCT*. Because the text is corrupt, editors differ on exactly which sanctuary Piso is accused of plundering. The two major candidates are the shrine of Jupiter Urios in Macedonia and that of Jupiter Zbelsurdos in Thrace, as adopted by Nisbet 1961. The exact location of the plundered sanctuary does not affect my argument.

36. Both narratives that I discuss center on canines. Across Greek and Roman literature, canines and equines are the animals most likely to appear as distinct characters with a particularly deep connection to humans (see Fögen 2017). Aelian states that there were at least a thousand dogs at the sanctuary of Adranus on Sicily, a number so high that we should treat it with skepticism (Ael. *NA* 11.20). For guard dogs in the ancient world more generally, see MacKinnon 2014, 269–74.

37. For human temple guards, see chapter 2.

example of a crime-fighting animal.[38] When a thief steals some precious offerings from the temple, only he notices the crime. He proceeds to follow the man around the city. The thief quickly realizes that the dog is attracting unwanted attention. He alternates between trying to bribe Kapparos with food and pelting him with stones, but nothing can persuade the dog to go away and leave the criminal alone. Eventually, Kapparos' strange behavior prompts people to investigate why he is following the man so intently. They promptly discover the crime, punish the man, and honor the dog as a hero for the rest of his life.

The story of Kapparos shares some elements with a narrative set at Delphi. As part of his tour of the site, Pausanias explains why there is a statue of a wolf at the sanctuary:

> λέγουσι δὲ τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ χρημάτων συλήσαντα ἄνθρωπον, τὸν μὲν ὁμοῦ τῷ χρυσίῳ κατακρύψαντα ἔχειν αὐτὸν ἔνθα τοῦ Παρνασσοῦ μάλιστα ἦν συνεχὲς ὑπὸ ἀγρίων δένδρων, λύκον δὲ ἐπιθέσθαι οἱ καθεύδοντι, καὶ ἀποθανεῖν τε ὑπὸ τοῦ λύκου τὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ ὡς ἐς τὴν πόλιν ὁσημέραι φοιτῶν ὠρύετο ὁ λύκος· ἐπεὶ δὲ οὐκ ἄνευ θεοῦ παραγίνεσθαί σφισιν ὑπελάμβανον, οὕτως ἐπακολουθοῦσι τῷ θηρίῳ, καὶ ἀνευρίσκουσί τε τὸ ἱερὸν χρυσίον καὶ ἀνέθεσαν λύκον τῷ θεῷ χαλκοῦν.[39]
>
> They say that a man had carried off some of the property of the god and had hidden himself with the gold on Parnassus where the forest was densest. A wolf attacked him while he was sleeping, and the man was killed by the wolf. The wolf went into the city every day and howled. Then, not without the help of the god, [the people] understood what had transpired. So they followed the animal, found the sacred gold, and set up a bronze statue of a wolf for the god.

Although this robber has taken extensive precautions, the wolf nevertheless manages to surprise him. Unlike Kapparos, who leaves the punishment of the thief to the human community, the wolf takes drastic action. This is not enough; the animal also wants to make sure that the humans are aware of what has happened. They, however, seem to be unable to interpret the wolf's behavior correctly, and only Apollo's intervention leads them to

38. His story is told by Plutarch (*De soll. an.* 969E–970B) and Aelian (*NA* 7.13).
39. Paus. 10.14.7.

realize that a temple robbery has occurred. In the end, they honor the wolf with a statue.[40] The uncanny intervention of a wild animal has brought the criminal to justice.

These are just some of the stories that attest to the power of divine retribution against those who run afoul of the gods. Since narratives such as these are well known throughout the Mediterranean, the mere threat of a confrontation with a god can be an effective deterrent. An episode from Cicero's *De Divinatione* illustrates this. It is set at the temple of Juno Lacinia at Croton:

> Hannibalem Coelius scribit, cum columnam auream, quae esset in fano Iunonis Laciniae, auferre vellet dubitaretque, utrum ea solida esset an extrinsecus inaurata, perterebravisse; cumque solidam invenisset, statuisse tollere; ei secundum quietem visam esse Iunonem praedicere, ne id faceret, minarique, si fecisset, se curaturam, ut eum quoque oculum, quo bene videret, amitteret. idque ab homine acuto non esse neglectum; itaque ex eo auro, quod exterebratum esset, buculam curasse faciendam et eam in summa columna collocavisse.[41]
>
> Coelius writes that when Hannibal wanted to take away a golden column that was in the shrine of Juno Lacinia, he wondered whether it was solid gold or plated with gold. He had a hole bored into it, and when he found that it was solid gold, he determined that he should take it. When he was sleeping, Juno appeared to him, told him not to do it, and threatened that if he did it, she would take care that he would also lose his good eye, with which he could see well. And, as an intelligent man, he had to take this seriously. So he took care that a calf was made from the gold that he had bored out and had the statue placed at the top of the column.

At the beginning of the passage, Hannibal behaves like a criminal. His systematic efforts to determine whether the column is worth stealing leave no doubt as to his intent. Then things take an unexpected turn. Juno threatens the Carthaginian general with blindness, one of the physical ailments one

40. Wolves have a deep connection to Apollo (see Paus. 10.6.2 with Graf 2008, 97–100 and 125–26).

41. Cic. *Div.* 1.48 = *FRH* L. Coelius Antipater F 32.

might expect as a punishment for temple robbery. Hannibal decides to heed the warning and apologizes to the goddess by having a statue made out of the gold that he took.[42] His actions are reminiscent of someone who has been found guilty of a theft in Rome; here, too, the expectation was that the stolen goods would be returned along with compensation.[43] Hannibal publicly admits his guilt, and the story of how the sanctuary acquired a splendid new statue serves as a warning to others who might want to take Juno's treasures for themselves. This is a sacred space protected by a powerful goddess.

Accidental Violations of Sacred Property

In all of these examples, the temple robbers are fully aware of the offense they are committing (or are about to commit). They even take the time to identify attractive targets and plan their attacks. Intent matters a great deal to the Romans. While Roman law has a broad notion of who counts as an accomplice in a crime, a proven lack of intent could lead to a milder treatment in court.[44] A similar logic informs views of ritual violations; if they are committed accidentally, they are seen as less serious and are easier to expiate.[45] For the gods, too, both act and intent matter. It would seem, then, that someone who enters a sacred space without the intent to cause harm should have little to worry about.

In the case of temple robbery, however, the relationship between intent and divine punishment is more complex. This becomes particularly apparent when we consider the so-called confession inscriptions, a set of texts unique to western Asia Minor, primarily Phrygia and Lydia. There are roughly 130 extant inscriptions, all written in Greek and mostly dated to the second and third centuries CE. The texts are inscribed on stelae, which

42. A calf is a particularly appropriate animal because the sanctuary owned a large herd of cattle (see Schultz 2014 *ad loc.*).

43. See, e.g., Harries 2007, 44–45.

44. Thus at *Dig.* 48.8.7, Paul states that the *Lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficis* does not apply to those who kill others due to gross negligence (*culpa lata*) rather than intent (*dolus*). Someone who is merely negligent is therefore not guilty of murder. On the *Lex Cornelia* and notions of intent, see Robinson 1995, 44–46 and Riggsby 1999, 55. On the distinction between *culpa* and *dolus* more broadly, see Harries 2007, 47–49 and Robinson 2007, 174–78.

45. Scheid 1999.

were erected in sanctuaries. The commissioners of these objects did not set out to harm the god, but nevertheless ran afoul of sanctuary regulations or other guidance for proper relationships between humans and the divine. On the stone, the miscreant identifies him- or herself and states how the god has been wronged and what kind of punishment has been received as a result.[46] The author often ends by asserting the power of the gods or by exhorting the reader not to make the same mistake.

Confession inscriptions provide a nonliterary perspective on how the gods are imagined to protect their property, something that is not consistently apparent from inscriptions found elsewhere in the Roman empire. Although these inscriptions form a unique genre and have some theological peculiarities, they are in dialog with widespread ideas about crime and divine punishment.[47] The items stolen are of comparatively little value and often constitute insignificant losses for the sanctuary. Confession inscriptions therefore also provide an insight into the day-to-day problems that a sacred space might face. Most significantly for the study of temple robbery, the authors of these inscriptions claim that they were not aware they were dealing with sacred property.

On one stele, a man apologizes for his theft of sacred pigeons:

Διεὶ Σαβαζίῳ καὶ Μη-
τρεὶ Εἰπτα. Διοκλῆς
Τροφίμου· ἐπεὶ ἐπεί-
ασα περιστερὰς τῶν
θεῶν, ἐκολάσθην ἰς
τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ
ἐνέγραψα τὴν ἀρετήν.[48]

For Zeus Sabazios and Mother Hipta. Diokles, the son of Trophimos. Since I caught the pigeons sacred to the gods, I was punished in regard to my eyes and inscribed this evidence for divine power [on this stele].

46. Roughly one third of the extant inscriptions are by women, but they do not deal with thefts from sacred spaces.

47. A notable oddity in the confession inscriptions is the emphasis on divine mercy (on which see Petzl 1998), which does not find echoes elsewhere in the pre-Christian Greco-Roman world.

48. Petzl 1994 no. 50 (= *TAM* 5 1.264), dating to the second or third century CE.

Fig. 1. Diokles' confession stele (Reproduced from *Annual of the British School at Athens* 21 [1914–16] plate 15.)

The stone (fig. 1) features a relief carving above the inscription that shows two pigeons and a pair of eyes as a visual summary of the crime and the punishment. The end of the text makes it clear that Diokles' blinding was an assertion of divine authority. The inscription attests to the fact that Zeus Sabazios and Hipta, Dionysus' nursemaid, are powerful deities. It illustrates that even an accidental temple robbery is an insult to the gods. The punishment prompts people to pay more attention to their surroundings and shows that the gods can assert their property claims.

Diokles does not reveal why he committed the theft. Another inscription, concerning the felling of a sacred oak, provides more details:

Μέγας Ζεὺς ἐγ Διδύμων Δρυ-
ῶν. Στρατόνεικος Εὐανγέ-
λου διὰ τὸ ἀγνοεῖν αὐτὸν Δι-
ὸς Διδυμείτου ἔκκοψε δρῦ-
ν, κὲ ἀναζητήσας ὁ θεὸς τὴν
ἰδίαν δύναμιν διὰ τὸ ἀπιστῖν
αὐτὸν κατέθηκεν ΟΛΟΔΟΥΜΕ
ἰσοθανάτους, καὶ σωθεὶς ἐγ
μεγάλου κινδύνου εὐχαρισ-
τῶν ἀνέθηκεν. Παρανγέλ-
λω δέ, αὐτοῦ τὰς δυνάμις μή
τίς ποτε κατευτελήσι καὶ
κόψει δρῦν.[49]

Zeus of the Double Oaks is great. Stratonikos, son of Evangelos, through ignorance on his part, cut down an oak belonging to Zeus of the Double Oaks, and the god, remembering his power, on account of Stratonikos' refusal to believe what he had done, put him into a deathlike state (?), and when he had been saved from great danger, he set up [this stele] in thanksgiving. And I exhort others to never slight his power and cut down an oak.

Stratonikos asserts his lack of intent, but he was nevertheless punished harshly. The suspension of all bodily functions is a form of divine retribution familiar from the "prayers for justice" discussed above. It is noteworthy that Stratonikos is not punished just for felling a tree; he also failed to show sufficient respect to the god. His inscription is therefore not only a warning about sacred trees, but also a lesson in what happens when people forget that the gods are powerful.[50]

49. Petzl 1994 no. 10 (= *SEG* 28.914) from Mons Toma. The inscription dates to 194/5 CE and is now in the Bergama Museum. My translation is based on Petzl's German version, including his proposed solution for ΟΛΟΔΟΥΜΕ, a sequence of letters that lacks a satisfactory explanation.

50. On the educational function of confession inscriptions more generally, see Petzl 1998, esp. 23; Chaniotis 2004; Belayche 2006, 73–80.

Other confession inscriptions illustrate that one does not have to harm sacred property directly to face angry gods. This is the case in an inscription addressed to the local deity Mēn put up by two brothers from Pergamon:

Μηνὶ Ἀξιοττηνῷ· Ἀρ-
τέμων καὶ Ἀτείμη-
τος, ἐπεὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐ-
τοῖς δορὰς ἦρεν βίᾳ
ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ, κολασ-
θέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ θε-
οῦ ἀπὸ νῦν εὐλογοῦ-
σιν.[51]

To Mēn Axiottenos! Artemon and Atimetos, after their father had taken for them by force animal skins out of the temple, were punished by the god, and from now on they praise (him).

In this case, the thief operated with intent and used force to obtain divine property. We are not told whether he was punished. Rather, the short text records a warning that even the receipt of stolen sacred property has consequences.[52]

In the confession inscriptions, ignorance and a lack of intent to harm sacred property are not mitigating factors. The divine punishment of temple robbery therefore seems to follow its own rules. Stratonikos' inscription offers a possible explanation; those who interfere with sacred possessions fail to recognize the power of the gods. They do not understand that their surroundings are potentially sacred and that interfering with plants and animals could offend the gods. In other words, those who commit temple robberies fundamentally misunderstand how the world works. Human desires do not determine what is sacred property and what is not. Only the gods can decide what is theirs. A failure or refusal to recognize this principle is therefore an insult to the divine.

51. Text and translation (modified) from Malay 1988, 149. The inscription is Bergama Museum inv. no. 4326 and dates to 177/8 CE.

52. Similarly, Petzl 1994 no. 9 (= *SEG* 28.913) records a punishment following an unauthorized purchase of sacred wood.

Challenging the Gods

Unlike the individuals in the confession inscriptions, temple robbers in literary narratives steal with intent. Their motives differ; a temple robber may need money quickly, want new décor to impress his friends and associates, or have simply taken a liking to a particular artifact. In especially problematic cases, however, the idea that any attack on divine property is an insult to the gods drives the *sacrilegus*. He sees himself as superior and proceeds on the explicit assumption that the gods cannot or will not enforce their property claims. He is therefore free to enrich himself with sacred possessions.

The censor Q. Fulvius Flaccus is emblematic of someone who steals from the gods to impress his community and increase his social standing with the full confidence that nothing bad will happen to him as a result. In 174 BCE, he and his colleague A. Postumius Albinus embark on an ambitious urban renewal program.[53] It is largely a utilitarian effort to improve the lives of citizens, but Flaccus also looks toward shaping his legacy. He therefore decides to build a temple to Fortuna Equestris in Rome. To make it stand out in the cityscape and ensure that it will be talked about for a long time, he plunders a different temple. As Livy tells it:

> Magnum ornatum ei templo ratus adiecturum, si tegulae marmoreae essent, profectus in Bruttios aedem Iunonis Laciniae ad partem dimidiam detegit, id satis fore ratus ad tegendum quod aedificaretur. naves paratae fuerunt quae tollerent atque asportarent, auctoritate censoria sociis deterritis id sacrilegium prohibere. postquam censor redit, tegulae expositae de navibus ad templum portabantur. quamquam, unde essent silebatur, non tamen celari potuit. fremitus igitur in curia ortus est; ex omnibus partibus postulabatur ut consules eam rem ad senatum referrent. ut vero accersitus in curiam censor venit, multo infestius singuli universique praesentem lacerare: templum augustissimum regionis eius, quod non Pyrrhus, non Hannibal violassent, violare parum habuisse, nisi detexisset foede ac prope diruisset. detractum culmen templo, nudatum tectum patere imbribus putrefaciendum.[54]

53. According to the catalog provided by Livy, these projects included the paving of streets, renovating buildings, constructing new temples, the building of city walls, and so on (Livy 41.5–13).

54. Livy 42.3.1–7.

> He thought that he would add splendid décor to his temple if the roof tiles were made of marble. He set out to the temple of Juno Lacinia in Bruttium and removed half the roof. He thought this would be enough to cover the temple that he was building. Ships had been made ready for the removal and transport; our local allies were deterred from stopping the temple robbery because of the authority of the censor. When the censor returned [to Rome], the tiles were unloaded and carried to the temple. Although he stayed quiet regarding where they were from, he nevertheless could not keep it a secret. An uproar, therefore, arose in the *curia*; people everywhere asked that the consuls refer the matter to the Senate. Indeed, when the censor was summoned and came to the *curia*, he was bitterly reproached by both individuals and the crowd; [they said] that he was not satisfied with plundering the most revered temple of that region, which neither Pyrrhus nor Hannibal violated—he vilely stripped it and almost destroyed it. Deprived of its roof, the temple was exposed to the elements and was rotting in the rain.

Flaccus knows where the roof tiles come from. In fact, he goes out of his way to obtain them. Once he has found suitable architectural elements for his temple, he plans an elaborate logistical operation to retrieve them from southern Italy. He abuses his political office to intimidate the locals into allowing him to carry out his crime.[55] To make matters worse, he is willing to risk the destruction of Juno's entire temple to take the material he desires. Nothing about his conduct can be described as pious. Temples only matter to him if he is the one building them in Rome. Flaccus is brazen about his intentions while in southern Italy, but he realizes that his actions would not find favor back in Rome and hence tries to keep quiet about the source of the magnificent roof tiles. In circumstances that Livy leaves unspecified, his theft is eventually discovered. The outrage at the crime focuses on three aspects; Flaccus has plundered a temple so sacred that even Rome's enemies would not touch it; his crime involved ripping away parts of the temple rather than merely carrying off sacred objects; and as a result, the sanctuary is now being damaged by the elements. Flaccus is therefore not just a temple robber, but a destroyer of an important sacred space.

55. Furthermore, as Davies (2004, 135–36) argues, because Flaccus is aiming to construct the largest and most magnificent temple in Rome, he exceeds the authority of his office. Innovations in how the gods are to be worshiped should be left to priests. Accordingly, Flaccus is not just overzealous in his plans for his temple, but also fails to understand what a censor is supposed to do.

The Senate is quickly convinced of Flaccus' guilt and decrees that the tiles should be returned to their original temple along with expiatory sacrifices.[56] This decision effectively ends the censor's career and leaves him to live out his life in disgrace. The affair does not end there, however. Flaccus' two sons die in Illyricum, one in battle, the other of a disease. As a result, the former censor commits suicide:

> Obruit animum simul luctus metusque: mane ingressi cubiculum servi laqueo dependentem invenere. erat opinio post censuram minus compotem fuisse sui; vulgo Iunonis Laciniae iram ob spoliatum templum alienasse mentem ferebant.[57]
>
> Grief and fear overwhelmed his mind simultaneously. In the morning, the slaves who had entered his bedroom found him hanging from a noose. There was the belief that he had not been himself after his censorship. The common rumor was that Juno Lacinia's anger over the plundering of her temple had taken away his sanity.

Public opinion directly links Flaccus' temple robbery with his fate. His actions have destroyed his family, ruined his reputation, and led him to a disgraceful death. Unlike the authors of the confession inscriptions, Flaccus never expresses remorse for his actions. His fate still educates others, but only once authors turn it into an *exemplum* about the excessive ambitions of a politician.[58] It also shows that even though divine vengeance may be slow, it will come for a temple robber.

Flaccus gives no thought to the fact that he has chosen to challenge a goddess. For other temple robbers, the confrontation with the divine is a motivating force. Successfully taking divine property shows that the human is more powerful than the gods. The act can even suggest that someone is a god, as in the case of Caligula. Suetonius and other authors famously state that the emperor struggled with the fact that he was a mere mortal. He wanted to be worshiped as a god, with temples, statues, and sacrifices.[59]

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56. Livy 42.3.10.

57. Livy 42.28.12.

58. In addition to Livy, Val. Max. 1.1.20 also discusses how Flaccus was punished.

59. Suet. *Calig.* 22.2–4; Dio Cass. 59.4.4 and 59.26.5–28.7. The exact nature of Caligula's cult and the sincerity of his belief in his own divinity are the subject of extensive scholarly debate; see, e.g., Simpson 1981; Barrett 2003, 140–53; Gradel 2002, 140–59; Winterling 2003, 139–52.

Even more troublingly, he wanted it to be recognized that he was more powerful than the gods. Throughout Suetonius' biography, Caligula shows his superiority over others by touching something that belongs to them. During a visit to Alexander the Great's tomb, the emperor removes the king's armor to present himself as the new conqueror of the world.[60] Closer to home, he collects relics from famous Romans, such as Torquatus' torque and a lock of Cincinnatus' hair.[61] When it comes to the gods, Caligula wants their statues:

> Datoque negotio, ut simulacra numinum religione et arte praeclara, inter quae Olympii Iovis, apportarentur e Graecia, quibus capite dempto suum imponeret, partem Palatii ad forum usque promovit atque aede Castoris et Pollucis in vestibulum transfigurata consistens saepe inter fratres deos, medium adorandum se adeuntibus exhibebat, et quidam eum Latiarem Iovem consalutarunt.[62]
>
> And when the order had been given that statues of the gods distinguished for their sanctity and artistic quality should be brought from Greece, among them the Jupiter of Olympia, on which he would place his own head after decapitating theirs, he extended part of the Palatine up to the forum and turned the temple of Castor and Pollux into his vestibule, often placing himself among his divine brothers, and he presented himself between them for adoration by visitors, and some of them greeted him as Jupiter Latiaris.

Caligula not only wants to possess sacred objects; he wants to refashion them into images of himself. This allows him to step into the role of the deity; by replacing Jupiter's head with his, he in effect, becomes a new Jupiter.

His quest is unsuccessful. As workmen set about removing the large statue from the sanctuary at Olympia, it starts laughing. The men flee in horror, and Suetonius interprets the event as a portent of the emperor's impending assassination.[63] In the end, divine authority has reasserted itself.

60. Suet. *Calig.* 52.

61. Suet. *Calig.* 35.1.

62. Suet. *Calig.* 22.2.

63. Suet. *Calig.* 57.1. Josephus (*AJ* 19.8–10) gives a somewhat different version of why the theft did not happen; the person whom Caligula had put in charge of the removal is told that the statue cannot be removed without destroying it, so he pauses his efforts while he writes to the emperor for guidance. The assassination then makes further action unnecessary.

Although they have different attitudes toward the gods—one seems to be unconcerned with them and the other wants to be one—Flaccus and Caligula are ultimately motivated by similar concerns. They see temple robbery as a means by which they can increase their status in the eyes of society. The censor wants to build a magnificent new temple as a legacy for himself, and Caligula wants to replace the conventional gods. Both fail to understand the appropriate hierarchy between gods and humans.

Caligula's actions are recognizable as *theomachia*, fighting the gods. A *theomachos* deliberately seeks a confrontation because he wants to show his superiority over the divine. Rather than trying to take on all the gods at once, *theomachoi* often pick a particular god who has caused them some offense as their target.[64] They therefore treat a god as equivalent to a human rival whom they can attack or outwit. In all cases, challenging the gods leads to a violent death.[65] This can happen immediately, as in the case of the paradigmatic *theomachos* Pentheus, or after a delay, as discussed below.[66] The king of Thebes considers Dionysus an unacceptable threat to his authority and challenges the god by banning his worship and having him arrested. Pentheus as presented in Euripides' *Bacchae*, not only thinks that he can dictate terms to Dionysus, but also considers himself intellectually superior to the god. His dismemberment by the Maenads at the end of the story reaffirms divine superiority and shows the foolishness of the king's actions.

The gods can also take their time in punishing *theomachoi*, as illustrated in Herodotus' account of the death of the Persian king Cambyses. Following his conquest of Egypt, the king seeks to challenge and destroy local religious practices at every turn. He even sets out on a military expedition to Ethiopia to burn an oracular shrine, but is forced to abandon his plans when his army miraculously cannot find anything to eat.[67] At Memphis, he kills a sacred bull said to represent the god Apis. For this, he is driven mad by the god. Eventually, the king dies of an injury that he suffers at the very spot on which he killed the bull.[68] Once more the god emerges as the winner of the conflict.

64. For the case that *theomachia* should more broadly be considered a form of atheism and hence a challenge to all the gods, see Whitmarsh 2015, esp. 40–51 and 173–85.

65. The role of the *theomachos* in ultimately affirming established patterns of authority is a major theme in Chaudhuri 2014 (see esp. 322–28).

66. Pentheus is the central case study in Kamerbeek 1948, the foundational study of narrative tropes associated with *theomachia*.

67. Hdt. 3.25.

68. Hdt. 3.64–66. For tropes of divine punishment in the Cambyses episode, see McPhee 2018.

Narratives of *sacrilegium* frequently disrupt the idea that all theomachic challenges to divine authority are bound to fail. Punishment can be delayed so significantly that it is difficult to connect it with the crime, or it may not happen at all. For authors interested in the relationship between gods and mortals, divine failures to intervene against temple robbers provide rich food for thought. Two possible explanations emerge; either the gods simply do not care about what happens on earth and hence have no concern for their physical possessions, or they are not all-powerful after all.[69] For some authors, the lax security of sanctuaries becomes a matter of ridicule. In Lucian's dialog *Jupiter Confutatus*, the interlocutor Cyniscus berates the gods for doing nothing against temple robbers and pirates and allowing them to take divine treasures at will.[70] In Rome, Juvenal describes how the temple of Mars Ultor had once been a popular place for people to deposit sums of money for safekeeping, hoping that the god would guard their treasures for them.[71] Now, however, they rush to move things to the nearby temple of Castor because Mars has failed so badly that he even had the helmet stolen from his statue.[72]

The failure of gods to protect their possessions and punish those who attack them can become a serious philosophical problem when the temple robber is left to boast about his exploits. For him, the successful attack becomes proof that he is not fully human, but has powers equal to the gods. In other words, when there is no punishment of the *theomachos* and subsequent reaffirmation of proper hierarchies, we are left with humans who can seemingly challenge the gods with impunity. One such individual was Dionysius I, who took control of Syracuse in the late fourth century BCE. His reign was marked by conflicts with the Carthaginians who ruled the west of Sicily at the time. In addition to trying to extend his political influence through warfare, the tyrant was also a prolific temple robber who plundered Locri Epizephyrii, Olympia, and Epidaurus.[73] Cicero tells of a particularly brazen crime at Olympia:

69. For the debates and relevant sources, see, e.g., Größlein 1998, 78–81; Gildenhard 2011, 315–23; Kuin 2023, 183–88.

70. Lucian *JConf.* 8; see also Lucian *Tim.* 4 where Zeus is berated for being too lazy to protect his sanctuary at Olympia.

71. It was common to use temples for this purpose; see, e.g., Cic. *Fam.* 20.5.5 (= SB 128); Nep. *Han.* 9.3.

72. Juv. 14.258–61.

73. Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.83–84 (cf. Val. Max. 1.1.ext.3; Ael. *VH* 1.20). The historical accuracy of this account of Dionysius' activities is doubtful since there is no independent evidence that he ever traveled to mainland Greece (see Pease 1955–58 *ad Nat. D.* 3.83 and Wardle 1998 *ad* Val. Max. 1.1.ext.3).

> Aureum ei detraxit amiculum grandi pondere . . . atque in eo etiam cavillatus est aestate grave esse aureum amiculum, hieme frigidum, eique laneum pallium iniecit, cum id esse ad omne anni tempus diceret.[74]
>
> He took from him [Jupiter] a heavy golden cloak and in the course of doing so even joked that a gold cloak was heavy in the summer and cold in winter. He put a short woolen cloak on [the statue] because he said that it was suitable for any season.

While the cloak would have been valuable due to its material, the passage does not suggest greed as the primary motive.[75] The tyrant steals to make fun of the god. He is confident that he will suffer no consequences for stealing clothes from the statue. Later in the same paragraph, we are told that at Epidaurus, matters escalate further. This time Dionysius cuts off the golden beard from the statue of Asclepius because he considers it inappropriate for the son of the beardless Apollo. The tyrant, then, thinks of himself as free to take whatever divine possessions he fancies. More troublingly, he even sees himself in a position to dictate what the gods wear and what they look like.

Cicero puts these stories in the mouth of C. Aurelius Cotta, who spends much of the third book of *De Natura Deorum* arguing against the idea that gods look out for humans and care how they act. Since Dionysius never suffers any consequences for his crimes, he becomes proof that the gods are not even interested in punishing those who challenge them. The predictable patterns of narratives of *theomachia* found in epic and tragedy have no place in the philosopher's world view. He even directly engages with the tropes of divine punishment for temple robbers to show how Dionysius' fate failed to meet expectations; "Olympian Jupiter did not strike him with a thunderbolt nor did Aesculapius kill after he wasted from a miserable and long illness. And after dying in his bed, he was laid on the tyrant's pyre with the gods having no objections."[76] The tyrant is seemingly even rewarded for his crimes.[77]

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74. Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.83.

75. Other sources suggest that Dionysius was chronically short on funds; see Caven 1990, 121–22.

76. *Hunc igitur nec Olympius Iuppiter fulmine percussit nec Aesculapius misero diuturnoque morbo tabescentem interemit, atque in suo lectulo mortuus tyranni dis non invitis in rogum inlatus est* (Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.84).

77. This version was apparently too theologically bleak for Valerius, who takes many

A successful temple robbery and thwarted expectations of divine retribution are also found in a narrative that Pliny the Elder includes in his discussion of statues made from gold:

> Aurea statua prima omnium nulla inanitate et antequam ex aere aliqua modo fieret, quam vocant holosphyraton, in templo Anaitidis posita dicitur . . . direpta ea est Antonii Parthicis rebus, scitumque narratur veteranorum unius Bononiae hospitali divi Augusti cena, cum interrogatus esset, sciretne eum, qui primus violasset id numen, oculis membrisque captum exspirasse; respondit enim cum maxime Augustum e crure eius cenare seque illum esse totumque sibi censum ex ea rapina.[78]

> The first statue to be made out of solid gold—and even before any were made from bronze in this way—which they call *holosphyraton* [made of solid beaten metal]—was said to have been erected in the temple of Anaitis . . . It was plundered in the Parthian campaign of Mark Antony, and a quip of one of the veterans is told that during a dinner at Bononia when the divine Augustus was a guest, he was asked whether he knew that the person who first profaned this godhead died after being blinded and paralyzed. He answered that Augustus was just now eating from the statue's leg, that he had been the one to profane it, and that he reckoned that his entire fortune came from that plunder.

The unnamed veteran freely admits to a temple robbery and also acknowledges that he has done more than just misappropriate divine property; he has turned a sacred statue into a dinner plate. The verb that Pliny uses for describing the profanation, *violare*, gets the point across well; at its core, the word means "to treat without respect."[79] Depending on the context, it can then take on sexual connotations as well, which likely apply in this passage. After all, the temple robber has stripped and dismembered a goddess, albeit

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facts from Cicero, but adds that the gods took vengeance on the tyrant's son, who was disgraced and driven into exile following the massacre of his family. In the long term, Dionysius' family was therefore wiped out, which makes the story an illustration of the slowness of divine vengeance, not its absence (Val. Max. 1.1.ext.3; for the differences between Cicero's and Valerius' accounts, see Mueller 2002, 96–97).

78. Plin. *HN* 33.82–83.

79. *OLD* s.v. *violo* (1) and (2).

a foreign one. His treatment of the statue, his pride in his actions, and his dismissal of the story of divine punishment all show that he is convinced that he will suffer no consequences. He does not even have concerns about implicating others in his actions. After all, since he has eaten from part of the statue, Augustus is now also a beneficiary of the temple robbery.

Neither Dionysius nor the unnamed veteran feels any relief at the fact that the gods have chosen not to punish them. They are proud of their actions and openly admit to them. Any concerns about a divine reaction merit dismissal or ridicule. Given these cavalier attitudes, it is no wonder that stories about temple robbers getting away with their crimes make some ancient authors wonder about the limits of divine power or care. These *sacrilegi*, after all, do not just steal from the gods, but seek to humiliate them. Their crimes are proof that they have defied the expectations set by a rich narrative tradition of divine punishment and that they can face off against the gods and win.

Avoiding Temple Robbery

Although temple robbers do not invariably face divine retribution, it is undesirable to be seen as a *sacrilegus*. Stealing from the gods shows that one has failed to understand the proper place of mortals in the world and that one is willing to risk both one's safety and that of the wider community in pursuit of riches. Even if the gods do not intervene, humans would do well to consider the temple robber an outcast and condemn his actions. Nevertheless, it is sometimes necessary to remove sacred possessions from a sanctuary. Doing so without risking divine wrath or human outrage requires thinking more like Ovid's shepherd than Pliny's veteran. An episode from Livy presents an example. In 168 BCE, Aemilius Paullus was victorious against the Macedonian king Perseus at the Battle of Pydna. This engagement marked the effective end of the Third Macedonian War. With no military options left, the king and his family fled to the island of Samothrace to seek refuge in the Sanctuary of the Great Gods. For the Romans, this presented a problem; Perseus had, in effect, turned himself into a sacred possession.[80] Removing him against the will of the gods would

80. "By coming into physical contact with a sacred place the suppliant is somewhat incorporated in the sanctity of the place, becoming in a sense property of the god" (Chaniotis 1996, 66–67). For the process by which human suppliants placed themselves under the protection of the gods and became inviolable, Naiden 2006 is foundational.

be a crime. Livy's account of how the Romans nevertheless captured the king shows how the removal of divine property can be cast as a pious act.

Roman interest in Perseus' relationship with sanctuaries begins well before Aemilius Paullus sends men to Samothrace to arrest him. A few years earlier, the Romans had asked Delphi to oppose Perseus. A heavily restored letter to the Amphictyones, members of the religious association overseeing the affairs of the sanctuary, lists a wide range of transgressions:

> οὐ δίκαιον δὲ σ[αφῶς ἐκεῖνον ἦν κοινωνεῖν ὑμῖν]
> [οὔ]τε [θ]υσιῶν οὔτε ἀγώνων ο[ὔτε πανηγυρίδων οὐδαμῶς, ἐπεὶ]
> ἐπεσπάσατο τοὺς πέραν το[ῦ Ἴστρου βαρβάρους, οἳ ἐπ' ἀγαθῶι μὲν]
> οὐθενί, ἐπὶ καταδουλώσει δὲ [τῆς Ἑλλάδος τὸ πρὶν ἐφωρμήθησαν,
> καί],
> ἐπιστρατεύσαντες ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερ[ὸν τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς, διανοούμενοι
> συλῆ]-
> σαι καὶ ἀνελεῖν αὐτό, ἔτυχον π[αρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς ἀξίας τιμωρίας].[81]
>
> It is clearly not right for him to have dealings with you or sacrifice or in any way participate in the contests since he invited the foreigners from beyond the Danube who once assembled for nothing good, for the enslavement of Greece, and having marched against the sanctuary at Delphi intending to sack and plunder it, they met deserved retribution from the god.

To prove that Perseus intends to harm the sanctuary, the Romans resort to a history lesson. In 279 BCE, a Gaul named Brennus invaded Greece with his troops in the hope of plundering sanctuaries.[82] Delphi's riches made it a particularly attractive target for him. There, however, the gods intervened. Earthquakes and a thunderstorm signaled divine disapproval of the invaders and the ghosts of famous heroes appeared to frighten the army.[83] A blizzard and rockslides followed. Chaos and confusion spread, and, eventually, Brennus and his men were overcome. Instead of plundering Delphi,

81. *FD 3* 4.75 = *SIG*³ 643 = Sherk 1984 no. 19, ll. 8–13.

82. Pausanias, the main source for these events, states that Brennus' troops "had acquired a lust for plundering and profit" (καὶ ἁρπαγῆς καὶ κερδῶν ἐς ἔρωτα ἥκοντες, Paus. 10.19.6).

83. Paus. 10.23.1–4. Pausanias introduces the episode with the words "Portents hostile to the foreigners swiftly appeared from the gods and they were the clearest ones ever seen" (τοῖς βαρβάροις ἀντεσήμαινε τὰ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ταχύ τε καὶ ὧν ἴσμεν φανερώτατα, Paus. 10.23.1).

the general lost his army.[84] Now, according to the letter, the Romans are now convinced that Perseus is consorting with the descendants of Brennus' troops to try to harm the sanctuary anew. Since the Gaul's actions had marked him as an enemy of Greek civilization, Perseus should be viewed in the same light.[85]

References to the past and a concern for the safety of the sanctuary also guide the Roman approach to removing the king from Samothrace. When Roman soldiers show up on the island to take Perseus prisoner, the Samothracians are confronted with a dilemma familiar to many Greek communities.[86] On the one hand, they are responsible for the safety of the suppliant in the sanctuary. On the other hand, they have to weigh the consequences of not giving a powerful army what it wants.[87] Fortunately for the Samothracians, the protection of the gods is not irrevocable. For the Romans, this provides a rhetorical opening; they can either prove that the king is unworthy of refuge in the first place or they can point to signs that he is no longer under divine protection.

L. Atilius, one of Aemilius Paullus' men, presents the Roman argument. He shows that the Romans are aware of Samothrace's status and the past actions of Perseus and his supporters:

> "Utrum nos, hospites Samothraces, vere accepimus an falso sacram hanc insulam et augusti totam atque inviolati soli esse?" cum creditae sanctitati adsentirentur om<nes>, "cur igitur" inquit "polluit eam homicida, sanguine regis Eumenis violavit, et, cum omnis praefatio <sacro>rum eos, quibus non sint purae manus, sacris arceat, vos penetralia vestra contaminari cruento latronis corpore sinetis?"[88]

84. In Diodorus' fragmentary account, Brennus makes it into the temple at Delphi, but is disappointed to find only wooden and stone statues. These are not the treasures that he had imagined (Diod. Sic. 22.9.4). This story may be part of an alternative tradition, also alluded to, for example, at Livy 38.48.2, that the sack was successful. For the bifurcated narrative tradition and its sources, see Nachtergael 1977, 99–125.

85. In addition to the literary texts, a number of inscriptions shape the narrative that Brennus was an enemy of the gods and Greece whose efforts were thwarted by divine intervention. The relevant material is cataloged in Champion 1995.

86. This problem already existed in pre-Roman Greece; see Sinn 1993 on some of the strategies that Greek sanctuaries adopted to rid themselves of problematic suppliants.

87. As Livy puts it, the Samothracians "saw that they themselves, their whole island, and the temple were under the power of the Romans" (*in potestate Romanorum sese insulamque totam et templum cernebant esse*, Livy 45.5.6).

88. Livy 45.5.3–5.

> "Are we right or wrong, Samothracian friends, to consider this island sacred and consisting entirely of revered and inviolable ground?" When all acknowledged this degree of sanctity, he said, "A murderer has polluted this island, he has dishonored it with the blood of King Eumenes, and, when every proclamation of sacred rites prohibits those who do not have pure hands from the sacred site, you allowed your most sacred spaces to be contaminated by the bloodstained body of a criminal?"

Although it may seem that Atilius is talking about Perseus, the murderer in this passage is Evander, a commander of Cretan mercenaries who fought alongside Perseus at Pydna and escaped to Samothrace with him.[89] A few years earlier, he helped Perseus rid himself of Eumenes II, his long-standing rival in the East and a friend to the Romans.[90] Evander planned to have Eumenes assassinated during a visit to Delphi. Contrary to the summary of events that Atilius gives the Samothracians, the plans failed. Nevertheless, even planning to kill someone in a sanctuary is an outrage, and the Romans are right to question Evander's presence at the Sanctuary of the Great Gods.

Atilius' speech casts the Roman desire to capture Perseus as motivated by a concern for the sanctuary. By contrast, Livy presents the Macedonian king as habitually impious.[91] He is not worthy of divine protection and associates with people who have committed polluting acts. Atilius' speech has its desired effect; the Samothracians agree that Evander must leave and ask Perseus to send him away. The king demands that Evander commit suicide in the sanctuary, which he fails to do. In the absence of other options, Perseus orders his assassination. Horrified by the impiety, his remaining troops abandon him, which prompts the king to make plans to flee the island. His family proceeds out of the sanctuary to the shore, where they are captured by the Romans. Perseus realizes that he cannot safely escape Samothrace and surrenders, "blaming fortune and the gods, in whose temple he was, for not providing a suppliant with any aid."[92]

There are therefore several indications that Perseus does not enjoy the

89. Perseus, too, may have been guilty of murder. Diodorus' fragmentary account of the episode states that Perseus' request for asylum on Samothrace was annulled (ἄκυρον ἔσχε) because he had murdered his younger brother Demetrius (Diod. Sic. 29.25).

90. The episode can be found at Livy 42.15–16.

91. See the discussion in Levene 1993, 120–23.

92. *Fortunam deosque, quorum <in> templo erat, nulla ope supplicem iuvantis accusans* (Livy 45.6.10–11).

protection of the gods and that his capture does not cause them any offense. First, through the murder of Evander, he has shown himself as unworthy of divine protection. Furthermore, he has chosen to leave the sanctuary once his troops rebel against him. Third, he himself states that the gods have chosen not to help him. It is no wonder that Aemilius Paullus concludes at his triumph that "the king himself was captured with his children in the temple of Samothrace just as if the gods themselves were handing them over."[93] By turning the capture of the king into an act that protects the sanctuary, the Romans cast themselves as pious and concerned with the best interests of the gods.

Conclusion

This chapter began with a shepherd nervous about accidentally violating a sacred space. The prospect of facing brutal consequences for his actions alarms him. Temple robbers as we encounter them in literary texts have no such fears. They are either unconcerned with how the gods might react to their actions or are looking for a confrontation with a deity to show themselves as superior. Temple robbery in literary texts is therefore not just a matter of taking something from a sanctuary, an act that in itself is not necessarily impious, as the removal of Perseus from Samothrace shows. *Sacrilegium* involves adopting an attitude that is diametrically opposed to that of all sensible people. As I explore more deeply in the next chapter, *sacrilegi* have a unique way of looking at the world. Their refusal to take the gods seriously is just one way in which they separate themselves from their fellow humans.

93. *Rex ipse, tradentibus prope ipsis dis, in templo Samothracum cum liberis est captus* (Livy 45.41.6).

TWO

How to Write About a Temple Robbery

In the late 80s BCE, on his way to an assignment in the province of Cilicia, C. Verres stops off on the island of Tenedos. As Cicero tells it, he is there for a specific purpose:

> Tenedo (praetereo pecuniam quam eripuit) Tenem ipsum, qui apud Tenedios sanctissimus deus habetur, qui urbem illam dicitur condidisse, cuius ex nomine Tenedus nominatur, hunc ipsum, inquam, Tenem, pulcherrime factum, quem quondam in comitio vidistis, abstulit magno cum gemitu civitatis.[1]
>
> From Tenedos (I pass over the money that he seized) Tenes himself, who is considered the most revered god among the inhabitants of Tenedos, who is said to have founded the city itself, whom Tenedos is named after, that very Tenes, I say, most beautifully made, whom you once saw in the *comitium*, he took away to the great lamentation of the community.

The *Verrines* are replete with scenes such as this. As is the case on Tenedos, the local inhabitants are powerless to do anything against the rapacious Roman official. He can simply walk into a sanctuary and take away its most significant statue.

In this chapter, I use some of the narratives found in the *Verrines* to explore how an author might describe the act of plundering a temple from the identification of targets to the execution and aftermath. As I argue, temple robbers take a unique approach to their environment. *Sacrilegi* are

1. Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.49. When and how the statue was displayed in Rome is unclear.

not simply prolific thieves, insatiable collectors, or confused commanders of troops, but exhibit a complete disregard for their physical surroundings and the treasures found in them. If walls and doors present an obstacle, they destroy them. Obsessed with precious raw materials, they even risk the destruction of the very works whose beauty infatuated them. Their main motivation is the thrill of acquisition. Once they have taken ownership of an object, it is quickly forgotten. The temple robber's priorities and his approach to acquiring objects make him incomprehensible when compared with other Romans or even ordinary criminals. Engaging in *sacrilegium* is a conscious choice to look at the world and interact with it in a way that no other person does.

Identifying Targets

Throughout the *Verrines*, Cicero is interested both in what Verres steals and in the psychological state that prompts him to commit his various offenses. Both of these topics come into play when the orator describes how the governor chooses his targets. As he sums up matters at one point: "He plundered all the shrines that had been consecrated following the most revered rites. Moreover, he left no god behind for the Sicilians whose statue he thought was slightly distinguished in craftsmanship or age."[2] To many readers of the *Verrines*, the governor's emphasis on the artistic quality of the objects he steals reveals him to be an overzealous collector of art.[3] This interpretation corresponds to Verres' image of himself; he is a connoisseur who takes advantage of his unfettered access to Sicily's artistic treasures.[4] To varying degrees, proponents of this view hold that the defendant's methods, while extreme, are grounded in a wider perception that the art and artifacts

2. *Delubra omnia sanctissimis religionibus consecrata depeculatus est; deum denique nullum Siculis, qui ei paullo magis adfabre atque antiquo artificio factus videretur, reliquit* (Cic. *Verr.* 1.14; cf. Cic. *Div. Caec.* 3). There is a vast bibliography on the relationship between gods and their statues in the ancient world. Gordon 1979 is foundational. Platt 2011, 77–123, and Platt 2015 discuss primarily the imperial Greek context. For the Roman world, see Stewart 2003, 184–95; Estienne 2010; Rüpke 2010. For this issue in the *Verrines* specifically, see Horvat and Lima 2020 and Beltrão 2023.

3. For example, Pape 1975, esp. 3–4 and 75–76; Zimmer 1994; Weis 2003; Bounia 2004, 269–306; Miles 2008, esp. 152–217; Rutledge 2012, esp. 31–77.

4. Verres' claims about his intelligence and refinement provide Cicero with ample fodder for sarcastic jokes at his expense; see, e.g., *Verr.* 2.4.4; 2.4.46; 2.4.126. For Verres trying to buy treasures at a ludicrously low price, see, e.g., 2.4.27–28.

of conquered peoples can be taken with impunity. In other words, while Verres' rapacity is troubling, his attitude toward the cultural patrimony of the Roman provinces and foreign lands should not be considered unique.

On such a reading, the *Verrines* can be interpreted as a plea for a more responsible and respectful attitude toward the ownership of foreign art in Rome. As Margaret Miles argues in *Art as Plunder: The Ancient Origins of Debate About Cultural Property*, Cicero presents Verres as an extreme example of a Roman collector. His behavior is meant to shock the orator's audience, many of whom collected works of art themselves, into reevaluating their personal practices. In particular, they should contemplate whether it is appropriate for them to own original works of art taken from the provinces.[5] At their core, Miles contends, the *Verrines* are concerned with the ethics of collecting and are therefore an intellectual precursor to contemporary debates about whether and how culturally significant works of art should be acquired and displayed.[6]

While interpreting Verres as a collector has been the dominant approach to the many thefts described in the *Verrines*, especially in *Verrines* 2.4, I propose taking things in a different direction. Throughout the speeches, Cicero goes to great lengths to show that the defendant does not fit in with Roman society. Although he has had a successful political career, he has no apparent awareness of how a Roman elite male is supposed to behave. Even dressing appropriately is beyond him.[7] It stands to reason that his methods for acquiring art would be similarly alien to Cicero's audience. Verres is not meant to be identifiable as a collector of art to other members of the Roman elite. He is indiscriminate in his selection of objects, guided only by his pas-

5. For example, Miles writes, "When ancient Greek art was taken out of its original context, the art took on new meanings to its new owners. Part of the value of Cicero's indirect social commentary lies in what it reveals about the implicit assumptions behind these distinctions. He frequently expresses the sense of outrage (we) Romans should feel that Verres illicitly took religious objects intended for communal use from others for use in his own house or villa" (Miles 2008, 154).

6. Miles 2017 offers a reflection on the major conclusions of Miles 2008 in light of new legislation concerning the ownership of cultural patrimony. See also Beard 2013, which reviews Miles 2008 alongside work on collecting and the Grand Tour.

7. At Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.86, Verres takes a brief break from banqueting to watch a fleet that he has sent out against pirates set sail. He stands in the harbor of Syracuse wearing women's clothing. The list of Roman invective stereotypes found in Craig 2007, 336–37, includes numerous tropes that suggest foreign origins, unexpected patterns of speech, or a lack of familiarity with social customs. Accusations that someone does not act as a Roman should are a productive source of insults.

sions, and he loses interest in his treasures as soon as he has acquired them. He is driven by insatiable greed, not connoisseurship.

Accordingly, when Verres sees an object, he does not consider its context or use, but only its physical properties. If it seems unique or precious, it must be valuable. If it is valuable, it must be acquired. Moreover, Cicero's Verres thinks that anything can be bought, extorted, or stolen outright.[8] The property claims or interests of gods and fellow mortals are irrelevant to him. To emphasize this point, Cicero fills the *Verrines* with scenes in which the defendant removes items against the strong objections of others, as we have already seen in the incident on Tenedos discussed earlier. These narratives isolate Verres; everyone except him agrees that ownership of the object cannot be transferred. He alone does not understand that works of art are more than just their beauty and material.

A long episode set at Thermae Himeraeae emphasizes the contrast between the governor and legitimate collectors of art.[9] Cicero characterizes the community as a wealthy and peaceful place that flourished despite the many incidents of conflict that Sicily had seen.[10] Hence Verres is the first one to dare to commit "an outrage born from lust, made greater through shameful desire, brought to fruition by cruelty" in this place.[11] The emphasis on the governor's lack of control over his emotions provides a guiding theme for the passage. He targets all the works of art in the community, be they in private houses or on public display. Unlike a conquering general, he does not set out to plunder as a way of punishing the community.[12] The interests of his fellow humans are simply irrelevant to him until they decide to stand in his way. Then they experience the governor's wrath.

We start at the house of Sthenius, a rich citizen with a considerable collection of domestic art whom Cicero had planned to call as a witness during the trial, before Verres' departure into exile after the first *actio* thwarted his plans:

8. Similarly Fulton 2018, 203–4; Fulton argues that Verres is interested in commodification rather than collecting.

9. Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.82–118.

10. In her discussion of the *Verrines*, Vasaly (1993, 127–28) draws attention to the important rhetorical role that setting the scene plays in the speeches. The digressions on the history of the town and its most important monument maximize the audience's understanding of Verres' destructive impact.

11. *Facinus natum a cupiditate, auctum per stuprum, crudelitate perfectum atque conclusum* (Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.82).

12. Berrendonner 2007 casts Verres as a general who wants treasures to parade in his triumph over the Sicilians. On such a reading, Verres has entirely failed to understand his assignment.

> Etenim Sthenius ab adulescentia paulo studiosius haec comparat: supellectilem ex aere elegantiorem et Deliacam et Corinthiam, tabulas pictas, etiam argenti bene facti, prout Thermitani hominis facultates ferebant, satis. quae cum esset in Asia adulescens studiose, ut dixi, compararat, non tam suae delectationis causa quam ad invitationes adventusque nostrorum hominum, amicorum atque hospitum.[13]
>
> Indeed, Sthenius had been quite assiduous about gathering these things from a young age; rather elegant bronze furnishings from Delos and Corinth, paintings, fine silver (in accord with the means of a man from Thermae). These things, as I said, he amassed assiduously as a young man in Asia, not so much for his own pleasure, but to invite and receive our people as friends and guests.

Cicero here contrasts Verres with a proper collector of art. Sthenius has been interested in precious objects for a long time and has a good sense of what is appropriate for his budget and the space that he is looking to decorate. While some of the objects come from famous places, none of them seems to have any explicit connections with sanctuaries or other meaningful places. None of the items are even worth describing in detail. They are not unique and do not appear to have a history of prior use.[14] Sthenius wants to impress and delight his guests by receiving them in an appropriately refined setting. When Verres visits him, Sthenius' eagerness to have others see his treasures becomes his downfall. The governor takes almost everything in sight.[15]

By buying appropriate objects and being aware of his financial limits, Sthenius models the proper approach to collecting treasures. Furthermore, he chooses objects that appeal to him visually and that fit into the decorative scheme of his house. The result is a dwelling that Cicero identifies as *exornata atque instructa*, "well-adorned and appointed."[16] When Verres plunders Sthenius' house, he dismantles a carefully curated display. This action not only contrasts him with a collector trying to create a coherent

13. Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.83.

14. Given the lack of information about them, Sthenius' treasures were likely manufactured for use as domestic decorations. For the market in Roman domestic décor, see, e.g., Galsterer 1994; Harris 2015; Flohr 2019.

15. In a particularly striking image, Cicero states that the governor had "drained and emptied" (*exhausit et exinanivit*) Sthenius' house (*Verr.* 2.5.109).

16. Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.84.

assemblage, but also shows that he has no regard for the idea that context gives an object meaning.

Once the governor has plundered Sthenius' house, he moves on to other treasures found in the town. At this point we are given a vivid depiction of his emotional state:

> Interea iste cupiditate illa sua nota atque apud omnis pervagata, cum signa quaedam pulcherrima atque antiquissima Thermis in publico posita vidisset, adamavit; a Sthenio petere coepit ut ad ea tollenda operam suam profiteretur seque adiuvaret. Sthenius vero non solum negavit, sed etiam ostendit fieri id nullo modo posse ut signa antiquissima, monumenta P. Africani, ex oppido Thermitanorum incolumi illa civitate imperioque populi Romani tollerentur.[17]
>
> In the meanwhile, that wicked man, due to his notorious lust, when he saw some very beautiful and old statues that had been set up in a public place in Thermae, fell in love [*adamavit*]. He began to ask Sthenius to promise him his assistance with their removal. Sthenius, however, not only refused, but also pointed out that the ancient statues, monuments of P. Africanus, could never be removed from the town of Thermae while that community and the Roman state still stood.

The verb used to describe the defendant's emotional state, *adamavit*, can express both simple admiration and passionate desire. In Cicero, it usually refers to an obsession.[18] The governor has an uncontrollable desire to take ownership of these works of art.[19] Despite his strong emotions, he does not act on impulse. He takes his time to plan his attacks and even enlists the hapless Sthenius in his efforts. Details such as this help Cicero argue that the defendant was intentional about his crimes and that he was willing to abuse the authority of his office to get what he wanted. Verres' acquisitions cannot be explained as acts of temporary insanity.

17. Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.85.

18. The verb *adamo* occurs five times in Cicero's speeches. In only one case (*Flac.* 25) is it used to neutrally express admiration. In the others (*Rosc. Am.* 121; *Verr.* 2.4.101; *Mil.* 88.1; and the passage under discussion here) it describes a desire to accumulate possessions or suggests an inappropriate degree of obsession.

19. Similarly, at Segesta, Cicero describes how the defendant "began to burn with desire and insanity" (*flagrare cupiditate atque amentia coepit*, *Verr.* 2.4.75) for a statue of Diana.

The statues that have caught Verres' attention have a complex history. They once stood in the nearby community of Himera, but were taken by the Carthaginians when they captured the town in 409 BCE.[20] In 146 BCE, Scipio Aemilianus retrieved them from Carthage and gave them to Thermae, where the inhabitants of Himera settled after their original city had been razed.[21] The statues, therefore, serve as memorials that recall both the destruction of Himera and an act of Roman generosity toward Sicilian communities, a gesture that Verres now threatens to undo. The subjects of the statues also emphasize their strong local connections. Cicero draws particular attention to a representation of Himera in the form of a beautiful woman and a statue of the poet Stesichorus, who once lived in the town.[22] When faced with the possibility that these uniquely meaningful objects will be removed, the community is outraged. Eventually, Verres has to concede that he cannot have the statues. Through their collective efforts, the citizens of Thermae offer a rare example of successful resistance.

These events find a close parallel with events that occur at Tyndaris.[23] Once again the governor takes an interest in a work of art owned by the community, a beautiful statue of Mercury. It is also a gift of Scipio Aemilianus and symbolizes the town's enduring loyalty to Rome. Once again Verres demands that the statue be transferred to him, but instead of asking the entire community, he starts by threatening Sopater, the chief magistrate. The governor then leaves temporarily to give Sopater time to ensure the cooperation of the rest of the town's leadership. When he returns, matters escalate:

> Respondetur ei senatum non permittere; poenam capitis constitutam, si iniussu senatus quisquam attigisset; simul religio commemoratur. tum iste, "quam mihi religionem narras, quam poenam, quem senatum? vivum te non relinquam; moriere virgis nisi mihi signum

20. The destruction of Himera, with a brief reference to the plundering of private houses and sanctuaries, is described at Diod. Sic. 13.62.

21. The return was commemorated in an inscription: Κορνήλιος Ποπλίου υἱὸς Σκιπίων Ἀφρι[κα]νὸς ὕπατος ἐ[πανακομισάμενος ἐκ Καρχηδόν]ος τοὺς ἐξ Ἰμέρ[ας συληθέντας ἀνδριάντας] Ἰμεραίο[ις Θερμιτανοῖς] ("Scipio Africanus, the son of Cornelius Publius, consul, has brought back from Carthage the statues plundered from Himera for the Himerians living in Thermae," *IGR* 1.504). The highly fragmentary inscription is no longer extant, but has since Mommsen been completed using Cicero's narrative. For this episode in the context of the Punic Wars, see Lapatin 2009, 1081.

22. Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.87.

23. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.84–87.

> traditur." Sopater iterum flens ad senatum rem defert, istius cupiditatem minasque demonstrat. senatus Sopatro responsum nullum dat, sed commotus perturbatusque discedit.[24]
>
> The answer was given to him that the senate did not permit it. It was a death sentence to touch [the statue] without permission from the senate. At the same time, religious scruples were also mentioned. Then that man said: "What religious scruples are you telling me about? What death sentence? What senate? I will not leave you alive. You will die by flogging if the statue is not handed over to me." Sopater, in tears, again referred the matter to the senate; he gave an account of the cupidity and threats of that man. The senate did not give Sopater an answer, but dispersed shaken up and troubled.

Once more, lust guides Verres. His emotional state lends urgency to Sopater's request and makes the case that the town's senate should take the matter seriously.[25] They are, however, left too shocked to respond. The leaders of the community have no idea what to do with someone who has such strong emotions and cannot be reasoned with.

In response, the governor decides to make an example out of Sopater by making good on his threats. He has him stripped naked, whipped, and then bound to an equestrian statue of C. Claudius Marcellus, a patron of the town. Another memorial to the good relations between Rome and Tyndaris thereby becomes an instrument of torture.[26] At this point, the members of the senate decide to hand over the statue of Mercury because they fear that Verres will turn on them next. The episode shows that the governor gets what he wants through violence, intimidation, and patience.

Cicero gives his audience very few details about the statue of Mercury. Aside from its outstanding beauty, it is not clear why Verres targeted this particular work of art. By contrast, an episode in which he deprives two Syrian princes of a candelabrum that was intended as a dedication to Jupiter Capitolinus offers a vivid illustration of the governor's motivations. As at Thermae Himeraeae and Tyndaris, the narrative establishes a strong

24. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.85.

25. Verres' strong emotions are evocative of the stereotypical tyrant in Greek and Latin literature (see Vasaly 1993, 116–17; Tempest 2007, 27–35; Guérin 2015; and Frazel 2009, 125–85). Tyrants tend to become violent if their demands are not met.

26. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.86–87.

contrast between Verres' way of looking at the world and that of everyone else. In those episodes the defendant could not grasp that the objects he wanted were of such significance to their communities that they could not be traded or handed over. Now he is the only one who fails to recognize that a precious work of art is sacred and not meant for domestic use.

Three features can signify that an object is sacred; it is placed in a prominent location within a sanctuary, it is the focus of religious ritual, or it has a particularly striking and memorable appearance.[27] The effectiveness of Cicero's narrative rests on his ability to convince his audience that all of these characteristics apply to the candelabrum. Hence, everyone but Verres can easily recognize that it is a sacred object and not a commodity. Although, as we will see, the sacred status of the candelabrum at the time of the theft is doubtful at best, the orator goes to great lengths to rhetorically sanctify it and portray Verres as a stranger to even the most basic religious conventions.

At the start of the narrative, two sons of Antiochus XII have been in Rome on a diplomatic mission, and as they return home one of them, also named Antiochus, decides to stop off in Sicily. He invites Verres to dinner. Fine tableware and jewels are brought in to impress the guest. The governor, however, quickly realizes that he is not seeing all the treasures that the young prince has brought with him:

> Candelabrum e gemmis clarissimis opere mirabili perfectum reges ii, quos dico, Romam cum attulissent, ut in Capitolio ponerent, quod nondum perfectum templum offenderant, neque ponere potuerunt neque vulgo ostendere ac proferre voluerunt, ut et magnificentius videretur cum suo tempore in cella Iovis Optimi Maximi poneretur, et clarius cum pulchritudo eius recens ad oculos hominum atque integra perveniret: statuerunt id secum in Syriam reportare ut, cum audissent simulacrum Iovis Optimi Maximi dedicatum, legatos mitterent qui cum ceteris rebus illud quoque eximium ac pulcherrimum donum in Capitolium adferrent. pervenit res ad istius aures nescio quo modo; nam rex id celatum voluerat, non quo quicquam metueret aut suspicaretur, sed ut ne multi illud ante praeciperent oculis quam populus Romanus.[28]

27. Mylonopoulos 2010, 6–11.
28. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.64.

> The kings about whom I am talking had brought to Rome a candelabrum fashioned with remarkable workmanship out of the most gleaming gems to dedicate in the Capitolium. Because they found that the temple was not yet finished, they were neither able to dedicate it nor did they want the common people to find out about it. They wanted it to seem more magnificent when it was dedicated in the shrine of Jupiter Optimus Maximus at the right time and to seem more gleaming because its beauty would appear whole and fresh to human eyes. They decided to take it back to Syria with them so that, when they heard that the cult image of Jupiter Optimus Maximus had been consecrated, they would send legates, who, along with other things, would take the extraordinary and most beautiful gift to the Capitolium. The matter somehow came to that man's [Verres'] ears, for the king had wanted to keep it [the candelabrum] under wraps not because he was afraid of anything or had any suspicions, but so that not many people would lay eyes on it before the Roman people [did].

The beginning of the description is pitched at Verres' level of appreciation. He sees a beautiful mass of precious materials. The candelabrum is described as consisting of the "most gleaming gems" and is an object of "remarkable workmanship." The superlatives signal that it is an attractive target for Verres. The object is further elevated by a slip in word choice; the sons of Antiochus, though technically princes, are described as "these kings" (*reges ii*).[29] This is a gift from kings fit for the king of the gods.

With the statement that the candelabrum was to be dedicated to Jupiter, Cicero cuts to the religious side of the narrative. The rambling discussion obscures the central problem with the object; a gift for the gods becomes divine property upon dedication, but intended dedications do not enjoy any special protections. Cicero, however, makes intent substitute for religious ritual and tries to convince his audience that Verres is guilty of temple robbery. This is a stretch, but the orator deflects such concerns with an elaborate explanation for the object's presence in Sicily. After suffering damage in a fire, the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus had not yet been fully restored, so the votive offering could not be dedicated. It also could not stay in Rome since its donors only wanted to put it on display in the finished temple. The princes, therefore, determine to take it back home until

29. On this point, see also Frazel 2009, 87 n. 27.

a delegation can be sent to Rome with it at the right time. The narrative impresses on the audience that the princes had every intention of dedicating the object, but were unable to do so because of unfortunate circumstances. As a result, the orator argues that Verres has disrupted a religious ritual.

To return to events on Sicily, Verres pleads to see the candelabrum. The prince eventually agrees to send the magnificent object to the governor's house for inspection. It seems implausible that he would part with such a precious work of art even for a brief while, but Cicero elides such concerns. Instead, he provides a narrative of the theft that stresses the beauty of the candelabrum and emphasizes that it belongs in a temple:

> Antiochus . . . nihil de istius improbitate suspicatus est; imperat suis ut id in praetorium involutum quam occultissime deferrent. quo posteaquam attulerunt involucrisque reiectis constituerunt, clamare iste coepit dignam rem esse regno Syriae, dignam regio munere, dignam Capitolio. etenim erat eo splendore . . . ea varietate operum . . . ea magnitudine ut intellegi posset non ad hominum apparatum sed ad amplissimi templi ornatum esse factum. cum satis iam perspexisse videretur, tollere incipiunt ut referrent. iste ait se velle illud etiam atque etiam considerare; nequaquam se esse satiatum; iubet illos discedere et candelabrum relinquere. sic illi tum inanes ad Antiochum revertuntur.[30]
>
> Antiochus had no suspicions about that man's [Verres'] ill intentions. He ordered his men to bring [the candelabrum] to the governor's residence covered up as discreetly as possible. After they had brought it to him, cast aside its wrappings, and set it up, Verres began to shout out that it was an object worthy of the kingdom of Syria, worthy of a royal gift, worthy of the Capitolium. For it was the case that from its splendor, its intricacy, and its size one could understand that it had not been made for human use, but for the decoration of a very impressive temple. When it seemed that Verres had gazed at the object long enough, Antiochus' men started picking it up to take it back. That man said that he wished to study it over and over again and that he in no way had had enough. He ordered them to go away and leave the candelabrum. And so they returned to Antiochus empty-handed.

30. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.65.

Once more we are told that the object should stay hidden from sight. Even Verres' act of looking at it for an extended time is inappropriate. He is not a visitor to Jupiter's temple in Rome, hence it is not meant for his enjoyment. We are told twice that it belongs in a temple; once by Verres' initial reaction and then again by the narrator. Here another detail is added; not only is the object stunningly beautiful, but it is also very large. It is far too spectacular to be placed in a domestic setting.[31]

The candelabrum is special, but its place within the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus is still merely anticipated at the time of the theft. Cicero's efforts to identify the object as sacred are therefore strained. The description of the candelabrum in the narrative also makes a case for its sacred qualities. We are told just enough to know that it is enormous and very expensive, but it is not possible to picture the object with the details provided.[32] It is easy to imagine how the candelabrum would have functioned within the temple. By putting such extensive emphasis on the item's intended religious use, Cicero tempts his audience to forget that it is not yet a sacred object.

The lust for unique and beautiful objects drives Verres' acquisitions. Their context and how they fit into a coherent display do not matter. Despite his claims to the contrary, the governor is not a collector, but a hoarder. Although he often uses material value as a guide, Verres can also make some strange choices when he picks his targets. At the temple of Minerva in Syracuse, for example, he takes some reed spears. Such cheap and ordinary objects should fall outside his sphere of interest, but they are unusually large and hence satisfy his desire for unique artifacts.[33] In addition, their placement in a significant sanctuary makes them valuable and worth possessing.[34] The broad range of things that Verres finds interesting makes his

31. Similarly, at *Verr.* 2.4.97–98, Cicero describes a theft from the sanctuary of Magna Mater at Engyion and states that the bronze objects stolen from the site are far too beautiful for domestic use.

32. For a text that concerns itself extensively with works of art, the *Verrines* are remarkably light on ekphrastic description. We are frequently told little more than an object's basic identification (e.g., statue, painting), size, and material. Commentators on the *Verrines* have seen this lack of detail as an attempt to enhance the defendant's villainy; the short descriptions increase the amount of space and emphasis given to Verres' actions (Innocenti 1994) and may assimilate Verres' activities to the crime of *furtum* (theft) (Frazel 2005, 369; cf. Frazel 2009, 73–78).

33. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.124–25.

34. Cicero's presentation of Verres' character is inconsistent about this point; when he plunders the domestic sanctuary of Heius in Messana (see chapter 3), he leaves an old wooden statue of Bona Fortuna presumably because he did not consider it sufficiently valuable (Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.7).

thefts seem indiscriminate.[35] The fact that he uses the power of his office to enforce his demands makes him a danger to any community or sanctuary.

In the Sanctuary

As in the narratives above, infatuation, careful planning, shocking behavior, and brutality also guide how Verres approaches sanctuaries. The major difference between the governor's interactions with treasures displayed in towns and those in sacred spaces is that he shifts his anger from people to buildings and other physical elements. Doors, walls, and the sheer size of the objects that he intends to take become his main obstacles, so he engages in both theft and destruction to overcome them. If the physical challenges prove insurmountable, he makes sure that he walks away with at least some souvenirs from the sanctuary. At Perga, for example, he peels off all the gold from a statue of Diana.[36]

Verres' behavior in the sanctuary and his interactions with objects and buildings further mark him as a transgressive figure. A growing body of scholarship shows that movement around ancient sacred spaces was highly regulated.[37] Buildings and pathways channel worshippers through the environment and control their interactions with the space. Ideally, visitors voluntarily comply with the prescribed patterns and proceed through the sanctuary in a collective, predictable movement. Herodas' *Mimiamb* 4 shows what the experience may be like through the eyes of a worshipper. The text introduces us to Cynno and Phile, two women visiting a sanctuary of Asclepius. They have come to deliver a sacrifice to the god, but first enjoy a tour of the sanctuary, with Cynno becoming Phile's guide to the precious works of art on display. Despite the extensive discussions of artists and themes of works of art, ritual concerns frame the narrative. Cynno's first utterance is a prayer to the god, and the scene concludes with her giving instructions for the sacrifice. The constant presence of a crowd of fellow worshippers and the long wait for the caretaker of the sanctuary punctuate the tour. Appreciating art and participating in rituals are not mutually exclusive activities; wor-

35. For a list of Verres' thefts, see appendix.

36. Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.54.

37. For the role of architectural features in guiding the worshipper's experience, see Wescoat 2012 and 2017; Yasin 2012 and 2017; Friese 2017; Moser 2019, 14–53; Gunderson 2021. For access to sacred sites in the Roman world more generally, see Raja 2015, esp. 309–10; for comparative evidence from classical Greece, Gawlinski 2014.

shippers can enjoy what they see around them.[38] Throughout, however, the two women keep a safe distance from the treasures. For them, interacting with the physical environment of the sanctuary involves taking in sights, smells, and sounds, but is not a tactile experience.

This is not to say that touch has no place in ancient religious practice. Some statues are marked by the touch of generations of worshippers. Nevertheless, ancient texts are not clear on whether it is appropriate to touch a religious object.[39] It can be viewed as an act of devotion that enhances the experience of the worshipper by creating a physical connection with a manifestation of the divine.[40] It can also be seen as an intrusion on the deity represented by the work of art. In Herodas' text, the question of whether one should touch the treasures of the sanctuary does not present itself. While his idealized worshippers occasionally think about touching a statue, they are too afraid of inflicting damage.[41] Their efforts to keep a safe distance from the objects are part of how they show respect to the deity. Touch is therefore not a universally accepted mode of interaction and can show that someone does not understand the rules of the space they are in.[42]

To make matters worse, temple robbers do not just want to touch but to take. Their very motivations make them a transgressive presence in the sanctuary. Accordingly, unlike Cynno and Phile, they do not take cues from the behavior of those around them. The paths of movement suggested by the architecture of the site, likewise, do not interest them. Since ancient sanctuaries are not subtle about their security measures, looking at a sacred site like a temple robber requires ignoring some of the most prominent architectural features. Walls, thick doors, barred windows, and limited points of access deter those looking to get into places where they are not supposed to be. We can get a sense of the obstacles facing them by looking at domestic spaces, which employ security design principles similar to those found in

38. As Platt (2010, 206) observes: "Both . . . women move between moments of ritual absorption (in which they respond emotionally to the content of the scenes they view and the charged atmosphere of the sanctuary and festival) and a more detached connoisseurship (in which they identify artists' hands and comment upon style, medium, and workmanship)."

39. For the wider debate concerning how people should interact with statues, see Stewart 2003, 26–29, and Platt and Squire 2018.

40. Lennon 2018, 123–25. See also Baldo 2004, 452–53, and Graf 2001, 230–31.

41. Herod. 4.57–60.

42. Mere looking, however, can also be deeply intrusive; see Haynes 2013, esp. 73–87, for examples. As in the case of the temple robber, who is often infatuated with the objects he is trying to steal, episodes of transgressive looking often have an erotic motivation.

Fig. 2. Vicolo di Mercurio, Pompeii
(Photograph by Simon Burchell, March 2019, via Wikimedia Commons, cc by-sa 4.0.)

temples.[43] A typical Roman domestic façade (fig. 2) limits access to visitors or thieves. Where windows face out on the street, they are small and have bars (fig. 3).[44] Although they rarely survive today, in antiquity, doors would have protected other points of entry. If these were closed, keys were needed to gain access to the inside.[45]

The same physical access restrictions apply to temples, but on a larger scale since the buildings themselves are more imposing. A particularly spectacular example of a key found at Schönbühl in Switzerland (fig. 4) has been associated with a local temple because of its size and composition. The object, dating to the first half of the second century CE, is made from

43. For Roman domestic security measures, see Kienzle 2011 and Michielin 2021, esp. 35–49 and 93–101. Stambaugh 1978, 568–71, briefly discusses temple security.

44. A depiction of a latticed temple window can be found on coins minted between 62 and 68 CE to celebrate the closing of the door of the temple of Janus under Nero. These coins show the façade of the temple on the reverse with a latticed window clearly visible in most examples (*RIC* I² Nero 264, 300, 301, 304, 306, 307, 309, 310, 337, 339, 342, 349, 354).

45. On Roman keys, see Swift 2017, 113–23.

Fig. 3. Remains of a wooden window frame and iron bars
(Photograph by Carole Raddato, July 2014, via Wikimedia Commons, cc by-sa 2.0.)

iron and features a bronze lion as the handle.[46] With a length of 19.2 cm (7.6 in.) and a weight of 1.5 kg (3.3 lb.), the object's ostentation threatens to interfere with its practical function. This is a conspicuous security measure that advertises its role in protecting important treasures.

In both the ancient and the modern world, burglars must know how to get around barriers if they want to successfully slip in and out of a place. As Geoff Manaugh states in his study of burglary in the modern city:

> In one sense, burglars seem to understand architecture better than the rest of us. They misuse it, pass through it, and ignore any limitations a building tries to impose. Burglars don't need doors; they'll punch holes through walls or slice down through ceilings instead. Burglars unpeel a building from the inside out to hide inside the drywall (or underneath the floorboards, or up in the trusses of an unlit crawl space). They are masters of architectural origami, demonstrat-

46. Kemkes 2011, 50–51, pointing to parallels with other keys featuring lions, considers the iconography apotropaic.

Fig. 4. Temple key from Schönbühl
(Augusta Raurica Inventory number 1939.807, cc by-sa 4.0.)

> ing skills that the rest of us only wish we had, dark wizards of cities and buildings, unlimited by laws that hold the rest of us in.[47]

Modern architectural theory distinguishes between persuasive design (which is intended to encourage good behavior) and coercive design (which enforces it, for example, by erecting obstacles or placing the transgressor in a dangerous situation).[48] Professional burglars, as Manaugh shows, pervert the suggestions of persuasive design and resist coercive features. They imagine access points beyond doors and windows. Every heist is unique because different buildings present different challenges and opportunities. If criminals want to escape without being detected—the mark of a successful burglary—they have to study carefully the physical context of the

47. Manaugh 2016, 13.

48. For efforts to design for crime prevention, see Ekblom 1995, and Davey and Wootton 2017, esp. 57–73; for persuasive architecture more generally, Ragsdale 2011, 1–17, and Miladi 2018. Ancient sanctuary design is also persuasive, although the narratives of divinely imposed penalties for robbers (see chapter 1) add a coercive dimension for those who take such stories seriously.

objects that they want to take. A professional burglary is not a crime of opportunity, but requires patience and extensive planning.

The same applies to ancient burglars, who also rely on stealth. Their default method of access is to tunnel into buildings.[49] Depending on the exact circumstances, far more elaborate schemes are also possible. Pausanias relates the mythical story of Trophonius and Agademes, brothers and skilled architects who lived in Boeotia in mythical times.[50] Their reputation attracts significant commissions including one for the temple of Apollo at Delphi. When Hyrieus, a Boeotian ruler, wants to hire them to build a treasury, they agree to do so, but decide to derive additional profit from the venture.[51] They leave a stone loose in one of the walls, which allows them to climb in and steal the contents. Hyrieus, however, notices that something is amiss and sets a trap. On their next heist, the snare catches Agademes. When he is unable to free him, Trophonius kills his brother to spare him a slow death at the hands of the ruler. The surviving brother is then swallowed up by the earth during his flight and acquires a hero cult in Lebadeia near Delphi.

Temple robbers in Roman literary texts, by contrast, do not operate like burglars. To begin with, they have no interest in remaining undetected. When confronted with challenges posed by their physical environment, they resort to violence. We see this clearly in several episodes described in the *Verrines*. One of the objects that Verres becomes interested in is a beautiful statue of Hercules that is kept in a sanctuary at Agrigentum. Cicero describes the object in striking terms:

> Herculis templum est apud Agrigentinos non longe a foro, sane sanctum apud illos et religiosum. ibi est ex aere simulacrum ipsius Herculis, quo non facile dixerim quicquam me vidisse pulchrius—tametsi non tam multum in istis rebus intellego quam multa vidi—usque eo, iudices, ut rictum eius ac mentum paulo sit attritius, quod in precibus et gratulationibus non solum id venerari verum etiam osculari solent.[52]

> There is a temple of Hercules at Agrigentum not far from the forum, especially sacred and revered among the town's inhabitants. In that

49. For some of the impressive feats of ancient burglars attested on papyri, see Riess 2001, 100–102. See also Curbera 2021, 96–97.

50. Pausanias and some other accounts make Trophonius the son of Apollo.

51. Paus. 9.37.5–7.

52. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.94.

> place there is a bronze image of Hercules himself, I cannot readily say whether I have seen anything more beautiful—though my understanding of these matters does not reflect the number of beautiful things that I have seen—but it is so beautiful, members of the jury, that its mouth and chin are a little rubbed off, because in their prayers and acts of thanksgiving the inhabitants of Agrigentum are not just accustomed to worship the statue, but also to kiss it.

The statue is both a typical and an unusual target for Verres. It is exceptionally beautiful and hence catches his attention. Its removal will do significant damage to the community, which marks it as an important and unique artifact. The reverence in which the object is held, however, has caused it to acquire some blemishes. The fact that the governor is willing to overlook these imperfections is surprising, but suggests that he sees it as still having sufficient material value to be of interest to him.

The governor sends his henchmen to obtain the object of his desires. Throughout the *Verrines*, Verres relies heavily on friends and subordinates to accomplish his nefarious goals. Cicero treats these individuals as mere extensions of the governor; since they have no autonomy, anything they do can simply be attributed to Verres.[53] This is also the case at Agrigentum:

> Ad hoc templum, cum esset iste Agrigenti, duce Timarchide repente nocte intempesta servorum armatorum fit concursus atque impetus. clamor a vigilibus fanique custodibus tollitur; qui primo cum obsistere ac defendere conarentur; male mulcati clavis ac fustibus repelluntur. postea convulsis repagulis ecfractisque valvis demoliri signum ac vectibus labefactare conantur.[54]

> At this temple, when that man [Verres] was in Agrigentum, there was a sudden rush and an attack by armed slaves in the middle of the night under the leadership of Timarchides. A shout was raised by the guards and watchmen at the temple. First, when they tried to resist and defend the building, they were driven back, badly beaten by clubs and fists. Afterward, when the bars had been wrenched off

53. At *Verr.* 2.2.27, Cicero likens them to Verres' hands. On Verres and his helpers, see Steel 2004 and Cuomo 2011. The governor is not the only temple robber who uses assistants to increase his reach. Nero, for example, relies heavily on his freedman Acratus to plunder sanctuaries in Greece and Asia Minor (Tac. *Ann.* 15.45 and 16.23; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 31.148–51).

54. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.94.

> and the doors broken, they [Timarchides' men] tried to pull down the statue and loosen it with crowbars.

Timarchides, one of Verres' freedmen, is regularly implicated in the governor's crimes. Elsewhere in the text, Cicero characterizes him as a parasite of sorts who looks to skim a profit whenever he is called on to steal something.[55] Armed slaves regularly help him carry out his plans.[56] The appearance of Verres' freedman with a band of armed slaves at night therefore makes this a dangerous attack that is designed to overwhelm the sanctuary's defenses.[57]

The doors and their bolts are no obstacle for Timarchides' men. They can destroy everything in their way until they reach the statue. The object is in danger—Cicero describes their plans to remove the fragile bronze work of art with the verb *demoliri* ("tear down"), a word commonly used to describe a destructive act.[58] The attackers operate like bandits or pirates and show no religious reverence whatsoever for the sanctuary or its contents. Their treatment of the statue suggests that they regard it as merely a heap of precious material. The protective mechanisms of the sanctuary appear to be powerless against them; the shrine is not designed to withstand such an overwhelming attack.

Cicero continues the story with the unexpected arrival of help:

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55. Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.133–36.

56. The threat of a rebellion of enslaved people is ever-present in the *Verrines* (see esp. *Verr.* 2.5.9–20, which focuses on how inept Verres would be at suppressing an uprising). In an apparent attempt to recall the slave kings of the first two Servile Wars, at *Verr.* 2.2.136 the orator calls Timarchides a runaway slave (*fugitivus*) who ruled over the towns of Sicily for the period of Verres' governorship (on Timarchides' resemblance to the slave king Athenion, see Grünewald 2004, 63). The governor is therefore someone under whom lawlessness thrives and who understands how to benefit from the ensuing chaos.

57. Legal authorities also considered thefts that occurred at night to be particularly serious. The Twelve Tables allow for thieves who operate at night or defend themselves with weapons to be killed on the spot (*RS* no. 40 ll. 17–18). Verres' men are guilty on both of these counts. Regarding temple robbery in particular, at *Dig.* 48.13.7 Ulpian states that the most severe penalties (in this case, being thrown to the beasts, burned alive, or hanged) should be reserved for those "who, having formed a band, broke into the temple and carried off the gifts of the god at night" (*qui manu facta templum effregerunt et dona dei noctu tulerunt*). Thus Timarchides and his men are committing the most serious form of the crime.

58. *TLL* 5/1. 498. 54–499. 72 (Jachmann) lists only two examples of *demolior* meaning "to remove," but cites several for it meaning "to destroy." Stewart discusses the incident at Agrigentum as part of his investigation of the destruction of statues in the Roman world (Stewart 2003, 267–78; the Hercules episode is discussed at 274).

> Nemo Agrigenti neque aetate tam adfecta neque viribus tam infirmis fuit qui non illa nocte eo nuntio excitatus surrexerit, telumque quod cuique fors offerebat arripuerit. itaque brevi tempore ad fanum ex urbe tota concurritur. horam amplius iam in demoliendo signo permulti homines moliebantur; illud interea nulla labebat ex parte, cum alii vectibus subiectis conarentur commovere, alii deligatum omnibus membris rapere ad se funibus. ac repente Agrigentini concurrunt; fit magna lapidatio; dant sese in fugam istius praeclari imperatoris nocturni milites.[59]
>
> No one in Agrigentum was so advanced in age or weak that he did not get out of bed that night stirred up by the news [of the attack] and did not grab the weapon that chance afforded him. So the whole city came together at the temple in a short time. For more than an hour, a large number of men were working on pulling down the statue; it, in the meanwhile, was not coming loose anywhere though some were trying to move it with crowbars placed underneath it and others were trying to pull it toward them with ropes tied around all its limbs. And suddenly the citizens of Agrigentum rushed together; there was a great shower of stones; the nocturnal troops of that distinguished general took flight.

The attackers are driven off by the determination of the community and, at least implicitly, by divine intervention. Statues that move easily can signal a god's desire to be removed from a particular location.[60] The Hercules of Agrigentum, by contrast, does not want to leave his temple. The difficulties posed by the removal of the statue give the citizens time to mount a counterattack. Against overwhelming odds, the god and the people who worship him manage to resist.

News of the heroic effort travels quickly around the island and inspires another community:

> Chrysas est amnis qui per Assorinorum agros fluit; is apud illos habetur deus et religione maxima colitur. fanum eius est in agro, propter

59. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.95.

60. Most famously in Latin literature, the arrival of the goddess Cybele in Rome illustrates the perceived connection between a divine power's willingness to relocate and the relative ease or difficulty of moving the deity's statue (see Livy 29.14; Ov. *Fast.* 4.179–372). For a broader discussion of the various ways in which statues are said to express divine displeasure, see Bremmer 2013.

> ipsam viam qua Assoro itur Hennam; in eo Chrysae simulacrum est praeclare factum e marmore. id iste poscere Assorinos propter singularem eius fani religionem non ausus est; Tlepolemo dat et Hieroni negotium. illi noctu facta manu armataque veniunt, foris aedis effringunt; aeditumi custodesque mature sentiunt; signum quod erat notum vicinitati bucina datur; homines ex agris concurrunt; eicitur fugaturque Tlepolemus, neque quicquam ex fano Chrysae praeter unum perparvulum signum ex aere desideratum est.[61]
>
> The river Chrysas flows through the land of the Assorians; Chrysas is considered a god among them and is worshiped with the utmost reverence. He has a shrine in the field that is next to the road that leads from Assorus to Henna. In it, there is a beautiful statue of Chrysas made of marble. That man [Verres] did not dare to demand it from the Assorians on account of the exceptional reverence they paid to the shrine. He gave the job to Tlepolemus and Hiero. Having put together an armed band, those men came at night and broke open the doors of the temple. The guards and caretakers realized it in time; the signal that was known to the neighbors was given with the trumpet; men rushed together from the surrounding area; Tlepolemus was thrown out and put to flight, and nothing was found missing from the shrine of Chrysas except for a very small statue made of bronze.

This time we are in a rural setting at the sanctuary of a god who has only local significance. A shrine (*fanum*) in a field does not suggest a particularly impressive site, but the space is clearly set aside for worship and has guards, identified as *aeditumi* and *custodes* in the passage. They are instrumental in preventing the temple robbery.

In addition to the architecture of the site, *custodes, vigiles*, and *aeditumi* provide an element of protection that temple robbers have to take into account.[62] The exact division of labor between the individuals labeled with these terms is unclear.[63] *Aeditumi* (or *aeditui*) are most frequently attested.[64] In addition to being mentioned in literary texts, there is substantial

61. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.96.

62. As discussed in chapter 1, guard dogs are a further challenge.

63. See Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2000, 407–17.

64. *Aeditumus* appears to be the older form and is found virtually exclusively in Cicero and earlier authors. In his discussion of the forms *aeditumus* and *aedituus*, Aulus Gellius

epigraphic evidence for them, which suggests conclusions as to their social classes and reveals possible organizational hierarchies.[65] Their exact functions seem to have differed widely. In some sanctuaries, *aeditumi* serve as guards and caretakers, but elsewhere they hold some ritual responsibilities as well.[66] In the context of temple robbery, their constant presence in the sanctuary is most important.[67] Tlepolemus and his men plan to deal with them in the same way they would confront a door or a wall, namely with overwhelming violence. Once more it is clear that stealth and surprise are not the preferred tools of these temple robbers. The protection of the governor means that they do not have to worry about facing any consequences for their actions, so they attack openly. Walls and doors indeed pose no challenge. In confrontations with humans, however, Verres' men occasionally lose.

Although the governor frequently attempts to use open intimidation and overwhelming force to obtain the objects that he desires, he also has more subtle methods at his disposal. Cicero intersperses scenes such as those at Agrigentum and Assorus with episodes that appear much more like conventional burglaries. In such cases, the narratives follow a set pattern; the orator briefly describes the object targeted by Verres and its significance; it is taken away at night; and on the next day the community is outraged when it realizes the loss. It usually does not take long to trace the theft back to the governor's household because only he would have the audacity and resources to steal a deeply significant object.

An example of such a narrative is the theft of a statue of Ceres from a

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states that the older form was derived from the root *aed-* along the lines of words such as *finitimus* and *legitimus*, so *aeditumus* means "concerned with the temple." The second form, on the other hand, is formed from *aedes* and *tueor* in the sense of "keep safe" or "protect" (Gell. *NA* 12.10.1–3).

65. Of 97 inscriptions that include named *aeditumi* in *EDCS*, 38 concern freedpeople. The rest are free, enslaved or of ambiguous social status. On a potential hierarchy of *aeditumi*, see Alföldy 1982, which restores an *aedituus magister* in a damaged imperial inscription from Comum (*CIL* 5.5306). The *aeditumus* in the framing narrative of Varro's *De Re Rustica* is attended by a freedman, which suggests an elevated social position.

66. In this regard, *aeditumi* are similar to *vilici*, whose functions also differed widely depending on the context of their work (see Carlsen 1995, esp. 15–16).

67. Their constant presence could be convenient: an *aeditumus* is at hand to protect the young Domitian when he seeks shelter in a temple during his father's civil war (Suet. *Dom.* 1.2 and Tac. *Hist.* 3.74). At Livy 43.13, two *aeditumi* report on prodigies observed in their sanctuary since they were the only ones to observe them.

sanctuary at Catina (modern Catania).[68] Cicero starts by stating that this work of art is very old, but has not been seen by many people. Ancient custom forbids men from looking at the statue, and women are in charge of all cult activities. When Verres sends men to remove the Ceres at night, he does not just commit a temple robbery, but also offends the religious customs of Catina. When a priestess of the cult discovers the theft, she alerts the authorities. The governor, who is concerned that his reputation will make him a suspect, immediately comes up with a plan to divert attention from himself and frames an enslaved person for the act. The false charge does not hold up during the ensuing trial. The priestesses recall having seen some of the governor's men in the sanctuary, which convinces everyone that Verres is the true guilty party. Cicero ends his narrative with the enslaved person's acquittal, so it is not clear whether the community ever attempted to confront the governor about his actions. The main point of the episode is that even if an actual temple robbery goes unnoticed, the extent of the defendant's crimes makes it impossible for him to truly take a statue in secret. His notoriety makes him a prime suspect whenever something vanishes from a sanctuary.

At least according to Cicero, the inhabitants of Sicily talk openly about the governor's lust for precious objects and the crimes he commits in pursuit of them. There is therefore generally no need for Verres to cover up his intentions. Everyone knows what he is up to, but also knows that his office protects him from facing any consequences. Accordingly, when Verres visits a sacred space, he is not just there to see the sights. A visit to the sanctuary of Ceres at Henna proves particularly lucrative.[69] After a long digression on the importance of the site, Cicero describes how the governor gathered numerous sacred treasures:

> Hoc dico, hanc ipsam Cererem antiquissimam, religiosissimam, principem omnium sacrorum quae apud omnis gentis nationesque fiunt, a C. Verre ex suis templis ac sedibus esse sublatam. qui accessistis Hennam, vidistis simulacrum Cereris e marmore et in altero templo Liberae. sunt ea perampla atque praeclara, sed non ita antiqua. ex aere fuit quoddam modica amplitudine ac singulari opere cum facibus perantiquum, omnium illorum quae sunt in eo fano

68. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.99–102. The episode has some similarities to the theft of a statue of Apollo from Agrigentum as detailed at *Verr.* 2.4.93. Here, too, the initial burglary goes undetected, but suspicion quickly falls on the governor and his men.

69. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.106–12.

> multo antiquissimum; id sustulit. ac tamen eo contentus non fuit. ante aedem Cereris in aperto ac propatulo loco signa duo sunt, Cereris unum, alterum Triptolemi, pulcherrima ac perampla. pulchritudo periculo, amplitudo saluti fuit, quod eorum demolitio atque asportatio perdifficilis videbatur. insistebat in manu Cereris dextra grande simulacrum pulcherrime factum Victoriae; hoc iste e signo Cereris avellendum asportandumque curavit.[70]
>
> I say this, that very old [statue of] Ceres herself, the most revered one, the most important one of all those that are sacred among all people, was taken by C. Verres from its temple and seat. Those of you who have been to Henna have seen a statue of Ceres made from marble and, at the other temple, a statue of Libera. They are very large and beautiful, but not all that old. There was also another statue made from bronze, of modest size and unique workmanship, very old and featuring torches. It was by far the oldest of all those statues that were at that shrine. He took it. And he was not even content with that. In front of the temple of Ceres, out in the open, there are two statues, one of Ceres, the other of Triptolemus, both very beautiful and large. Their beauty was a danger to them, but their size saved them since tearing them down and carrying them off seemed very difficult. There stood in the right hand of Ceres a large and beautiful statue of Victory. That man took care to rip it off and carry it away from the statue of Ceres.

The passage progresses from describing Verres' theft of the most important statue to an almost comical scene where, when an object proves too big to move, he breaks off part of it.[71] He does not care about the context of the treasures that he gathers. He wants to possess precious things, or at least as much of a precious thing as he can feasibly move. Taken as a whole, Verres' acquisitions in this passage show once more that he has no coherent vision for his collection. Some statues catch his attention because they are large, others because they are old, yet others because they are beautiful or unique, and, finally, there are objects that end up in his household simply because they are small enough to move.

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70. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.109–10.

71. Dionysius I also had a fondness for taking golden statues of Victories, dishes, and crowns held by other statues (Val. Max. 1.1.ext.3).

It is also clear from Cicero's description of events at Henna that, as far as Verres is concerned, collection and destruction are interchangeable acts. The passage uses two different verbs to describe the removal of statues, forms of *tollo* and forms of *asporto*. Both are common words for carrying off objects and are used in many narratives of temple robbery in Cicero and other authors.[72] Here, as often also elsewhere, these words are combined with terms that signify destruction. In his efforts to accumulate, Verres is equally content with carrying things off or destroying them. For him, the only thing that matters is that he comes away with at least some precious items.[73]

When compared to each other, the narratives set at Agrigentum, Catina, and Henna and the earlier example set at Tyndaris provide templates for describing Verres' temple robberies that Cicero deploys throughout the speeches. While not every theft conforms to one of them, they cover the majority of assaults on sacred property described in the *Verrines*.[74] First, as seen at Tyndaris, there is extortion. Verres is fully aware that the authority of his office allows him to use intimidation and violence to obtain precious works of art. Second, as in the theft of a statue from Catina, there is a burglary at night. While Verres or his henchmen do not get caught in the act in such narratives, they quickly become suspects. These episodes emphasize the role of the governor as a cultural outsider. The sacred space does not even require security because no one would contemplate a temple robbery from here. When items are stolen, the only logical conclusion is that it must be the work of the one person who has consistently shown that he does not understand social customs or religious conventions.

Events at the temple of Hercules at Agrigentum follow a third template, the armed assault. Here, Verres' men noisily attack the walls and doors of the sanctuary and have no concern about confronting guards or damaging objects. These *sacrilegia* resemble an attack by pirates or robbers. Finally, as

72. In addition to this passage, a sample of relevant examples, several of which are discussed in this book, can be found at Cic. *Div. Caec.* 28; Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.91, 2.3.29, 2.4.80, 2.4.88, 2.4.103–4, 2.4.111, 2.4.121, 2.5.185; Livy 29.8.10, 29.17.16, 42.3.3; Tac. *Ann.* 16.11.1 (for *asporto*); and Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.46, 2.4.93, 2.4.99, 2.4.109, 2.4.123, 2.4.131, 2.5.187; Caes. *BCiv.* 1.6.5–8, 3.33.1–2, 3.105.1–2; Val. Max. 1.1.ext. 3; Sen. *Ben.* 7.7.1–2; Plin. *HN* 35.17–18; Quint. *Inst.* 3.6.38, 4.2.68, 4.4.3, 5.10.39; Juv. 13.147 (for *tollo*).

73. In the robbery from the temple of Chrysas at Assorus discussed above, Verres' henchman Tlepolemus mirrors his patron's behavior when he pockets a small bronze statue during his flight from the scene.

74. Most notably, none of the examples that I have discussed so far have Verres offering to buy objects for a ludicrously low price. These are variations on the extortion narratives. For an example, see Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.27–28.

at Henna, Verres can also just walk into a sanctuary and attempt to take what he wants. He also has no concerns about damaging objects; he wants to accumulate as much as possible, and if a statue proves too big, it is broken apart. Verres and his men, it seems, are more interested in acquiring precious raw material than intact works of art. Overall, even though the governor often becomes infatuated with objects, he takes his time to figure out what approach works best in any given circumstance. Virtually none of the governor's robberies are crimes of opportunity. He plans and prepares his assaults carefully, which leaves no doubt as to his intent.

After the Robbery

The question of what happens to the precious works of art after Verres has acquired them returns us to the realm of Roman art collecting. At the beginning of this chapter, I introduced Sthenius, a resident of Thermae Himeraeae, whose efforts to assemble a personal collection of art serve as a foil for Verres. Sthenius curated his collection not just for his enjoyment, but also for the delight of his guests. We see parallels of his efforts in the artistic programs on display in the houses of the Roman elite.[75] Here, too, curation matters. Paintings, statues, and other objects are arranged to provide an impressive and coherent display. Domestic spaces do not just indicate their owner's status through the amount of stuff in them, but also through thoughtful assembly.

As his letters reveal, Cicero thought of himself as one of those discerning collectors. In exchanges with Atticus, he orders statues for various houses.[76] For example:

> Signa Megarica et Hermas, de quibus ad me scripsisti, vehementer exspecto. quicquid eiusdem generis habebis, dignum Academia tibi quod videbitur, ne dubitaris mittere et arcae nostrae confidito. genus hoc est voluptatis meae. quae γυμνασιώδη maxime sunt, ea quaero. Lentulus naves suas pollicetur.[77]

75. On Roman domestic displays, see, for example, Bartman 1991; Bergmann 1995; Petersen 2012.

76. The relevant passages are conveniently assembled in Marvin 1989, 41–43.

77. Cic. *Att.* 1.8.2 (= SB 5). I reproduce Shackleton Bailey's translation with slight modification.

> I am eagerly expecting the Megarian statues and the herms you wrote to me about. Anything you may have of the same sort which you think suitable for the Academy, don't hesitate to send it and trust my purse. This is how my fancy takes me. Things that are especially suitable for a lecture hall are what I want. Lentulus promises [the use of] his ships.

These lines present an especially rich contrast with Verres' actions. Cicero, too, is looking to accumulate many works of art and takes pleasure in the process. The objects of his desire are mass-produced for the art market.[78] Hence he does not have to worry about any potentially sacred objects. Furthermore, Cicero thinks about what works well for each space and orders statues with the appropriate motifs. He is not just looking to fill his houses, but wants to impress upon his guests that he knows what he is doing.[79] The names of artists or objects with unique histories do not matter to him. Copies and generic statues fulfill the desired decorative functions nicely.

Verres, by contrast, takes his unique treasures and piles them up where he finds space. They end up forgotten in courtyards and gardens where they are exposed to the elements. When Cicero turns to what happened to objects that the defendant allegedly stole from the island of Samos, he tells his audience:

> Quas iste tabulas illinc, quae signa sustulit! quae cognovi egomet apud istum in aedibus nuper, cum obsignandi gratia venissem. quae signa nunc, Verres, ubi sunt? illa quaero quae apud te nuper ad omnis columnas, omnibus etiam intercolumniis, in silva denique disposita sub divo vidimus.[80]

> What paintings, what statues that man took away from there! I myself recognized them in his house recently when I had gone there to seal it [as evidence]. Where are these statues now, Verres? I ask about those which I recently saw by all the pillars, even between all the pillars, in fact, placed in a thicket under the open sky.

78. Harris 2015, 402.

79. On Cicero's collecting habits and wider concepts of Roman decorative decorum, see Leen 1991 and Perry 2002, 154–57.

80. Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.50–51; cf. *Verr.* 2.1.61 for a similar scene.

The passage is replete with wordplay. Cicero identifies Verres' house as *aedes*. While the word can be used to refer to a grand domestic dwelling, it is also a common word for a temple, which is a reminder of the origins of many of the artistic treasures.[81] Next, Verres' garden becomes a *silva*, here a thicket, but more commonly referring to woodlands. The green spaces of the house are vast, but are an unkempt, jumbled mess. Finally, the choice of the phrase *sub divo*, with its etymological links to the adjective *divus*, divine, to refer to the open sky creates the sense that the gods are also watching the scene. Cicero transforms the defendant's house into a perverted sanctuary; neglect and excess mix in a space that is simultaneously too large (it contains woodlands) and too small (the statues do not all fit) for its function. The gods and the orator's audience look on in horror.

Things do not improve when Cicero takes us inside the rooms of one of Verres' houses. In one of the longest narratives of temple robbery in *Verrines* 2.4, the defendant adds a bronze statue of Diana from Segesta to his collection.[82] As so often, the community initially refuses to part with the work of art. It had been stolen by the Carthaginians and was then returned to them by Scipio Aemilianus following the sack of Carthage. Like the statue of Himera discussed earlier in this chapter, the Diana of Segesta is a celebration of the strong ties between Rome and a Sicilian community. Eventually the governor is successful in his quest, at which point Cicero expresses his outrage in two rhetorical questions:

> Verres Africani monumentis domum suam plenam stupri, plenam flagiti, plenam dedecoris ornabit? Verres temperantissimi sanctissimique viri monumentum, Dianae simulacrum virginis, in ea domo conlocabit in qua semper meretricum lenonumque flagitia versantur?[83]

> Will Verres decorate his house full of debauchery, full of scandal, full of disgrace with this monument of Africanus? Will Verres place the monument of a most moderate and excellent man, an image of the virgin Diana, in that house in which the scandalous behaviors of sex workers and procurers are constant?

81. The examples collated in *TLL* 1. 907.43–916. 10 (Prinz) suggest that the meaning "temple" is more common.

82. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.74–78.

83. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.83, cf. *Verr.* 2.4.71, where the candelabrum that Verres stole from the sons of Antiochus is now said to illuminate the governor's debaucheries.

Verres' house is a wholly inappropriate place for the statue. The surroundings insult the memory of Scipio and are especially scandalous for a virgin goddess. A brothel, so Cicero implies, would have required very different works of art.

The governor's rapacious accumulation leaves him with far more art than he knows what to do with. Even with access to multiple houses and no scruples about piling things on top of one another, he has to store some of his treasures with friends.[84] The exact extent of the defendant's collection, it seems, is unknown even to himself. All of this suggests that for Verres, works of art are no longer interesting once they have been acquired. He is motivated by the lust for new things and the challenges that obtaining them might pose. The goal of the art collector—to produce a beautiful collection and show it to guests—is lost on him.

Conclusion

According to Cicero, everything about Verres' interactions with art is inappropriate. He responds to treasures with strong emotions that leave him with a burning desire to acquire them. When he sees an object, all he can perceive is its beauty and material value. Its intended function is irrelevant. To him, sacred statues are works of bronze and marble that may be exquisite but have no deeper significance. Hence, as far as Verres is concerned, any object can be bought or taken. In his interpretation, the powers bestowed on him by the office of governor give him the authority to add anything he wants to his collections. His methods of acquisition are also inappropriate. They rely on violence and intimidation and often risk the destruction of the object. Unlike burglars, who use stealth and want to keep the treasures they target intact, Verres and his henchmen want to grab as much precious material as they can. They do not care about going undetected or about possible damage to the objects. This lack of concern is undoubtedly connected to the idea that Verres loses interest in his acquisitions as soon as they are in his home. There they are piled up and neglected in sorry scenes that bear no resemblance to a carefully curated domestic display.

The temple robber, then, is a wholly unique creature whose behavior does not parallel that of other humans. Although he visits sanctuaries, he is not a worshipper. Unlike a burglar, who puts his surroundings to per-

84. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.36.

verted use to gain access, the temple robber destroys what is around him. He has no fear of being caught, and violence is his weapon of choice. At the same time, since almost all temple robbers in Roman literary texts are high-ranking Roman citizens, they are also not pirates or bandits. Finally, the temple robber's lack of interest in his treasures shows that he is not an art collector. He is an unpredictable force who is driven by lust to accumulate or destroy. Hence Cicero struggles to define who Verres is in human terms:

> Non . . . furem sed ereptorem, non adulterum sed expugnatorem pudicitiae, non sacrilegum sed hostem sacrorum religionumque, non sicarium sed crudelissimum carnificem civium sociorumque in vestrum iudicium adduximus.[85]
>
> Not a thief, but a plunderer, not an adulterer, but a raider of chastity, not a temple robber, but an enemy of the holy and sacred, not a cutthroat, but a brutal butcher of citizens and allies I have brought before your court.

Only hyperbole and incomprehension will do for such a person.

85. Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.9.

THREE

The Temple Robber's Itinerary

Cicero concludes the *Verrines* with a prayer for the success of his prosecution.[1] One by one he invokes Jupiter, Juno, Ceres, and the other gods whom Verres allegedly harmed during his career. The prayer functions as a review of the *Verrines* as a whole and allows the orator to revisit some of the defendant's most outrageous offenses.[2] We are reminded that Verres plundered Minerva's temple at Syracuse, attacked the island of Delos, stole an object that was meant to become a votive offering in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus at Rome, and so on. Verres, it appears, was indiscriminate in selecting his targets and took treasures from all parts of the Mediterranean.

In this chapter, I show that the governor's movements are not random, but integral to Cicero's characterization. Verres follows what I term the temple robber's itinerary. Much as *sacrilegi* have unique ways of interacting with sacred spaces, as I showed in the previous chapter, they also have distinct travel patterns that take them to major sanctuaries with a long history of encounters with robbers and other threats.[3] Famous works of art, too, can establish connections between criminals as they pass through multiple hands. There is the sense that any temple robber worth mentioning has to visit certain places and steal certain things. Furthermore, authors place temple robbers in constant competition with one another. Since it is easy to rank different plunderers of the same site and since invective lends itself to hyperbole, every new nefarious visitor to the site proves to be greedier and more daring than his predecessors. Cicero's *Verrines* reveal the full invective

1. Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.184–89.

2. The list is incomplete since Verres omits minor local deities and instead, as von Albrecht has argued (2003, 209), privileges gods that are important to the city of Rome. For the connection between the prayer and the speeches as a whole, see also Lhommé 2008, 66.

3. Clusters of stories involving one site are not limited to narratives of temple robbery. MacBain (1982, 10–18) observes a similar pattern for communities that report prodigies.

potential of the temple robber's itinerary. The orator distorts or sets aside historical realities to place his villain into a pristine Mediterranean world that has never seen plunderers before Verres shows up in the 80s and 70s BCE.

Connecting Robbers

Before I turn to Verres' travels around the Mediterranean, it is worth taking a closer look at how the history of a site can tie violators of sacred property to each other. Livy's narratives concerning a series of robberies from Locri Epizephyrii in southern Italy in the third century BCE are instructive. The town's sanctuary of Proserpina housed a treasury and hence held out the promise of quick riches to would-be plunderers.[4] In chapter 1, I introduced the most famous Roman to lay hands on the site, the rapacious legate Q. Pleminius. When Pleminius arrives in 205 BCE, he quickly takes an interest in the sanctuary. History should have warned him against making an attack; in 276 BCE, Pyrrhus of Epirus had unsuccessfully attempted to plunder the same sanctuary that Pleminius now targets:

> Nec alia modo templa violata sed Proserpinae etiam intacti omni aetate thesauri, praeterquam quod a Pyrrho, qui cum magno piaculo sacrilegii sui manubias rettulit, spoliati dicebantur. . . . regiae naves laceratae naufragiis nihil in terram integri praeter sacram pecuniam deae quam asportabant extulerant.[5]
>
> Not only had the rest of the temples been violated, but they [Pleminius' men] were even said to have plundered the treasury of Proserpina, which had remained inviolate throughout the ages except for Pyrrhus, who returned his plunder with a great expiatory offering for his temple robbery. . . . The royal ships were broken by shipwreck, and nothing came back whole to dry land except for the sacred money of the goddess which they [Pyrrhus' men] had taken away.

By suffering shipwreck, Pyrrhus shares in a well-recognized form of punishment that gods inflict on temple robbers. Going back to Homer's *Odyssey*,

4. On the archaeological evidence, see Costabile 1992, 109–14.
5. Livy 29.8.9.

where Helios responds to the killing of the Cattle of the Sun by causing a fatal shipwreck, destruction often befalls ships carrying the plunderers of sacred spaces.[6] As a consequence of his wreck, Pyrrhus recognizes that the sanctuary is protected by powerful forces and responds by making restitution and a substantial additional offering. The Locrians tell visitors about what happened to the king as a warning that the goddess protects her possessions.[7] Taking money from the treasury is an act only a particularly daring villain would undertake. In the case of Pleminius, who ignores all advice about how to conduct himself, history repeats itself. Proserpina visits him and his men with madness and causes them to die painfully.[8]

In contrast to Pleminius' refusal to listen, the Roman Senate provides an example of taking the concerns of Proserpina's sanctuary at Locri seriously. In 200 BCE, when the Senate receives word that an unknown party has stolen money from the sanctuary and that various omens attest to an angry goddess, they immediately order an investigation and take steps to expiate the crime. Pleminius' gruesome death, which had happened some time previously, lends additional urgency to their actions; the senators are outraged that anyone would dare to touch the goddess' possessions after such an event.[9] They assume that people would be willing to learn from the stories told about the fate of past temple robbers.

Here we can once again see the fundamental differences between how temple robbers and other people respond to information. A normal audience, as represented by the senators, hears these narratives and draws conclusions about how to behave. Temple robbers, on the other hand, have no regard for a site's history. They see themselves as insulated from the past and refuse to learn from it. Just as they ignore the function and context of a sacred object, they also do not think of themselves as participants in interconnected events.

In Livy's narrative, Pleminius' failure to learn is particularly glaring because he is informed about a story involving a famous individual. Moreover, at least some members of Livy's audience would have likely been aware of Pyrrhus' mishap prior to this episode. In the *Verrines*, by contrast, Cicero often denies historical reality by saying nothing about a site's previous plun-

6. Hom. *Od.* 12.260–419. Earlier in the text, Locrian Ajax, who dragged Cassandra out of Athena's temple, is killed in a shipwreck (*Od.* 4.499–511).

7. At 29.18.7–8, the Locrians tell the Roman Senate that they explicitly warned Pleminius about what had happened to Pyrrhus.

8. See chapters 1 and 4.

9. Livy 31.12–13. This is the last attested temple robbery from the site.

derers. The orator's goal is to present Verres as the first plunderer of a site no matter how inaccurate such a claim may be. He therefore does not refer to other temple robbers by name.[10] It is up to the knowledge of individual members of the audience whether they can successfully connect Verres with past villains. But even if the links to the past are at times too obscure, Cicero's invective works even for those who do not have detailed knowledge of the history of various Greek sanctuaries. All one needs to know is that, according to Cicero, no one had quite as big an impact on the site as Verres.[11]

Connective Places: Verres in the East

During his career, Verres moves from Italy to the East, then back to Rome, and finally to Sicily.[12] Almost everywhere he goes he commits crimes that Cicero prompts his audience to identify as temple robberies. While the defendant's time as governor provides the most material, his earlier activities set the stage and are mentioned frequently throughout the *Verrines*. Verres is a villain from the start. In 84 BCE, his first major assignment as quaestor for Cn. Papirius Carbo in Cisalpine Gaul comes to an end when he abandons Carbo and his army after embezzling a considerable sum of money.[13] The theme of disloyalty continues in his next assignment. Four years after serving with Carbo, Verres joins the staff of Cn. Cornelius Dolabella in Cilicia. In Dolabella the future villain of the *Verrines* finds a kindred spirit; both men use their position to engage in plundering on a significant scale. When Dolabella is tried *de repetundis* after his return, his subordinate turns on him and becomes a key witness for the prosecution.[14]

Verres starts his career as a temple robber when he travels through Greece to his assignment with Dolabella. His first crime is narrated in a *praeteritio*:

10. Examples of good behavior, however, abound. See, for example, the various gifts by Roman generals discussed in chapter 2. All named individuals, except for Verres, seem to know how to treat sacred spaces properly.

11. In historiographic and epigraphic texts, a similar effect is achieved by calling someone a first in order to draw attention to the magnitude of their achievement (on which see chapter 4).

12. For overviews of Verres' career, see *RE* s.v. C. Verres (H. Habermehl); Broughton 1952, 61 and 81; Ricchieri 2020, 13–16.

13. See especially Cic. *Verr.* 1.11, 2.1.11, 2.1.34–39, 2.3.178. As noted in *RE* s.v. Papirius (38), Cn. Carbo (F. Münzer), the *Verrines* are the only evidence for the supposed abandonment of Carbo and his army, and the historical veracity of the episode is doubtful.

14. For Dolabella's career and his trial *de repetundis*, see Gruen 1966, 389–98.

> Iam quae iste signa, quas tabulas pictas ex Achaia sustulerit, non dicam hoc loco: est mihi alius locus ad hanc eius cupiditatem demonstrandam separatus. Athenis audistis ex aede Minervae grande auri pondus ablatum; dictum est hoc in Cn. Dolabellae iudicio. dictum? etiam aestimatum. huius consili non participem C. Verrem, sed principem fuisse reperietis.[15]
>
> Now what statues, what paintings that man removed from Achaia, I shall not talk about here; there is another place for me to demonstrate his acquisitiveness. You have heard that he took a large amount of gold from the temple of Minerva in Athens—it was mentioned at the trial of Cn. Dolabella. Mentioned? There were even specifics about its value. You will find that C. Verres was not just a participant in this deed, but the leader.

By making Verres the sole subject of the first sentence, the orator suggests that what had commonly been understood as Dolabella's crime should be attributed to Verres, and only to him. Moreover, the pointed insignificance with which Cicero treats the theft from the Acropolis indicates that larger and far more spectacular robberies are to come.

In the literary tradition, however, stealing from Athena's sanctuary is not something that should be treated in a single subordinate clause. The site was no stranger to plunderers, and those who lay hands on it show that they are at war with Athens and, by extension, the entire Greek world. The Persian king Xerxes is the paradigmatic attacker of the sanctuary. Greek literary treatments of his sack of Athens in 480 BCE fashion the attack on the Acropolis into an example of supreme impiety. In Aeschylus' *Persians*, it even becomes a reason for the eventual defeat of the Persian army. When she wants to learn what led to her son's defeat in Greece, Queen Atossa, with the help of the Persian elders, summons the ghost of her husband, Darius. According to the former king, the failure of the campaign is a "recompense for hubris and godless pride."[16] He elaborates:

> οἳ γῆν μολόντες Ἑλλάδ' οὐ θεῶν βρέτη
> ἠδοῦντο συλᾶν οὐδὲ πιμπράναι νεώς·
> βωμοὶ δ'ἄιστοι, δαιμόνων θ' ἱδρύματα
> πρόρριζα φύρδην ἐξανίσταται βάθρων.[17]

15. Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.45.
16. ὕβρεως ἄποινα κἀθέων φρονημάτων (Aesch. *Pers.* 808).
17. Aesch. *Pers.* 809–12.

> When they [the Persian Army] came to the land of Greece, they were not ashamed to carry off the images of the gods and burn the temples. Altars are gone and the houses of divine powers have been ripped up from their foundations in utter confusion.

Temple robbery and destruction blend seamlessly as Xerxes seeks to destroy the Greeks' ability to worship their gods. This is his sole motivation; he is not interested in riches, but in removing the gods of his enemies. Such behavior must inevitably prompt a divine response.[18]

Another infamous plunderer of the Acropolis looks at the sanctuary as a source of wealth to alleviate his financial troubles. At the beginning of the third century BCE, the tyrant Lachares lays hands on the site's treasures. The literary record has left us with only fragmentary glimpses of his turbulent rule, but they paint a consistent picture of cruelty and disregard for the welfare of the Athenians.[19] When Demetrius Poliorcetes besieges the city and tries to starve out the inhabitants, the tyrant ignores the general suffering and holds a banquet for his friends.[20] Lachares' political fortunes take a turn for the worse when Athens decides to surrender and he is forced to flee. Before he does so, however, he goes to the Acropolis to take as much precious metal as he can to make his exile easier.[21] Here we get the most famous part of Lachares' story; allegedly he even strips the statue of Athena of its golden finery.[22] In his quest for money, he violates and embarrasses

18. Herodotus' portrayal of Xerxes' treatment of temples is broadly similar, but devotes more space to plundering. The temple of Apollo at Abae, for example, is plundered and then burned (καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἱρὸν συλήσαντες ἐνέπρησαν, 8.33). The close proximity of ἱρόν and συλήσαντες reminds the reader of the Greek word for temple robbery, ἱεροσυλία. Hartog (1988, 335–37), discusses the relationship between the insatiable desire for gain attributed to a despot in ancient Greek thought and Xerxes' treatment of Greek sanctuaries.

19. My narrative follows Paus. 1.25.7–8. For an overview of the historical record and its problems, see Wheatley and Dunn 2020, 301–17. The invective elements are so overwhelming that we cannot be certain about the historicity of any of Lachares' actions; Thonemann (2005, 64) remarks that the historiographical tradition fashioned the tyrant into an "improbable stage villain."

20. Ath. 9.405f.

21. One might compare Hannibal, who, when he is exiled from Carthage, departs with a large amount of loot. He must go to great lengths to protect his treasures against potential thieves (Nep. *Han.* 9–10).

22. Paus. 1.25.7 and 1.29.16. See also Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 379d; Ath. 9.406a. The word choice in all of these passages suggests that Lachares removed clothing, but did not peel gold off the statue itself. Plutarch is the most explicit; Lachares, according to him, "ren-

the goddess and shows himself as entirely unrestrained by propriety. He is a creature of insatiable greed.

Shortly after he leaves Athens, the tyrant's acquisitiveness meets its match. On his journey through Boeotia, bandits catch sight of the traveler who is carrying huge amounts of precious metals with him. They decide to murder him and take his treasure for themselves. Unlike Xerxes, Lachares does not face divine retribution directly, but the temple robbery is nevertheless the cause of his death. The fruits of his plundering attracted unwanted attention and made him the victim of even greedier men.

By plundering the Acropolis, Verres also follows in the footsteps of Sulla. During the First Mithridatic War, the city had sided with Mithridates Eupator against the Romans. When Sulla captures the strategically important city in 86 BCE, he combines brutal slaughter with widespread plundering. The literary sources foreground the human suffering caused by the event. While there are some scattered remarks about looting, details are rarely provided.[23] Occasionally, however, an author briefly accuses the general of plundering the Acropolis. Appian notes that Sulla had the city's political leaders executed and then remarks that "close to forty pounds of gold and about six hundred pounds of silver were gathered from the Acropolis."[24] The historian does not explicitly identify the act as illicit, and none of his vocabulary suggests violence. It hardly constitutes an accusation of temple robbery. Nevertheless, the act draws a connection between the Roman general and Xerxes. He, too, does not seem content with merely taking possession of the city, but wants to destroy it. By laying hands on the treasures of the Acropolis, Sulla confirms that he poses an existential threat to Athens.

Both Xerxes' and Sulla's acts become embedded as traumatic memories in the fabric of the city.[25] Lachares' plundering is on a different scale, but in

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dered [Athena] naked" (γυμνὴν ἐποίησεν). Lapatin 2001, 88–89, considers the removal of Athena's clothing impractical and implausible and argues that Lachares must have taken movable goods from elsewhere. Despite all this, Cicero may have understood Lachares as peeling off the gold; as discussed in chapter 2, at Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.54 Verres treats a statue of Diana at Perga in the same way.

23. Plut. *Sull.* 14, for example, represents the sack as a destructive rampage that kills countless people.

24. συνηνέχθη δ' ἐκ τῆς ἀκροπόλεως χρυσίου μὲν ἐς τεσσαράκοντα λίτρας μάλιστα, ἀργύρου δ' ἐς ἑξακοσίας (App. *Mith.* 39 [152]).

25. For commemorations of the Persian attack, see, for example, Kousser 2009 and Meyer 2020. Sulla's attack, by contrast, does not have monuments associated with it. Instead, the

his case, too, the crime reflects his general character; although he is the ruler of Athens, he consistently acts as an enemy of his people. Furthermore, all three men are unable to control their impulses. Lachares cannot keep his greed in check, whereas Xerxes and Sulla seek to punish the inhabitants of the city for their political choices. Those who plunder the Acropolis show not only their disregard for the gods, but also that they lack moderation and self-control. Verres' first theft, therefore, makes a statement about his destructive tendencies and the extent of his greed.

Verres next turns his attention to the island of Delos, which provides the occasion for the first detailed narrative of a temple robbery in the *Verrines*. The passage contains several tropes that we saw in the previous chapter:

> Delum venit. ibi ex fano Apollinis religiosissimo noctu clam sustulit signa pulcherrima atque antiquissima, eaque in onerariam navem suam conicienda curavit. postridie cum fanum spoliatum viderent ii qui Delum incolebant, graviter ferebant; est enim tanta apud eos eius fani religio atque antiquitas ut in eo loco ipsum Apollinem natum esse arbitrentur. verbum tamen facere non audebant, ne forte ea res ad Dolabellam ipsum pertineret. tum subito tempestates coortae sunt maximae, iudices, ut non modo proficisci cum cuperet Dolabella non posset sed vix in oppido consisteret: ita magni fluctus eiciebantur. hic navis illa praedonis istius, onusta signis religiosis, expulsa atque eiecta fluctu frangitur; in litore signa illa Apollinis reperiuntur; iussu Dolabellae reponuntur. tempestas sedatur, Dolabella Delo proficiscitur.[26]
>
> He came to Delos. There, from the most sacred shrine of Apollo, secretly by night he removed the most beautiful and ancient statues and had them piled into his transport ship. On the next day, when they saw that the shrine had been plundered, those who lived on Delos took the news badly. For among them the religious status of the shrine and its antiquity were held to be so great that they believe that Apollo himself was born in this place. They did not dare to say anything, in case Dolabella himself had something to do with it. Then suddenly, judges, very great storms arose, so that Dolabella was

piles of rubble and damaged buildings remain part of the landscape until efforts to rebuild get underway in the 60s BCE (Hoff 1997).

26. Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.46.

> not only unable to set out when he wanted but also barely managed to stay put in the town, such large waves arose. At this point, the ship of that contemptible robber, weighed down with religious statuary, was broken up, expelled, and tossed out by a wave. Those statues of Apollo were found on the shore; they were put back by order of Dolabella. The storm subsided; Dolabella set out from Delos.

The quick transition between the arrival at Delos and the theft creates the impression that Verres came to the island for no other purpose than to steal something. It is no surprise that he targets the "most revered shrine of Apollo"—the most important sanctuary of the island would also hold its most precious treasures. Since Verres enters the sanctuary "secretly" and "by night," there can be no doubt that he intends to commit a crime. After all, there would have been no need for such precautions if his acts had been officially sanctioned. The idea that the statues are the "most beautiful and ancient" states the guiding principles behind Verres' collecting habits; for an object to interest him, it needs to be of distinguished beauty and value.

People are shocked when Verres attacks the sanctuary, whose security was unthreatened before this point:

> Apollinemne tu Delium spoliare ausus es? illine tu templo tam antiquo, tam sancto, tam religioso manus impias ac sacrilegas adferre conatus es? si in pueritia non iis artibus ac disciplinis institutus eras ut ea quae litteris mandata sunt disceres atque cognosceres, ne postea quidem, cum in ea ipsa loca venisti, potuisti accipere id quod est proditum memoria ac litteris, Latonam ex longo errore et fuga gravidam et iam ad pariendum temporibus exactis confugisse Delum atque ibi Apollinem Dianamque peperisse? qua ex opinione hominum illa insula eorum deorum sacra putatur, tantaque eius auctoritas religionis et est et semper fuit ut ne Persae quidem, cum bellum toti Graeciae, dis hominibusque, indixissent, et mille numero navium classem ad Delum adpulissent, quicquam conarentur aut violare aut attingere. hoc tu fanum depopulari, homo improbissime atque amentissime, audebas?[27]
>
> You dared to plunder the temple of Delian Apollo? You attempted to lay your impious and sacrilegious hands on that temple so ancient, so

27. Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.47–48.

> sacred, so revered? If in childhood you were not instructed in these matters so as to have learned and known what is passed down in literature, did you not later, when you came to the very place, hear about what is transmitted orally and in writing, namely that Latona was pregnant and, after a long and meandering flight, right when it was time to give birth she sought refuge at Delos and bore Apollo and Diana there? Ever since then, human opinion has considered this island of the gods sacred, and its religious authority is so great, and has always been [so great], that not even the Persians, when they had declared war against all of Greece, against gods and humans, and put ashore on Delos with a fleet of a thousand ships, attempted to touch or violate anything. Is this the shrine you dared to plunder, you most wicked and insane man?

Cicero expresses outrage at Verres' apparent lack of education.[28] To emphasize his point, he invites a comparison between the defendant, Darius, and Xerxes that allows him to stress that even the Persian kings recognized the island as a universally sacred space.

The idea that everyone, even enemies of Greece who follow different religious practices, respects the sanctity of Delos can already be found in Herodotus.[29] When Darius makes his way west, the Cyclades suffer greatly. On Naxos, the Persians even burn temples.[30] For the inhabitants of Delos, these events are a warning and they decide to flee. Darius' admiral Datis is surprised and sends them the following message:

> "Ἄνδρες ἱροί, τί φεύγοντες οἴχεσθε, οὐκ ἐπιτήδεα καταγνόντες κατ᾽ ἐμεῦ; ἐγὼ γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπὶ τοσοῦτό γε φρονέω καί μοι ἐκ βασιλέος ὧδε ἐπέσταλται, ἐν τῇ χώρῃ οἱ δύο θεοὶ ἐγένοντο, ταύτην μηδὲν σίνεσθαι, μήτε αὐτὴν τὴν χώρην μήτε τοὺς οἰκήτορας αὐτῆς. νῦν ὦν καὶ ἄπιτε ἐπὶ τὰ ὑμέτερα αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν νῆσον νέμεσθε."[31]

> "Holy men, why did you flee and judge me incorrectly? For I and the

28. Cf. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.106–8, where Cicero prefaces the narrative of Verres' attack on Henna with an excursus about the history of the site, since the defendant had apparently missed being educated about this matter of common knowledge.

29. Hdt. 6.95–98.

30. Hdt. 6.96. Scott 2005 *ad loc.* connects the destruction of the sanctuaries with a desire to punish the gods.

31. Hdt. 6.97.

> command of the king that sent me here intend that no harm will be done to this island on which the two gods were born, neither to the land itself nor to its inhabitants. Now return to your land and dwell on your island."

Every aspect of Datis' message signals that he takes the sacred status of the island seriously. The fact that it is the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis makes Delos inviolate even as other sanctuaries in the area are destroyed with impunity. In order to underscore the sincerity of his intentions, the admiral burns a large amount of incense at an altar, showing that he respects not only the Delians, but also their gods. Then he departs.[32]

This is what Cicero is thinking of at the start of the scene when he lectures Verres on the importance of Delos. The defendant is the only one so ignorant that he would attack the island. To make this rhetoric work, the orator has to sidestep the island's more recent history. During the First Mithridatic War, two of Mithridates' officers, Archelaus and Menophanes, led a destructive attack on Delos.[33] Pausanias is particularly interested in Menophanes' actions.[34] He tells us about a wooden statue of Apollo that was brought from Delos to Cape Maleas in southern Laconia.[35] It was removed from its original setting when Menophanes, after killing the foreign inhabitants and many of the Greeks on the island, proceeded to "carry off . . . all the votive offerings, sell the women and children into slavery and raze Delos itself to the ground."[36] The act does not go unpunished. As soon as he sets sail, the surviving Delians attack him and sink his ships. The wooden statue is carried off by the waves and eventually washes up at its new location. It is therefore a reminder both of Menophanes' atrocities in Delos and of the notion that such acts will be punished.[37]

At the time of Verres' visit, Delos was recovering from the depredations

32. On his way back to Persia following the Battle of Marathon, Datis discovers that one of his men plundered a statue of Apollo from the Greek mainland. He leaves it as a dedication on Delos, once more confirming his respect for the island (Hdt. 6.118).

33. Rauh (1993, 68–70) considers the sack instrumental in the decline of Delos as a trading center.

34. The most extensive surviving record of Archelaus' actions is found at App. *Mith.* 28 (108–11).

35. Paus. 3.23.3–5.

36. κατασύρας . . . πάντα δὲ τὰ ἀναθήματα, προσεξανδραποδισάμενος δὲ καὶ γυναῖκας καὶ τέκνα, καὶ αὐτὴν ἐς ἔδαφος κατέβαλε τὴν Δῆλον (Paus. 3.23.4).

37. Pausanias interprets the attack on the ships as a divine punishment. Furthermore, Mithridates' eventual suicide is presented as Apollo's revenge for what the king's troops did to Delos (Paus. 3.23.5).

of Mithridates' men and was trying to rebuild its political standing.[38] Cicero ignores this episode from the island's recent history. In his version of events, Verres is the person who singlehandedly destroys a peaceful and prosperous sanctuary for his personal gain. The defendant's attempt to sneak away with a pile of sacred riches becomes the defining moment of danger for Delos. Whereas previous visitors understood that the island was universally held to be a sacred space, Verres now shows that there are riches to be had.

Verres' attack threatens to put the island in a precarious position should others choose to follow his lead. While Dolabella orders the restoration of the stolen artifacts, it is Apollo, not a Roman official, who reminds everyone that the island is sacred. By causing the shipwreck, he exposes Verres' crimes and shows what happens to those who plunder his temple. Only the gods, it seems, can effectively oppose Cicero's villain and undo some of the harm he has done. The shipwreck proves to be only a temporary setback, and Verres swiftly moves on to new crimes. Athens and Delos, after all, mark the beginning of his career as a temple robber.

Some years after the *Verrines*, Cicero's narrative finds echoes in the *Lex Gabinia Calpurnia de insula Delo*, a decree from 58 BCE in which the consuls A. Gabinius and L. Calpurnius Piso granted the island immunity from taxes and reaffirmed its importance following the wars with Mithridates and Pompey's defeat of the pirates.[39] Commentators have noted verbal similarities between the highly fragmentary inscription and Cicero's Delos narrative.[40] Both present a narrative arc in which the island has to be restored to its former status following a catastrophe. In the inscription, the birthplace of Apollo and Diana, with its ancient and revered sanctuary, has suffered greatly at the hands of pirates.[41] These miscreants, it implies, took advantage of Delos' weakened status following Mithridates' attack. In the inscription, Mithridates becomes the first plunderer of the site. Following in his footsteps, other bandits and temple robbers learn that the sacred island is an appropriate target for an attack. The *Lex Gabinia Calpurnia* seeks to undo this damage by reaffirming the sanctity of Delos. It, too, rewrites the history of the site for rhetorical effect. More broadly, in the logic of narratives of temple robbery, an individual's actions threaten to set off a cascade of attacks. Every famous sanctuary has a prominent individual who first dared to sack it. The identity of this individual can change depending on the rhe-

38. Between the sack in the early 80s BCE and 58 BCE, Delos' position can best be described as precarious (see Ferrary 1980).

39. *RS* no. 22.

40. *RS* no. 22 *ad* l. 11 with Moreau 1980 passim.

41. *RS* no. 22, ll. 8–15.

torical needs. For Cicero, Verres is the first person to attack Delos. For the consuls of the year 58, it is Mithridates Eupator.

When we return to the *Verrines*, we follow the defendant's journey to the East. Cicero recalls thefts on Chios and Tenedos and in Erythrae and Halicarnassus. At all of these sites, Verres is especially keen on sculptures, which remain an interest of his throughout the text. Once the defendant gets to Samos, Cicero describes his impact on the famous sanctuary of Juno:

> Illa vero expugnatio fani antiquissimi et nobilissimi Iunonis Samiae quam luctuosa Samiis fuit, quam acerba toti Asiae, quam clara apud omnis, quam nemini vestrum inaudita! de qua expugnatione cum legati ad C. Neronem in Asiam Samo venissent, responsum tulerunt eius modi querimonias, quae ad legatos populi Romani pertinerent, non ad praetorem sed Romam deferri oportere. quas iste tabulas illinc, quae signa sustulit! quae cognovi egomet apud istum in aedibus nuper, cum obsignandi gratia venissem.[42]
>
> Indeed, how grievous that assault on the ancient shrine and the most celebrated Juno of Samos was to the inhabitants of Samos, how bitter it was to all of Asia, how famous it became among all peoples—no one among you has not heard of it! When delegates from Samos came to C. Nero in Asia regarding this assault, they were told that complaints of this kind, which pertained to a legate of the Roman people, had to be brought not to a praetor, but to Rome. What paintings, what statues he took from that place! I myself saw them at his house recently, when I went there to secure the evidence.

The narrative presents a version of the *Verrines* in miniature. Verres brutally attacks a famous sanctuary; the word Cicero uses twice to describe the defendant's actions is *expugnatio*, which is normally used for military attacks. It is used hyperbolically here and sums up the overwhelming and destructive nature of the defendant's actions. The tale of the attack spreads widely, but authorities refuse to deal with the matter even though the evidence of the crime can readily be seen by anyone who cares to look.[43] Furthermore, the narrative recalls the close connection between Verres, Darius,

42. Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.50.

43. Verres was assisted in his thefts by a Chian citizen named Charidemus. Charidemus was prosecuted for his crimes, but acquitted because the court identified Verres as solely responsible (Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.52).

and Xerxes that Cicero introduced earlier in the speech. The defendant is restaging the Persian Wars in reverse; Persian troops plundered sites, including Samos, on their way west; he does so while moving east.[44] Once more the most appropriate point of reference for Verres' actions is the behavior of a general at war with Greek civilization.

Cicero's villain does not finish there. In Pamphylia, he allegedly takes "everything" from Aspendos, including a famous statue of a citharist, and lays waste to a sanctuary of Diana at Perga.[45] Verres' activities in the East insert him into the ranks of cruel tyrants and destructive foreign enemies, the worst temple robbers. He has the logistical resources of an army at his disposal and moves across the territory with the speed and thoroughness of a conquering general. The objects he plunders range from generically beautiful things—especially paintings and statues—to items of local importance. When it comes to choosing where to steal from, he mixes famous sites with smaller sanctuaries. At well-known locations, his activities can readily be compared to those of other famous people who respected the site. In all cases, as can be expected from an invective assault on Verres, the defendant is the worst attacker that a site has ever seen.

Connective Objects: Verres in the West

Once Verres gets to Sicily, Cicero starts to compare the defendant's behavior to that of other Romans. Without fail, even in times of war, Cicero's Romans have treated the island's sanctuaries in an exemplary fashion. If anyone plundered these places before Verres, it was the Carthaginians.[46] Whereas in the Greek world the governor steps into the footsteps of previous temple robbers, the Sicilian narrative is a study of contrasts; a Roman should know that the island's sacred property must be respected. A further shift between the Greek and the Sicilian narratives is an increased emphasis on objects. Verres takes a considerable number of historically significant artifacts, and these connect him to individuals from the past. Verres' movement in the West illustrates that the temple robber's itinerary does not just consist of places, but also of things.

One episode that highlights the importance of the history of artifacts

44. Pausanias tells us that in 540 BCE, the Persians burned the temple during a raid (Paus. 7.5.4).

45. Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.53–54.

46. As is the case with the statues from Himera/Thermae at Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.86–88, discussed in chapter 2.

stolen by Verres is set on the island of Melita, modern-day Malta. As part of Verres' province, the island was subject to his depredations:

> Fanum est Iunonis antiquum, quod tanta religione semper fuit ut non modo illis Punicis bellis . . . sed etiam hac praedonum multitudine semper inviolatum sanctumque fuerit. quin etiam hoc memoriae proditum est, classe quondam Masinissae regis ad eum locum adpulsa praefectum regium dentis eburneos incredibili magnitudine e fano sustulisse et eos in Africam portasse Masinissaeque donasse. regem primo delectatum esse munere; post, ubi audisset unde essent, statim certos homines in quinqueremi misisse qui eos dentis reponerent. itaque in iis scriptum litteris Punicis fuit regem Masinissam imprudentem accepisse, re cognita reportandos reponendosque curasse. erat praeterea magna vis eboris, multa ornamenta, in quibus eburneae Victoriae antiquo opere ac summa arte perfectae. haec iste omnia, ne multis morer, uno impetu atque uno nuntio per servos Venerios, quos eius rei causa miserat, tollenda atque asportanda curavit.[47]
>
> There is a very old shrine of Juno, which has always been held in such religious reverence that it was left undisturbed and sacred not only back then during the Punic Wars but also nowadays by the many pirates. Indeed, there is even a story that when King Masinissa's fleet landed there, the prefect of the king took ivory tusks of enormous size from the temple, brought them to Africa, and gave them to Masinissa. At first, the king was delighted by the gift. Afterward, when he heard where it came from, he immediately sent some men in quinqueremes to put back the tusks. And so it was inscribed on them in Punic letters; King Masinissa had accepted [the tusks] without knowing anything about them. When he became aware of the facts, he took care that they were brought back and put back in place. Aside from the tusks, there was a large amount of ivory [in the temple], many ornaments, among them an ivory Victory of ancient workmanship and the highest craft. To not delay further, all these things that man [Verres] took care to take away and carry off with the help of temple slaves of Venus in one attack and through one message.

47. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.103–4.

As so often in the *Verrines*, Melita had no reason to worry about the safety of its sacred sites until Verres took an interest in them.[48] Masinissa's actions should have modeled how to treat Juno's treasures appropriately. Neither man ever sets foot on the island; in Masinissa's case the idea for the removal of the tusks comes from one of his admirals, and an unspecified group of men brings the objects back to the island. Verres, by contrast, initiates the theft, but lets temple slaves from the sanctuary of Venus at Eryx, who regularly act as his henchmen throughout the speeches, commit the actual temple robbery.[49] Cicero reinforces the contrast between the two by using parallel grammatical constructions to describe their actions; in the inscription that he quotes, two gerundive phrases and the verb *curare*, to take care, show what Masinissa did once he learned that he had been the recipient of stolen goods. At the end of the passage, two gerundive phrases and the verb *curare* show Verres ordering the removal of the items. He thereby undoes the king's appropriately reverent actions. He also takes objects that are inscribed (albeit in a foreign language) with evidence of their sacred status.

A second story presents a more tenuous encounter between Verres and a historically significant object. *Verrines* 2.4 opens with a theft from the house of a man named Gaius Heius in Messana. A domestic space is not a sanctuary, but the orator attempts to convince his audience that its statuary is of considerable religious importance:

> Erat apud Heium sacrarium magna cum dignitate in aedibus a maioribus traditum perantiquum, in quo signa pulcherrima quattuor summo artificio, summa nobilitate, quae non modo istum hominem ingeniosum et intellegentem, verum etiam quemvis nostrum, quos iste idiotas appellat, delectare possent, unum Cupidinis marmoreum Praxiteli; nimirum didici etiam, dum in istum inquiro, artificum nomina. idem, opinor, artifex eiusdem modi Cupidinem fecit illum qui est Thespiis, propter quem Thespiae visuntur; nam alia visendi causa nulla est. atque ille L. Mummius, cum Thespiadas, quae ad

48. In his version of Masinissa's story, Valerius Maximus briefly states that Pyrrhus had also stolen tusks from the temple (Val. Max. 1.1.ext.2). There are no other accounts of that theft.

49. For Verres' use of the slaves, see, e.g., *Verr.* 2.3.50 and 2.3.102, where they aggressively help to collect taxes. The sanctuary of Venus at Eryx was of special interest to Verres, and he regularly meddled in its affairs or used its resources for his personal gain (see Martorana 1979).

> aedem Felicitatis sunt, ceteraque profana ex illo oppido signa tolleret, hunc marmoreum Cupidinem, quod erat consecratus, non attigit.[50]
>
> There was in the house of Heius a *sacrarium* of great renown passed down from his ancestors and very old. In it, there were four very beautiful statues of the highest workmanship and greatest distinction, which could delight not only such a refined and intelligent man as Verres, but even one of us, whom he calls commoners. One of these marble statues was a Cupid of Praxiteles—I learned the names of the artists, of course, while I was making inquiries about Verres. The same artist, I think, made a Cupid of the same kind, which is in Thespiae. It is why people visit Thespiae, since there is no other reason to see the town. And the famous Lucius Mummius, although he removed the "Women of Thespiae" (which are at the temple of Felicitas) and other unconsecrated statues from that town, did not lay hands on this marble Cupid, since it was consecrated.

This part of Heius' house is identified as a *sacrarium*, a word derived from the adjective *sacer*, sacred. Cicero's terminology poses a challenge. The orator describes a space that is far more elaborate than a conventional household shrine. He prompts his audience to imagine a sanctuary attached to a house rather than a small area set aside for worship.[51] The reference to the history of the space—it has been sacred to generations of Heius' family—and the names of the artists further facilitate a slippage between a domestic space for worship and a public sanctuary. This is a site with a long history, many visitors (Cicero mentions that Heius always welcomes visiting Romans), and works of a famous artist.[52] The invocation of Praxiteles' name also facilitates a link to Roman history; during the sack of Thespiae, Mummius modeled how a Roman should treat a sacred work of art by the renowned sculptor. Once more, Verres does not behave as he should.

Going beyond Cicero, the Cupid not only connects Verres to the exemplary past, but also to later Roman temple robbers who follow in his footsteps. Pausanias provides an overview of the object's history:

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50. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.4.

51. For two attempts to reconstruct Heius' *sacrarium*, see Zimmer 1989, 496–507, and Baldo 2004, 221–23. On the appearance of regular household shrines, see Bowes 2015, esp. 210–16.

52. Heius' Cupid is unlikely to be an actual work of Praxiteles. It and the other statues were likely locally produced copies of famous works of art (see Corso 2012).

> πρῶτον δὲ τὸ ἄγαλμα κινῆσαι τοῦ Ἔρωτος λέγουσι Γάιον δυναστεύσαντα ἐν Ῥώμῃ, Κλαυδίου δὲ ὀπίσω Θεσπιεῦσιν ἀποπέμψαντος Νέρωνα αὖθις δεύτερα ἀνάσπαστον ποιῆσαι. καὶ τὸν μὲν φλὸξ αὐτόθι διέφθειρε· τῶν δὲ ἀσεβησάντων ἐς τὸν θεὸν ὁ μὲν ἀνθρώπῳ στρατιώτῃ διδοὺς ἀεὶ τὸ αὐτὸ σύνθημα μετὰ ὑπούλου χλευασίας ἐς τοσοῦτο προήγαγε θυμοῦ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὥστε σύνθημα διδόντα αὐτὸν διεργάζεται, Νέρωνι δὲ παρὲξ ἢ τὰ ἐς τὴν μητέρα ἐστὶ καὶ ἐς γυναῖκας γαμετὰς ἐναγῆ τε καὶ ἀνέραστα τολμήματα.[53]
>
> The first to move the statue of Eros is said to have been Gaius [Caligula], the Roman emperor. Claudius sent it back to the people of Thespiae, but Nero had it dragged back [to Rome] a second time. There, a fire destroyed it. One of those who had acted impiously against the gods [i.e., Caligula] always gave the same password to a soldier with a suppressed sneer and provoked the man into such a fit of rage that he was killed while giving the password. Nero, on the other hand, in addition to the acts against his mother, also committed unholy and cruel crimes against his wives.

In the passage, stealing this particular statue becomes an activity for bad emperors. Both Caligula and Nero exhibit character flaws beyond temple robbery; Caligula shows a fatal lack of respect for the people charged with guarding his safety, and Nero maltreats his family. As so often in Roman narratives of temple robbery, abusing people and stealing sacred objects are closely linked.

Furthermore, when we look at the history of the statue, we see that the Cupid of Thespiae is an especially interesting choice for two emperors with rich histories of sexual impropriety.[54] The statue commemorated Praxiteles' affair with the *hetaira* Phryne. After she had been his model for the Cnidian Aphrodite, he wanted to thank her by giving her a sculpture of her choosing. Phryne picked the Cupid, which Praxiteles considered a representation of the desire he felt for her, and promptly dedicated it in

53. Paus. 9.27.3–4. Plin. *HN* 36.22 notes that the statue could be seen at the Porticus of Octavia in Nero's day.

54. For Caligula, e.g., Suet. *Calig.* 24–25 (accusations of incest); for Nero, e.g., Suet. *Ner.* 28–29 (affairs) and 35 (failed marriages) and Tac. *Ann.* 13.12 (affairs and first marital trouble with Octavia), 14.59–64 (the end of the marriage with Octavia) and 15.37 (affairs).

the sanctuary at Thespiae.[55] From the beginning, therefore, this is a sacred work of art, but one that commemorates a passionate sexual relationship. The statue subsequently became a tourist attraction and the best-known work of art in the community.[56] As the centerpiece of the sanctuary of Eros, its meaning shifted over time from being an embodiment of male desire to symbolizing women's hope for happy and harmonious marriages.[57] The statue is therefore inappropriate for Caligula and Nero on several levels. It is a sacred object of special relevance to women and represents the opposite of either emperor's domestic life. Their behavior reflects the lust and passion that inspired the statue, but they do not understand its wider religious and cultural significance.

In the Heius narrative, Cicero highlights the Cupid because of its relationship with a similar object that has a long history as a sacred artifact. The statue allows him to compare Verres with Mummius and show yet again how the governor does not live up to Roman standards of behavior. At a later point in history, a Cupid by Praxiteles catches the attention of two bad emperors and allows readers to compare them to Verres.[58] Stealing the Cupid is not just a temple robbery, but a wider signal that someone has trouble controlling his passions.[59] Much as places facilitate comparisons between temple robbers, so do objects. There are, Cicero avers, plenty of examples of how to treat precious and sacred artifacts properly. The defendant either does not know about them or chooses to ignore them. In either case, he is unfit to serve as a representative of Rome.

Many of Verres' thefts are not accompanied by descriptions of what was taken. We might get details about the material or type of artifact (for example, "silver plates" or "several statues"), but, unlike with the tusks or the Cupid, we cannot identify a specific object that Verres is accused of taking.[60] There is simply too much to talk about, especially when it comes to thefts from private households. In sanctuaries and public spaces, however, the defendant is often accused of taking specific, significant objects. These,

55. Ath. 13.591a–b.

56. In addition to Cicero's brief remark in the *Verrines*, see Str. 9.2.25.

57. Gutzwiller 2004, 404–9.

58. Miles 2008, 252–59, refers to Caligula and Nero as the "Verrine Emperors."

59. Verres' emotions in Heius' house closely mirror those on display when he steals another significant object with a rich history at the end of the speech, a sculpture of Sappho by Silanion. On this theft, see Rosenmeyer 2007.

60. On the lack of details, see Frazel 2005, 369, and 2009, 73–78; Frazel argues that Cicero's brief presentation is inspired by legal conventions in a trial for *furtum* (theft).

in turn, allow people to construct a map of Verres' activities and remember the locations that he damaged. In Syracuse, Cicero claims, this becomes a task for tour guides:

> Itaque, iudices, ii qui hospites ad ea quae visenda sunt solent ducere et unum quidque ostendere, quos illi mystagogos vocant, conversam iam habent demonstrationem suam. nam ut ante demonstrabant quid ubique esset, item nunc quid undique ablatum sit ostendunt.[61]
>
> Therefore, judges, those who used to take guests to the things they need to see and show them each one (those whom they call *mystagogoi*) now do the opposite of their tour. For when previously they indicated where everything was, now they reveal what has been taken away from each place.

Visitors to the city can tour the signs of Verres' destruction for themselves and hear a description of what they are missing. The guides do for visitors what Cicero does for his audience; they attempt to make visible the evidence of the defendant's crimes through their narratives.[62] The guides are appropriately called *mystagogoi*, people who initiate others into a mystery cult. They, too, reveal hidden things.[63] Each object that Verres takes is presented in the *Verrines* as a grievous loss to an individual or community. These artifacts allow Cicero to talk about how the governor failed to live up to an exemplary past and ignored easily recognizable signs of an item's sacred significance. Both when it concerns places and when it concerns specific objects, the temple robber's itinerary shocks and prompts comparisons with the past.

Within a wider Mediterranean context, the actions of the *mystagogoi* that the orator describes here bear some resemblance to the Lindian Chronicle. In this inscription dating to 99 BCE, the citizens of Lindos on Rhodes cataloged the various precious objects that had been lost from the inventory of the sanctuary of Athena over the years.[64] These include items that connect the sanctuary to the mythological past, such as a silver cup dedicated

61. Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.132.

62. For Cicero's attempts in the *Verrines* to appeal to the imagination of his readers and ask them to picture Verres' impact, see Vasaly 1993, 128–30.

63. I therefore do not think we should understand Cicero's word choice as a joke of sorts (Baldo 2004 *ad loc.*) or as simply referring to ordinary guides (Lazzeretti 2006 *ad loc.*).

64. For a text and translation, see Higbie 2003, 18–49. For a summary, see Shaya 2005.

by Minos, two shields given to Athena by Heracles, and various offerings by heroes of the Trojan War. They also include gifts from otherwise unknown individuals, the community as a whole, and various foreigners. The inscription finishes with a catalog of epiphanies through which Athena saved the sanctuary from foreigners looking to attack it.[65] While the exact function of the inscription is disputed, the text aims to prove that although it had lost many of its treasures, the sanctuary of Athena at Lindos had been significant for as long as there have been sanctuaries. The missing items attest to a turbulent history and the sheer amount of stuff that such a prominent site would accumulate. Syracuse's *mystagogoi* similarly create a record of missing items. Through their actions, Verres' time as governor truly transforms into a historic event with the strong sense that Sicily will never be the same after it.

Rome

Before I leave the temple robber's itinerary, I should briefly turn to the city of Rome, which has a special status in the travel patterns of temple robbers. It is technically included in Verres' itinerary; as urban praetor in 74 BCE, Cicero alleges, he used his role as overseer of the restoration and upkeep of temples to extort money from contractors.[66] He does not, however, engage in any outright plundering. In general, it is rare for a narrative of temple robbery to be set in the city of Rome, especially in the time of Cicero and earlier. There are, as can be expected, accounts of temple plundering associated with the Gallic sack.[67] In this case, we have a foreign enemy disregarding the sanctity of Roman temples, but not a Roman assaulting the sacred spaces of his own people.

This is not to say that precious items did not sometimes go missing from Rome's sanctuaries or that Rome's sacred treasures do not otherwise come to harm.[68] In 83 BCE, a fire destroys the Capitoline temple.[69] Although there are attempts to identify someone to blame for the fire, including partisans of

65. One such foreigner is Darius' general Datis (*Lindian Chronicle* XLII D 1–47), who supposedly behaved so piously toward Delos.

66. Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.130–53.

67. For example, Livy 5.50.6; Plin. *HN* 33.15.

68. For example, Livy 25.40.3 on the gradual disappearance of treasures from Marcellus' temple to Honos and Virtus (discussed in chapter 4) and Plin. *HN* 33.14 (gold from the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in 52 BCE).

69. For the literary sources discussing the fire and the later impact of the event, see Flower 2008.

Sulla, no definite cause can be determined. While political revolutionaries frequently resort to arson, they are usually indiscriminate in their targets.[70] Specific plans to burn or otherwise harm a temple are vanishingly rare during the Republic.[71] Any misfortunes suffered by Rome's sanctuaries are generally the result of foreign attacks or inexplicable accidents.

For a narrative of a premeditated attack on a Roman sanctuary by a Roman, the extant literary record makes us wait until Caesar's march on Rome in 49 BCE. Lucan gives us the most extensive account, which focuses on Caesar's confrontation with the tribune Metellus, who unsuccessfully attempts to stop the plundering.[72] The official's first words, spoken as he stands in front of the Temple of Saturn and faces Caesar's troops, sum up the magnitude of what is about to unfold:

> "Non nisi per nostrum vobis percussa patebunt
> templa latus, nullasque feres nisi sanguine sacro
> sparsas, raptor, opes. certe violata potestas
> invenit ista deos."[73]
>
> Not unless you murder me will the temples open for you. You, plunderer, will not carry off any riches unless you spill my sacred blood. Certainly, violence inflicted on this office will attract the attention of the gods.

He not only calls the general a plunderer, but also gives him to understand that attacking the treasury will involve killing the tribune. Since his person is sacrosanct, Metellus implies at the end, this act will have the gods pursue Caesar for punishment.[74] Any divine punishment that would ensue follow-

70. See Closs 2020, 16–18.

71. Cicero's attack on Catiline provides an exception; Catiline and his followers are accused of making plans to burn temples, but do not actually carry out their designs (Cic. *Cat.* 3.22 and 4.2).

72. Luc. 3.112–68. For Caesar's own interpretation of these events, see chapter 6 below. Pliny at *HN* 33.56 provides a detailed list of the gold, silver, and coins that Caesar removed from the treasury on this occasion. The word he uses to describe these actions, *profero*, does not suggest violence or ill intent.

73. Luc. 3.123–26. The text of Lucan follows Housman.

74. In Appian's version (*B Civ.* 2.41 [163–64]), the treasury itself is protected by a curse that Caesar brings down on himself when he proceeds.

ing the plundering would therefore have two possible causes, the murder and the temple robbery.[75]

The attacker is undeterred, and Metellus is eventually persuaded to stand aside. Events proceed ominously:

> Tunc rupes Tarpeia sonat magnoque reclusas
> testatur stridore fores; tum conditus imo
> eruitur templo multis non tactus ab annis
> Romani census populi.[76]
>
> Then the Tarpeian Rock resounded and with great creaking witnessed the opened doors. Next, the wealth of the Roman people hidden deep inside the temple and untouched for many years was dug up.

The mention of the Tarpeian Rock continues the idea that this is an act that will bring consequential punishment with it.[77] Lucan's description of the actual plundering at first seems to lack the expected vocabulary of violence. The doors are not broached by force, but simply opened.[78] The word used to describe the bringing forth of riches, however, suggests the use of force. At its most basic, the verb *eruo* means bringing something into the open. This can mean extracting something from the ground or another dark, hidden place or violently plucking out a root or an eye. Depending on how one interprets the passage, then, the riches are either discovered in the depths of the temple or, more likely, forcefully pulled out.[79] Caesar is violently disturbing things that no other person would think about touching.

This episode shows how far Caesar is willing to go. While it is the only attack on a sanctuary in Rome that Lucan describes in detail, there appear

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75. This kind of overdetermination is common in both epic (Feeney 1991, 371–76) and historiography (Levene 1993, 27–28).

76. Luc. 3.154–57.

77. By extension, it also represents the Capitoline and Rome as a whole (Nix 2008, 288).

78. Contrast Plut. *Caes.* 35.9, where Caesar summons smiths to break the locks.

79. *TLL* s.v. *eruo* (5/2, 843, 61–846, 43 [Brandt]). Duff's Loeb translates "brought forth"; Braund 1992 "unearthed." One anonymous reader suggests a persuasive parallel to Lucan's usage in Seneca's description of the first time humans mined gold, when greed prompts them to venture deep into the earth to rip up (*erueret*) the precious metal (Sen. *QNat.* 5.15.3–4).

to have been others.[80] Institutions and appeals to customs and conventions do not restrain the general. He is looking to do unparalleled things. Money that has never been touched will fuel his efforts. Such recklessness and ambition fit well with the general character traits associated with a temple robber, but even in comparison to someone like Verres, the complete upheaval of society prompted by Caesar's actions is on a different scale. Outright plundering in the city of Rome is not a task for a conventional temple robber, not even a prolific one. It requires a figure like Lucan's Caesar.[81]

Conclusion

The temple robber's itinerary, then, largely places the *sacrilegus'* activities away from Rome. Unsurprisingly, sanctuaries that are rich and famous are most likely to attract temple robbers. Narratives of plundering sites such as the Athenian Acropolis invite us to compare the actions of different criminals or to contrast the temple robber's behavior with that of people who treated the sanctuary with respect. Although the narratives derive their effectiveness from these comparisons, authors often start from the assertion that the *sacrilegus* at the center of their story is the first one to lay hands on a particular site. He is the only one who cannot understand that the space is sacred and that its possessions cannot simply be taken, and thereby has the first pick at an undisturbed treasure. This trope, in turn, frequently introduces the community's outraged response as they struggle to cope with the actions of someone who would display such an astounding degree of cultural ignorance. Temple robbers compete with each other in regard to who can take the most things and cause the most harm.

The story of Verres' death takes the competition between temple robbers to an extreme. After going into exile, the former governor spends years living peacefully in Massilia (modern Marseille) surrounded by many of his riches. He is not heard from again until 43 BCE, when he is proscribed by Mark Antony for refusing to hand over works of art that the triumvir desired for himself. As Pliny the Elder describes these events:

80. Note the plural in "The temples were despoiled by grim plundering" (*tristi spoliantur templa rapina*, Luc. 3.167).

81. For an overview of Lucan's characterization of Caesar, see Joseph 2017, esp. 301–3 with further references.

> Mireque circa id multorum adfectatio furuit, quippe cum tradatur non alia de causa Verrem, quem M. Cicero damnaverat, proscriptum cum eo ab Antonio, quoniam Corinthiis cessurum se ei negavisset.[82]
>
> A desire concerning it [Corinthian bronze] rages amazingly strongly in many people; indeed, it is said that for no other reason Verres, whom Cicero had brought to court, was proscribed along with him by Mark Antony, since he refused to hand over *Corinthia* to him.

Corinthia, small bronze sculptures that were manufactured for the Roman art market and traded widely, are responsible for the temple robber's death.[83] These artifacts are expensive, but neither difficult to acquire nor unique. Verres' murder is therefore gratuitous and illustrates Antony's greed and penchant for cruelty. And so a temple robber who sought to amass unique and expensive treasures wherever he went is done in by relatively undistinguished objects that were traded on the art market. In a scene that harkens back to the death of the tyrant Lachares, a greedy man has fallen victim to an even greedier one and Verres has met a grimly appropriate death.[84]

Spaces and objects facilitate relationships between temple robbers. The range of sites that a *sacrilegus* plunders may be unprecedented and the objects that he takes may have been spared by earlier robbers, but his travel patterns and actions make him comparable to others and, in turn, confirm that he is indeed a temple robber. *Sacrilegi* in literary texts share a way of looking at the world, locations they go to, objects that they are attracted to, and sometimes biographical details. Each criminal participates in a wider imaginative tradition that turns individuals into literary tropes and their seemingly random movements into itineraries.

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82. Plin. *HN* 34.6. Pliny is not explicit about the manner of Verres' death; Sen. *Suas*. 6.24 states that he committed suicide upon hearing the news of his proscription. For the literary tradition surrounding the death of Verres, see Desy 2022, 48–51.

83. For the nature of *Corinthia*, see Hallett 2015, esp. 128, with further bibliography. Harris 2015, 407–11, discusses the general evidence for trading in bronze sculptures on the Roman art market.

84. Similarly Isager (1991, 82): "The moral is obvious. For his private art collection Verres had robbed Sicily of works of art that had been the pride of the Sicilian cities. He fell as a victim to another and more powerful person's mania for collecting."

FOUR

Rome's First Temple Robbery

At the start of *Bellum Catilinae*, Sallust lays out how he thinks greed and corruption came to spread in Rome. He identifies warfare and the ready access to riches that it provides as a major catalyst. Sulla's campaign in the East bears a particular responsibility for Rome's decline; in his efforts to ensure the loyalty of his troops, the general let them do whatever they wanted. As a result, "there first an army of the Roman people became accustomed to sexual pleasures, drink, the admiration of statues, paintings, and embossed vessels; [and began] to steal them from private houses and public places, to plunder temples, to violate all things sacred and profane."[1] Such behavior quickly spread to other Romans.

Sallust is not alone in trying to explain how—and, equally importantly, when—the Romans turned from being simple soldier-farmers to plunderers with a seemingly insatiable taste for luxury goods. These narratives of decline tend to follow the same formula; a single event allows a foreign influence to corrupt a small group of Romans. These, in turn, spread their newfound interests and desires to the rest of the community and prompt society to turn away from its fundamental values.[2] In this chapter, I examine a subset of the rich discourse of Roman cultural corruption by asking when Roman authors thought temple robbery first became a part of Roman warfare.

Authors differ widely in their dating of this event. Unlike Sallust, most sources propose M. Claudius Marcellus, the conqueror of Syracuse in 212

1. *Ibi primum insuevit exercitus populi Romani amare, potare, signa, tabulas pictas, vasa caelata mirari, ea privatim et publice rapere, delubra spoliare, sacra profanaque omnia polluere* (Sall. *Cat.* 11.6).

2. Models of contagion are popular for explaining how Romans think about social decline; see, e.g., Lintott 1972.

BCE, or L. Mummius, the destroyer of Corinth in 146 BCE, as the first to put Rome on a path toward decline.[3] Despite the differences in chronology, the authors can agree on other fundamental aspects of their narrative. The first *sacrilegium* marks an inflection point in Roman cultural history; it marks the divide between a mythical uncorrupted past and a present shaped by decadence and greed. In the past—however distant it may be—wars did not aim at the acquisition of plunder.[4] Sacking cities to carry off the enemy's riches is the product of cultural decline. It follows that there is nothing inherently Roman about temple robbery. An outside influence teaches Roman troops about the desirability of riches and that sacred spaces, especially in the East, contain them in abundance.[5] Most importantly, accounts of Rome's first *sacrilegium* tend to be stories of unintended consequences; the first general to order an attack on a foreign temple does not do so out of lust or greed, as in Sallust's analysis. He simply wants to bring back treasures to Rome to enrich the city and to take credit for a splendid victory won on behalf of the Roman people. Those who follow in his footsteps, however, have baser motivations. The Roman temple robber is born.

Who Was the First?

The narratives of Rome's first temple robbery combine two prominent literary and cultural tropes, the fascination with tales of decline and the idea of a culture hero. Both in the Roman world and in other ancient cultures, authors tend to imagine cultural change as the product of a particular moment and, frequently, the work of a single individual.[6] Within this framework exact chronologies and details are not fixed. As political and

3. Another figure often mentioned in this context is Cn. Manlius Vulso, whose Asian triumph in 187 BCE introduced the Roman people to splendid furnishings (Livy 39.6.7–9). Vulso's influence, however, is more limited than that of Marcellus or Mummius since he is primarily the catalyst for changes in the domestic realm rather than all-encompassing cultural corruption.

4. The question of what motivated the early Romans to go to war remains the subject of debate. Harris 1971 and 1979 popularized the image of the Romans as aggressive warmongers. For complications of this perspective, see Richardson 1986 and Rich 1993.

5. The story of Rome's first temple robbery is inextricably linked to the broader issue of how Rome's eastern conquests shaped their cultural identity. On these see, e.g., Lintott 1972; Levick 1982; Ferrary 1988; Gruen 1990 and 1992.

6. On this pattern of discourse in the Greco-Roman world, see Purcell 2003 and Hay 2023, esp. 70–82.

social circumstances change, so can the individual who is credited with a major invention or cultural shift. What matters more than agreement about temporal frameworks is the idea that changes happen suddenly and due to specific impulses. Moreover, since change represents an irrevocable break with the past, it is not always a good thing. It is therefore unsurprising that authors are keen to constantly reshape the narrative of when and how their culture changed.[7]

Roman authors cast the Romans as austere warrior-farmers who know nothing about luxury until some outside force causes them to become morally corrupt. In the Augustan period, the stereotypical image of the traditional, simple Roman reaches its full literary expression.[8] Horace, for example, pictures himself at the cusp of a new age:

> Iam pauca aratro iugera regiae
> moles relinquent, undique latius
> extenta visentur Lucrino
> stagna lacu platanusque caelebs
> evincet ulmos; tum violaria et
> myrtus et omnis copia narium
> spargent olivetis odorem
> fertilibus domino priori;
> tum spissa ramis laurea fervidos
> excludet ictus. non ita Romuli
> praescriptum et intonsi Catonis
> auspiciis veterumque norma.[9]
>
> Soon our regal structures will leave only a few acres for the plow; before our gaze fishponds will extend in every direction more widely than the Lucrine Lake; and the bachelor plane tree will crowd out the elm. Then violets and myrtles and every kind of abundance that pampers the nostrils will sprinkle scent where olive groves bore fruit

7. I have summarized here the main argument of McCants 2012. On changes to the exemplary value of an individual's actions over time in Roman culture more specifically, see Langlands 2018, 206–25; and Roller 2018, 163–96, esp. 183–87.

8. For Roman luxury discourse, see, e.g., Lintott 1972; Edwards 1993, esp. 176–83; Dench 1995, 80–85; Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 315–55; Nichols 2010. For the importance of simplicity and rusticity in the creation of an "authentic" Roman identity, see Zanker 1988, esp. 285–91; Dench 1996; Dench 2005, 152–221; Malamud 2009.

9. Hor. *Carm.* 2.15.1–12, trans. Rudd 2004 (slightly modified).

> for the former owner; then the bay with its thickened foliage will shut out the sun's fiery shafts. Such things were not permitted by the authority of Romulus and shaggy Cato and the standards of the men of old.

This is a picture of decline; the large estates and the new eastern luxury goods that they contain—primarily fancy trees and plants—are about to replace the productive small farms and self-sustaining agriculture of Italy with the unproductively decadent. In the first two lines of the passage, the poet has a particularly harsh term for the luxurious lifestyle that has captured the desire of the Romans when he refers to their houses as "regal structures," *regiae moles*. With its associations with kingship, the adjective *regiae* makes it unmistakably clear that this new way of living is foreign and non-Roman. By being associated with royalty, it presents a fundamental threat to Roman civilization.

It is therefore not surprising that such choices would have been unthinkable in Rome's early days, which extend at least to the time of the elder Cato. The description of Cato as "shaggy" (*intonsus*) is striking; in Horace's interpretation, the people of bygone ages were not just simple, but willfully unrefined. Appearances mattered as little to them as luxury goods and large houses. Anything that improves life was an unnecessary decadence.[10] Art and other cultural achievements were similarly alien to traditional Romans, a view that Horace sums up elsewhere with his famous adage "Captive Greece has captured the fierce victor and has brought the arts to rural Latium."[11] The conquest of Greece starts Rome on a path to losing its traditional way of life.

With this dating in mind, we can turn to Marcellus and Mummius, the two generals most often associated with Rome's first temple robbery. The period between 264 and 133 BCE, conventionally known as the Middle Republic, was a time of enormous change.[12] During this era Rome became a vast empire, and its political, social, and religious landscape had to evolve in response. By locating Rome's first temple robbery in this period, authors

10. Gary Miles' characterization of Livy's Romulus sums up this point: "A self-sufficient, human hero whose particular source of excellence lies in the austerity of his rustic origins" (1995, 148). Romulus' hut, the Casa Romuli, commemorates the founder's simple lifestyle in the Roman cityscape (see Edwards 1996, 27–43).

11. *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes / intulit agresti Latio* (Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.156–57).

12. The dating of the Middle Republic is not fixed; see Bernard, Mignone, and Padilla Peralta 2023, 3–5, for the debate about periodization.

place the event at a time of uncertainty about what it means to be Roman. The chronology also grounds Rome's plundering of sanctuaries in a long period of imperial expansion. In schematic terms, the process is imagined like this; Rome makes military forays into the Greek world. There, the Romans encounter temples stuffed with riches, a stark contrast to the much simpler forms of Roman devotion. Looting ensues. Initially, the treasures are brought back to Rome and put on display in temples, but people quickly become interested in decorating private houses with these beautiful objects. They transform into rapacious plunderers.

In light of what we know about early Roman warfare, the third or even second century BCE is an implausibly late date for the start of widespread looting by the Roman army. The epigraphical evidence for Roman plundering goes back to at least the late fifth century BCE. A column base found in Tusculum commemorates a successful campaign:

> M(arcos) Fourio(s) C(aii) f(ilios) tribunos | militare de praidad Maurte dedet.[13]
>
> Marcus Furius, son of Gaius, military tribune, gave this to Mars from the spoils of war.

An otherwise identical inscription on a different base gives another part of the spoils to the goddess Fortuna.[14] We do not know what campaign prompted the memorial or what Furius' spoils consisted of. The inscription, however, provides us with early evidence that Roman generals pillaged and that they made gifts to the gods from their booty. Not long after Furius' dedications, the sack of Veii, which receives ample attention in historiographical narratives, represents another significant event in the relatively early history of Roman plunder. Camillus plunders the city and brings its most important deity to Rome.[15] The plundering of cities, including their sanctuaries, was a practice established well before Marcellus' sack of Syracuse.

A second problem with the theory that foreign art suddenly arrives in Rome in the Middle Republic is that it ignores the networks of cross-cultural

13. *CIL* 1^2 49 = 14.2578, dated to 403 BCE.

14. *CIL* 1^2 48 = 14.2577. The inscriptions are 1 (to Fortuna) and 2 (to Mars) in Waurick 1975; and 31 (Fortuna) and 32 (Mars) in Ernout 1957.

15. I discuss Camillus in chapter 5. Several other early military campaigns associated with ample plunder are cataloged in Davies 2017, 29–32.

contact and trade in ancient Italy's multiethnic landscape in favor of telling a story that attributes almost all Roman cultural change to military conflict with the Greek world.[16] Archaeological evidence, by contrast, indicates that foreign art—especially Greek—had been found in Rome from at least the eighth or seventh century BCE onward.[17] Trade with Etruria had brought smaller objects to Rome. In the fifth century, the building of the Temple of Ceres on the Aventine showcased Greek workmanship in its reliefs.[18] Even before the great military conquests of the third and second centuries BCE, numerous named and unnamed artists and works of art had turned the sanctuaries and public spaces of Rome into essentially a "Greek city."[19] While the campaigns increased the availability of Greek art and led to a wider display of such objects in the domestic sphere, the mere presence of Greek art in the Roman world would have been nothing new. It is just one aspect of a long tradition of cultural contact between Rome and various parts of the Greek world.

The ancient narratives, however, seek a general to be cast as a culture hero of sorts. He is an exemplary military leader whose actions have unfortunate consequences. There is no shortage of encomiastic discourses about firsts in Roman culture. Both Latin inscriptions and literary texts use *primus omnium* (the first of all) and *primus Romanorum* (the first of the Romans) as honorific labels to highlight the outstanding achievements of Roman politicians and community leaders. They can identify the first member of a community to become a member of the Roman Senate or praise someone for sponsoring especially elaborate spectacles. Despite their emphasis on firsts, the object of these texts is not necessarily to assert that someone is indeed the first person to do something, but to elevate his achievement

16. For early contact between Rome and Greek communities, see, for example, Lomas 1993 and Cornell 1995, esp. 86–92. The idea that the sack of Syracuse was the first moment when any significant quantity of Greek art came to Rome is found in many ancient authors and persists in modern scholarship; see, e.g., McDonnell 2006 and Stoffel 2009. By contrast, Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 356–440, develops a model for the introduction of luxury goods to the Roman world that deemphasizes the actions of individuals such as Marcellus and posits a gradual process of commercialization.

17. For Greek art in Italy before the Roman expansion, see esp. *Roma medio repubblicana*, Hölscher 1978, and La Rocca 1996.

18. The temple is no longer extant. The year of its dedication is suggested by Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom*. 6.17.94, which mentions that the building was dedicated in the consulship of Postumius and Sp. Cassius (493 BCE).

19. Hölscher 1994, 875.

above those of other people.[20] In other words, someone may not actually be the first person to put on a gladiatorial fight in a town, but his was so large and extravagant that it is the only one that people will remember. The same holds for the search for Rome's culture hero; he may not be the very first plunderer, but the scale of his actions eclipses what came before. By compressing a centuries-long narrative of cultural change into a single moment, ancient authors highlight the magnitude of Rome's development during the Republic. They also ask their readers to consider whether the progress represented by the military's ability to conquer cities stuffed with treasures is a good thing.[21] Rome's first temple robbery puts Rome on the path to being unrecognizable—and even abhorrent—to Romulus and the other "men of old."

Marcellus

Livy casts M. Claudius Marcellus, consul four times between 222 and 208 BCE and the conqueror of Syracuse, as the person who introduced Greek art to Rome.[22] The Marcellus presented in the ancient sources appears to be the fusion of two different traditions, one that makes him a great war hero and another that shows him as a corrupt politician.[23] Marcellus' role as a culture hero is equally complex; he is given credit for a great victory, but his actions have undesirable consequences and lead to questions about the extent to which he should be celebrated. Livy writes:

> Dum haec in Hispania geruntur, Marcellus captis Syracusis, cum cetera in Sicilia tanta fide atque integritate composuisset ut non modo suam gloriam sed etiam maiestatem populi Romani augeret, ornamenta urbis, signa tabulasque quibus abundabant Syracusae, Romam devexit, hostium quidem illa spolia et parta belli iure; ceterum inde primum initium mirandi Graecarum artium opera licentiaeque hinc sacra profanaque omnia volgo spoliandi factum est,

20. Mrozek 1971; Meban 2008; Richardson 2014.

21. The tendency to undercut Roman achievements by pointing to a loss of traditional values can be detected in accounts of the First Punic War, which Roman sources often treat as the beginning of Roman seafaring and the first contact with Carthage (see Biggs 2017).

22. The idea that Marcellus introduced Rome to Greek luxury goods is not Livy's invention; see Polybius' famous analysis of the consequences of the sack of Syracuse (Polyb. 9.10).

23. See Flower 2003.

> quae postremo in Romanos deos, templum id ipsum primum quod a Marcello eximie ornatum est, vertit. visebantur enim ab externis ad portam Capenam dedicata a M. Marcello templa propter excellentia eius generis ornamenta, quorum perexigua pars comparet.[24]
>
> While these things were happening in Spain, Marcellus, when Syracuse had been captured, arranged the remaining business in Sicily with such honesty and integrity that he increased not only his own reputation but also the glory of the Roman people. He took away to Rome the ornaments of the city, the statues and the paintings with which Syracuse was filled. Indeed, these were the spoils of war and rightly acquired in war; but this was the first beginning of the admiration of Greek art and from there the license to plunder all things sacred and profane, which afterward turned against the Roman gods, first against the very temple that was splendidly adorned by Marcellus. For the temples near the Porta Capena dedicated by Marcellus were visited by strangers because they were outstanding ornaments of their kind, very little of which remains today.

The passage does not devote any space to the conduct of the sack. There is initially no note of discomfort with the extent of Marcellus' plundering—the items taken are seen as "rightly acquired in war." What was taken from the city and where it was taken from does not matter in this part of Livy's account of the sack. There is no doubt that Marcellus was right to do what he did. Once the focus shifts from actions to consequences, things become more negative. The beautiful works of art brought back from Syracuse inspire others to acquire such objects even if they happen to come from sacred spaces.[25] The word *licentia*, which signifies a dangerous lack of self-control, shows that the victory facilitated the development of a new and dangerous trend in the conduct of Roman military campaigns.[26]

The reference to the Temple of Honos and Virtus at the end of the passage thematizes the religious impact of the sack of Syracuse. Again, Mar-

24. Livy 25.40.1–3.

25. We do not know exactly what Marcellus took from Syracuse. The only reference to a specific object is to a sphere crafted by Archimedes at Cic. *Rep.* 1.21. It is unlikely that this object was taken from a temple.

26. Similarly Jaeger (1997, 130): "The Syracusan artwork is separated from the great victory that it commemorates. Instead of associating the artwork with victory, Livy uses it to illustrate the rising of wonder, license, and robbery."

cellus' own conduct is unproblematic—he dedicates a temple to house the plunder that he brought back. When we go beyond Livy, it becomes clear that his is far from the first sanctuary to celebrate a victory and receive plunder.[27] Marcellus is not even the first general to have to house a substantial art collection, if Pliny the Elder is to be believed; he reports that M. Fulvius Flaccus' campaign against the Volsinii resulted in the capture of two thousand statues.[28] Nor did Marcellus construct a new building at the Porta Capena; he renovated a temple to Honos dedicated by Q. Fabius Maximus two decades earlier.[29] In this regard, Marcellus is not an innovator, but a participant in a long-standing tradition. Yet, as Livy states, the sanctuary also became the first victim of temple robbery in the city of Rome. Its dedicator had taught the Romans to desire the splendid works assembled in it, and the building had to suffer the consequences. He tempted the Romans into plundering temples.

Livy puts the defining summary of Marcellus' impact on Rome in the mouth of Cato the Elder. The censor is the ideal mouthpiece for a fundamental critique of the place of foreign art in Rome; he was enshrined in the literary tradition as a figure opposed to any form of foreign luxury, especially if it came from Greece.[30] He was also known as an ardent critic of the display of plunder in private houses, and a fragment of a speech—possibly part of an attack on M'. Acilius Glabrio for the misappropriation of spoils—survives in which he expresses his outrage that statues of the gods are displayed like furniture.[31] In 195 BCE, he had to fight a different

27. A list of manubial temples starting with M. Furius Camillus' temples to Juno Regina and Mater Matuta in 396 BCE is found in Popkin 2016, 50–51 (temples built prior to the Punic Wars) and 53–57 (those built during the Punic Wars).

28. Plin. *HN* 34.34.

29. The detail of who dedicated the original temple that Marcellus according to Livy "splendidly adorned" is given at Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.61. Marcellus' renovations turned the site into a double temple with two *cellae*; hence Livy speaks of *templa* in the last sentence of the passage (cf. *LTUR* 3 s.v. "Honos et Virtus, Aedes" [D. Palombi]).

30. Cato's hatred of Greek luxury has sometimes been used to accuse him of being more broadly anti-Greek. Such an interpretation obscures the complex and fruitful relationship that Cato had especially with Greek learning (see Astin 1978, 157–81; Gruen 1992, 52–83; and Henrichs 1995, 244–50).

31. *ORF* Marcus Porcius Cato fr. 98. Virtually nothing is known for certain about the nature of Cato's attack on Glabrio, and the exact charges—and even whether this fragment can be securely connected to them—are tentative. For a discussion of what is known and not known about the case and a survey of various scholarly theories surrounding it, see Churchill 2000. Gruen 1990, 134–36, uses the Glabrio affair as a starting point for an attempt to reconstruct Cato's wider view on war plunder from other known titles of his speeches.

kind of excess. As voices grow louder for the repeal of the stringent sumptuary regulation of the Oppian Law, which had been passed at the height of the Second Punic War, he speaks out in support of the law. Although the regulations primarily affected women, Livy has Cato take a stance against all forms of luxury. This includes a review of how Greek art got to Rome:

> Et iam in Graeciam Asiamque transcendimus omnibus libidinum inlecebris repletas et regias etiam attrectamus gazas—eo plus horreo, ne illae magis res nos ceperint quam nos illas. infesta, mihi credite, signa ab Syracusis inlata sunt huic urbi. iam nimis multos audio Corinthi et Athenarum ornamenta laudantes mirantesque et antefixa fictilia deorum Romanorum ridentes. ego hos malo propitios deos et ita spero futuros, si in suis manere sedibus patiemur.[32]
>
> And now we are crossing over into Greece and Asia Minor, which are stuffed with all manner of seductive pleasures, and we even handle regal treasures—I am even more shocked by this; these things have captured us more than we have them. Believe me, hostile standards have been advanced against this city from Syracuse. Now I hear that all too many people praise and admire the ornaments of Corinth and Athens and make fun of the terracotta antefixes of the Roman gods. I prefer these gods to be propitious to us and I hope that they will be so in the future if we allow them to remain in their dwellings.

Like the entire debate about the arrival of Greek art in Rome, this speech should be considered fictional, not least because its dramatic date is earlier than Rome's major plundering campaigns in Asia.[33] It closely reflects Livy's general ideas about the impact of decadence as a factor in Rome's decline and thereby serves as a programmatic passage within *Ab Urbe Condita*. In highly compressed form, it covers the evils of Greek art and who was responsible for introducing them to Rome.

For Livy's Cato, eastern luxury goods are deeply un-Roman, which is why he describes them as *regiae gazae*, "regal treasures."[34] Their associa-

32. Livy 34.4.1–5.

33. On the argument that the speech is Livy's invention and its chronological problems, see Astin 1978, 25–27, and Gruen 1992, 98. For the wider programmatic significance of the speech, see Feldherr 1998, 42–46, and Chaplin 2000, 97–101. On *luxuria* as a corrupting force in Livy, see esp. Miles 1995, 76–88.

34. Compare the use of the adjective in Horace's *regiae moles* above.

tion with kings marks them as unfit for Roman use, a point driven home by *gazae*—a word of Persian origins.[35] Furthermore, the Latin contains an untranslatable pun; the statues that Marcellus brought back from Syracuse are called *signa*, which can mean both "statues" and "military standards." What was brought back from Syracuse are statues, but by describing them as *infesta*, hostile, and using the verb *infero*, which is regularly used of an army moving against an enemy, Cato fashions them into signs of an invasion.[36] This phrase focuses the speaker's attention on the negative impact of Greek art in particular, which he goes on to distinguish sharply from its Roman counterpart; whereas Greeks produce mere ornaments (*ornamenta*), Rome may only have unsophisticated terracottas, but, as the possessive genitive *deorum Romanorum*, shows, they belong to the gods. Romans, it stands to reason, decorate their temples because they wish to express their piety, not because they want to make buildings look ornate. The very idea that one can greedily desire art, then, is alien to Cato's view of traditional Roman society.

Now that he is talking about temples, Livy's Cato alludes to a further problem with foreign luxury goods; they are obtained by removing the gods from their houses, that is, by plundering sacred spaces. The Roman craze for foreign art has made them temple robbers, another un-Roman behavior that is a symptom of cultural decline. The speech thus sums up what is at stake in charting the arrival of Greek art in Rome; it forces its audience to confront the fact that Marcellus paved the way for considering sacred possessions to be consumer goods. As far as the Romans are concerned, plunder is a natural consequence of war, but it is not without its problems. Where it comes from and what effect it has on Rome have to be considered. In order to explore such issues, authors construct the arrival of Greek art in Rome as a sudden event that transforms a previously uncorrupted culture.

Livy's *Verrines*

Livy's Cato reflects on Marcellus' achievements with several years of hindsight. Within the historian's wider narrative, he is not the first to question the significance of the sack of Syracuse; debates about the event and its

35. *Gaza* as used in poetry and historiography from the Augustan period and later almost always carries connotations of eastern regal excess (cf. *TLL* 6/2, 1721, 34–1722, 78 [Koch]).

36. For the pun see also Briscoe 1981 *ad loc.*

religious and cultural consequences begin in the immediate aftermath of the campaign. When the general returns to Rome, he finds that the Senate is unenthusiastic about his achievements. The triumph in the city of Rome that he had expected fails to materialize, and he has to content himself with an *ovatio* and a triumph on the Alban Mount. Marcellus is far from the only one to be denied what he considered to be his due. Rules for awarding a triumph were unstable, and seemingly arbitrary decisions were common.[37] In Livy, senatorial deliberations about whether to award a triumph are an opportunity to revisit the military victory and discuss whether everything was conducted properly. These debates, rather than the eventual celebration (whatever form it may take), determine how a general's achievements will be remembered.[38]

Senators also have other opportunities to evaluate a general's conduct. For Marcellus, significant problems arise when he is awarded Sicily as his proconsular province. The citizens of Syracuse are outraged by the appointment and send a delegation to Rome to ask the Senate for another governor. The core of their argument revolves around the idea that the sack of Syracuse showed Marcellus to be excessively cruel, and, most importantly, a temple robber. Livy draws heavily on Cicero's *Verrines* to create the image of an appropriately villainous general for the Sicilians to complain about.[39] In the *Verrines* themselves, Marcellus appeared as an exemplary victor who enriched rather than plundered the cities that he conquered.[40] Now the tables are turned and the general is seen as acting like Verres. The speech of the Syracusans in the Roman Senate not only shows that Verres had become the paradigmatic temple robber by Livy's time, but also explores the differences between regular plundering and committing a temple robbery.

Livy presents the petition of the Syracusans in indirect discourse. The ambassadors start by revisiting several episodes from the city's history that

37. Brennan 1996. Lundgreen 2011, 203–16, presents an attempt to determine the criteria for awarding a triumph largely based on Livy. The character of the aspirant for a triumph emerges as an important qualification and is always under implicit evaluation in the debate. Someone who has behaved improperly during a campaign cannot possibly be awarded a triumph.

38. For the programmatic importance of triumphal debates in Livy, see Pittenger 2008. Elections, as shown in Lushkov 2015, 96–127, present a similar opportunity to articulate ideals and evaluate candidates according to them.

39. On parallels between Livy's Marcellus and Verres, see also Levene 2010, 122–25; more generally on Livy's use of the *Verrines*, Jaeger 2010. For the historian's debt to Cicero, see McDonald 1957; Malcolm 1979, 219; Kraus 1994, 199–205; Nousek 2010.

40. See, e.g., Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.120–21.

demonstrate the community's loyalty to Rome. Then they introduce the charges against Marcellus:

> Quid ultra quam quod fecerit, nisi ut deleret Syracusas, facere hostiliter Marcellum potuisse? certe praeter moenia et tecta exhausta urbis et refracta ac spoliata deum delubra, dis ipsis ornamentisque eorum ablatis, nihil relictum Syracusis esse.[41]
>
> What act more hostile than what he did do could Marcellus have committed, except destroy Syracuse? Certainly, apart from the walls and the emptied houses of the city and the sanctuaries of the gods broken open and pillaged—with the gods themselves and their ornaments taken away—there was nothing left in Syracuse.

These words, especially the phrase *spoliata . . . delubra*, present Marcellus as someone who deliberately targeted temples. At its most basic, the verb *spolio* signifies stripping the armor off a defeated enemy, so here the general is having the temples stripped of their wealth and decorations.[42] The language of the passage shows Marcellus as greedy and ruthless. He even destroys the sanctuary buildings themselves to quickly get at their content, something only a temple robber would do. And by taking away the gods of Syracuse, he takes away the city's ability to worship as well.

The passage is an echo of Cicero's report of how the Sicilians approached him at the beginning of the *Divinatio in Caecilium*:

> Venisse tempus aiebant . . . ut vitam salutemque totius provinciae defenderem: sese iam ne deos quidem in suis urbibus ad quos confugerent habere, quod eorum simulacra sanctissima C. Verres ex delubris religiosissimis sustulisset.[43]

41. Livy 26.30.8–9.

42. The phrase is strikingly similar to the description of Hannibal plundering the temple in the grove of Feronia: *iis omnibus donis tum spoliatum templum* ("Then the temple was stripped of all these gifts," Livy 26.11.9). Variations on the phrase are also found in 28.36.3 (Mago plunders Gades); 29.8.9 and 29.8.18 (both in reference to Pleminius); 38.43.5 and 39.4.11 (both in reference to Fulvius Nobilior, whom I discuss in chapter 5); 42.28.12 (Fulvius Flaccus; see chapter 1); 43.7.10 (the actions of the rogue praetor C. Lucretius; see introduction).

43. Cic. *Div. Caec.* 3.

> They said that the time had come for me to defend the life and safety of the entire province. They themselves now had not even the gods in their cities to whom they could flee, because C. Verres had removed their most sacred statues from the most revered sanctuaries.

The parallel underscores that the Syracusans are deeply worried about how their new governor will behave.

Marcellus reacts with apparent surprise at the charges and argues that he did not engage in any unreasonable actions.[44] The senators feel more conflicted. While they ultimately decide that Marcellus' conduct was acceptable, some of them worry about the possibility of a provincial uprising as a reaction to apparent Roman overreach.[45] Such concerns also find parallels in the *Verrines*; while Cicero portrays Sicily as a famously loyal province, he also suggests that this loyalty may have its limits if no actions are taken against Verres.[46] Marcellus, however, faces no personal consequences.[47] The intertexts with the *Verrines* initiate a debate about the acceptability of the general's conduct, but do not lead to a condemnation of his actions.

When compared to another episode for which Livy draws inspiration from the *Verrines*, it becomes clear that the allegations against Marcellus are not well-developed. The parallel between him and Verres is brief and ultimately does not help the Syracusans make a persuasive argument. To see how Livy can use the literary memory of Verres more effectively, we should return to the depredations of Q. Pleminius at Locri Epizephyrii. In chapter 1, I described the legate's arrest and trial. The episodes that we will look at here take place earlier in the narrative and detail Pleminius' actions at Locri and the community's efforts to persuade the Senate to take action against the rogue official. Whereas the accusations of the Syracusans against Marcellus introduce new claims and are not supported by the wider narrative context, the idea that Pleminius is a temple robber of Verres' caliber develops over an extended arc. When they approach the Senate, the Locrians

44. Livy 26.30.12–31.11.

45. Livy 26.32.4–7.

46. Cicero does not suggest an armed revolt, but imagines that if Verres is not convicted, the Sicilians will be driven to such despair that they will abandon their houses and farms and stop supplying the city of Rome with the grain that it has come to depend on (Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.9).

47. Fearing potential reprisals, the Syracusans then proceed to ask Marcellus to become their patron (Livy 26.32.8). For an analysis of the Sicilians' actions in light of Hellenistic traditions of ruler cult, see Rives 1993.

simply restate for the internal audience what the reader already knows from earlier in the work. Livy here exploits the fact that being a temple robber is about more than just plundering sanctuaries. A fully developed characterization of a *sacrilegus* should also include evidence that he is cruel, arbitrary, and lacks control over his emotions.

Pleminius' perverted sense of justice plays an important role in the case against him. Here Livy can again look to the *Verrines* where Cicero turns Verres' disrespect for the law into evidence that he is unsuited to the task of being a governor. At one point, the orator sums up the situation:

> Furor enim quidam, sceleris et audaciae comes, istius effrenatum animum importunamque naturam tanta oppressit amentia ut numquam dubitaret in conventu palam supplicia, quae in convictos maleficii servos constituta sunt, ea in civis Romanos expromere.[48]
>
> For a certain rage, the companion of his wickedness and recklessness, beset the mad mind and ruthless character of that man with such insanity that he never hesitated to openly visit on Roman citizens punishments that are reserved for slaves convicted of crimes.

Verres, seemingly permanently enraged, metes out grotesque punishments that subject even Romans to the most brutal excesses of the law. Much like the governor's temple robberies, his philosophy of punishment indicates a failure to understand the world as a Roman should. His fellow citizens, at least, should not have to worry about being tortured in public.

The last narrative episode of the *Verrines* shows that Verres has no regard for the principle that Roman citizens should be treated differently in judicial procedures. The governor has Gavius, a Roman citizen to whom he has taken a personal dislike, sentenced to the mines. The innocent victim manages to escape but is recaptured in Messana. He is brought before Verres, who makes an example of him:

> Caedebatur virgis in medio foro Messanae civis Romanus, iudices, cum interea nullus gemitus, nulla vox alia illius miseri inter dolorem crepitumque plagarum audiebatur nisi haec, "Civis Romanus sum." hac se commemoratione civitatis omnia verbera depulsurum cruciatumque a corpore deiecturum arbitrabatur; is non modo hoc non

48. Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.139.

> perfecit, ut virgarum vim deprecaretur, sed cum imploraret saepius usurparetque nomen civitatis, crux, crux, inquam, infelici et aerumnoso, qui numquam istam pestem viderat, comparabatur.[49]
>
> In the middle of the forum of Messana, judges, a Roman citizen was beaten with rods. In the course of this, no groan, no voice was heard from that miserable man amidst his pain and the sound of the whips except this, "I am a Roman citizen." With this reminder of his citizenship, he thought that he would drive away the beatings and dispel the torture from his body. He not only did not manage to lessen the force of the blows, but when he pleaded more often and kept mentioning his citizenship, a cross—a cross, I say—was made ready for this unfortunate and wretched man, who had never seen such a horror.

If Verres had bothered to apply regular legal standards, Gavius' citizenship would have protected him from both flogging and crucifixion. An individual's social status dictated what punishments could be inflicted, and the cruel humiliations Gavius suffered would have been unacceptable.[50] By not only having his victim publicly beaten but even going as far as ordering his crucifixion, Verres signals to everyone that the conventions of the Roman state do not extend to his island.

Pleminius, too, is convinced that he has the authority to inflict whatever punishments he likes on the bodies of Roman citizens. As his soldiers attack the sanctuary of Proserpina and the wealthy households of the city, fights break out about who gets to keep which part of the plunder.[51] Two military tribunes attempt to intervene and send in their soldiers to stop the crime. Pleminius' men are beaten back and flee to their commander. He promptly decides to punish the tribunes and orders them to be stripped and whipped.[52] As military tribunes responsible for the discipline of the army, they would have on occasion ordered the whipping of common soldiers,

49. Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.162.

50. On the relationship between legal status and punishment, see, e.g., Aubert 2002, 100–103, Riggsby 2010, 203–4, and (with a focus on the late Roman world) Bauman 1996, 96–108. Retribution and humiliation are important elements in Roman thinking about punishments (see Coleman 1990, 44–47), but Verres goes well beyond what is conventional, especially for dealing with an innocent citizen.

51. Livy 29.8.11–9.4.

52. Livy 29.9.5.

but themselves would not have been subject to such a treatment. The legate, however, shows no respect for their status. While the punishment is being carried out, soldiers loyal to the tribunes successfully intervene and manage to free them. The troops then turn on Pleminius, who is badly beaten and left for dead.

The legate miraculously survives and, after making a swift recovery, returns to the business of punishing the tribunes:

> Pleminius impotens irae . . . tribunos attrahi ad se iussit, laceratosque omnibus quae pati corpus ullum potest suppliciis interfecit, nec satiatus vivorum poena insepultos proiecit.[53]
>
> In an uncontrollable rage, Pleminius ordered the tribunes to be brought before him and after inflicting on them all the injuries that a human body can suffer, he killed them. And not satisfied with the punishment exacted on them while alive, he threw them out unburied.

We are not told exactly what the legate does to the tribunes, but the scene resembles Verres' treatment of Gavius, who was left hanging on the cross and gazing at Italy. Like Gavius, the legates suffer an indecent treatment twice. First, they are publicly whipped while naked, then they experience much worse. The denial of burial at the end of the passage marks the tribunes as criminals of the worst kind. For trying to prevent Pleminius and his men from committing crimes, they are branded as traitors and enemies of Rome.[54] All of this happens because the person in charge is a criminal, and one who has no control over his impulses and even mistreats Roman citizens. Verres and Pleminius both invert the principles of Roman justice; those who commit crimes punish those who try to prevent them. Arbitrary and tyrannical rule suspends the protections enjoyed by Roman citizens.

Since they cannot do anything about the legate while he is in Locri, the Locrians go to Rome and approach the Senate with their story. They present Pleminius as a monster:

> In hoc legato vestro . . . nec hominis quicquam est, patres conscripti, praeter figuram et speciem, neque Romani civis praeter habitum ves-

53. Livy 29.9.9–11.

54. For the denial of burial to traitors, see Hope 2000, 116–20, and Barry 2008.

> titumque et sonum Latinae linguae; pestis ac belua immanis, quales fretum quondam quo ab Sicilia dividimur ad perniciem navigantium circumsedisse fabulae ferunt.[55]
>
> There is nothing human in this legate of yours, Senators, except for his body and appearance. And there is nothing of a Roman citizen [in him] except for his manner of dress and the sound of the Latin language. He is a curse and an inhuman beast, like the ones that the stories tell us once besieged to the detriment of sailors, the straits that divide us from Sicily.

The legate is compared to Scylla and Charybdis, another point of contact between him and Verres. For Cicero, too, the two monsters had offered attractive material for an insult:

> Non enim Charybdim tam infestam neque Scyllam nautis quam istum in eodem freto fuisse arbitror; hoc etiam iste infestior, quod multo se pluribus et immanioribus canibus succinxerat.[56]
>
> And indeed, I think that Charybdis and Scylla were less dangerous to sailors in those straits than he [Verres] was. He was more dangerous than that because he had surrounded himself with more monstrous dogs.

The comparison between Pleminius and two mythological monsters strongly associated with Sicily and southern Italy is a memorable illustration of the legate's behavior. When viewed alongside its parallel passage in the *Verrines*, the comparison also has wider implications. Verres is dangerous because he has henchmen who help him haul in everything that he desires. It is only through his assistants that he can fully act on his impulses. By recalling this passage, Livy's Locrians implicitly ask the Senate whether Pleminius, too, can rely on other people for aid. Monsters are bad, but can be dealt with and consigned to mythological tales. If Pleminius finds backers in Rome, however, he has the potential to outdo Scylla and Charybdis.

The Locrian delegation turns its attention to temple robbery only after they have described a monster of mythical proportions. In a long narrative,

55. Livy 29.17.11–12.

56. Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.146. For mythological creatures in Ciceronian invective, see May 1996.

the Locrians recall not only Pleminius' treatment of the sanctuary, but also Pyrrhus' unsuccessful attempt to plunder the site and evidence of Proserpina's ability to avenge herself.[57] They also revisit the story of the tribunes at this point; they explain that the legate acted so violently because the goddess had driven him mad. His guilt is therefore already confirmed by divine punishment. The Senate need only step in and make sure that Pleminius is also punished in the human realm. The speech of the Locrians has the desired effect; the legate is arrested and brought to Rome for trial.

In the case of Marcellus and Pleminius, Livy uses Cicero's *Verrines* in strikingly different ways. In Marcellus' case, a few echoes ask us to briefly consider the possibility of Marcellus as a Verres-like character, but there is no sustained effort to develop the point. Pleminius, on the other hand, offers a fully developed parallel to Verres, one who mirrors the behavior of Cicero's villain not only in his treatment of sanctuaries but also in other areas. A brief accusation of temple robbery without a discussion of other character flaws, then, is not enough to mark someone as a temple robber. To be a *sacrilegus*, one needs to consistently engage in despicable acts and show that one does not respect the norms of society. Marcellus' actions pave the way for future temple robbers, but, unlike Pleminius, he is no Verres, or even a more ordinary temple robber.

Mummius as a Bringer of Greek Art

We can now take the lessons about how to effectively characterize a temple robber to L. Mummius, consul of 146 BCE and conqueror of Corinth. Questions about what is considered appropriate in the sack of a city permeate narratives about him. The sources have left us a narrative portrait consisting of three seemingly incompatible strands. One set of sources focuses on the general's ignorance about all aspects of culture. They make him a brutal conqueror who destroys Corinth without a second thought. Mummius and his fellow censor Scipio Aemilianus were locked in a competition about who had achieved the greater military victory in 146—Scipio by defeating Carthage or Mummius by bringing Greece fully under Roman control.[58] Sources favorable to Scipio attribute the razing of Carthage to

57. Livy 29.18. See chapter 3 above.

58. For debates about the most significant conquest of 146, see Purcell 1995. For possible political reasons behind the generally negative portrayal of Mummius, see Gruen 1984,

grim necessity. The general laments the loss of the city's cultural achievements but recognizes that letting it survive poses too much of a risk to Rome.[59] The conqueror of Corinth, on the other hand, experiences no such moments of reflection. In fact, he seems to be unaware that he is destroying a city of enormous historical and cultural significance. While Mummius' ignorance is the most prominent feature in most texts concerning him, he elsewhere appears as a great innovator who introduced gilded ceilings and theater spectacles to Rome.[60] His extensive epigraphical record adds yet another dimension, namely his skill at using donations of plunder to further his political goals.[61] Depending on the source, then, the general is an ignorant brute, a cultural revolutionary, or a pious and cunning politician.

In all sources, even the negative ones, Mummius is a man without personal greed.[62] He has no ambitions to own any plunder himself and does not understand what other people find attractive about artistic treasures. Pliny the Elder's narrative of how Greek painting came to Rome is illustrative. Following the victory over Corinth, the general holds an auction:

> Tabulis autem externis auctoritatem Romae publice fecit primus omnium L. Mummius, cui cognomen Achaici victoria dedit. namque cum in praeda vendenda rex Attalus $\overline{VI}$ emisset tabulam Aristidis, Liberum patrem, pretium miratus suspicatusque aliquid in ea virtutis, quod ipse nesciret, revocavit tabulam, Attalo multum querente, et in Cereris delubro posuit.[63]
>
> Furthermore, Lucius Mummius, to whom the victory gave the *cognomen* Achaicus, was the first of all who created a public place for

265–66, and 1992, 123–29; the series of articles by Pietilä-Castrén (1978, 1982, and 1991); Yarrow 2006.

59. Polybius' report of the general weeping at the fall of Carthage is a particularly memorable image (Polyb. 38.22 = App. *Pun.* 132 [629]).

60. For gilded ceilings, see Plin. *HN* 33.57. Tacitus credits Mummius with the invention of theater spectacles at *Ann.* 14.21, an improbably late date given what we know about early Roman theatrical performances (see, e.g., Coleman 2000, 219–20).

61. The relevant inscriptions are compiled in Waurick 1975; Graverini 2001; Lippolis 2004; Yarrow 2006.

62. As Cicero sums it up: "Was L. Mummius any richer when he had razed the richest city to the foundations? He preferred to decorate Italy rather than his own home" (*L. Mummius, numquid copiosior, cum copiosissimam urbem funditus sustulisset? Italiam ornare quam domum suam maluit*, Cic. *Off.* 2.76). See also the praise for Mummius' refusal to decorate his house with plunder at *Verr.* 2.1.55 and 2.3.9.

63. Plin. *HN* 35.24. For auctions, see further chapter 5.

> foreign paintings in Rome. For, when at the auction of booty, Attalus VI bought a painting by Aristides of Father Liber [Dionysus], Mummius marveled at the price and suspected that there was some merit in this painting that he did not know about, and recalled it, although Attalus protested greatly, and put it in the temple of Ceres.

Here we have a pivotal moment in Roman art history. Pliny inserts Attalus himself into the scene even though other accounts merely have one of the king's legates present at the auction.[64] In Pliny, however, Romans are introduced to a new way of seeing Greek art. One could argue that up to this point, objects of Greek art were considered valuable because of their material. Seeing value in a painting is different from recognizing that a bronze statue or a golden votive offering is worth a great deal of money. The Romans now develop a sense of aesthetics and an appreciation for the history of objects. A king is an appropriate facilitator.

For Mummius, by contrast, art does not matter. By paying a large sum of money for Aristides' piece, Attalus signals to the general that this is not ordinary plunder. Aesthetics or a general appreciation for foreign art do not play a role here; it is purely the amount of money that prompts the general to action. Pliny enhances this impression by not including a description of the painting. The rise of Greek painting in Rome, he suggests, was not based on what looked good or what was depicted in the works of art, but on the value that they were seen to represent. At the end of the passage, Mummius places the painting in a temple. He may have no sense of art, but knows the proper place for a precious object. Future Romans, by contrast, will desire to take private ownership of paintings now that the general has taught them about their monetary value.

In Pliny's narrative, Mummius' insight into the value of the painting transforms it from ordinary plunder to be sold at auction into a gift for the gods. We see the same process in Strabo's description of the sack of Corinth. Here, too, the plunder of the city plays a pivotal role in taking the Romans from complete ignorance to an obsession with collecting art. The narrative interweaves a fragment from Polybius with Strabo's own observations and conclusions. The beginning of the passage, based on Polybius, emphasizes the complete disregard with which the objects looted from Corinth, including sacred ones, were treated:

64. So, e.g., Paus. 7.16.8, which also mentions the auction, but does not impart any wider cultural significance to it.

> Πολύβιος δὲ τὰ συμβάντα περὶ τὴν ἅλωσιν ἐν οἴκτου μέρει λέγων προστίθησι καὶ τὴν στρατιωτικὴν ὀλιγωρίαν τὴν περὶ τὰ τῶν τεχνῶν ἔργα καὶ τὰ ἀναθήματα. φησὶ γὰρ ἰδεῖν παρὼν ἐρριμμένους πίνακας ἐπ᾽ ἐδάφους, πεττεύοντας δὲ τοὺς στρατιώτας ἐπὶ τούτων. ὀνομάζει δ᾽αὐτῶν Ἀριστείδου γραφὴν τοῦ Διονύσου, ἐφ᾽ οὗ τινὲς εἰρῆσθαί φασι τὸ "οὐδὲν πρὸς τὸν Διόνυσον," καὶ τὸν Ἡρακλέα τὸν καταπονούμενον τῷ τῆς Δηιανείρας χιτῶνι.[65]
>
> Polybius, who says that the events surrounding the sack are a cause for grief, also lays out the soldiers' lack of esteem for works of art and votive offerings. For he says that he was there and saw paintings thrown to the ground and soldiers playing draughts on them. He names among these a painting of Dionysus by Aristides, which some say the saying "nothing to do with Dionysus" referred to, and one of Heracles suffering in Deianira's robe.

Mummius' soldiers do not consider the paintings valuable. In fact, the very work by Aristides, which in Pliny the Elder leads to a new phase in the appreciation of art in Rome, is one of the objects mistreated.

A striking take on the destruction of Corinth found in Plutarch's *Life of Lucullus* is written with such episodes in mind. I started this book with Cicero's remarks about Lucullus' plundering during the Third Mithridatic War. This scene, too, is set in that context. As part of his campaign against Mithridates, the consul of 74 BCE besieges Amisus in Pontus. When the Romans are finally able to take the city, his soldiers are keen on looting and burning as many buildings as they can. Lucullus tries to prohibit this, but his men disobey and destroy large parts of the city. When the general enters the ruins the next day, he takes in the horror and exclaims: "The god has transferred to me the reputation of Mummius."[66] The conqueror of Corinth stands for chaos, wanton destruction, and losing control of one's troops. Since Lucullus has also failed at an orderly takeover, he, too, has become a Mummius. The remarks on Lucullus' career in Cicero and Plutarch suggest that he did even worse; he was not just an incompetent general, but also one driven by greed.

The absence of desire is an important feature of Mummius' characterization in the literary sources. As already seen in Pliny, the general is keen to

65. Str. 8.6.23/Polyb. 39.2.

66. Ἐμὲ . . . εἰς τὴν Μομμίου δόξαν ὁ δαίμων περιέστησεν (Plut. *Luc.* 19).

honor the gods with his victory. As Strabo continues his account of the sack of Corinth, we learn that whereas his soldiers channel their ignorance—not greed—into destruction, Mummius turns his lack of knowledge about art into a boon for the temples of Rome:

> τοῦτον μὲν οὖν οὐχ ἑωράκαμεν ἡμεῖς, τὸν δὲ Διόνυσον ἀνακείμενον ἐν τῷ Δημητρείῳ τῷ ἐν Ῥώμῃ κάλλιστον ἔργον ἑωρῶμεν· ἐμπρησθέντος δὲ τοῦ νεὼ συνηφανίσθη καὶ ἡ γραφὴ νεωστί. σχεδὸν δέ τι καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀναθημάτων τῶν ἐν Ῥώμῃ τὰ πλεῖστα καὶ ἄριστα ἐντεῦθεν ἀφῖχθαι· τινὰ δὲ καὶ αἱ κύκλῳ τῆς Ῥώμης πόλεις ἔσχον. μεγαλόφρων γὰρ ὢν μᾶλλον ἢ φιλότεχνος ὁ Μόμμιος, ὥς φασι, μετεδίδου ῥᾳδίως τοῖς δεηθεῖσι. Λεύκολλος δὲ κατασκευάσας τὸ τῆς Εὐτυχίας ἱερὸν καὶ στοάν τινα χρῆσιν ᾐτήσατο ὧν εἶχεν ἀνδριάντων ὁ Μόμμιος, ὡς κοσμήσων τὸ ἱερὸν μέχρι ἀναδείξεως, εἶτ᾽ ἀποδώσων· οὐκ ἀπέδωκε δέ, ἀλλ᾽ ἀνέθηκε, κελεύσας αἴρειν, εἰ βούλεται· πράως δ᾽ ἤνεγκεν ἐκεῖνος οὐ φροντίσας οὐδέν, ὥστ᾽ ηὐδοκίμει τοῦ ἀναθέντος μᾶλλον.[67]
>
> Now, I have not seen that one [the Heracles painting mentioned at the end of the previous passage], but I saw the Dionysus, a most beautiful work, set up in the temple of Demeter in Rome. Recently the painting was destroyed when the temple burned down. And almost all the richest and finest of the other votive offerings in Rome came from there [Corinth]; the cities surrounding Rome also hold some. For Mummius, who was, as they say, generous rather than an art lover, readily shared with those in need. And when Lucullus was fitting out a temple to Good Fortune and a stoa, he asked to use statues that Mummius had in order to decorate the temple until the dedication, at which point he would give them back. He did not give them back, though, but dedicated them and told Mummius to take them, if he wanted to. He [Mummius] bore it in good spirits and did not think anything of it, with the result that he was more highly thought of than the person who made the dedication.

Despite the rampaging by the soldiers, the "richest and finest" objects could still be brought to Italy to decorate cities there. Whether Mummius or his men took anything for themselves is not addressed; all the riches that made

67. Str. 8.6.23/Polyb. 39.2.

it back to Italy, we are led to assume, benefited the public. The general therefore has the same mode of interaction with Greek art as in Pliny; he has no appreciation for it but knows that something of such high value should be dedicated to the gods.

Through the anecdote featuring L. Licinius Lucullus, the consul of 151 BCE and grandfather of the Lucullus who worried about having become a Mummius, Strabo turns Polybius' troubling report into something positive. Mummius' ignorance about art allows him to transform plunder into sacred objects and shows that he is free from any desire to enrich himself.[68] For him, there are only two options when one has captured a Greek work of art; one can either mistreat it (as his soldiers do) or give it to the gods. He is uncorrupted by luxury and has no desire to take any of the treasures for himself. His private household does not need any tangible reminders of his victory.

Mummius' eagerness to see that the gods are honored appropriately leads him to make several dedications across Greece and Italy. At Olympia, Pausanias credits him with a puzzling first:

> Ῥωμαίων δὲ οὔτε ἄνδρα ἰδιώτην οὔτε ὁπόσοι τῆς βουλῆς οὐδένα Μομμίου πρότερον ἀνάθημα ἴσμεν ἐς ἱερὸν ἀναθέντα Ἑλληνικόν, Μόμμιος δὲ ἀπὸ λαφύρων ἀνέθηκε τῶν ἐξ Ἀχαΐας Δία ἐς Ὀλυμπίαν χαλκοῦν.[69]
>
> We know of no Roman private individual or senator before Mummius who set up an offering in a Greek sanctuary. Mummius at Olympia dedicated a bronze statue of Zeus from the spoils of Achaea.

This is a difficult passage both because it does not hold up when compared with the archaeological record and because Pausanias himself gives ample credit to earlier conquerors such as Flamininus and Aemilius Paullus for their dedications. The assertion is therefore not even internally consistent. Various solutions have been proposed; the most plausible credits Mummius with being the first Roman to dedicate the image of a god—rather than an image of himself or some part of his plunder—at a temple.[70] The practice of

68. For another effort to cast Mummius' ignorance as a testament to his character and a boon for Rome, see Vell. Pat. 1.13.4–5, discussed below.

69. Paus. 5.24.4.

70. Tzifopoulos 1993.

dedicating images of gods in a sanctuary has a long tradition in Greece.[71] Images of Zeus, furthermore, were a popular choice among Greeks making dedications at Olympia.[72] Mummius' offerings, therefore, reflect local customs and are perhaps the first Roman gifts to do so.

The general's sophisticated engagement with local conventions is not unique to Olympia. A particularly impressive dedication is found at Epidaurus and takes the form of a large marble prow. A short Greek inscription identifies the dedicator and his motivations: "Lucius Mummius, son of Lucius, commander-in-chief of the Romans, to Apollo, Asclepius, and Hygeia."[73] The monument is not a new creation. It already bears several older Greek inscriptions, and Mummius' dedication simply repurposes it as his own. Matteo Cadario describes the monument and its history:

> Mummius' inscription was carved on a base shaped like a ship's prow, which probably supported a Victory and had been previously dedicated by the Achaean League after a naval victory against Nabis. Mummius did not erase the original inscription, which is still visible next to his new dedication. The message was clear: behind the veil of his *pietas erga deos*, he wanted to remind visitors to the Asklepieion of the Roman victory over the Achaean League: his strategy was to respect the local history whenever he inserted himself in such contexts, as if to declare himself more a successor than a victor.[74]

The reuse of monuments is common in Hellenistic and imperial times.[75] The general's dedication is not a mark of haste or strained economic circumstances, but a customary attempt to give an old object new meaning. As Cadario shows, however, we are not just dealing with a respect for local cus-

71. See Keesling 2003, esp. 3–21.

72. See Paus. 5.21.2–5.22.7 with the discussion at Tzifopoulos 1993, 96–97.

73. Λεύκιος Μόμμιος Λεύκιου | στρατηγὸς ὕπατος Ῥωμαίων | Ἀπόλλωνι Ἀσκληπίῳ Ὑγιείᾳ (*IG* 4^2 306D, dating to 146 or 145 BCE). The same inscription in the same layout is also found on a statue base in the sanctuary (Peek 1972, no. 47). These inscriptions are of the form generally preferred by Mummius: Λεύκιος Μόμμιος Λεύκιου (sometimes with υἱός, son, and sometimes without) στρατηγὸς ὕπατος Ῥωμαίων and then the relevant deities in the dative (see also *I.Olympia* 278–81 and *IG* 7.2478 from Thebes. On the Olympia inscriptions, see Phillipp and Koenigs 1979).

74. Cadario 2014, 88. Compare Melfi 2013, 144–49; Melfi leans toward a more aggressive interpretation of Mummius' actions as "marking the newly acquired territory, in a way that was the most understandable for the locals" (148).

75. This is especially true for honorific statues; see Shear 2007 and Ma 2013, 60–62.

toms. By reusing the prow and putting his own inscription on it, Mummius shows that he has won without having to explicitly mention his conquest. His military title and the recycled monument are enough.[76]

When he makes offerings in Italy, Mummius is sometimes explicit about his victory and the fact that he took ample plunder.[77] This is most apparent in his famous temple dedication in Rome:

> L(ucius) Mummi(us) L(ucii) f(ilius) co(n)s(ul) | duct(u) | auspicio imperioque | eius Achaia capt(a) Corinto | deleto Romam redieit | triumphans ob hasce | res bene gestas quod | in bello voverat | hanc aedem et signu(m) | Herculis Victoris | imperator dedicat.[78]
>
> Lucius Mummius, son of Lucius, consul. Because of his leadership, guidance, and command, Achaea was captured. When Corinth had been destroyed, he returned to Rome in triumph. On account of these accomplishments, the general dedicates this temple and statue of Hercules Victor, which he had vowed in war.

The dedication is in fulfillment of a vow, as is common for temple buildings in this period.[79] Mummius dedicates not just the building itself, but also a statue; some of the works of art he took end up decorating a temple that has his name on it. As with the Greek dedications, Mummius follows local conventions. He celebrates his victory by building a temple, and his choice of deity also conforms to tradition.[80] The temple of Hercules Victor therefore prominently and unmistakably commemorates both Mummius' military achievements and his piety. Even if the general had no appreciation for art, he certainly knew what to do with it.[81]

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76. One can here compare Aemilius Paullus' monument at Delphi, which finishes and recasts a monument by Perseus following the battle of Pydna. Aemilius Paullus, however, had his monument inscribed in Latin and boasts of the fact that he appropriated it from his enemy. Mummius' move is far more subtle.

77. As Graverini (2001, 145) observes, Mummius is quite understated about his conquest. It is therefore not uncommon for inscriptions to refer to him simply as a consul; e.g., *CIL* 1^2 629 (to the people of Parma), CIL 1^2 628 (to the people of Nursia).

78. *CIL* 1^2 626= 6.331.

79. The text of the inscription, too, as Itgenshorst (2005, 116–17) shows, follows the conventions of the time.

80. On the popularity of temples to Hercules among victorious Roman generals, see Pietilä-Castrén 1987, 160, and Loar 2017, 47–48. Scipio Aemilianus also dedicated a temple to the god (see *LTUR* 3 s.v. "Hercules, Aedes Aemiliana" [F. Coarelli]).

81. The same is true for gifts of plunder to communities rather than sanctuaries; see Yarrow 2006.

The Mummius of the epigraphical record seems considerably more savvy than his literary counterpart. Yet the two are not as incompatible as they seem. The most famous literary portrait of the general illustrates how we might be able to make sense of the diversity of sources. It comes from Velleius Paterculus in his account of the spoils of Corinth:

> Mummius tam rudis fuit ut capta Corintho, cum maximorum artificum perfectas manibus tabulas ac statuas in Italiam portandas locaret, iuberet praedici conducentibus, si eas perdidissent, novas eos reddituros. non tamen puto dubites, Vinici, quin magis pro re publica fuerit manere adhuc rudem Corinthiorum intellectum quam in tantum ea intellegi, et quin hac prudentia illa imprudentia decori publico fuerit convenientior.[82]

> Mummius was so ignorant that when, after the capture of Corinth, he arranged to move to Italy paintings and statues crafted by the hands of the greatest artists, he ordered that the movers be instructed that if they lost the works, they would have to replace them with new ones. But, Vinicius, I do not think that you would doubt that it would have been better for the state if the appreciation of Corinthian art had remained so underdeveloped rather than its value being appreciated so much, and that this prudence would have been more appropriate for public propriety than the current imprudence.

The beginning of the passage verges on the satirical. It is sometimes cited on its own to suggest that Velleius has a negative attitude toward Mummius and wants to portray him as ignorant.[83] The rest of the passage, on the other hand, treats the general as a representative of a bygone era free from the corruptions of luxury.[84] An appreciation of art, it seems, does not come naturally to the Romans, but neither do greed and an obsession with foreign riches. Even when Romans take large amounts of plunder, as Mummius did at Corinth, they are not automatically corrupted by it.[85] The conqueror of Corinth uses his spoils to enrich sanctuaries. Other uses for the treasures emerge only later. Even more than Marcellus, Mummius illustrates the attraction of attributing the arrival of Greek art in Rome to a single

82. Vell. Pat. 1.13.4–5.

83. See Pietilä-Castrén 1978, 122, and Arafat 1996, 94.

84. Such a conclusion can also be supported by the wider context of the passage in Vell. Pat. 1; see Pitcher 2011.

85. Mummius' lack of interest in putting the spoils to personal use is also illustrated by the fact that he left his daughter without a dowry (Plin. *HN* 34.36).

culture hero; there is nothing fundamentally Roman about being greedy for luxury goods.

Conclusion

In the end, Marcellus and Mummius, the sources all agree, have no interest in personally enriching themselves with things stolen from sanctuaries. Since they are free of personal greed and other contemptible character traits, they cannot be considered *sacrilegi*. The narrative of cultural change brought on by plundering generals therefore once more emphasizes that not every removal of sacred objects from a sacred space is a temple robbery. It is only later, when people start accumulating Greek art for their personal enjoyment, that the Romans turn into temple robbers.[86] Despite the fears of Livy's Cato, the sacks of Syracuse and Corinth did not inevitably put Rome on a path to decline. Marcellus and Mummius both model an approach to foreign treasures that does not corrupt their society. Not everyone looking at the riches they brought back is equally upstanding, however. Their moral failings, not the initial plundering of a Greek temple, turn the Romans into rapacious conquerors who do not even respect the property of the gods. Nevertheless, the tendency of authors to treat a temple robbery as an inflection point in Roman cultural history suggests a sense of unease with the idea that Roman armies took riches from the temples of their enemies.

86. For the escalating competition between generals, see, e.g., Fronda 2020 and Roy 2023.

FIVE

The Sacred Life of Roman Plunder

In 209 BCE, Q. Fabius Maximus reconquered Tarentum from Hannibal. Plutarch, after detailing widespread slaughter and enslavement, turns his attention to plundering:

> τὴν πόλιν ἡ στρατιὰ διήρπασεν· ἀνηνέχθη δ' εἰς τὸ δημόσιον τρισχίλια τάλαντα. πάντων δὲ τῶν ἄλλων ἀγομένων καὶ φερομένων λέγεται τὸν γραμματέα πυθέσθαι τοῦ Φαβίου περὶ τῶν θεῶν τί κελεύει, τὰς γραφὰς οὕτω προσαγορεύσαντα καὶ τοὺς ἀνδριάντας· τὸν οὖν Φάβιον εἰπεῖν· "Ἀπολείπωμεν τοὺς θεοὺς Ταραντίνοις κεχολωμένους." οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τὸν κολοσσὸν τοῦ Ἡρακλέους μετακομίσας ἐκ Τάραντος ἔστησεν ἐν Καπιτωλίῳ, καὶ πλησίον ἔφιππον εἰκόνα χαλκῆν ἑαυτοῦ.[1]
>
> The army sacked the city; three thousand talents were brought back to the treasury. As all the other things were taken away and borne off, it is said that the secretary inquired of Fabius what he commanded concerning the gods, [for] so he called their paintings and statues. Then Fabius said, "Let us leave the angry gods to the Tarentines." But having taken away a colossal statue of Heracles from Tarentum, he erected it on the Capitoline and near it a bronze equestrian statue of himself.

Fabius' actions point to a central issue in Roman warfare; how should the Romans deal with the sacred possessions of their enemies? Several generals acted similarly to Fabius—they took plunder and brought it back to the

1. Plut. *Fab.* 22.5–6.

temples of Rome. In the 70s BCE, for example, M. Lucullus had added a colossal statue of Apollo from Apollonia in Pontus to the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline.[2] C. Sosius added a statue of the same god made from cedarwood that he had taken during his campaigns in Syria and Judaea to his temple of Apollo.[3] Augustus brought back a statue of Janus from Egypt.[4] Yet only a very small portion of Rome's sacred plunder can be traced like this. Most of it was subsumed into the large piles of loot that the army brought back from its conquests.

In this chapter, I take a closer look at how Roman sources deal with the fact that temples were targets in military campaigns. After all, this was usually where the community's biggest trove of treasures could be found. Both ancient sources and modern scholarship have paid little attention to this aspect of Roman warfare.[5] While other intersections between war and religion—such as the declaration of war and the religious rituals associated with the celebration of a victory—have received ample attention, religious concerns about plunder have been peripheral. The ancient sources suggest that the gods are largely irrelevant to ancient authors when they narrate the sack of a city; only occasionally do we learn about an attack on a sanctuary.

Yet, I argue, concerns with temple robbery are often in the background when Roman authors comment on the success or failure of a military campaign. Since the Romans did not consider the contents of foreign sanctuaries to be inherently sacred, but also did not completely deny the possibility of foreign divine property—an issue I discuss below—these objects could be treated with a great deal of rhetorical flexibility. Accordingly, looted sacred objects can be rhetorically sanctified when it is useful for the author's overall goals. The default assumption, which usually does not merit further comment in the ancient sources, is that a general kept control of his troops and that sacred objects were treated properly. If, however, a greedy or incompetent person led the army, his character flaws could pave the way for an attack on sacred spaces. Not every badly run military campaign includes a temple robbery, but the mistreatment of sacred property always shows that something has gone amiss. After some general remarks about the rhetorical treatment of Roman plunder, I discuss three cases that illustrate the complexities of Rome's attitude toward sacred plunder: Manlius Vulso's

2. Plin. *HN* 34.40.

3. Plin. *HN* 13.53.

4. Plin. *HN* 36.28.

5. In Jörg Rüpke's landmark study on warfare and Roman religion, for example, concerns with sacred plunder receive minimal attention (Rüpke 1990, 211).

and Fulvius Nobilior's quests for triumphs following problematic victories; Camillus' sack of Veii; and Josephus' description of Vespasian and Titus' triumph. In the final section of the chapter, I consider examples of campaigns featuring a temple robbery.

Classifying Plunder

Latin has many different words for plunder. In addition to the two terms that appear most frequently in scholarship, *praeda* and *manubiae*, we also find *exuviae, praemium*, *rapina*, and *spolium* attested in the classical period. Some of these words categorize different types of loot. *Exuviae*, for example, derives from the verb *exuo*, "to take off" or "to strip," and most commonly refers to armor and other items removed from the bodies of enemies. Other terms can be used to refer to a wide range of loot, including money, precious textiles, and works of art. They might indicate how these treasures were obtained. *Rapina* (from *rapio*) indicates that something was carried off by force. *Spolium* (from *spolio*) suggests pillage. *Praemium* ("reward" or "prize") highlights an important function of war plunder; it rewarded Roman soldiers for their performance and provided a substantial part of their pay.[6] Beyond that, it helped commanders offset the cost of campaigns and was used to keep the army fed and clothed.[7] Extravagant amounts of loot could also be employed to further the reputation of a general. If the victory was judged worthy of a triumph, particularly spectacular pieces would be featured in the parade. Individual objects might go on to decorate public buildings or private houses.[8] *Manubiae* paid for public works in the name of the general.[9] Plunder, therefore, played an essential role both in managing

6. The revocation of rights to part of the plunder could also be used as a punishment, e.g., at Suet. *Iul.* 70, where Caesar strips disobedient soldiers of the *praedae* and land promised to them.

7. For a comprehensive look at the various monetary needs of a Roman campaign, see Grainger 1995.

8. For private displays of plunder, see Welch 2006.

9. The public works most commonly associated with Roman war plunder are manubial temples, on which see Aberson 1994; Orlin 1997; and Padilla Peralta 2020, 31–128. The most spectacular Roman manubial building, however, is the Flavian Amphitheater (Alföldy 1995). For overview of all the ways in which a general could commemorate his victory—from buildings to minting coins—see Itgenshorst 2005, 89–147. There is considerable disagreement about the nature of *manubiae* and their regulation; see esp. the debate between Shatzman 1972 and Churchill 1999 about who controlled their use. Tarpin 2009 provides

the practical challenges of Rome's long and complex military campaigns and in commemorating a victory back home.

Ancient sources commonly state the monetary value of a campaign. Sometimes it is phrased in vague terms, such as a remark that a war resulted in "enough plunder."[10] Pliny provides us with a list of how much various generals added to the treasury.[11] Elsewhere we get detailed catalogs as in a famous inscription commemorating the consul C. Duilius' naval victory over the Carthaginians in 260 BCE:

> Vique nave[is cepe]t cum socieis septer[esmom I quin
> queresm]osque triresmosque naveis X[XX merset XIII]
> aur]om captom numei MMMDCC (?)
> [arcen]tom captom praeda numei C(milia) [3] (?)
> [omne] captom aes CCCCCCCC(milia) [3] (?)
> [3]CCCCCCCCCCCCC(milia) [3] (?)[12]

> And he captured ships by force with their crews; one septireme and 30 quinqueremes and triremes. He sank 13. 3,700 (?) gold coins were captured, 100,000 (?) silver coins were obtained from the sale of the plunder, in total bronze coins 800,000 (?) [and?] 1.3 million.

Because of damage to the stone, the numbers in the inscription are uncertain.[13] But the exact quantities are immaterial here; what is relevant is how the plunder is quantified. The inscription presents the coins in the same way as it does the captured ships. Within each class of item, quantities are given in order from most valuable to least valuable (gold, silver, bronze), or from largest to smallest type of ship. Even if we can no longer make sense of the exact quantities, it is apparent that Duilius captured a large amount of stuff.

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an exhaustive catalog of the relevant primary sources for the handling of *manubiae*, which suggests that confusion and slippage between different types of booty was already a problem for ancient authors.

10. *Satis magna praeda* (Livy 31.27.6). For the quantification of military victories, see Coudry 2009, 52–62, and Kay 2014, 20–42. Östenberg 2009a, 82–119, offers a series of case studies from literary texts that illustrate the difficulties with tracing the exact spoils that Romans took from different campaigns. In many cases, it is not what the Romans took that matters, but how much.

11. Plin. *HN* 33.55–56.

12. *CIL* I^2 25 (cf. pp. 718, 739, 831, 861) = *CIL* 6.1300 (cf. pp. 3799, 4675, 4771, 4811), Gordon 1983, pp. 124–26, ll. 11–15. My text follows Gordon with the transliterations for the numerical symbols found in *EDCS*.

13. See, e.g., Gordon 1983, 124–26.

Duilius' inscription has played an important role in discussions of how the Romans perceived the relationships between coinage and value. The coins mentioned represent radically different types of things. The gold coins may have been actual Carthaginian coins—plunder in the proper sense of the word.[14] The silver coins likely represent the profits made from the sale of loot. The bronze coins may have been minted from melted-down objects.[15] The items listed in the inscription, therefore, include both actual plunder and coins derived from that plunder. Both are treated as equivalent and both factor into calculating the magnitude of the general's success.

We know little about the processes that transformed the enemy's treasures into usable plunder. There are some references to auctions and the melting down of goods, but it is unclear what ended up being sold or stripped down to its material value and what was kept intact.[16] Since proceeds from pillaging had to pay for the maintenance of the soldiers, a large part of Roman plunder may be reported only in monetary equivalents. We can conclude that while the individual campaign and the monetary total of the plunder were important, what exactly it consisted of and where it came from did not matter in such contexts.

Uncertainty about the nature of Roman loot is also prevalent in the most important extant account of how the Romans went about sacking a city, Polybius' description of the fall of Carthago Nova in 209 BCE.[17] The historian states that the conquest was divided into two distinct phases, each with its own rules. The first, chaotic phase aimed at gaining control and involved indiscriminate slaughter. While the soldiers were free to kill, they could not plunder until permitted to do so by their commander.[18] There

14. Kondratieff 2004, 16–17.

15. Kondratieff 2004, 17–21, and Rowan 2013b, 372, cf. Rowan 2013a, 115. It is not uncommon for heaps of coins to be considered functionally equivalent to bullion (see Rowan 2013b and von Reden 2010, 18–34). Here the opposite is the case; the bullion is quantified as a pile of coins.

16. For Roman auctions, García Morcillo 2005 provides the most comprehensive study to date. For the melting down of plunder, see, for example, Rowan 2013a. Jacquemin 2009 offers a comparative perspective by discussing what is known about sales of plunder in the Hellenistic world.

17. Polyb. 10.15–16.

18. "In accordance with Roman custom, [Scipio] sent the majority [of his soldiers] against those in the city, ordering them to kill whomever they happened upon and not spare anyone, but not to start plundering until the signal was given" (τοὺς μὲν πλείστους ἐφῆκε κατὰ τὸ παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς ἔθος ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐν τῇ πόλει, παραγγείλας κτείνειν τὸν παρατυχόντα καὶ μηδενὸς φείδεσθαι, μηδὲ πρὸς τὰς ὠφελείας ὁρμᾶν, μέχρις ἂν ἀποδοθῇ τὸ σύνθημα, Polyb. 10.15.4–5).

was, it appears, no concern with the human cost of war, but any material gain from the conflict had to be tracked carefully. Accordingly, the second phase of the capture of the city was devoted to quantifying and distributing the plunder. On the day following the successful assault, all the valuable objects taken by the soldiers were piled up in the city center. An oath guaranteed the soldiers' compliance with the equal distribution of these treasures.[19] The plunder was treated as common property, and since everyone received a fair share, no one profited from personal rapaciousness.

Polybius' account is puzzling since it is difficult to imagine such an orderly approach to dividing up a fallen city's wealth.[20] The problems only increase when we consider the wide variety of loot. Some objects, such as a bag of coins, were easy to divide up and transport. A large marble statue, on the other hand, would be challenging to move. Furthermore, the material, aesthetic, and symbolic value of items varied widely. Although they are not mentioned by Polybius, intermediate steps would therefore be necessary to allow for the distribution of goods. These might include the melting down of metal artifacts or an auction to turn treasures into cash.[21] Some soldiers would therefore walk away with plunder taken directly from the city; others would receive monetary equivalents. What in Polybius' account is presented as a quick and simple process of distribution is likely to have been considerably more complex and prone to generating debates and conflicts.

Within the apparently undifferentiated mass of Roman plunder, sacred loot presents a special challenge. At times it is subsumed within the general spoils; in other cases it is set aside and handled with great care. From a legal perspective, the discussion of sacred property in Gaius' *Institutes* also reflects a potential for flexibility. Regarding sacred space, Gaius tells us:

> Sed sacrum quidem hoc solum existimatur quod ex auctoritate populi Romani consecratum est, veluti lege de ea re lata aut senatus consulto facto.[22]

19. Polyb. 10.16.6.

20. Ziolkowski 1993, esp. 85–90. See also Grainger 1995, 27, for skepticism about the oath, and Machado 2021, 389–97, for reasons to doubt Polybius' accuracy when it comes to describing standard Roman military practice. Polybius' assertions are still sometimes taken as factual; see, e.g., Erdkamp 2007, 53. Ancient sources sometimes consider prohibitions on plundering and soldiers' obedience to them noteworthy, which suggests that such discipline was not the common expectation. Appian, for example, notes the restraint shown by Lucullus' soldiers in Armenia; as in Polybius' narrative, they kill first, and only then (with the permission of their commander) turn to plundering (App. *Mith.* 85 [388]).

21. See the summary of approaches in Rowan 2013b, 369–72.

22. Gai. *Inst.* 2.5; translation here and below from Gordon and Robinson 1988.

> But note that to be considered sacred land must have been consecrated by authority of the Roman people, by a statute on that matter, for instance, or by a Senate resolution.

If we leave things at that, no foreign sacred object could be considered sacred unless it was rededicated in Rome. As Gaius continues, matters become more complex:

> Sed in provinciali solo placet plerisque solum religiosum non fieri, quia in eo solo dominium populi Romani est uel Caesaris, nos autem possessionem tantum et usumfructum habere videmur; utique tamen, etiamsi non sit religiosum, pro religioso habetur: item quod in provinciis non ex auctoritate populi Romani consecratum est, proprie sacrum non est, tamen pro sacro habetur.[23]

> But in the case of land in the provinces most people accept that it is not made religious, because ownership of such land is held by the Roman people or by the emperor; we are regarded as having only possession or a usufruct; all the same, although not in fact religious, it is treated as religious. Again, anything in the provinces not consecrated by authority of the Roman people is not sacred properly speaking, yet it is treated as sacred.

Gaius' pronouncements suggest that the sacrality of land depends on a Roman ritual. He suggests that things are sacred not because they belong to the gods, but because of what the Roman people think of them.[24] While Gaius is not talking about warfare, this concept—that spaces (and by extension objects) are considered fully sacred only when they are consecrated by the Roman people and quasi-sacred in other circumstances—is helpful for discussions of Roman plunder. As emerges consistently in a variety of ancient sources, foreign loot has no right to a sacred identity, but when enough people express concern about how a general has conducted his campaign, it can acquire one.

Accordingly, depending on the rhetorical context, sacred plunder can be mere stuff that can be sold or melted down or a distinct group of objects with special rules regarding their handling. There is no binding approach;

23. Gai. *Inst.* 2.7.

24. For the interpretative difficulties with Gaius' argument and the challenges of distinguishing between different types of sacred property identified by him, see Rives 2012.

every campaign is considered on its own merits. Furthermore, the property of foreign gods is not a legal matter in its own right. Prosecutions for the mishandling of plunder fall under the category of *peculatus*, the theft of public funds.[25] A general facing such charges is accused of skimming an excessive profit for himself. He has failed to pay the expected amount to the treasury or has not compensated his troops adequately. The only thing that matters for the legal proceedings is the estimated monetary value of the victory. Questions about what the soldiers took from a foreign city and how they went about it are important for the moral assessment of the campaign, but are not a concern for the courts.

Asking for a Triumph

The year 187 BCE was a busy time for those concerned about Roman plundering. Cn. Manlius Vulso and Fulvius Nobilior, co-consuls of 189, both faced questions brought about by the rapaciousness on display during their successful military campaigns in the East. Livy provides details about the accusations leveled against them. In both cases, trouble starts when the general seeks a triumph. Manlius' story begins as soon as he returns:

> Cn. Manlius proconsul Romam venit; cui cum ab Ser. Sulpicio praetore senatus ad aedem Bellonae datus esset, et ipse, commemoratis rebus ab se gestis, postulasset ut ob eas dis immortalibus honos haberetur sibique triumphanti urbem invehi liceret, contradixerunt pars maior decem legatorum qui cum eo fuerant, et ante alios L. Furius Purpureo et L. Aemilius Paullus.[26]
>
> The proconsul Cn. Manlius came to Rome. A meeting with the Senate was granted to him by the praetor Ser. Sulpicius at the temple of Bellona. After recounting the things he had achieved, he demanded that on account of them, honors should be given to the immortal gods and that he himself should be permitted to enter the city in triumph. The majority of the ten ambassadors who had been with him opposed this, and, above all, L. Furius Purpureo and L. Aemilius Paullus.

25. These prosecutions are rare, but not unheard of. Shatzman 1972, 189–98, lists twelve cases between the sixth and the first centuries BCE.

26. Livy 38.44.9–11.

As Livy tells it, the general is vague about what exactly he has done, but states that he wants to see the gods honored for his victory. These two ideas become guiding motifs for the rest of the narrative; people are not quite sure about how to assess Manlius' achievements, and they have doubts that he has treated the gods properly.

Opposition to Manlius' request arises from eyewitnesses to his campaign. Furius Purpureo and Aemilius Paullus, along with eight other senators, had accompanied Vulso to conduct negotiations with Antiochus III. A peace agreement, the Treaty of Apamea, was ratified in 188, but in Livy's narrative, this happens despite Manlius' actions, not because of them.[27] Accordingly, Furius Purpureo and Aemilius Paullus accuse him of leading an illegitimate campaign. Rather than helping with the diplomatic effort, they say, the general let his army roam freely around Asia and eventually attacked the Galatians for no good reason and without authorization. Manlius, they state, was engaged in "private brigandage."[28] His actions were reckless, and the only thing that kept the campaign from ending in disaster was the lack of preparedness among the Galatians.[29]

Matters become even worse once the military operations conclude and the time comes to return to Rome. Furius Purpureo and Aemilius Paullus, Manlius' accusers, report:

> Cum redeuntes in latrunculos Thracas incidissemus, caesi fugati exuti impedimentis sumus. Q. Minucius Thermus, in quo haud paulo plus damni factum est quam si Cn. Manlius, cuius temeritate ea clades inciderat, perisset, cum multis viris fortibus cecidit; exercitus, spolia regis Antiochi referens, trifariam dissipatus, alibi primum alibi postremum agmen alibi impedimenta, inter vepres in latebris ferarum noctem unam delituit.[30]
>
> When we were on the way back, we happened upon some Thracian bandits and were attacked, put to flight, and stripped of our baggage. Along with many other brave men, Q. Minucius Thermus was killed, a matter far more serious than if Cn. Manlius, whose rashness caused

27. Grainger 1995 argues that Vulso's actions had a significant influence on the successful outcome of the negotiations, but that Livy attempts to obscure this fact.

28. *Privatum latrocinium* (Livy 38.45.8).

29. Livy 38.45.10–46.5. The men recommend that the gods be thanked for the weakness of the enemy.

30. Livy 38.46.6–8. Q. Minucius Thermus, consul of 193 BCE, was another of the ambassadors accompanying Manlius.

> the disaster, had died. The army bringing back the spoils of King Antiochus was split into three parts, a vanguard, a rearguard, a baggage train, all in different places, and at night they huddled together in the thickets of the wild animals.

Rather than presenting material for a triumph, Manlius' campaign ends in disgrace. A small group of bandits—they are described with the diminutive *latrunculi*—manages to surprise the army and rout it.[31] What is more, despite his professed eagerness for plunder, he did not obtain the treasures that he presents in Rome in battle. He merely provided a remarkably incompetent transport service for the glorious achievements of others.

Manlius successfully defends himself and obtains his triumph. Nevertheless, his opponents succeed in spreading doubt about his ability as a commander and manage to suggest that the spoils paraded in the triumph were not actually taken by Manlius himself. At least in some eyes, the triumphant general is immortalized as a greedy profiteer. This is often the outcome of debates about a commander's conduct as portrayed in Livy; while honors are still awarded and actions are still legitimized, doubts and questions remain.

The other debate about a triumph in 187 BCE concerns Fulvius Nobilior's campaign against the Aetolians. In contrast to Manlius' case, the problem this time does not center on whether the conflict was legitimate and whether the general should be credited with the victory, but concerns the nature of the plunder itself. Fulvius Nobilior, Manlius' fellow consul, had conquered Ambracia on the west coast of Greece and brought home many riches. For M. Aemilius Lepidus, the consul of 187, the plunder serves as a justification for accusing his long-standing political opponent of temple robbery.

When Lepidus sets out to make the case for denying Fulvius Nobilior a triumph on the grounds of his unreasonable plundering, he bases his case on complaints made by the citizens of Ambracia. He is particularly keen on talking about the general's treatment of sacred spaces:

> Questi . . . omnia exempla belli edita in se caedibus incendiis ruinis direptione urbis, coniuges liberos in servitium abstractos, bona

31. In the long defense that Manlius gives following this speech, they are *latrones Thraces*, Thracian bandits (38.49.8). He also stresses that Thrace is an exceptionally hostile space for a Roman army.

> adempta, et, quod se ante omnia moveat, templa tota urbe spoliata ornamentis; simulacra deum, deos immo ipsos, convulsos ex sedibus suis ablatos esse; parietes postesque nudatos, quos adorent, ad quos precentur et supplicent, Ambraciensibus superesse.[32]
>
> They [the Ambracians] complained that everything that can happen in war had been inflicted on them, with slaughter and burning and ruins and the destruction of the town; wives and children had been taken into slavery, their possessions had been taken away, and, what moved them above all, the temples in the whole city had been despoiled of their ornaments; the statues of the gods—indeed, the gods themselves—had been ripped up from their seats and taken away; stripped walls and door posts were left for the Ambracians to worship, pray to, and beseech.

Lepidus' report of the complaints voiced by the Ambracians leaves no doubt as to the violence of the general's deeds; the temples have been despoiled (*spoliata*), the gods ripped away (*convulsi*) and taken away (*ablati*), and the doorposts and walls stripped (*nudati*). The consistent use of the passive voice emphasizes that the Ambracians are the defenseless victims of the Roman assault. Fulvius is a cruel and unreasonable conqueror who has taken away a community's ability to perform its rituals and worship the gods. The accusations leveled by the Ambracians remind the reader of similar charges brought against Marcellus by the Syracusans at Livy 26.30.8–9.[33] Marcellus, too, was accused of depriving Syracuse of its gods. One of the great heroes of the Punic Wars becomes a problematic precedent for Fulvius.

When it is the general's turn to defend himself, he also thinks of Marcellus, but with an entirely different interpretation:

> Iam de deorum immortalium templis spoliatis in capta urbe qualem calumniam ad pontifices attulerit? nisi Syracusarum ceterarumque captarum civitatium ornamentis urbem exornari fas fuerit, in Ambracia una capta non valuerit belli ius.[34]

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32. Livy 38.43.3–7.

33. See chapter 4 for a discussion of that scene, and Pittenger 2008, 202, and Östenberg 2009a, 80–82, for the verbal parallels between the accusations against Marcellus and those against Fulvius.

34. Livy 39.4.11–13.

> Now, what kind of complaint about the despoliation of the temples of the immortal gods in the captured city did he [Lepidus] bring before the *pontifices*? Unless it had been right to adorn the city [Rome] with the decorations of Syracuse and other captured cities, whereas in the case of the capture of Ambracia alone, the law of war did not apply.

He has simply followed precedent. The spoils of conquest are used to decorate the city, a practice established by Marcellus and others. Furthermore, there is no religious or legal problem with this practice; it is both *fas*, divinely approved, and *ius*, sanctioned by law. Lepidus is the one who is acting unreasonably by denying his opponent his right to recognition.

Fulvius' statement regarding precedent makes two assumptions; first, objects taken from temples are no different from anything else taken from a captured city. Second, Marcellus established the norms of acceptable conduct for subsequent generals. Despite stating that Lepidus is falsely accusing him of treating the town's sanctuaries inappropriately, denying temple robbery is not Fulvius' main defense. Instead, he argues that what happened to the sacred spaces is not an issue because the famous generals of old have established that sacred plunder is just plunder. This argument is supported by the fact that, unlike Lepidus, Fulvius wastes no words in describing how the objects were taken from the city. For him, the captured riches are just *ornamenta*, decorations.[35] The word in and of itself does not have any sacred connotations and can be used to refer to anything decorative and costly. In the speech that Livy gives to the general, the idea that *ornamenta* are meant to decorate is further enhanced by the verb *exornare*, "decorate." Fulvius did not take sacred objects from Ambracia, but merely adornments for Rome's public spaces.

Fulvius' use of the word *ornamenta* harkens back to Lepidus' speech. There, too, there is talk of *ornamenta*, but rather than stressing their decorative function, Lepidus emphasized their origins. The *ornamenta* come from temples and are sacred. Their treatment shows that Fulvius engaged in unreasonable actions contrary to religious custom. One rhetorical context accords the objects their sacred status; another context strips it away. That both speeches prominently use the same word with very different implications is not mere rhetorical trickery. It highlights the inherently unstable position of objects taken from temples. Without Romans who are will-

35. The same term is used at Livy 34.4.1–5 to describe the adornments (*ornamenta*) of Greek cities that Cato finds so offensive; see chapter 4.

ing to recognize their sacred status, they are mere decorative things. Like Manlius, Fulvius is granted a triumph and can be celebrated as a victorious general who has returned with treasures that are officially considered unproblematic.[36]

Camillus at Veii

Yet, although the cases of Manlius and Fulvius suggest rhetorical avenues for dealing with artifacts plundered from temples, the gods could be a factor in the sacking of a city. As the statement by Q. Fabius Maximus about the Tarentines quoted at the beginning of this chapter indicates, conquests result in angry gods. These could potentially turn on the army or the entire state.[37] The tutelary deities of ancient cities had a particular interest in the health and survival of their communities. The widespread belief in these gods brings us to one of the most famous Roman rituals, the *evocatio*. It was used to call deities out of a city. Since ancient gods did not stay in doomed cities and since the abandoned communities no longer enjoyed divine protection, asking deities to leave made the conquest easier and also ensured that nothing was being done against the will of a god.[38] Attested cases of *evocatio* are so few that we should be hesitant to assume that it had a regular place in Roman military practice. There are a maximum of six examples, which mostly date to between the fourth and second centuries BCE.[39]

36. As David Levene (1993, 92) has argued, the dismissal of the case against Fulvius is part of a wider set of episodes in Livy's fourth decade that thematize decline and a loss of religious scruples. The case of Camillus and others suggests, however, that the problem with the inadequate recognition of sacred plunder started much earlier.

37. For the power of angry gods to threaten Rome itself, see, for example, Val. Max. 1.1.16, which expresses the view that a minor offense against Jupiter resulted in the defeat at Cannae.

38. Gods abandoning cities before a conquest are common in Greek and Roman literature. See, e.g., Poseidon's opening speech at Eur. *Tro.* 1–47 in which he explains his departure from Troy, and Verg. *Aen.* 2.351–52, where the gods abandon Troy. The trope is also richly attested in other ancient Mediterranean literatures; see Bachvarova 2016, esp. 64–70. Vigourt 2006 discusses the trope in a Roman context.

39. Scholars generally agree that *evocationes* are associated with the conquest of Veii, Falerii, and Carthage. There is no consensus on whether Vertumnus' arrival in Rome or a highly fragmentary inscription from Isaura Vetus in Anatolia dating to the 70s BCE (*AE* 1977, 816) are to be associated with the ritual. For discussions of each of these cases and the evidence associated with them, see Rüpke 1990, 162–64; Gustafsson 2000, 46–62; Ando 2008, 128–33; and Ferri 2010, 59–154.

Despite its rarity, *evocatio* has a prominent place in scholarly discussions of Roman relations with the gods. The practice of conquering a city and taking its deities is not limited to the Romans. Ever since the first book-length study of *evocatio*, it has been popular to compare the Roman ritual to Near Eastern practice.[40] It has been widely noted that while the Roman sources focus on enlisting help from the deities, the Near Eastern texts emphasize the conquest of the enemy's gods. Part of the record of the reign of the Middle Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I, who reigned from 1115 to 1076 BCE, exemplifies a rhetorical approach that treats gods as plunder:

> I overwhelmed the lands Sarauš [and] Ammauš, which from ancient times had not known submission, [so that they looked] like ruin hills [created by] the Deluge. I fought with their extensive army in Mt. Aruma, and I brought about their defeat. The corpses of their men-at-arms I laid out on the mountain ledges like grain heaps. I conquered their cities. I carried away their gods. I carried off their booty, possessions, and property. I burned, razed, and destroyed their cities. I turned [them] into ruined hills and heaps.[41]

This practice has been dubbed "godnap" and, as recent studies have pointed out, should not be considered purely an expression of the fact that the enemy's gods have been crushed and rendered powerless. The captive gods could be treated like human hostages to be returned at a politically opportune point.[42] The gods are not obliterated but are forced to take up temporary residence in a new context. The Roman practice, by contrast, aims at permanent incorporation through persuasion. The *evocatio* turns foreign gods into Roman ones.[43]

Roman narratives, therefore, emphasize that the gods have a choice about joining the Roman side. Hence the rhetoric surrounding the *evocatio* stresses the incentives offered to the god and the piety of the people

40. Basanoff 1947, 140–52; Versnel 1976; Johnson 2011, 87–104; Sacco 2011; Dillon 2020.

41. Tiglath-Pileser 1/A.0.87.1 column iii 73–85 (Grayson 1991, 18–19); translation from Younger 1990, 80.

42. See Johnson 2011, 137–79; Zaia 2015; Trimm 2017, 399–408.

43. See, e.g., Ferri 2010, 37–41, and Orlin 2010, esp. 31–57. In the early Christian tradition, the deities acquired by *evocatio* are polemically understood as conquered gods (see Ando 2008, 136 and 139).

conducting the ritual.[44] Both are on display in Livy's famous account of an *evocatio*, M. Furius Camillus' sack of the Etruscan city of Veii in 396 BCE, which illustrates the narrative complexity of dealing with sacred plunder. Livy's narrative describes a military campaign that is conducted entirely correctly, but that threatens to divide Rome because of debates about how to distribute the loot between gods and humans. The episode takes place at a time of religious and military uncertainty. While Rome is engaged in challenging conflicts with its neighbors, portents start appearing all over Italy. The most concerning is a sudden rise in the water level of the Alban Lake. Between the military frustrations of the campaign and divine signs against their success, the Romans start imagining themselves on the losing side and wonder whether the gods have turned against them.[45]

Camillus takes command of a military operation that focuses on the city of Veii. As a leader of a powerful alliance, Veii is an existential threat to Rome, but cannot be conquered without the cooperation of the gods. The general therefore faces a double challenge; he must overcome a military enemy, but also must ensure divine support. In order to address the latter issue, Camillus prays to Apollo, whom the Romans had consulted regarding the apparent omens against their success, and Juno, the patron deity of Veii:

> Tum dictator auspicato egressus cum edixisset ut arma milites caperent, "tuo ductu" inquit, "Pythice Apollo, tuoque numine instinctus pergo ad delendam urbem Veios, tibique hinc decimam partem praedae voveo. te simul, Iuno regina, quae nunc Veios colis, precor, ut nos victores in nostram tuamque mox futuram urbem sequare, ubi te dignum amplitudine tua templum accipiat." haec precatus superante multitudine ab omnibus locis urbem adgreditur.[46]
>
> Then, when the auspices had been taken, the dictator set out and, after having told his men to take up arms, spoke: "Impelled by your leadership, Pythian Apollo, and your divine will, I go to destroy the city of Veii, and to you I promise a tenth part of the plunder. I also

44. This is also apparent in Macrob. *Sat.* 3.9.7–8, which transmits the prayer that Scipio Aemilianus supposedly used to initiate an *evocatio* at Carthage.

45. Livy 5.15–18. 5.18.11–12 suggests widespread panic in Rome; as a reaction to rumors that the Etruscans have started a counteroffensive, people rush to the city walls and women beseech the gods to protect the city.

46. Livy 5.21.1–4.

> pray to you, Juno Regina, who now tends to Veii, so that you will follow us victors back to our—and soon to be your—city, where a temple worthy of your power will receive you." Having prayed these words, he attacked the city on all sides with a superior force.

Camillus' prayer gives the gods an explicit stake in Rome's success. As thanks for facilitating the victory, Apollo will receive part of the plunder. Juno's cult, in turn, will be relocated to Rome. This promise placates the goddess and precludes any potential debates about the general's handling of sacred property; when his soldiers empty Juno's temple of its contents, it will be to move them to Rome, not to misappropriate them.[47]

The rest of Livy's narrative of the sack of Veii continues developing the idea that the handling of sacred plunder was entirely unproblematic in this case. Once the Romans are victorious, Juno's relocation proceeds apace:

> Cum iam humanae opes egestae a Veiis essent, amoliri tum deum dona ipsosque deos, sed colentium magis quam rapientium modo, coepere. namque delecti ex omni exercitu iuvenes, pure lautis corporibus, candida veste, quibus deportanda Romam regina Iuno adsignata erat, venerabundi templum iniere, primo religiose admoventes manus, quod id signum more Etrusco nisi certae gentis sacerdos attractare non esset solitus. dein cum quidam, seu spiritu divino tactus seu iuvenali ioco, "visne Romam ire, Iuno?" dixisset, adnuisse ceteri deam conclamaverunt. inde fabulae adiectum est vocem quoque dicentis velle auditam; motam certe sede sua parvi molimenti adminiculis, sequentis modo accepimus levem ac facilem tralatu fuisse, integramque in Aventinum aeternam sedem suam quo vota Romani dictatoris vocaverant perlatam, ubi templum ei postea idem qui voverat Camillus dedicavit.[48]
>
> When human riches had been taken away from Veii, they began to remove the offerings to the gods and the gods themselves, but in the manner of worshippers rather than plunderers. For young men were chosen from the entire army to whom, when they had cleansed their bodies and dressed in white clothes, the removal of Juno to Rome

47. On the connection between *evocationes* and cult transfers, see also Hicks 2013, esp. 75–80.

48. Livy 5.22.3–7.

> was assigned. They entered the temple in religious awe and at first moved their hands with religious scruple because it was Etruscan custom that this statue should not be touched except by a priest of a certain tribe. Then when one of them, either because he had been touched by divine inspiration or because of a juvenile joke, said "Do you want to go to Rome, Juno?" the others shouted that the goddess had nodded. Eventually, it was added to the story that a voice had also been heard saying that she wanted [to go to Rome]. Certainly, we hear that she was moved from her temple with little in the way of effort and tools, and she was slight and easy to transport as if she was following [the army]. She was brought unharmed to her eternal temple on the Aventine, where the vows of the Roman dictator had called for her to be brought and where afterward the same Camillus who had vowed it dedicated a temple to her.

The temple is not included in the general sack, and the soldiers cannot enter it before they have taken off their armor and transformed themselves into worshippers. Nothing about moving Juno is to have any outward resemblance to the pillaging of the city. Then Livy briefly undercuts the reverent spirit of the episode when one of the men seeks divine approval for his actions either because of religious scruples or as a joke. The rest of the passage, however, treats the question about Juno's wishes as genuine religious concern and adds further proof of the goddess' voluntary departure. Therefore, Livy's narrative of the fall of Veii affirms that divine approval is essential to a cult transfer. Camillus bribes Juno by promising her a new home, but she can decide whether to come along.

The episode is not only revealing of how Rome might acquire a new god; it also presents a story that carefully separates divine possessions from the other material goods of the city. Nothing that is taken from the temple can be mistaken for loot; it is removed at a different time and by people who are not dressed as soldiers. The treasures from the temple will not be piled up and distributed among those who fought. Instead, they will go straight to Juno's new home in Rome. There is no possibility of temple plundering because every precaution has been taken to separate the military campaign (where looting might occur) from the cult transfer.

Back in Rome, efforts to separate military and religious concerns collapse. Plunder had been an important motivating factor for the campaign, and it was expected that the loot from Veii would replenish Rome's treasury. It had also been anticipated that Rome's civilian population would

demand a large share of the spoils.[49] Camillus was therefore under pressure to bring back piles of treasure and distribute them. Any actions involving the plunder that did not directly add to the material wealth of the Roman people would be met with resistance. As predicted, once the city has been conquered there is disagreement about what to do with its treasures:

> Agi deinde de Apollinis dono coeptum. cui se decimam vovisse praedae partem cum diceret Camillus, pontifices solvendum religione populum censerent, haud facile inibatur ratio iubendi referre praedam populum, ut ex ea pars debita in sacrum secerneretur. tandem eo quod lenissimum videbatur decursum est, ut qui se domumque religione exsolvere vellet, cum sibimet ipse praedam aestimasset suam, decimae pretium partis in publicum deferret, ut ex eo donum aureum, dignum amplitudine templi ac numine dei, ex dignitate populi Romani fieret.[50]
>
> Then discussion began concerning the gift for Apollo. When Camillus said that he had promised him a tenth of the plunder and when the *pontifices* ruled that the people had to discharge the vow because piety dictated it, it was not easy to devise a plan for compelling the people to return the plunder so the amount due could be set aside for sacred use. At least that which seemed the most lenient was decreed, namely that those who wished to have themselves and their household fulfill the religious obligation should take an estimate of their plunder and pay a tenth of it into the treasury. That way a gift of gold appropriate for the size of the temple and the power of the god and worthy of the esteem of the Roman people would be made.

The passage gives an insight into the distribution of plunder. While Juno's treasures are treated entirely separately (Camillus commissioned her temple just before this passage), Apollo's reward is to come out of the general loot, which was distributed to the people before verifying that there were no further obligations on it. In order to fulfill the vow, the priests have to resort to appealing to the piety of the people to make a voluntary contribution.

Arguments about how much Apollo is owed and recriminations against the general carry over into Rome's campaign against the Faliscii. Here,

49. Livy 5.20.4–10.
50. Livy 5.23.8–11.

Camillus ensures a surrender but fails to obtain any plunder. Back in Rome, another discussion takes place about the general's persistent failure to deliver loot at a satisfactory rate. The gift that had been promised to Apollo in connection with the conquest of Veii resurfaces in this context. The Romans finally make plans to send a golden bowl to Delphi, the most important sanctuary of the god:

> Crateramque auream donum Apollini Delphos legati qui ferrent, L. Valerius L. Sergius A. Manlius, missi longa una nave, haud procul freto Siculo a piratis Liparensium excepti devehuntur Liparas. mos erat civitatis velut publico latrocinio partam praedam dividere. forte eo anno in summo magistratu erat Timasitheus quidam, Romanis vir similior quam suis; qui legatorum nomen donumque et deum cui mitteretur et doni causam veritus ipse multitudinem quoque, quae semper ferme regenti est similis, religionis iustae implevit, adductosque in publicum hospitium legatos cum praesidio etiam navium Delphos prosecutus, Romam inde sospites restituit.[51]
>
> The legates L. Valerius, L. Sergius, and A. Manlius were sent to Delphi on a warship to bring the golden bowl as a gift for Apollo. Not far from the Sicilian strait they were intercepted by Liparian pirates and taken to Lipara. It was the custom of those people to divide up the spoils as if they were obtained from state-sponsored piracy. By chance, the chief magistrate that year was a certain Timasitheus, a man more like to the Romans than his own people. When he showed reverence for the names of the legates, the gift, the god to whom it was sent, and the reason for the gift, he also imbued his people, who are almost always similar to those ruling them, with proper piety. After they had been shown public hospitality, he conveyed the legates to Delphi with an escort of ships and from there returned them safely to Rome.

Timasitheus and his pirates model how the Romans should have dealt with the plunder. Their entire society shares in what is captured, but not everything can be distributed among the people. Property that is set aside for the gods is honored and delivered with maximum speed and efficiency. Camillus' delegates, who are finally able to discharge the vow after years of argu-

51. Livy 5.28.2–4.

ing back in Rome, have little trouble convincing even pirates of the need to make a gift to Apollo. The criminals outdo the Roman people in piety and efficiency.

The episode is one of many clues that foreshadow Camillus' fall from grace. He is eventually driven into exile due to a variety of accusations including the mishandling of plunder.[52] Despite the official charges, Livy's narrative leaves us with the sense that the general's military success simply did not lead to as much personal profit as the Romans had hoped for. Camillus seems to have failed to understand that Roman warfare has to result in sufficient plunder for the soldiers and the people back home. Livy depicts a man who tried to do everything correctly, but was brought down by greed and envy.

Livy's extended narrative about the fall of Veii and its aftermath is driven by a tension between diametrically opposed approaches to handling the material goods of an enemy city, the strict separation of sacred treasures from other objects, and the indiscriminate mixing of different types of loot. The first is on display in the *evocatio*, where Juno's wealth is not treated as plunder, but as the tangible evidence of a cult transfer. Nobody argues about these treasures or calls for their distribution to the people of Rome. This part of the narrative also attests to Camillus' piety. He can persuade Juno to come with him, so does not need to use violence to obtain Veii's sacred objects. The vast, undifferentiated mass of plunder, on the other hand, causes Camillus considerable problems and calls his character into question. It is to be divided between the gods, the treasury, and the people, but no one is quite sure according to which criteria and in which proportions. Everyone feels entitled to these treasures.

Titus and Jerusalem

Livy's account of the sack of Veii is unusual in the degree of emphasis it puts on the handling of sacred plunder and is a rare example of a text that postulates a sharp distinction between sacred and nonsacred loot. The careful removal of Juno's possessions from the sanctuary leaves no doubt that the act was in no way a temple robbery. The narrative also lacks all the references to violence and greed that would normally accompany a *sacrilegium*. Livy is not the only author who tries to convince his audience that

52. Livy 5.32.8–9.

the removal of famous sacred objects from a defeated city did not constitute a temple robbery. Josephus' narrative of Titus' sack of Jerusalem in 70 CE presents a particularly complex case, as the historian attempts to negotiate the tension between his desire to absolve the general from all blame and the fact that Roman troops undeniably looted a sacred space. He does so by engaging with the narrative conventions of Roman historiography when dealing with temple robbery and sacred plunder.[53] In the description of the sack itself, he exploits the idea that temple robbers must demonstrate serious character flaws. Titus emerges as an exemplary character, but he has to contend with some bad actors. When the treasures appear in Titus' triumph back in Rome, Josephus largely resorts to a straightforward description of the parade that treats the plunder as a quantifiable mass of precious stuff.

Before the Romans start plundering, Josephus presents a debate between Titus, various other Roman military leaders, and M. Antonius Julianus, the procurator of Judaea, in which the men debate how to treat the temple.[54] As an attempt (albeit fictional) to explicate how Romans might want to deal with an enemy's sacred spaces, the scene is without parallel. In literary terms, it is a variation on the trope of the constitutional debate in ancient historiography, which depicts leaders consulting trusted advisers at a time of great political importance when a decision about the future of the state must be made.[55] This literary ancestry lends a special significance to the debate. Titus must decide what kind of conqueror he wants to be and, by extension, what kind of conquerors the Romans are going to be under his leadership. Josephus summarizes the outcome:

> τοῖς μὲν οὖν ἐδόκει χρῆσθαι τῷ τοῦ πολέμου νόμῳ· μὴ γὰρ ἄν ποτε Ἰουδαίους παύσασθαι νεωτερίζοντας τοῦ ναοῦ μένοντος, ἐφ᾽ ὃν οἱ πανταχόθεν συλλέγονται. τινὲς δὲ παρήνουν, εἰ μὲν καταλίποιεν

53. I here build on Steve Mason's arguments about Josephus' deep engagement with the conventions of Roman literature (Mason 2003 and 2016). See also Östenberg 2009a, 111–19, for the relationship between Josephus' description of the triumph and the Arch of Titus (see below); and Itgenshorst 2005, 26–29, on Josephus' narrative, the arch, and triumph descriptions in the imperial Greek literary tradition.

54. Joseph. *BJ* 6.236–42.

55. The most famous examples are Herodotus' debate concerning which form of government Darius should adopt for Persia (Hdt. 3.80–82) and, on the same subject, Dio Cassius' discussion between Maecenas, Agrippa, and the future emperor Augustus (Dio Cass. 52.2.1–41.2). Josephus is therefore making use of a Greek (and later Roman) mode of historical philosophizing. For Josephus' wider engagement with the Greek argumentative tradition, see, for example, Cohen 1988.

> αὐτὸν Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ μηδεὶς ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῦ τὰ ὅπλα θείη, σώζειν, εἰ δὲ πολεμοῖεν ἐπιβάντες, καταφλέγειν· φρούριον γάρ, οὐκέτι ναὸν εἶναι, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν ἔσεσθαι τῶν ἀναγκασάντων [τὴν] ἀσέβειαν, οὐκ αὐτῶν. ὁ δὲ Τίτος οὐδ᾽ ἂν ἐπιβάντες ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῦ πολεμῶσιν Ἰουδαῖοι φήσας ἀντὶ τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἀμυνεῖσθαι τὰ ἄψυχα οὐδὲ καταφλέξειν ποτὲ τηλικοῦτον ἔργον· Ῥωμαίων γὰρ ἔσεσθαι τὴν βλάβην, ὥσπερ καὶ κόσμον τῆς ἡγεμονίας αὐτοῦ μένοντος.[56]
>
> Indeed, it seemed best to some to employ the custom of war, for the Jews would never stop rebelling while the temple remained; they would gather at it from everywhere. Others advised that if the Jews left the temple and no one placed weapons in it, it should be spared. But if they went up to it to make war, it should be burned to the ground. For they observed that it would no longer be a temple and what would follow would be impiety [on the part] of those compelling them, not of the Romans. Titus, however, said that even if the Jews were to go up to the temple to make war, he would never punish inanimate objects instead of men and he would never burn down such a great work, since, if it remained standing, it would be an ornament for the empire.

All sides in the debate are reluctant to attack the temple, but the majority of the participants have concerns about the building's function as a rallying point for the rebellion. Nevertheless, Titus decides that the symbolism of burning the temple is too problematic. Although his decision poses a risk, he orders it to be left alone.

Contrary to the general's command, the temple is burned and emptied of its contents. In Josephus' account, the destruction of the sanctuary is doubly determined; first, because it was divinely decreed, and, second, because the defenders set fire to the city.[57] Titus rushes in and orders the fire to be extinguished.[58] His troops, however, have no interest in doing so. Once they get a glimpse of the riches hidden inside, a "hope for plunder" (ἁρπαγῆς ἐλπίς)[59] takes over and nothing can stop the destruction. Although he has good intentions, Titus cannot keep his frenzied soldiers in check. The actual plundering is the work of an undifferentiated mass of greedy men.

56. Joseph. *BJ* 6.239–41.
57. Joseph. *BJ* 6.250–51.
58. Joseph. *BJ* 6.256.
59. Joseph. *BJ* 6.264.

Strikingly, Titus' men do not loot the entire temple. Some especially significant items are removed in an orderly fashion that is reminiscent of Camillus' actions at Veii:

> παραδίδωσι δὲ καὶ τὰ καταπετάσματα καὶ τὰ ἐνδύματα τῶν ἀρχιερέων σὺν τοῖς λίθοις καὶ πολλὰ τῶν πρὸς τὰς ἱερουργίας σκευῶν ἄλλα. συλληφθεὶς δὲ καὶ ὁ γαζοφύλαξ τοῦ ἱεροῦ Φινέας ὄνομα τούς τε χιτῶνας καὶ τὰς ζώνας ὑπέδειξε τῶν ἱερέων.[60]
>
> [One of the priests] also handed over the veils and the clothing of the high priests together with precious stones and many other things [used] for worship. When he was captured, the treasurer of the temple, Phineas by name, pointed out the garments and belts of the priests.

By mixing references to precious materials with explanations of how the artifacts were used, the account shows that these are not simply items of plunder. They are individually cataloged and tracked, and nothing about the process suggests a violent attack. While individual soldiers act like temple robbers, any part of the process that Titus maintains control over has no narrative resonances with an account of a *sacrilegium*.

The treasures of the temple next appear in Titus and Vespasian's triumph in Rome in 71 CE.[61] Josephus describes the spoils that were the centerpiece of the parade:

> λάφυρα δὲ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα χύδην ἐφέρετο, διέπρεπε δὲ πάντων τὰ ἐγκαταληφθέντα τῷ ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἱερῷ, χρυσῆ τε τράπεζα τὴν ὁλκὴν πολυτάλαντος καὶ λυχνία χρυσῆ μὲν ὁμοίως πεποιημένη, τὸ δ' ἔργον ἐξήλλακτο τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν χρῆσιν συνηθείας. . . . ὅ τε νόμος ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐφέρετο τῶν λαφύρων τελευταῖος. ἐπὶ τούτοις παρῆσαν πολλοὶ Νίκης ἀγάλματα κομίζοντες· ἐξ ἐλέφαντος δ' ἦν πάντων καὶ χρυσοῦ ἡ κατασκευή. μεθ' ἃ Οὐεσπασιανὸς ἤλαυνε πρῶτος καὶ Τίτος εἵπετο, Δομετιανὸς δὲ παρίππευεν, αὐτός τε διαπρεπῶς κεκοσμημένος καὶ τὸν ἵππον παρέχων θέας ἄξιον.[62]

60. Joseph. *BJ* 6.389–90.

61. For reconstructions of what this triumph would have looked like to the Roman audience, see Beard 2003, esp. 548–55, and Beard 2007, 147–53.

62. Joseph. *BJ* 7.148–52.

> The other spoils were carried in heaps, but the things taken from the temple in Jerusalem stood out among everything: a golden table, a great haul of gold, a candelabrum also made of gold, but in regard to workmanship completely different from an ordinary one for daily use. . . . The Jewish laws were carried after them as the last of the booty. After these, there were many people carrying images of Nike entirely made from ivory and gold. Following them Vespasian drove first and Titus followed; Domitian rode along [with them] and he was dressed strikingly and had a horse that was worthy of admiration.

The identification of the menorah as a candelabrum "different from an ordinary one" recalls its sacred function, but, on the whole, individual items drown in the mass of stuff. There is so much plunder that it is carried along "in heaps" (χύδην). The kind of piling up of precious goods that Josephus describes here is instrumental in transforming the plunder from whatever it was previously to "politically significant decor."[63] In this sense, the sacred history of the objects ends with the triumph.

Josephus' description of the triumph has much in common with those found in other authors. Livy's description of T. Quinctius Flamininus' triumph in 194 BCE, celebrating his defeat of Philip in the Second Macedonian War, is representative of narratives that see the triumph as a parade of quantified riches:

> Triduum triumphavit. die primo arma tela signaque aerea et marmorea transtulit, plura Philippo adempta quam quae ex civitatibus ceperat; secundo aurum argentumque factum infectumque et signatum. infecti argenti quadraginta tria milia pondo et ducenta septuaginta, facti vasa multa omnis generis, caelata pleraque, quaedam eximiae artis; ex aere multa fabrefacta; ad hoc clipea argentea decem. signati argenti octoginta quattuor milia fuere Atticorum: tetrachma vocant, trium fere denariorum in singulis argenti est pondus. auri pondo fuit tria milia septingenta quattuordecim, et clipeum unum ex auro totum, et Philippei nummi aurei quattuordecim milia quingenti quattuordecim. tertio die coronae aureae, dona civitatium, tralatae centum quattuordecim.[64]

63. Hölscher 2006, 42.
64. Livy 34.52.4–9.

> He triumphed for three days. On the first, he paraded armor, weapons, and bronze and marble statues, more of them captured from Philip than from the Greek city-states. On the second day, [he paraded] gold and silver, wrought, unwrought, and coined. There were 43,270 pounds of unwrought silver. Of the wrought silver, there were vessels of many kinds, most of them embossed, some of distinguished workmanship. There were many things skillfully made from bronze; in addition, there were ten silver shields. In coined silver there were 84,000 Attic coins (they call them tetrachma); each coin has a weight of silver approximately equal to that of three denarii. The weight of gold was 3,714 pounds and there was one shield made entirely of gold. There were 14,514 Philippic gold coins. On the third day 114 golden crowns, gifts of the city-states, were paraded.

Gifts and plundered treasures are lumped together to create a visual representation of the magnitude of Flamininus' achievement. Aside from the coins, it is difficult to picture any items with precision. We learn, for example, that some of the silver vessels are exceptionally beautiful, but are given no hints as to their size or appearance. Unlike an inventory list, the description does not aim to provide a unique record of each item.[65] We are asked to picture generic groups of things. When it comes to numbers, on the other hand, the description is precise.[66] The narrative perspective flips back and forth between a viewer of the triumph—who could perceive the material that something is made of and its shape, but not see any surface details—and someone who is producing an official record of what Flamininus brought back and has access to numbers and explanations. Official records and viewing experience combine to create the impression that the general obtained an almost uncountably large pile of plunder, all of which is precious raw material without a history or original context to worry about.

Pompey's third triumph in 61 BCE, for his successful campaign in Asia Minor, was an even more visually overwhelming affair. If Plutarch is to be believed, the general planned the aesthetics of his triumph well before he had won his victory. When a ruler surrendered to him and brought gifts, Pompey "only took those that seemed to provide décor for temples and

65. For the descriptive language of inventories, see Kirk 2021, 110–52.

66. The accuracy is doubtful, both because of the convenient round numbers for the silver and because numerals are prone to textual corruption. See Briscoe 1981 *ad* 34.52.5.

splendor for his triumph."[67] The actual triumph is described in detail by Pliny the Elder, Plutarch, and Appian, each with a different emphasis.[68] A small section of Appian's description best conveys the overwhelming nature of the display:

> καὶ παρῆγεν ἐς μὲν τοὺς λιμένας ἑπτακοσίας ναῦς ἐντελεῖς, ἐς δὲ τὴν πομπὴν τοῦ θριάμβου ζεύγη καὶ φορεῖα χρυσοφόρα καὶ ἕτερα κόσμου ποικίλου, καὶ τὴν Δαρείου τοῦ Ὑστάσπου κλίνην, καὶ τὸν τοῦ Εὐπάτορος αὐτοῦ θρόνον καὶ σκῆπτρον αὐτοῦ τε καὶ εἰκόνα ὀκτάπηχυν ἀπὸ στερεοῦ χρυσίου παρῆγε, καὶ ἐπισήμου ἀργυρίου μυριάδας ἑπτακισχιλίας καὶ πεντακοσίας καὶ δέκα, ἁμάξας δὲ ὅπλων ἀπείρους τὸ πλῆθος, καὶ νεῶν ἔμβολα, καὶ πλῆθος αἰχμαλώτων τε καὶ λῃστῶν.[69]
>
> [Pompey] had 700 undamaged ships brought into the harbors, while in the triumphal procession, he had wagons and litters carrying gold and others with various types of ornament, including the couch of Darius and the throne and scepter of Mithridates Eupator himself, as well as a statue of the king eight cubits high and made of solid gold; there were 75,100,000 drachmas of coined silver, countless wagons full of weapons, and ship rams, and a host of prisoners of war and pirates.

Appian is particularly interested in showing how Pompey used the triumph to insert himself into the ranks of other great rulers, so souvenirs from kings and prisoners of war take center stage. Pliny describes this triumph in his discussion of gemstones and hence focuses on objects made out of precious stones. Most significantly, this includes a portrait of the general made entirely from pearls, which Pliny considers to be an example of bad taste and decadence. This object was of course not taken during the conflict, but was crafted from loot for the occasion. In Plutarch, explanatory placards (*tituli*) take center stage, explaining to the Romans the financial benefits that they can expect from the victory.[70] No matter which description we look at, the sheer quantity of stuff makes it difficult to appreciate any but

67. ἐκεῖνος ὅσα κόσμον ἱεροῖς καὶ λαμπρότητα τῷ θριάμβῳ παρέξειν ἐφαίνετο λαβὼν μόνα (Plut. *Pomp.* 36.6).

68. Plin. *HN* 37.12–16; Plut. *Pomp.* 45; App. *Mith.* 116–17 (568–78).

69. App. *Mith.* 116 (569–70); translation from McGing's Loeb with slight modifications.

70. On *tituli* and their contents and uses, see Östenberg 2009b and 2013, 816–18. Peter Holliday's study of Roman triumphal paintings shows that these texts functioned alongside visual explanatory material (Holliday 1997, especially 146).

Fig. 5. South inner panel of the Arch of Titus, Rome
(Photograph by Bradley Weber via Wikimedia Commons, cc by-sa 2.0.)

the largest objects individually. Furthermore, most of the objects do not have an original context that is worth mentioning.

To return to Josephus, for many readers, the description of the triumph invites a comparison with Titus' posthumous triumphal arch at the edge of the Roman Forum.[71] The reliefs in the passageway of the arch concentrate on just a few highlights from the triumph and, as in Josephus' description, privilege the objects taken from the temple. At first glance, the visual depiction seems quite different from Josephus' account. The south inner panel of the arch (fig. 5) does not show piles of material. Explanatory *tituli* carried by the soldiers stand out prominently. The relief invites viewers to imagine an event that does not try to overwhelm them, but that seeks to explain where objects came from and how they were captured. The centerpiece of the procession on the arch disrupts this visual message. It features an enormous menorah that needs an unusually large number of carriers to move it.[72] This suggests an object of significant weight and therefore mate-

71. For a detailed study of the monument, see Pfanner 1983.

72. As Östenberg (2009a, 115) points out, a bier of the type bearing the candelabrum usually requires four carriers. The relief on the arch features eight.

rial worth; it thus echoes Josephus' emphasis on the piles of material carried in the procession.[73]

Following the description of the triumph, Josephus catalogs where the items are stored. The spectacular objects made from precious metals end up in the newly erected Temple of Peace in Vespasian's forum, while the sacred books and purple hangings from the temple are sent to the palace.[74] This distinction preserves the idea that materially precious objects might make suitable gifts for the gods, but simply because they are beautiful and expensive and not because of the ritual importance that they held prior to their arrival in Rome. They are now things to look at and remind people of the victory that the Romans have achieved. Sacred plunder can also have a sacred identity in Rome, but that is not the norm.

When Things Go Wrong

Josephus' effort to absolve Titus from blame for any plundering partially relies on holding a small number of his troops responsible instead. Here the historian taps into a trope found in some accounts of temple robbery by the Roman army; a commander loses control over his soldiers and they, in turn, commit a *sacrilegium*. Sometimes such actions can have horrible consequences, as in Valerius Maximus' description of the sack of Carthage by Scipio Aemilianus' troops in 146 BCE:

> Acer etiam sui numinis vindex Apollo, qui Karthagine a Romanis oppressa veste aurea nudatus id egit ut sacrilegae manus inter fragmenta eius abscisae invenirentur.[75]
>
> Apollo was also a fierce avenger of his godhead. Having been stripped of his golden garments when Carthage was conquered by the Romans, he brought it about that the sacrilegious hands of his attackers were found cut off in the rubble.

73. I differ from Pfanner's (1983, 88) interpretation; he states that the arch reflects none of the bombastic aspects of Josephus' account. While I would not go as far as arguing that the arch was inspired by Josephus' account, I do not think that the author and the visual depiction have an entirely different perspective on the event.

74. Joseph. *BJ* 7.160–62.

75. Val. Max. 1.1.18.

There is no doubt that the soldiers are temple robbers—their hands are even called *sacrilegae*. Stripping the clothes off the statue suggests insatiable greed, one of the characteristics of a temple robber.[76] We are not told whether the soldiers were acting under orders, but we have a clear example of a temple robbery.

Appian's version fleshes out the background for these events. In his narrative, the threat that the soldiers will lose discipline is always present. Before he has the city put under siege, Scipio gives a speech in which he tries to encourage the soldiers by putting himself forward as an example:

> ἓν ἔστω παράγγελμα κοινὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἔργοις ὁ ἐμὸς τρόπος καὶ πόνος· πρὸς γὰρ τόδε κατευθύνοντες αὑτοὺς οὔτε προθυμίας ἁμαρτήσεσθε οὔτε χάριτος ἀτυχήσετε. χρὴ δὲ νῦν μὲν πονεῖν, ἐν ᾧ κινδυνεύομεν, τὰ δὲ κέρδη καὶ τὴν τρυφὴν ἐς τὸν πρέποντα καιρὸν ἀναθέσθαι. ταῦτ' ἐγὼ προστάσσω καὶ ὁ νόμος, καὶ τοῖς μὲν εὐπειθῶς ἔχουσιν οἵσει πολλὴν ἀγαθῶν ἀμοιβήν, τοῖς δ' ἀπειθοῦσι μετάνοιαν.[77]
>
> Let there be one common instruction for all your deeds: my way of life, and hard work. If you pay attention to this, you will not lack zeal and will obtain what you desire. Now you must work hard. At this moment you are in danger, and you must put off profit and easy living until the right time in the future. These things I order, and it is the law. To those who obey, there will be ample compensation, but to those who do not, regret.

In the first place, Scipio is trying to prevent laziness during the siege. His words, however, also suggest a larger concern that not all the soldiers will obey his orders and behave as he wants them to. The remarks about putting off a desire for profit and waiting for a reward foreshadow what is about to unfold. Some of the troops will become impatient and will ignore the call for restraint.

This is what happens when the troops finally enter Carthage. Slaughter and chaos ensue, and Scipio does not manage to take the entire city in a single attack. He has to pause at nightfall. The reinforcements who are summoned the next day have no interest in following orders:

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76. For more examples of stripping statues, see chapter 2.

77. App. *Pun.* 116 (552–53).

> ἀρχομένης δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας ἑτέρους ἀκμῆτας ἐκάλει τετρακισχιλίους, οἳ ἐσιόντες ἱερὸν Ἀπόλλωνος, οὗ τό τε ἄγαλμα κατάχρυσον ἦν καὶ δῶμα αὐτῷ χρυσήλατον ἀπὸ χιλίων ταλάντων σταθμοῦ περιέκειτο, ἐσύλων καὶ ταῖς μαχαίραις ἔκοπτον, ἀμελήσαντες τῶν ἐφεστώτων, ἕως ἐμερίσαντο καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ ἔργον ἐτράποντο.[78]
>
> At daybreak, he called up another 4,000 fresh troops, who entered the temple of Apollo, in which there was a gilded statue and an interior lined with beaten gold weighing more than a thousand talents. They stripped it and cut it up with knives. They ignored their officers until they had divided it up. Then they returned to the business at hand [i.e., the sack].

While the soldiers do not suffer consequences as they do in Valerius Maximus' account, their temple robbery is an unauthorized operation that threatens to derail Scipio's efforts to take the city. He is relying on these troops to help bring Carthage under control, but instead they head straight for the temple. There they adopt the temple robber's gaze; all they can see are large piles of gold that they must acquire for themselves. In order to render the plunder portable, they cause widespread damage to the temple. It is no wonder that the literary tradition contains a variant of this story in which the troops are violently punished.[79]

A chaotic loss of discipline is also at the heart of Tacitus' description of the sack of Cremona by Vespasian's troops in the Year of the Four Emperors. Vespasian himself is not present in this scene. The effort is led by the senator M. Antonius Primus, one of Vespasian's commanders and a "most fierce instigator of war."[80] In Tacitus' account, as Rhiannon Ash argues, Antonius is consistently portrayed as someone who takes on the most unsavory parts of the campaign and who has a great deal of autonomy in deciding how to do so. His actions ultimately benefit Vespasian, but allow Vespasian to avoid taking responsibility for any atrocities that were perpetrated

78. App. *Pun.* 127 (609).

79. The detail about the soldiers cutting the panels of gold inside the temple suggests that Appian and Valerius ultimately go back to the same source, whatever it may have been, but use different details from it (on these passages and their possible source, see also Wardle 1998 *ad loc.*). Cutting off the hands of soldiers who cut up divine possessions presents an attractive narrative symmetry.

80. *Acerrimus belli concitator* (Tac. *Hist.* 3.2).

under Antonius' leadership.[81] In the Cremona narrative the assignment of responsibility is no different; Antonius supposedly goes against his general's wishes when he decides to attack Vitellius' men, who had taken refuge in the town. He is leading a rogue contingent whose actions do not reflect on the army as a whole.

When Antonius' troops are victorious in a preliminary skirmish, we get an insight into their character:

> Antonius instare perculsis, sternere obvios, simul ceteri, ut cuique ingenium, spoliare, capere, arma equosque abripere.[82]
>
> Antonius pursued the losing side, struck down those in his way. At the same time, the others, each according to his own nature, stripped the dead, took captives, seized weapons and horses.

Antonius engages in actual killing, whereas his troops plunder. The soldiers' actions are violent and most of them involve ripping away or dragging off things.[83] The men act on their own impulses. There seems to be no leadership behind anything that they do. We should therefore expect violence and mayhem in what is to follow.

When the soldiers turn their attention to the city itself, they continue their pattern of behavior. In a rare show of common purpose, they press for a nighttime assault before the enemy has a chance to surrender. After all, "the plunder of a city taken in battle goes to the troops, the plunder of a city that has surrendered to the generals."[84] A battle in front of the city quickly ensues and ends in a Flavian victory.[85] Next, Vitellius' men inside the city are overrun. Once the battle has concluded, Antonius' soldiers turn their attention to the civilian population of Cremona, whom they suspect of having helped the enemy.[86] Antonius orders the city to be burned, and the troops turn to inflicting violence on its inhabitants. At this point, Tacitus shifts attention to the sanctuaries:

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81. Ash 1999, 147–65.

82. Tac. *Hist.* 3.17.

83. The verb *abripio* in a military context most often means "to seize" (*OLD* s.v. *abripio* [4]), but it retains the connotations of violently ripping something away (*TLL* s.v. *abripio* [i, 132, 34–136, 30; Dittmann]).

84. *Expugnatae urbis praedam ad militem, deditae ad duces pertinere* (Tac. *Hist.* 3.19).

85. Tac. *Hist.* 3.22–25.

86. Tac. *Hist.* 3.32.

> Dum pecuniam vel gravia auro templorum dona sibi quisque trahunt, maiore aliorum vi truncabantur. quidam obvia aspernati verberibus tormentisque dominorum abdita scrutari, defossa eruere: faces in manibus, quas, ubi praedam egesserant, in vacuas domos et inania templa per lasciviam iaculabantur; utque exercitu vario linguis moribus, cui cives socii externi interessent, diversae cupidines et aliud cuique fas nec quicquam inlicitum.[87]
>
> While some carried off for themselves money or dedicatory offerings heavy with gold, they were cut down by someone stronger. Others, rejecting the things they came upon, searched for hidden things by whipping and tormenting their owners and dug up what had been buried. They had torches in their hands, which, when they had taken out the plunder, they threw into emptied houses and temples for sport. Just as the army had a variety of languages and customs since it consisted of citizens, allies, and foreigners, so it had different desires [for plunder] and for each one, something else was right [*fas*] and in no way wrong [*nec . . . inlicitum*].

The passage opens with an episode of competitive temple robbery as the soldiers attack each other for the spoils they have taken. Money seized from private houses and offerings taken from temples are treated alike—only the material value matters. Plundering and destruction blend as greed and violent impulses mix.

The scene echoes the aftermath of another famous temple robbery. When Pleminius lets his soldiers loose on Locri Epizephyrii, they, too, combine a massacre with temple robbery. They also turn on each other:

> Illa pecunia omnibus contactis ea violatione templi furorem obiecit, atque inter se ducem in ducem, militem in militem rabie hostili vertit.[88]
>
> That money afflicted everyone involved in this violation of the temple with rage, and it turned commander against commander and soldier against soldier with hostile madness.

87. Tac. *Hist.* 3.33.
88. Livy 29.8.11.

There is no sense that the madness is divinely inflicted, but in both episodes the infighting shows how far the soldiers are willing to go in pursuit of profit. Antonius' soldiers no longer care about the enemy or military objectives. They slaughter each other in pursuit of treasures.

At the end of *Histories* 3.33, Tacitus reminds his readers that Antonius' troops come from a variety of backgrounds and do not share the same language and customs.[89] They cannot even agree on what is right and wrong in the sack of Cremona. Since both *fas* and *nec . . . inlicitum* carry connotations of divine sanction, it is implied that even the plundering and burning of temples are seen as acceptable to at least some of the men.[90] Tacitus takes to an extreme the idea that even a skilled general is sometimes unable to maintain control over his troops. The resulting strong condemnation of the Flavians contains echoes of Livy that deepen the idea that the soldiers have lost all control over their impulses. When wars become competitions in greed and cruelty, temple robberies swiftly follow.

Conclusion

When Roman authors state that a temple robbery occurred during a campaign, they do not simply assert that a general took sacred objects from a sanctuary. *Sacrilegia* are the result of specific conditions; a general has proven himself unfit to be a representative of the Roman people and their values, or some soldiers have decided to go rogue. In all cases, personal greed and a lust for plunder have led individuals to set aside their orders or larger military objectives to enrich themselves. Temple robberies, therefore, are neither a regular occurrence nor a collective characteristic of the Roman army. They are the work of contemptible outliers who struggle with discipline. Most commonly, the Roman soldiers and their leaders keep control over their impulses. In such cases, sacred plunder is unproblematic. It is simply part of the loot taken by the victors.

Since Romans do not view the possessions of foreign gods as automatically sacred, authors have a great deal of flexibility in how (and whether)

89. Ash 1999, esp. 67–71, argues that the diversity of Vespasian's troops is reminiscent of Hannibal's army. Although the army is led by a Roman, it is therefore not properly a Roman force. In the historiographical tradition, such diverse armies are often seen as problematic since communications will eventually break down and the army will be defeated (see also Master 2016, 69–71).

90. It is also reminiscent of Fulvius Nobilior's defense at Livy 39.4, discussed above.

they address the treatment of sanctuaries. They take advantage of this circumstance by using sacred objects to assess a general and his character. The default assumption is that all aspects of the campaign were conducted properly, in which case sacred plunder does not need to be mentioned. When an author comments on how temples fared during a conquest, he wants either to praise a commander for his exceptional piety or condemn him for greed or incompetence. As a result, our sources leave us with no clear sense of how many temples Roman armies plundered or what happened to the loot from them. Authors are not interested in providing documentary evidence for encounters between sanctuaries and Roman soldiers. Instead, they are looking to evaluate the conduct of a campaign. Foreign sacred objects maintain their sacred identity during a conquest only when it is rhetorically useful.

SIX

Gods as Resources

A temple robber does not understand the fundamental values of Roman society. He is interested only in his own profit and is unconcerned with the consequences of his actions. Accusing one's enemies of temple robbery is therefore a powerful rhetorical move, especially in a civil war, when the charge amounts to identifying one's opponents as non-Roman. Accordingly, in Book 3 of Caesar's *Bellum Civile*, we encounter a startling claim. Twice, Caesar tells us, he has had to save the sanctuary of Artemis at Ephesus from rapacious Pompeians looking to plunder it.[1] Caesar's victory over Pompey is therefore not just a personal success, but a victory for everyone who respects the gods and their property.

In this chapter, I use Caesar's accusations against Pompey's men to explore what we might learn about the role of the gods in human conflicts. I argue that the alleged temple robberies are attempts to use established channels to seek financial help from the sanctuary at Ephesus. Caesar's rhetorical strategy deflects us from this interpretation; he portrays the Pompeian side as consistently greedy and presents temple robbery as a standard part of their operations, so an innocent interpretation of events at Ephesus becomes unlikely. Most importantly, he obscures significant differences between the Greek and Roman worlds regarding the use of sacred funds in times of crisis. Caesar's accusations therefore also raise wider questions about the appropriate limits of involving the gods and their possessions in a war.

1. Caes. *BCiv.* 3.105.2.

Characterizing Temple Robbers

Caesar's Pompey does not play by the rules of Roman society. What is worse, he attracts followers who are happy to ignore tradition as well. At the meeting of the Senate with which the work opens, we see Pompey's supporters sidestep procedure, intimidate people, and rely more on threats than arguments.[2] Matters escalate when the general himself joins a meeting of the Senate outside the city. In one quick sweep, Caesar takes us from improper political proceedings to preparations for armed conflict:

> De reliquis rebus senatus consulta perscribuntur. provinciae privatis decernuntur, duae consulares, reliquae praetoriae. Scipioni obvenit Syria, L. Domitio Gallia. Philippus et Cotta privato consilio praetereuntur, neque eorum sortes deiciuntur. in reliquas provincias praetores mittuntur. neque exspectant—quod superioribus annis acciderat—ut de eorum imperio ad populum feratur, paludatique votis nuncupatis exeunt. consules—quod ante id tempus accidit numquam—ex urbe proficiscuntur <inauspicato> lictoresque habent in urbe et Capitolio privatim contra omnia vetustatis exempla. tota Italia dilectus habentur, arma imperantur, pecuniae a municipiis exiguntur e fanis tolluntur. omnia divina humanaque iura permiscentur.[3]
>
> Decrees of the Senate were recorded regarding the remaining matters. Provinces were assigned to those not currently holding public office: two consular ones, the rest praetorian. Syria went to Scipio, Gaul to L. Domitius. Philippus and Cotta were passed over by private arrangement and took no part in the lottery. Praetors were sent to the remaining provinces. They did not wait, as had happened in previous years, for the people to bestow *imperium* on them. When they had donned military dress and had said their vows, they departed. The men of consular rank left the city without auspices, which had never happened before this time. They as private citizens had lictors with them in Rome and on the Capitoline, contrary to all the precedents of old. Levies were held in all of Italy, weapons were requisitioned, money was demanded from the towns, plundered from sanctuaries. All the laws of gods and humans were jumbled together.

2. Caes. *BCiv.* 1.1–2.
3. Caes. *BCiv.* 1.6.5–8.

Although official records are being kept, nothing authorized by the senatorial decrees conforms to proper procedure. Rather than following the regular process of assigning provinces by lot to current officeholders, Pompey's Senate concentrates on putting territory under the control of those on their side and excluding those whose loyalties they doubt.[4] The praetors bypass having *imperium* formally bestowed on them and therefore cannot be said to govern their provinces on behalf of the Roman people. Pompey and his supporters treat Rome as their private property, to be run as they please.[5] To make matters even worse, they do not simply disregard the role of the Roman people in running the government, they also neglect to consider the gods. Accordingly, the former consuls only complete half the steps that their departure requires; they put on military dress, but do not care about receiving divine approval.

The laws and customs of gods and humans are therefore already being ignored before we get to the final section of the passage. In a short sentence heavy in asyndeton, the Pompeian side hastily acquires men, weapons, and money. The funds come from extortion and temple robbery. The verb that Caesar uses to describe the plundering, *tollo*, is common in narratives of temple robbery.[6] The reference to the mixing of sacred and profane at the end of the passage advertises a narrative theme; Pompey and his men do not recognize the difference between the two. They seek out sacred money to use in their war efforts.[7] The possessions of the gods are theirs for the taking.

There is little independent evidence that any temple robberies were planned by the Pompeians in Italy, let alone successfully carried out.[8] Caesar, too, struggles to substantiate his claims; in the subsequent narrative Pompey's men target only one sanctuary, the Temple of Saturn in Rome, which houses the treasury. Their attempt fails:

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4. For the standard process of appointing governors, see, e.g., Grillo 2015, 20–23.

5. For conflicts between private and public interests as a major theme in *BCiv.* 1, see Batstone and Damon 2006, 33–84, esp. 41–59.

6. See chapter 2.

7. Throughout the text, the Pompeian side is looking for *pecunia*, which I have translated with its most conventional English translation, "money." Strictly speaking, the term also signifies other forms of fungible wealth, not just coins (see Hollander 2007, 5–7). Even if the Pompeians are stealing and extorting more than just coins, the most important quality of *pecunia* for them is that it can be exchanged for goods and services.

8. Caesar is likewise exaggerating Pompeian plans for levies; see Batstone and Damon 2006, 54–55.

> Tantus repente terror invasit ut, cum Lentulus consul ad aperiendum aerarium venisset ad pecuniamque Pompeio ex senatus consulto proferendam, protinus aperto sanctiore aerario ex urbe profugeret. Caesar enim adventare iam iamque et adesse eius equites falso nuntiabantur.[9]
>
> Such a sudden terror arose that although the consul Lentulus had come to open the treasury and bring money to Pompey in accordance with a decree from the Senate, he hastily fled the city when the inner treasury had been opened. For Caesar was said to be arriving imminently and his cavalry already at hand—both false.

In a letter to Atticus, Cicero confirms Lentulus' plans as Caesar presents them here when he expresses dismay at the insufficient logistics of the operation; the consuls are to retrieve a large sum of money, but are not provided with a military escort.[10] It is therefore not just Caesar's assessment that Pompey's side was operating hastily and without sufficient planning. The temple is not named in the narrative. The location of the treasury is assumed knowledge, and only the adjective *sanctius* reminds readers that the money is hidden in a sacred space. The consul's actions are illegitimate and contemptible, especially when this episode is read in conjunction with Caesar's previous remarks about the use of money from sanctuaries. False rumors based on Caesar's legendary speed save the sanctuary.

Book 1, therefore, establishes that the Pompeian side has no compunction about taking funds from temples and treats them just like riches obtained from any other source. This pattern continues in the provinces. Spain provides an early glimpse of what life is like under Pompeian rule. M. Terentius Varro is in charge of logistics in the south. He had initially been reluctant to join Pompey's side and tried to stay friendly with Caesar or at least neutral. Initial successes by the Pompeians and some false information about Caesar's weaknesses, however, prompted him to change his mind.[11] Varro quickly proves a real Pompeian:

> Dilectum habuit tota prouincia. legionibus completis duabus cohortes circiter XXX alarias addidit. frumenti magnum numerum

9. Caes. *BCiv.* 1.14.1.
10. Cic. *Att.* 7.21.1 (= SB 145).
11. On Varro's switching sides, see also *BCiv.* 2.17.

> coegit quod Massiliensibus item quod Afranio Pompeioque mitteret. naves longas X Gaditanis ut facerent imperavit, complures praeterea [in] Hispali faciendas curavit. pecuniam omnem omniaque ornamenta ex fano Herculis in oppidum Gades contulit.[12]
>
> He held a levy throughout the province. When the legions were at full strength, he added two cohorts of about thirty auxiliary cavalry. He collected a large amount of grain, which he sent to Massilia and likewise to Afranius and Pompey. He ordered that ten warships be built at Gades and saw to it that many more were built at Hispalis. He gathered in the town of Gades all the money and all the decorations from the sanctuary of Hercules.

Varro's actions reveal that what we saw in Book 1 was not an unusual event; taking the treasures of temples is standard operating procedure on the Pompeian side. They conduct levies, have ships built, and plunder sanctuaries to pay for it all. The fact that the money and ornaments are brought to the town is an important detail. It makes these precious objects part of the general operating fund. Varro oversees not only a temple robbery, but also the conversion of sacred objects into resources.[13]

Before the funds can be put to use, however, the Pompeians lose control of the region, and Varro is forced to surrender. Starting in Corduba, Caesar sets about to undo the damage:

> Pecunias quas erant in publicum Varroni cives Romani polliciti remittit. bona restituit iis quos liberius locutos hanc poenam tulisse cognoverat. tributis quibusdam populis privatisque praemiis reliquos in posterum bona spe complet. biduumque Cordubae commoratus Gades proficiscitur. pecunias monimentaque quae ex fano Herculis collata erant in privatam domum referri in templum iubet. provinciae Q. Cassium praeficit. huic IIII legiones attribuit. ipse iis navibus quas M. Varro quasque Gaditani iussu Varronis fecerant Tarraconem paucis diebus pervenit.[14]

12. Caes. *BCiv.* 2.18.1–2.

13. Alexander Thein (2016) traces similar procedures in Sulla's army during the civil war. The Pompeians are therefore not the first to mistreat Roman cities by plundering them and selling off the loot.

14. Caes. *BCiv.* 2.21.2–4.

> He remitted the money that the Roman citizens had promised Varro for the public treasury. He restored the property of those he had learned suffered this penalty for speaking too freely. When some had been granted public and private rewards, he filled the rest with hope for the future. And after staying in Corduba for two days, he set out for Gades. He ordered that the money and statues from the sanctuary of Hercules that had been gathered in a private home be brought back to the temple. He put Q. Cassius in charge of the province and gave him four legions. He himself reached Tarraco in a few days with the ships that M. Varro and, on his orders, the people of Gades had built.

The initial concerns are financial; Caesar addresses Varro's extortion and unjust confiscations. The order to have Hercules' property restored should also be seen in this light. Under Caesar's leadership, both the mortals and the gods regain the possessions that were illegally taken from them. When it comes to sacred property, the author makes two subtle changes from the description of Varro's actions a little earlier in the text. The ornaments, *ornamenta*, of *Bellum Civile* 2.18 are now called *monimenta*. While both words can be used to refer to statues and other ornaments, the choice of *monimenta* at 2.21 emphasizes the cultural, not decorative, value of these artifacts. With its etymological connection to *moneo*, "to remind" or "advise," a *monimentum* is meant to preserve and trigger memories.[15] Varro is thereby accused of stealing not just precious objects, but precious objects that are meaningful to the community and represent its history and achievements. His actions have deprived the sanctuary of both money and its position as a center of memory for the community. Furthermore, whereas at 2.18 the sacred treasures were merely gathered up in town, now they are to be found in a private house. Once more we see the Pompeian side freely mixing private and public, secular and sacred.

Another change between the initial description of Varro's actions at 2.18 and this passage concerns the function of the objects. When they are piled up in town, they are presumably going to be melted down or sold, with the revenue being used for whatever the Pompeians need. The temple at Gades is to provide *pecuniae*, much as the Italian temples did at 1.6.5–8. The first

15. On the etymology of *monumentum*, see Maltby 1991, 392, and Jaeger 1997, 15–16; on its polyvalence, see Jaeger 1997, 16–29. The word is not used in Caesar's extant works except for this passage.

association made with sacred treasures in a private house, however, is not temporary storage, but the collecting and display of luxury goods. With this detail, Caesar subtly suggests a characteristic of the Pompeians that, as we will see, he comes back to with great effect in Book 3; they are decadent lovers of luxury. Varro's use of Hercules' treasures therefore mixes two inappropriate uses of sacred objects; their use as bullion and their ostentatious display in private dwellings.

In the final part of *Bellum Civile* 2.21.2–4, Caesar puts in place a governing structure for the province and then uses Varro's ships to get himself to Tarraco. This detail reveals that he is happy to use resources that the Pompeians have left behind, but only those that have been obtained lawfully. The inhabitants are therefore freed from extortionary demands and compensated for unjust fines. Hercules, who is a victim of the same rapaciousness, also receives his property back. By considering how items were obtained, Caesar assures his readers that he understands that not everything can be turned into a resource.

The insights into how Pompeians finance their campaign in Books 1 and 2 show them as reliant on extortion and temple robbery. Their greed does not even stop at the contents of sanctuaries, which they try to turn into resources for their campaigns. Neither of the references to temple robbery in these books is accompanied by a narrative. Caesar does not need one. A few hints allow his readers to supply their own narrative of temple plundering. As he so often does, Caesar professes to report simple facts. Interpretation is up to the reader.[16] The two most important elements, the lack of respect for the possessions of the gods and the greed of the Pompeians, nevertheless stand out. These set the scene for Book 3.

Caesar Saves Ephesus

Caesar's swift actions prevent the Pompeians from establishing themselves in Spain. In the East, by contrast, Pompey's men have time to set up an administrative apparatus that fully reflects their exploitative interests:

> Interim acerbissime imperatae pecuniae tota provincia exigebantur. multa praeterea generatim ad avaritiam excogitabantur. in capita singula servorum ac liberorum tributum imponebatur. columnaria

16. On Caesar's narrative omissions, see Damon 1993 and Grillo 2012, esp. 26–28.

> ostiaria frumentum milites arma remiges tormenta vecturae imperabantur. cuius modo rei nomen reperiri poterat hoc satis esse ad cogendas pecunias videbatur. non solum urbibus, sed paene vicis castellisque singulis <singuli> cum imperio praeficiebantur. qui horum quid acerbissime crudelissimeque fecerat, is et vir et civis optimus habebatur.[17]
>
> In the meanwhile, commandeered funds were extracted from the whole province in the most ruthless ways. Additionally, many other individual means were concocted [to extract money] on account of greed. A tribute was imposed on each slave and free person; pillar-taxes, door-taxes, grain, soldiers, weapons, oars, war machinery, and transport were demanded; if a name of some sort could be found for something, this was seen as enough to demand money for it. Individuals with *imperium* were put in charge not only of towns, but also villages and individual fortresses. Whoever acted with the utmost ruthlessness and cruelty was considered a hero and the best of citizens.

Greed is the driving force behind the Pompeians' actions. The passage is filled with superlatives, and the list of Pompey's new taxes is so hyperbolic that it smacks of the ridiculous.[18] The foundations of Roman imperial rule are also overturned. The penultimate sentence of the passage confronts the reader with several textual problems. One of them is the phrase *cum imperio*, which suggests that the individuals in charge of extracting the funds all held *imperium*, an impossibility in a system in which only a provincial governor regularly held that power.[19] The deletion of the phrase has therefore been suggested.[20] This is unnecessary. In fact, the passage as transmitted fits Caesar's characterization of the Pompeians well; everyone feels that he can extort as much as he wants with impunity. Instead of being used in the technical sense to refer to the power of select individuals, *imperium* has become a simple license for greed and cruelty and is exercised by anyone looking to impress Pompey.

17. Caes. *BCiv.* 3.32.1–3.

18. The effect is further heightened by the fact that many of the names for new taxes such as *ostiaria* are made-up words that have a "spuriously official sound" (Damon 2015, 252–53, quotation on 252).

19. On the scope of *imperium* and possible conflicts between multiple holders of *imperium* in the same sphere, see Beck 2011.

20. For the deletion, see Carter 1993 *ad* 32.3.

Shortly after this general overview of the economic conditions of Pompey's East, the narrative takes us to Ephesus for the first time as Metellus Scipio tries to get his hands on the sanctuary's resources:

> Praeterea Ephesi a fano Dianae depositas antiquitus pecunias Scipio tolli iubebat. certaque eius <rei> die constituta cum in fanum ventum esset adhibitis compluribus ordinis senatori quos advocaverat Scipio, litterae ei redduntur a Pompeio: mare transisse cum legionibus Caesarem; properaret ad se cum exercitu venire omniaque posteriora haberet. his litteris acceptis quos advocaverat dimittit, ipse iter in Macedoniam parare incipit. paucisque post diebus est profectus. haec res Ephesiae pecuniae salutem attulit.[21]
>
> In the meanwhile, Scipio ordered that the money that had been deposited there long ago should be taken from the sanctuary of Diana at Ephesus. On the day that was fixed for the occasion, Scipio arrived at the shrine, and many of the men of senatorial rank whom he had called there were summoned. A letter was given to him from Pompey saying that Caesar had crossed the sea with his legions and that he should hasten to come to him with his army and consider all other things of secondary importance. When this letter was received, Scipio sent away those whom he had called together. He himself began to prepare his march to Macedonia and departed a few days later. This guaranteed the security of the resources of Ephesus.

According to Caesar, the funds that Scipio is interested in have been undisturbed in the temple for a long time. This is implausible given Ephesus' recent history. As discussed below, the sanctuary faced extensive financial demands in the 80s BCE, when Ephesus found itself caught between the Romans and Mithridates. In keeping with the tropes of temple robbery narratives, however, Pompey's henchman is going after treasures that stayed untouched through all of that turbulence. He is the first person to violate a universally respected site. Scipio orders the money to be taken, *tolli*, a choice of vocabulary that recalls the phrase *e fanis tolluntur* from *Bellum Civile*. 1.6.8.[22] He is engaging in activities that are typical for Pompeians.

21. Caes. *BCiv.* 3.33.1–2.

22. The repetition of words and phrases to link passages that are far apart in the text is not unusual in Caesar; see Damon 1993, 190–91, and Grillo 2015, 29, 60–61, 101–3, and 143–47.

The summoning of witnesses, a detail to which we will return, shows that Scipio has no interest in hiding his actions. He is openly scheduling the plundering of a temple. The rumor of more pressing military matters saves Ephesus from the premeditated attack. Therefore, however indirectly, Caesar (or, more precisely, his reputation) saves the sanctuary of Diana from an unprecedented theft for the first time.

The behaviors exhibited by the Pompeians in Book 3 present an escalation of what we saw earlier in the narrative. Rapaciousness mixes with cruelty and temple robberies are planned openly. The description of Pompey's camp in the aftermath of the battle of Pharsalus marks the culmination of Caesar's efforts to characterize Pompey's side as non-Roman. He finds no evidence of Roman values or tastes:

> In castris Pompei videre licuit trichilas structas, magnum argenti pondus expositum, recentibus caespitibus tabernacula constrata, Luci etiam Lentuli et nonnullorum tabernacula protecta edera, multaque praeterea quae nimiam luxuriem et victoriae fiduciam designarent, ut facile existimari posset nihil eos de euentu eius diei timuisse qui non necessarias conquirerent voluptates. at hi miserrimo ac patientissimo exercitu Caesaris luxuriem obiciebant, cui semper omnia ad necessarium usum defuissent.[23]
>
> In the camp of Pompey, one could see that gazebos had been arranged, great amounts of silver put on display, tents floored with fresh-cut turf (the tent of L. Lentulus and not a few others were even decked with ivy), and many other things besides that showed excessive luxury and confidence in victory. One could therefore easily deduce that they—who sought pleasures, not necessities—had had no fear about the outcome of this day. And they accused Caesar's most wretched and long-suffering army of luxury, [an army] which always lacked all the necessities.

The beginning of the passage puns on the verb *struo*. Here the word refers to the construction of gazebos, but in a military context it is most often used to describe arranging troops in a battleline.[24] Instead of getting ready for battle, the Pompeians busied themselves with creature comforts. The rest

23. Caes. *BCiv.* 3.96.1–2.
24. *OLD* s.v. *struo* (5).

of the description continues the impression of Pompey's camp as a venue for luxurious relaxation. This would be an appropriate dwelling for a stereotypical eastern tyrant, not a Roman general.[25] To make matters worse, Pompey's troops no longer think of themselves as subject to the whims of fortune. Losing is simply not a possibility for them. Caesar's men, by contrast, have been neither greedy nor overconfident. Their experience during the war has been characterized by hardship, but now they get the credit for modeling proper Roman behavior.

Most of the luxuries on display in Pompey's camp are natural resources that would have been readily available. The army has to go to the trouble of using trees and branches to construct gazebos, cut turf for flooring, and decorate tents with ivy, but none of these items would have required lengthy transport or complex logistical operations. The silver, however, is a different matter. Here the reader is invited to recall the rapaciousness with which Pompey's supporters had seized money from everywhere. Using extorted and stolen funds to pay for food and supplies for the troops is one thing, but having piles of money on conspicuous display is quite another. Pompey's men, we learn yet again, do not steal out of necessity; the treasures are, after all, used for decoration rather than to pay for necessary supplies and provisions. The Pompeians are motivated by greed and a desire to maintain their luxurious lifestyles even as they prepare to face the enemy in combat.

It is therefore no surprise that the battle does not put a stop to their greed. The Pompeians make their second attempt at taking treasures from Ephesus:

> Caesar, cum in Asiam venisset reperiebat T. Ampium conatum esse pecunias tollere Epheso ex fano Dianae eiusque rei causa senatores omnes ex provincia evocavisse ut his testibus in summa pecuniae uteretur, sed interpellatum adventu Caesaris profugisse. ita duobus temporibus Ephesiae pecuniae Caesar auxilium tulit.[26]
>
> When Caesar came to Asia, he found that T. Ampius had been attempting to take money from the temple of Diana at Ephesus and that for this purpose he had summoned all the senators from the province, so that he could use them as witnesses to the sum of money

25. Rossi 2000, esp. 243–45; Tronson 2001; Mader 2007. For despots and luxury, see also Dunkle 1967.

26. Caes. *BCiv.* 3.105.1–2.

> [taken], but that he had fled when he was interrupted by Caesar's arrival. So Caesar came to the aid of the money of Ephesus for the second time.

The vocabulary and other narrative details connect the two short Ephesus narratives with the actions of the Pompeians against sanctuaries in Italy and Spain depicted earlier. Once more, financial resources are the target of the theft. The verb used to express the intended removal of objects is again *tollo*. Ampius, too, summons witnesses. Caesar yet again interrupts plans to plunder a sanctuary.

Following the second foiled temple robbery at Ephesus, Caesar presents us with a list of divine signs. All over the East, statues of the gods are seen to move in a way that suggests support for Caesar, and sounds of rejoicing are heard from the innermost parts of temples.[27] The list of portents is surprising in a text that is not generally imbued with religious language. While there have been some doubts about its authenticity, the passage should be understood as part of Caesar's strategy to show himself as a divinely favored victor.[28] By placing the list of prodigies not immediately after the battle of Pharsalus but rather after the second rescue of Ephesus, Caesar can also portray himself as someone who knows how to treat the gods and their possessions properly and receives divine approval in return. He and his pious soldiers would never regard the treasures of a sanctuary as freely available funds for a campaign. Furthermore, since temple robbery is only one symptom of Pompeian greed and cruelty, Caesar can show himself as the liberator and savior of the Roman world.

Getting Help from the Gods

Yet the events at Ephesus are not merely foiled temple robberies. In his analysis of Caesar's narrative voice, Luca Grillo demonstrates that while Caesar for the most part appears as an omniscient narrator who knows exactly what motivates all of the characters in his accounts, he can also

27. Caes. *BCiv.* 3.105.

28. For a survey of doubts concerning the authenticity of the passage, see Reggi 2002. Feeney (1998, 19–20) and Santangelo (2013, 113–14), by contrast, show that it fits well with Caesar's general attempts to show divine approval for his actions. Val. Max. 1.6.12 uses a list of prodigies identical to Caesar's as evidence that Pompey has fallen out of favor with the gods.

present himself as confused.[29] In such cases, the actions of his opponents are so irrational and strange that they cannot be made comprehensible to his readers. With this rhetorical strategy in mind, let us return to a detail in the two Ephesus narratives, the presence of senatorial witnesses to Scipio's and Ampius' alleged temple robberies. Caesar leaves their participation entirely unexplained and invites us to see them as further evidence of the brazenness of the Pompeians. Caesar's insertion of a confusing and unexplained detail, I argue, allows him to place a well-known aspect of the economics of Greek sanctuaries beyond the realm of comprehension of educated Romans—the temple loan.

The idea that Pompey's men are seeking a loan from the sanctuary appears in Carter's commentary with the strong suggestion that it is a mere pretense at legality.[30] I contend that the Pompeians are indeed seeking a loan and have approached Ephesus specifically because of what they know about the financial politics of the sanctuary. Caesar's narrative, however, not only accuses Scipio and Ampius of insincerity, but also shows that every aspect of the process is being carried out improperly. The narrative therefore appeals to readers at two levels. The lack of explanatory details might tempt some readers to forget that Greek sanctuaries regularly provided loans to those in financial trouble. The readers who remember this fact, on the other hand, are quickly convinced that the Pompeians were looking to steal rather than borrow. In either case, the reader is guided to the conclusion that Pompey's men intended to commit a temple robbery.

To tempt his readers into forgetting about the very existence of loans, Caesar exploits a significant difference between Greek and Roman financial practices. While the Roman treasury was located in a temple, it was merely stored there under the god's protection. Temple finances and public and private finances ideally should not mix. The contents of the treasury were a distinctly identifiable set of resources. Borrowing from a sanctuary to supplement them is not considered an option. Livy's description of the aftermath of the Gallic sack of Rome illustrates this point:

> Aurum quod Gallis ereptum erat quodque ex aliis templis inter trepidationem in Iovis cellam conlatum, cum quo referri oporteret

29. Grillo 2011, esp. 250–53.

30. Carter 1993 *ad* 33.1: "[The senators] were to serve as official witnesses to the 'loan.'" Furthermore, Carter speaks of "the looting of the temple" and characterizes the activities as a "sacrilege." Westall (2017, 261–70) sees the episode as an example of extortion by the Roman provincial government.

> confusa memoria esset, sacrum omne iudicatum et sub Iovis sella poni iussum. iam ante in eo religio civitatis apparuerat quod cum in publico deesset aurum, ex quo summa pactae mercedis Gallis confieret, a matronis conlatum acceperant ut sacro auro abstineretur.[31]
>
> The gold that had been taken from the Gauls and that which had been fearfully gathered from the other temples into the temple of Jupiter, when there was confusion about where it should be put back, was decreed—all of it—to be sacred and ordered to be placed under Jupiter's throne. Even beforehand, the religious scruples of the citizens had been apparent in this matter, since when there was not enough gold in the treasury to make up the payment agreed with the Gauls, they accepted gold gathered by the matrons in order to avoid touching the sacred gold.

Faced with a demand for a hefty ransom, the Romans first empty the treasury and then fall back on the generosity of the women in the community. The gold gathered in Jupiter's temple is therefore never considered for use as part of the ransom; the sacred funds are merely relocated for safekeeping, not to help make up the thousand pounds of gold that the Gauls had demanded at Livy 5.48.8. Furthermore, rather than risk accidentally returning funds to the wrong place, everything in the temple is declared sacred, including gold that the Gauls might have looted from private individuals. It is better for the gods to profit than for a Roman to accidentally end up with any part of sacred funds. The lack of accurate tracking is resolved in Jupiter's favor.

Many years later, the matrons remind the community of their generosity when they call for the repeal of the Oppian Law.[32] The memory of the fact that even with the enemy in their city the Romans did not have to resort to surrendering sacred money is turned into social and political capital. Similar acts of generosity by senators and common people, both men and women, are attested during the various crises of the Second Punic War.[33] The alternative—namely that the community would have to resort to the resources of the gods—is not even mentioned.[34]

31. Livy 5.50.6–7.

32. Livy 34.5.9–10.

33. Most notably Livy 26.36.5–12 and 34.6.13–15.

34. When Romans take money or goods from a sanctuary during a crisis, this is viewed very negatively. Appian reports that when the Romans were in need for funds for Sulla's

This is not to say that loans from sanctuaries are unheard of in Italy outside of Rome.[35] Caesar, however, invites his readers to put themselves in the position of the Romans during the Gallic Sack or the Second Punic War, who did not touch sacred gold even when the very survival of the city was at stake. The Pompeians, who consider Caesar an existential threat to Rome, cannot summon sufficient voluntary generosity for their cause. They have to steal and extort money instead of being able to rely on widespread financial support from the population. Their rapacious fundraising efforts are a symptom both of their greed and of insufficient confidence in Pompey's leadership and the lack of a strong Pompeian common cause. From a traditional Roman perspective, the events at Ephesus can only be understood as attempted temple robberies.

In the Greek world, on the other hand, loans from sanctuaries for both private individuals and communities were a long-standing tradition.[36] The exact steps for obtaining a temple's financial support differed from place to place, but the practice has left ample epigraphical traces testifying to the need for accurate record-keeping. Sanctuaries could even show themselves as particularly generous and not ask for their money back when the community faced hardship. A sweeping example of loan forgiveness comes from Ephesus.[37] In the First Mithridatic War, the city had sided with Mithridates and was even the site of a massacre of Romans during the Asian Vespers.[38] When Sulla swept eastward, however, the community was compelled to join the Roman cause. In two decrees dating to 86 or 85 BCE and recorded on the same stone as one continuous inscription, Ephesus attempts to rewrite its role in the war. The first decree, which is heavily damaged at the beginning, shows the Ephesians as loyal and constant allies of the Romans:

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campaign against Mithridates, they sold off treasures bequeathed by King Numa that were supposed to be used to pay for sacrifices to the gods at festivals. Appian identifies this as a sign of both Roman poverty and extreme ambition (App. *Mith.* 22 [84]).

35. The sanctuary of Diana at Aricia gave loans to private individuals (Green 2007, 20–21 and 40). There is also evidence for a lending network at the temple of Zeus at Locri Epizephyrii (Migeotte 1988) and at sanctuaries in Capua (Baratte 1992, 117).

36. The bibliography on Greek temple loans is extensive. Davies 2001; Dignas 2002, 21–25; Migeotte 2006; von Reden 2010, 162–64 and 168–71; and Chankowski 2011 are fundamental to my discussion of what the Pompeians might have been attempting to do at Ephesus. Magie 1950, 142 n. 67, calls Ephesus a bank.

37. The blanket suspension of debts in this decree may be a first in Greco-Roman economic history (Harris 2006, 8–9, with further references).

38. The massacre is vividly described in App. *Mith.* 23 (88), where the Romans are clutching the statues of the gods while they are stabbed. See also App. *Mith.* 62 (256).

[ἐπειδή, τοῦ δήμου]
[φυλάσσον]τος τὴν πρὸς Ῥωμαίους τοὺς κο[ινοὺς σωτῆρας πα-]
[λαιὰν εὔν]οιαν καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπιτασσομέ[νοις προθύμως]
[πειθαρχ]οῦντος, Μιθραδάτης Καππαδοκί[ας βασιλεὺς παρα-]
[βὰς τὰς π]ρὸς Ῥωμαίους συνθήκας καὶ συναγαγὼ[ν τὰς δυνάμεις ἐ-] 4
[πεχείρη]σεν κύριος γενέσθαι τῆς μηθὲν ἑαυτῶι προ[σηκούσης]
[χώρα]ς, καὶ προκαταλαβόμενος τὰς προκειμένας ἡμῶν πό[λεις ἀ-]
[πάτ]ῃ, ἐκράτησεν καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας πόλεως καταπληξάμενος
[τῶι] τε πλήθει τῶν δυνάμεων καὶ τῶι ἀπροσδοκήτωι τῆς ἐπιβο- 8
λῆς,
[ὁ] δὲ δῆμος ἡμῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς συνφυλάσσων τὴν πρὸς Ῥωμαί-
ους εὔνοιαν.[39]

Since, when the community was keeping its long-standing goodwill toward the Romans, our collective saviors, and eagerly obeyed all instructions, Mithridates, king of Cappadocia, broke his agreements with the Romans and, having gathered troops, attempted to put himself in charge of lands that did not belong to him. He fraudulently attacked our neighboring cities and took charge. And although he menaced our city with a great number of his troops and a surprise attack, our community from the beginning kept its goodwill toward the Romans.

The similarity in vocabulary between the beginning and end of this opening statement contends that nothing has changed for the Ephesians. They have always been steadfast allies of Rome, but had no choice about submitting to Mithridates' rule when the king overwhelmed them and their neighbors. Mithridates is the one who broke promises and agreements and temporarily forced communities away from being able to openly acknowledge their support for the Roman cause.

The professed enthusiasm for the Roman war effort is the foundation for the second decree, which deals with a sweeping cancellation of financial obligations to the city and the sanctuary. Almost all debts are affected. After an introductory statement that they face danger and difficult times due to the ongoing potential for conflict, the community decrees that liturgies will no longer be enforced, fines no longer have to be paid, and those who had

39. *I.Ephesos* 1a 8 (= *SIG*^{3} 742 = Ashmolean Museum inv. no. G 1187), ll. 1–10.

lost their civic status due to unmet financial obligations are to be reinstated to the citizen roll.[40] Repayments to the sanctuary are also cancelled and modified:

ὅσα δὲ ἱερὰ δεδάνεισται, πάντας
τοὺ[ς]
ὀφείλοντας καὶ χειρίζοντας ἀπολελύσθαι ἀπὸ τῶν ὀφειλημάτων,
πλὴ[ν]
τῶν ὑπὸ τῶν συστεμάτων ἢ τῶν ἀποδεδειγμένων ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν ἐκδα-
νεισ-
[τ]ῶν ἐπὶ ὑποθήκαις δεδανεισμένων, τούτων δὲ παρεῖσθαι τοὺς
τόκους ἀπὸ
τοῦ εἰσιόντος ἐνιαυτοῦ, ἕως ἂν ὁ δῆμος εἰς καλλίονα παραγένη-
ται κατάσ[τα]-
σιν.[41]

With regard to all sacred loans, all debtors and guarantors shall be released from their debts, except mortgages issued by religious groups or their appointed managers; of these the interest is waived from the coming year onward, until the community is in a better situation.

The goddess can only cancel loans that are issued directly by the sanctuary, so those made through intermediaries merely have their interest payments suspended. There is a direct connection between the sanctuary's generosity and the switch to the Roman side. Since they no longer have loans to repay, the people have the resources to contribute to their new allies. In this spirit, the rest of the inscription also shows the sanctuary as an enthusiastic supporter of the Roman cause and even promises freedom to any temple slaves who take up arms against Mithridates. The resources of the goddess can now be put to Roman use.

The avid generosity of the inscription elides the fact that responsibility for the dire financial situation of the community did not lie solely with the king of Pontus. When he brought Ephesus under his control, Sulla imposed five years of taxes as a penalty on the community.[42] What is presented in the

40. *I.Ephesos* 1a 8 (= *SIG*^{3} 742 = Ashmolean Museum inv. no. G 1187), ll. 22–34.

41. *I.Ephesos* 1a 8 (= *SIG*^{3} 742 = Ashmolean Museum inv. no. G 1187), ll. 35–40. Translation from Dignas 2002, 148, with slight modification.

42. App. *Mith.* 62 (258–60).

decree as an act to free up money for voluntary contributions was therefore also an acknowledgment of economic necessity. There was likely no money to spare to pay back Artemis.

This, then, is the community that the Pompeians approach for a loan. The Temple of Artemis has an established tradition of issuing loans and a record of being accommodating to Roman exigencies.[43] Even with this in mind, however, nothing about the process is done properly. There are witnesses to record the loan and its terms, but Caesar mentions only Roman senators, not, as would be expected, representatives of the sanctuary. Perhaps even more importantly, the debt-forgiveness decree makes it clear that the sanctuary issued loans to members of the local community. Pompeians who have swept into town in a hurry do not qualify as such. Even if we acknowledge that sanctuaries in some parts of the Roman world regularly issued loans, what Pompey's men are doing cannot be considered an example of this procedure. Again, the only interpretation of their actions that is left to Caesar's readers is that we are witnessing attempted temple robberies.

Lucan, a careful reader of Caesar's text, develops the confusion between Pompeian loans and temple robberies further.[44] After the Battle of Pharsalus, where Caesar places the second attempt to get money from Ephesus, the poet takes us to the island of Lesbos. The island had served as a shelter for Pompey's wife, Cornelia, and now he joins her there. The community approaches him with an offer of assistance:

> Accipe templorum cultus aurumque deorum;
> accipe, si terris, si puppibus ista iuventus
> aptior est; tota, quantum valet, utere Lesbo.
> hoc solum crimen meritae bene detrahe terrae,
> ne nostram videare fidem felixque secutus
> et damnasse miser.[45]

> Take the splendor of the temples and the gold of the gods; take the young men for your army or your navy, if that is more suitable; use all of Lesbos, however much it is worth. Just remove this accusation

43. Pompey's relationship with Sulla, while complex, may also have played a role in selecting Ephesus as the sanctuary to ask for money. Artemis had, after all, accommodated Sulla's demands.

44. For Lucan as a reader and reviser of Caesar, see Ginsberg 2021 with further bibliography.

45. Luc. 8.121–27.

> from a land deserving of your goodwill, that you do not seem to pursue our loyalty when fortunate and spurn it when wretched.

Pompey is to be given whatever he needs to continue the war. With the anaphora in the first two lines, the representatives of the island offer him sacred objects and manpower with equal confidence. Both are offered as a gift in the hope that the general does not turn his back on the island. The recent loss at Pharsalus is not a reason to lose confidence, but an opportunity for Lesbos to emphasize its continued loyalty.

Pompey, in turn, assures the island of his continued affection, but rejects the offer:

> . . . hic sacra domus carique penates,
> hic mihi Roma fuit. non ulla in litora puppem
> ante dedi fugiens, saevi cum Caesaris iram
> iam scirem meritam servata coniuge Lesbon,
> non veritus tantam veniae committere vobis
> materiam. sed iam satis est fecisse nocentis:
> fata mihi totum mea sunt agitanda per orbem.
> . . . accipe, numen
> siquod adhuc mecum es, votorum extrema meorum:
> da similis Lesbo populos, qui Marte subactum
> non intrare suos infesto Caesare portus,
> non exire vetent.[46]
>
> Here [on Lesbos] was my sacred home and my cherished Penates, here was my Rome. When I was fleeing, I did not put ashore anywhere else although I knew that Lesbos had already merited the anger of savage Caesar by keeping my wife safe. I did not fear to entrust you with such a great opportunity for earning his forgiveness. But now I have made you guilty enough; my fate must play out across the globe. Receive, if there is still a divine power with me, the last of my prayers; grant that there are people similar to the ones of Lesbos who do not prohibit someone defeated to enter or leave their harbors even though Caesar is threatening.

46. Luc. 8.132–46.

Pompey's speech seems to have little to do with the offer of aid that the community has made him. He seems to focus on their great service in keeping Cornelia safe and on concerns for his future.

The verbal similarities between the two speeches, however, are revealing when read in conjunction with the accusations found in Caesar's narrative. Both the offer made to Pompey and the general's own speech mention the gods. For the community, the gods provide resources that the defeated Roman can use. For Pompey, the gods establish his ties with the island. He asks them for good fortune at the end, but does not assume that it will be granted. The general's words, therefore, reject the utilitarian attitude that the inhabitants of the island have toward divine aid. Another parallel is the language of guilt. The community fears punishment from Pompey; not accepting their help is tantamount to withdrawing his affection. The general, on the other hand, is concerned about what his opponent will do and is looking to protect Lesbos from the very real possibility of retaliation by removing himself as quickly as possible. The inhabitants of the island seem so fanatically devoted to Pompey that they have lost a sense of the real threat facing them. Finally, the imperative *accipe* occurs in both speeches. In the first one, it is addressed to Pompey and extends the invitation to help himself to whatever he needs. In the second one, it is addressed to a god and expresses a prayer for safety.

The speech is therefore a rejection of exactly the sort of aid that Ampius is seeking in Caesar's text.[47] Lucan's Pompey is grateful for Lesbos' past assistance, but only the gods can help him in the future. What is more, any divine support will be intangible. He wants people who are well-disposed toward him, not piles of treasures to continue the war effort, at least not from Lesbos. As the inhabitants of Lesbos illustrate, not all of Pompey's supporters have grasped that the Battle of Pharsalus effectively ended the conflict. The general, however, is fully aware of this reality and signals this in his response.

Pompey is not directly involved in any of the scenes of temple plundering in Caesar's text, but he cannot escape the accusations about his character that the rhetoric triggers.[48] A large part of Caesar's charge against his

47. It is also a rejection of Caesar's portrait of Pompey remaining as greedy as ever after Pharsalus. At Caes. *BCiv.* 3.103, he gathers funds from a variety of sources on his way to Egypt.

48. Peer 2016, 20–26, examines the theme of Pompey's absence throughout Caesar's text and argues that Caesar exploits it in two seemingly contradictory ways; Pompey is sometimes the mastermind who directs things from afar and sometimes the ineffective

opponent rests on the idea that Pompey permitted bad things to happen. He put no limits on the rapaciousness of his officers and gave them considerable freedom in acquiring and managing resources. This is an atmosphere that is ideal for temple robbers. While Pompey does not lay hands on a sanctuary directly, he is ultimately responsible. All Pompeian encounters with sacred spaces in the text are therefore presented as temple robberies. For this rhetorical presentation to be convincing, Caesar must skirt around the Greek practice of the temple loan. Ideally, his readers should forget about the practice entirely and greet the events at Ephesus with incomprehension. Romans, after all, like to imagine themselves as not daring to borrow from temples under any circumstances. Even if the reader remembers the economic role of Greek sanctuaries, various details suggest that proper procedures were not followed. The lines between a loan and a temple robbery are easily blurred. Hence, implicitly, Lucan's Pompey understands that as a pious Roman, it is best to refuse when a community offers to empty its sanctuary for him.

Using Divine Possessions

Scipio and Ampius are not the only Romans whose attempt to take out a loan from a sanctuary is interpreted as a temple robbery. We find another memorable example in Plutarch's biography of Sulla. Unlike Caesar, Plutarch is writing for an audience for whom temple loans would likely be an unremarkable economic practice. This text therefore does not capitalize on differences between Roman and Greek practices, but instead uses Sulla's actions and attitude to create its accusations. Plutarch thus gives us further insight into the difference between seeking a loan and committing a crime. Once Sulla has brought Athens under his control, he has to refill his coffers:

> ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ χρημάτων ἔδει πολλῶν πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον, ἐκίνει τὰ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἄσυλα, τοῦτο μὲν ἐξ Ἐπιδαύρου, τοῦτο δὲ ἐξ Ὀλυμπίας, τὰ κάλλιστα καὶ πολυτελέστατα τῶν ἀναθημάτων μεταπεμπόμενος. ἔγραψε δὲ καὶ τοῖς Ἀμφικτύοσιν εἰς Δελφοὺς ὅτι τὰ χρήματα τοῦ θεοῦ βέλτιον εἴη κομισθῆναι πρὸς αὐτόν· ἢ γὰρ φυλάξειν ἀσφαλέστερον ἢ καὶ ἀποχρησάμενος ἀποδώσειν οὐκ

leader whose troops do whatever they like. Either mode of leadership works for the temple robberies and implicates Pompey in them.

> ἐλάττω· καὶ τῶν φίλων ἀπέστειλε Κάφιν τὸν Φωκέα κελεύσας σταθμῷ παραλαβεῖν ἕκαστον.[49]
>
> Since he also needed much money for the war, he moved that the inviolable objects of Greece, some from Epidaurus and others from Olympia, the most beautiful and valuable of the dedications, be sent to him. He also wrote to the Amphictyones at Delphi that it would be better to have the goods of the god sent to him; for either he would keep them more safely or, if he had to spend them, would return them in full. And from his friends he commanded Caphis, a Phocian, to receive each object paying attention to its weight.

At the end of the passage, Sulla promises to return the items and instructs Caphis to pay close attention to the value of each object, leaving no doubt that the general is at least claiming to be seeking a loan. Before we get to this detail, however, the objects are gradually desacralized. At first, they are the ἄσυλα, inviolate objects. Next, they are called ἀναθήματα, objects set up, or dedications. When Plutarch switches to an indirect statement to give the content of Sulla's letter to Delphi, they have become χρήματα, precious stuff without any sacred connotations. The passage, therefore, makes it clear that Sulla intends to turn whatever he obtains into resources.

Once he arrives in Delphi, Caphis becomes uncomfortable with his mission.[50] Matters become even more complicated when the Amphictyones report that they have heard the god sing and play his lyre inside the temple. Although this is never made explicit by them or the narrator, the portent is to be understood as a sign that the god disapproves of Caphis', and thereby Sulla's, activities. Since a loan can only be obtained from a god willing to lend it, the Roman general's plans are now in doubt. When he is informed of it in a letter, however, Sulla takes it upon himself to reinterpret the portent: "He wrote back mockingly that he would be amazed at Caphis if he did not understand that the singing was because of happiness and not because of anger. Therefore, he commanded Caphis to take boldly since the god was eager to give."[51]

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49. Plut. *Sull.* 12.3–4.

50. Plut. *Sull.* 12.5.

51. ὁ δὲ σκώπτων ἀντέγραψε θαυμάζειν τὸν Κάφιν, εἰ μὴ συνίησιν ὅτι χαίροντος, οὐ χαλεπαίνοντος, εἴη τὸ ᾄδειν· ὥστε θαρροῦντα λαμβάνειν ἐκέλευσεν, ὡς ἡδομένου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διδόντος (Plut. *Sull.* 12.5). For Sulla's confidence about divine support, cf. Diod. Sic. 38.7.1. Sulla's letters can be interpreted as exceedingly disrespectful to the god; see Badian 1987.

Caphis goes ahead and orders the removal of items:

> τὰ μὲν οὖν ἄλλα διέλαθε τούς γε πολλοὺς Ἕλληνας ἐκπεμπόμενα, τὸν δὲ ἀργυροῦν πίθον, ὃς ἦν ὑπόλοιπος ἔτι τῶν βασιλικῶν, διὰ βάρος καὶ μέγεθος οὐ δυναμένων ἀναλαβεῖν τῶν ὑποζυγίων, ἀναγκαζόμενοι κατακόπτειν οἱ Ἀμφικτύονες εἰς μνήμην ἐβάλοντο τοῦτο μὲν Τίτον Φλαμινῖνον καὶ Μάνιον Ἀκύλιον, τοῦτο δὲ Αἰμίλιον Παῦλον, ὧν ὁ μὲν Ἀντίοχον ἐξελάσας τῆς Ἑλλάδος, οἱ δὲ τοὺς Μακεδόνων βασιλεῖς καταπολεμήσαντες οὐ μόνον ἀπέσχοντο τῶν ἱερῶν τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ δῶρα καὶ τιμὴν αὐτοῖς καὶ σεμνότητα πολλὴν προσέθεσαν.[52]
>
> The other items were sent away without most of the Greeks knowing about it, but the silver *pithos*, which was the only one of the royal gifts left, could not be transported by draft animals on account of its weight and size. The Amphictyones were compelled to cut it apart while remembering Titus Flamininus and Manius Acilius, then Aemilius Paullus, of whom one had driven Antiochus out of Greece, and the others had defeated the kings of Macedon. These men had not only spared the sanctuaries of the Greeks, but had provided gifts and much respect and reverence.

A double excursus into the history of the sanctuary firmly places Caphis' acts in the realm of the contemptible. The first concerns a memorable object, an extremely large silver *pithos*, one of four given to Delphi by Croesus. *Pithoi* were normally made from earthenware, but the fabulously rich Lydian king could afford to use precious metal instead. The vessels, which were part of a larger offering, quickly became famous, and some were even used in rituals due to their size and beauty.[53] By Sulla's time, however, Croesus' dedication is no longer complete. Although he emphasizes the destruction of the *pithos*, Plutarch's phrasing does not quite manage to obscure the fact that Caphis is not the first person to help himself to the contents of the sanctuary and to parts of Croesus' offering. When the narrator reports the thoughts of the Amphictyones, however, Sulla is implicitly cast as the first Roman to plunder Delphi. All his predecessors had treated the site, and Greece's sanctuaries in general, with respect.[54]

52. Plut. *Sull.* 12.6.

53. Hdt. 1.50–51 has a list of the offerings and talks about their uses.

54. While Flamininus indeed behaves flawlessly toward Greek sanctuaries in Plutarch's

The cutting up of the *pithos* is particularly revealing of Caphis' (and, by extension, Sulla's) intentions. The contents of the sanctuary have become raw material for the general to use. While he promised in his letter to reimburse the sanctuary for any items turned into bullion, this extraordinarily large vessel presents a problem in this regard; it is difficult to imagine coming up with the money necessary to replace such a large and heavy item. Sulla's assurances seem to be designed to give plundering and destruction the veneer of a mere loan.[55]

Sulla's actions regarding Delphi, therefore, pose wider questions about what can be borrowed from a sanctuary. Money is one thing—it can easily be replaced. Unique objects, however, are more of a challenge. While, for example, it might theoretically be possible for Sulla to replace the material value of an item like the silver *pithos*, he cannot replace its connection with Croesus and its long history in the sanctuary. These objects recall both the history of a community and its connection with the gods. They can only be borrowed if the original object is later returned intact, so they are of little use as a resource. Caphis ignores this fact.

With these considerations in mind, we return to Caesar. In his own work, Caesar creates a deliberate asymmetry in the reader's knowledge about the financing of campaigns on both sides; we are told about Pompey's rapaciousness but get no insights into how the author's army supported itself financially.[56] Lucan takes on the challenge of demystifying how Caesar gets his resources. For money, the general plunders the treasury housed in the Temple of Saturn, a feat that Caesar's Pompeians had only attempted.[57] For resources, Lucan's Caesar destroys an entire sanctuary. At Massilia, the general finds himself in need of timber for a siege. He identifies a nearby sacred grove as a suitable source.[58]

The grove is entirely different from any sanctuary that the Romans are familiar with, something that Lucan emphasizes in his introductory description:

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biography of him, Aemilius Paullus during his campaign in Epirus explicitly demands gold from sanctuaries (Plut. *Aem.* 29.2).

55. I am grateful to Susanne Ebbinghaus for enlightening me about the practicalities of moving such an offering and for suggesting that Sulla must have planned on its destruction.

56. On this feature of Caesar's narrative, see Coffee 2011. Suetonius briefly accuses the general of plundering shrines during his campaign in Gaul and the Capitoline (likely standing in for the treasury at the temple of Saturn) during the civil war (Suet. *Iul.* 54).

57. Luc. 3.141–68; see chapter 3.

58. Luc. 3.399.

Hunc non ruricolae Panes nemorumque potentes
Silvani Nymphaeque tenent, sed barbara ritu
sacra deum; structae diris altaribus arae
omnisque humanis lustrata cruoribus arbor.[59]

No country-dwelling Pans or Silvani ruling over the woods or Nymphs hold this grove, but the sacred affairs of gods savage in ritual. The altars were piled up with horrible offerings and every tree was lustrated with human gore.

These lines also tell us that the sanctuary is in active use and that the trees are an essential element within it. It also reveals that it is a place that sensible people are afraid of and explains why the grove has never been violated before.

It is therefore no wonder that Caesar finds that his men are reluctant to chop down the trees:

Sed fortes tremuere manus, motique verenda
maiestate loci, si robora sacra ferirent,
in sua credebant redituras membra securis.
inplicitas magno Caesar torpore cohortes
ut vidit, primus raptam librare bipennem
ausus et aeriam ferro proscindere quercum
effatur merso violata in robora ferro
"iam nequis vestrum dubitet subvertere silvam
credite me fecisse nefas." tum paruit omnis
imperiis non sublato secura pavore
turba, sed expensa superorum et Caesaris ira.[60]

But strong hands trembled, and moved by the awe-inspiring power of the place, they believed that if they struck a sacred tree, the axes would rebound on their own limbs. When Caesar saw the cohorts wrapped up in great reluctance, he first dared to swing an ax that he had seized and split a tall oak with the iron. With the iron buried in the injured oak, he said: "Now let none of you hesitate to uproot the forest. Trust that I have taken responsibility for the religious wrong."

59. Luc. 3.402–5.
60. Luc. 3.429–39.

> Then everyone obeyed the orders, but they did not feel safe and reassured. Instead, they balanced the anger of the gods and Caesar's anger.

Caesar thinks that his men are reluctant to carry out their orders out of fear of angering the gods. He himself has no such fears—he does not think that anything in the grove could be threatening to him—and therefore volunteers himself as a scapegoat of sorts. This act separates Caesar from his men, since they approach the grove with an entirely different attitude. For the troops and the native Gauls, this is a space inhabited by gods. For Caesar, it is simply a source of wood. His soldiers promptly fall in line.

The general commits three different offenses; he commits a temple robbery because he is taking divine resources; he destroys a sanctuary because the resources that he takes are integral to the space; and, with his lack of respect for the gods of the grove, he also declares war on an entire religion and way of life.[61] The episode characterizes Caesar as an irreligious despot who simply takes what he wants and does not even pretend to put in place any arrangements with the community, as Sulla had done. He is openly taking, not borrowing. On a fundamental level, however, both Lucan's Caesar and Plutarch's Sulla make the same two errors. First, they do not realize how important the attitude of the person taking the divine possessions is. Both generals are openly dismissive of possible divine consequences, which should disqualify them from seeking help from the gods. Secondly, both take and destroy irreplaceable objects. Unlike a loan that is repaid with interest, their actions make the sanctuary poorer and threaten to disrupt its sacred functions. The two episodes show that even if we allow for sanctuaries lending material support in a crisis, not everything can be taken. If the invaders fail to show proper respect, the scene quickly becomes a temple robbery.

Punishing Communities and Their Gods

Sulla and Caesar face an additional problem when dealing with sanctuaries; how should one treat sacred spaces in a community that was originally one's enemy? The idea that both of these generals dealt far too harshly with the places that opposed them is a trope among their opponents. Following his narrative of the assassination of Caesar, Appian presents a pair of speeches

61. For the religious conflict of the episode, see Augoustakis 2006 and Leigh 2010.

in which Antony and Brutus try to enlist the support of the people of Rome. Brutus includes a history lesson. Sulla and Caesar, he tells his audience, waged war on Italy and plundered its lands, houses, tombs, and temples, something the Romans would not even do to foreign enemies.[62] This statement is an obvious exaggeration, but one that emphasizes the rhetorical value of accusations of temple robbery. If one wants to emphasize one's opponent's lack of regard for Roman values, one points to his treatment of sacred spaces.

Matters become more complex for Brutus and his fellow conspirators when they are faced with the reality of a drawn-out conflict. Cassius finds himself in charge of raising money and resources. At first, he writes letters to various communities and foreign leaders.[63] Support from some of Pompey's former allies, especially in the Levant, proves sufficient for Cassius to defeat Dolabella at Laodicea in Syria. The assassin promptly turns his attention to the town. After plundering the sanctuaries and the treasury, he imposes oppressive taxes to squeeze resources out of the community.[64]

Things do not go better for Tarsus in Cappadocia. Here the community is divided about which Roman side to support in the civil war. As Appian tells it:

> Κάσσιος δὲ νικήσας Δολοβέλλαν καὶ ἐσφορὰν ἐπέθηκεν αὐτοῖς χίλια καὶ πεντακόσια τάλαντα. οἱ δὲ ἀποροῦντές τε καὶ ὑπὸ στρατιωτῶν ἐπειγόντων ἀπαιτούμενοι σὺν ὕβρει, τά τε κοινὰ ἀπεδίδοντο πάντα καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς κοινοῖς, ὅσα εἶχον ἐς πομπὰς ἢ ἀναθήματα, ἔκοπτον. οὐδ' ἑνὸς δὲ μέρους οὐδ' ὡς ἀνυομένου, ἐπώλουν αἱ ἀρχαὶ τὰ ἐλεύθερα· καὶ πρῶτα μὲν ἦν παρθένοι τε καὶ παῖδες, ἐπὶ δὲ γυναῖκές τε καὶ γέροντες ἐλεεινοί, βραχυτάτου πάμπαν ὤνιοι, μετὰ δὲ οἱ νέοι. καὶ διεχρῶντο οἱ πλέονες ἑαυτούς, ἕως ὧδε ἔχοντας ὁ Κάσσιος ἐκ Συρίας ἐπανιὼν ᾤκτειρέ τε καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ τῶν ἐσφορῶν ἀπέλυσε.[65]
>
> Having defeated Dolabella, Cassius imposed a tax of 1,500 talents on them. They lacked the resources, and since they were violently beset

62. App. *B Civ.* 2.141 (586).

63. App. *B Civ.* 4.61 (261–64). Appian is particularly keen on emphasizing that Cassius unwisely decides to approach Cleopatra although she is cooperating with demands from Dolabella.

64. App. *B Civ.* 4.62 (268).

65. App. *B Civ.* 4.64 (273–76).

> by the soldiers, they sold everything in the treasury and, after the things in the treasury, they turned the sacred objects that they had for processions or as votive offerings into coin. When this was not sufficient for even a partial payment, the leaders sold the free people into slavery. First were the young girls and boys, then the women and wretched old men, who sold for the lowest price, then the young men. Most of them killed themselves. [This went on] until Cassius returned from Syria, took pity on them, and released them from the rest of their payment.

This passage once again illustrates the close link between cruelty toward humans and a disregard for sacred property. Cassius does not care what the Tarsians must do to meet his excessive demands. While he is not directly responsible for mass death or the emptying of the sanctuaries, he puts the community in an impossible position. His eventual decision to stop punishing the community does nothing to alleviate the damage already done.

Cassius next turns his attention to Rhodes, which has little inclination to support his side. With the fates of Laodicea and Tarsus as ample warning, the Rhodians decide to forestall any potential plundering by sending Cassius' former Greek teacher to him as an ambassador. The appeals to the conspirator's education, respect for Greek culture, and reverence for the gods prove unsuccessful. He captures the city and, just as at Laodicea, orders the plundering of the treasuries and sanctuaries and even forces the inhabitants to loot tombs.[66] Communities that have opposed Cassius' side are not allowed to keep any of their possessions. Sacred objects are just one category of wealth that can be taken. Despite Brutus' efforts to condemn Caesar for just such behavior immediately following the assassination, his own side behaves no better.[67]

Plundering a sanctuary aims to punish not only the community, but also the gods. After all, when sacred spaces provide resources, the divine powers become active participants in human conflicts. Had the Pompeians succeeded in obtaining a loan from Ephesus, for example, the temple would have positioned itself against Caesar. We know from a wide range of sources

66. App. *B Civ.* 4.73 (311–12).

67. The literary tradition points to a lack of agreement about the proper place of plundering in warfare on the part of Caesar's assassins. Whereas Cassius does not care about any human suffering caused by his actions, Brutus tries to minimize his impact on communities (see, e.g., his restraint at Xanthos [App. *B Civ.* 4.80 (335–38) with Tempest 2017, 181–88]).

that for humans, the consequences of opposing the Romans were severe. Massacres, mass enslavement, and the destruction of entire communities were common occurrences. At the very least, a conquered community could expect the imposition of financial penalties. Since this chapter has centered on the gods as economic agents, it is worth asking what consequences they might face for supporting the wrong side. This is not a topic for which we have much surviving evidence, but there are hints that the gods could be treated remarkably like humans.

Dio Cassius provides a report of Caesar's activities after the Battle of Pharsalus:

> ἐς τὴν Βιθυνίαν ἦλθε, κἀντεῦθεν ἔς τε τὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ ἐς τὴν Ἰταλίαν ἔπλευσε, πολλὰ καὶ ἐπὶ πάσῃ προφάσει χρήματα παρὰ πάντων, ὥσπερ καὶ πρίν, ἐκλέγων. τοῦτο μὲν γάρ, ὅσα τινὲς τῷ Πομπηίῳ προϋπέσχηντο, ἐπράξατο, τοῦτο δὲ καὶ ἄλλα ἔξωθεν, προσεπικαλῶν τινα, ἦτει. τά τε ἀναθήματα τοῦ ἐν τῇ Τύρῳ Ἡρακλέους πάντα ἀνείλετο, ὅτι τήν τε γυναῖκα καὶ τὸν παῖδα τοῦ Πομπηίου ὑπεδέξαντο ὅτε ἔφυγον. καὶ στεφάνους ἐπὶ ταῖς νίκαις συχνοὺς καὶ παρὰ τῶν δυναστῶν τῶν τε βασιλέων χρυσοῦς ἔλαβε. ταῦτα δὲ οὐχ ὑπὸ κακίας ἐποίει, ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι καὶ ἐδαπάνα παμπληθῆ, καὶ ἀνάλωσιν πολὺ πλείω ἔς τε τὰ στρατόπεδα καὶ ἐς τὰ ἐπινίκια, τά τε ἄλλα ὅσα ἐλαμπρύνετο, ποιήσειν ἔμελλε.[68]
>
> [Caesar] came to Bithynia and from there he sailed to Greece and Italy, collecting money plentifully and under every pretense, just as before. Some of this he got from whatever had been promised to Pompey earlier, some of it he demanded also from elsewhere, making some accusations. And the votive offerings found in the temple of Heracles at Tyre he took away in their entirety since they sheltered [ὑπεδέξαντο] the wife and son of Pompey when they had fled. And he took many golden crowns for the victories from the rulers and kings. He did these things not out of wickedness, but because he had spent a great deal and intended to spend even more on his army and his triumph and on other things he took pride in.

68. Dio Cass. 42.49.1–4.

Dio's Caesar is consistently rapacious and in need of money.[69] His motivations in this episode, however, are not purely financial. He commits a temple robbery in order to punish Heracles for assisting Pompey. Dio's vocabulary here is noteworthy. The verb used to express that the site sheltered Pompey's wife and son, ὑπεδέξαντο, is a third-person plural, but without an explicit subject. "They," presumably, are both the god and the community, which must now both suffer the consequences of their actions. Since ὑποδέχομαι can mean "to harbor a fugitive" or "to let an enemy into the town," a crime has been committed.[70] This is, in effect, the scenario that Lucan's Pompey was worried about on Lesbos. By targeting the votive offerings, Caesar punishes both the god and the community. The objects belong to the god, so their confiscation penalizes him. But these items were placed there by the community and are testaments to personal piety and meaningful relationships between gods and humans. Their removal would therefore also be significant to the mortals. The votive offerings, as the end of the passage tells us, will become resources to meet Caesar's financial obligations. In effect, the sanctuary of Heracles at Tyre has to pay a fine.

A second example of punitive plundering comes from the civil war between Octavian and Antony. In his description of the Arcadian town of Tegea, Pausanias remarks that the community has lost much of its importance. The ultimate reason for this was its decision to side with Antony:

> τῆς δὲ Ἀθηνᾶς τὸ ἄγαλμα τῆς Ἀλέας τὸ ἀρχαῖον, σὺν δὲ αὐτῇ καὶ ὑὸς τοῦ Καλυδωνίου τοὺς ὀδόντας ἔλαβεν ὁ Ῥωμαίων βασιλεὺς Αὔγουστος, Ἀντώνιον πολέμῳ καὶ τὸ Ἀντωνίου νικήσας συμμαχικόν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ οἱ Ἀρκάδες πλὴν Μαντινέων ἦσαν οἱ ἄλλοι.[71]
>
> But the ancient image of Athena Alea the Roman emperor Augustus took, and with it the tusks of the Calydonian Boar after he had conquered in war Antony and his allies, among whom were all the Arcadians, except for Mantinea.

These actions are far more severe than Caesar's at Tyre. Whereas Heracles lost his votive offerings, Tegea is deprived of its most meaningful artifacts.[72]

69. Like Lucan, Dio is fond of inverting Caesar's accusations against Pompey and the Pompeians; in Dio's narrative, it is Caesar who sacks the temple at Gades (Dio Cass. 43.39).

70. *LSJ* s.v. ὑποδέχομαι.

71. Paus. 8.46.1–2.

72. On this point, see Alcock 1993, 175–77.

Octavian wants the cultural and religious capital of the sanctuary; the treasures that attracted visitors and worshippers. The move punishes the sanctuary and the community and rebalances power in the region. Tegea loses its cultural and religious importance, but Mantinea, which has proven loyal to the right person, can expand its clout.[73]

Pausanias uses these events as the basis for an excursus on punitive temple robbery. His ostensible goal is to show that Tegea's experience was nothing unusual:

> βασιλέα τε τῶν Περσῶν Ξέρξην τὸν Δαρείου, χωρὶς ἢ ὅσα ἐξεκόμισε τοῦ Ἀθηναίων ἄστεως, τοῦτο μὲν ἐκ Βραυρῶνος καὶ ἄγαλμα ἴσμεν τῆς Βραυρωνίας λαβόντα Ἀρτέμιδος, τοῦτο δὲ αἰτίαν ἐπενεγκὼν Μιλησίοις, ἐθελοκακῆσαι σφᾶς ἐναντία Ἀθηναίων ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι ναυμαχήσαντας, τὸν χαλκοῦν ἔλαβεν Ἀπόλλωνα τὸν ἐν Βραγχίδαις· καὶ τὸν μὲν ὕστερον ἔμελλε χρόνῳ Σέλευκος καταπέμψειν Μιλησίοις, Ἀργείοις δὲ τὰ ἐκ Τίρυνθος ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ τὸ μὲν παρὰ τῇ Ἥρᾳ ξόανον, τὸ δὲ ἐν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνός ἐστιν ἀνακείμενον τοῦ Λυκίου· Κυζικηνοί τε, ἀναγκάσαντες πολέμῳ Προκοννησίους γενέσθαι σφίσι συνοίκους, Μητρὸς Δινδυμήνης ἄγαλμα ἔλαβον ἐκ Προκοννήσου· τὸ δὲ ἄγαλμά ἐστι χρυσοῦ, καὶ αὐτοῦ τὸ πρόσωπον ἀντὶ ἐλέφαντος ἵππων τῶν ποταμίων ὀδόντες εἰσὶν εἰργασμένοι. βασιλεὺς μὲν δὴ Αὔγουστος καθεστηκότα ἐκ παλαιοῦ καὶ ὑπό τε Ἑλλήνων νομιζόμενα καὶ βαρβάρων εἰργάσατο.[74]

> And we know that the Persian king Xerxes, son of Darius, beyond whatever he had carried off from the city of Athens, also took the statue of Artemis Brauronia from Brauron, and, moreover, having brought the charge against the Milesians that they had let themselves be defeated in a naval battle against the Athenians, he took the bronze statue of Apollo from Branchidae. At a later time, Seleucus was destined to send it back to the Milesians. To this day, the Argives have what they took from Tiryns; one statue is in the temple of Hera; another is set up in the temple of Lycian Apollo. The people of Cyzicus, having compelled the people of Proconnesus by war to

73. Pausanias does not mention that some of the plunder from Tegea made it back to Rome; see Celani 1998, esp. 13–20.

74. Paus. 8.46.3–4.

> live with them, took away a statue of the Mother of Dindymene from Proconnesus. The statue is of gold, and its face is made from hippopotamus teeth rather than ivory. Indeed, the emperor Augustus employed what had long ago been established as customary by the Greeks and foreigners.

We are confronted with a remarkable blending of different reasons for the removal of religious objects. There is no explanation for what happens at Brauron, so one is tempted to see Xerxes' actions as a stereotypical temple robbery carried out by a stereotypical tyrant. The Milesians lose their important statue because they did not fight hard enough against the Athenians and hence proved to be disloyal and unreliable allies. The Argives appear to have taken trophies, and the last example seems to be an attempt to relocate a cult. The only common denominator is the idea that a stronger party can take a weaker party's gods. Furthermore, since direct actions on the part of the sanctuary, as happened at Tyre, do not factor into the discussion, we are also left with the sense that sanctuaries are mere extensions of human communities and hence suffer along with them.

Conclusion

There is no universally agreed-upon position for the gods in a human conflict. In the city of Rome, they could be persuaded to look favorably on the community and had to be thanked after a military success, but their sanctuaries were not seen as depositories of resources that could prove useful in a crisis. The gods provide intangible aid. In the Greek world, on the other hand, the gods were economic agents with significant monetary and other resources that could be put at the disposal of those in need. And then, at times, the gods can be punished with impunity for being on the wrong side.

Caesar shows us how the various contradictory ways to conceptualize the role of the gods in human conflicts can be used for rhetorical effect. He turns an unremarkable process—seeking a loan from a Greek sanctuary—into a temple robbery by exploiting differences between Greek and Roman attitudes about getting help from the gods. He presents the Greek practice as unrecognizable and incomprehensible to a Roman audience, even though many of his readers would have been aware of the financial generosity of Greek sanctuaries. Caesar's world is one in which temples cannot be asked

to provide resources even as loans in an emergency. Furthermore, since he has portrayed the Pompeians as consistently greedy and unwilling to follow proper procedures, he also shows us that a temple robbery is not just about the actions, but also about the intentions and disposition of the individual looking to take precious objects from the sanctuary. He has to save Rome from cruel temple robbers.

Conclusion

In 1801, Thomas Bruce, better known as Lord Elgin, ordered the removal of a significant part of the architectural sculpture from the Athenian Acropolis. A decade later, with the process still ongoing, the English poet Lord Byron penned a verse commentary on Elgin's deeds. "The Curse of Minerva" takes the form of an imagined dialog between the poet, who is an outraged witness to the activities, and the goddess. The poem engages deeply with tropes found in narratives of Roman temple robbery. Most notably, Elgin is cast as the first attacker of the Acropolis and faces the threat of divine punishment. The poet is also keen to separate his villain from the rest of his community. Like a Roman temple robber, the earl is an isolated individual whose actions cause derision and horror.

Minerva enters Bryon's poem after a long discourse on the beauty of Attica, which leaves the reader with the false impression that Elgin was the first to violate the pristine landscape. The goddess' physical appearance reflects the damage being done to her sanctuary:

> Her idle Aegis bore no Gorgon now;
> Her helm was dinted, and the broken lance
> Seem'd weak and shaftless e'en to mortal glance.[1]

It appears that Elgin's actions have deprived Minerva not only of her possessions, but also of her powers.

As her first words to her interlocutor reveal, Byron's Minerva wants vengeance:

1. Byron, "The Curse of Minerva," ll. 80–82. The text follows McGann 1980.

"Mortal!" ('twas thus she spake) "that blush of shame
Proclaims thee Briton, once a noble name;
First of the mighty, foremost of the free,
Now honoured *less* by all, and *least* by me:
Chief of thy foes shall Pallas still be found—
Seek'st thou the cause of loathing?—look around."[2]

Minerva seeks to punish Elgin and everyone who shares his national origins. The offense of an individual will have grave consequences for all of Britain. Although the poet objects ("Frown not on England; England owns him not: / Athena! no; thy plunderer was a Scot"),[3] Minerva threatens to turn her back on the whole island and plunge it into an age of ignorance. The temple robber's actions call for collective punishment. As the poem continues, however, the goddess is swayed by pleas that the attacker of her sanctuary is not representative of Britain as a whole and promises to focus her energy on ruining only his life and causing his disgrace.

Elgin's chief source of humiliation following the events in Athens was his divorce from Mary Nisbet, an heiress who had been his main source of wealth.[4] For Byron, the end of Elgin's marriage was a frequent satirical theme that finds its most memorable treatment in *Carmina Byronis in C. Elgin*, a Latin epigram appended to "The Curse of Minerva":

Scote miser! quamvis nocuisti Palladis aedi
    Infandum facinus vindicat ipsa Venus;
Pygmalion statuam pro sponsa arsisse refertur,
    Tu statuam rapias, Scote, sed uxor abest.

Wretched Scot! Although you harmed the temple of Pallas, Venus herself exacts revenge for your unspeakable crime. It is said that Pygmalion longed to have a statue as a wife. You snatched the statue, Scot, but your wife is gone.

In these lines, the divorce and its ensuing shame become a divinely inflicted punishment. Elgin's lust for plunder has caused him to lose everything.

As he appears in Byron's invective portrait, Elgin is an heir to the figure

2. Byron, "The Curse of Minerva," ll. 89–94.
3. Byron, "The Curse of Minerva," ll. 127–28.
4. On the divorce and the circumstances leading up to it, see Nagel 2004, 192–227.

of the Roman temple robber as we encounter him in Cicero, Livy, and others. He is a well-known individual, but has no place in society because of his passion for Minerva's treasures and the consequences of taking them. Others consider him a butt of jokes or use his story to explain what sort of things Britons do not do. With the same effort that Roman authors invest in arguing that there are Romans who do not adhere to their society's norms and become temple robbers, but that Romans as a whole do not plunder temples, Byron's narrator tries to convince Minerva (and, by extension, the poem's audience) that Elgin is a rogue actor. Temple robbers are a problem because they abuse their political standing to do things no proper member of society would ever contemplate. *Sacrilegium* is a failure to understand what it means to be Roman (or in the case of Elgin, British).

In this book, I have shown that the Roman temple robber is a well-developed literary stock type. He has no fear of the gods, is a creature of his impulses, and treats his fellow human beings cruelly. He is fundamentally unsuited to high political or military office. Accusing someone of being a temple robber therefore denies their ability to function as a member of the Roman elite. Stealing from the gods is, after all, only part of what the temple robber does. He cannot be trusted to act responsibly in any sphere of public life.

The claim that someone is a temple robber and hence not a real Roman is particularly useful in the context of invective. A striking use of such rhetoric comes from Augustus' *Res Gestae*. Here Rome's first emperor claims, "After I won, I put back in the temples of all the cities in the province of Asia the ornaments that that man [Mark Antony] with whom I fought a war had appropriated for his private use once the temples had been plundered."[5] The idea that Antony turned divine possessions into private property underscores the idea that he is indeed a *sacrilegus*. Only a temple robber would not know the proper place for sacred objects. Furthermore, the triumvir's lust for precious objects has caused him to harm the very people who most eagerly supported him; Asia, after all, was on his side in the civil war. Temple robbers embody un-Roman qualities and cannot think clearly about their situation.

The fact that the temple robber's world view is supposedly alien from that

5. *In templis omnium civitatium provinciae Asiae victor ornamenta reposui quae spoliatis templis is cum quo bellum gesseram privatim possederat* (*RGDA* 24.1). For Augustus' return of sacred property to Asia, see Str. 14.1.14 and Plin. *HN* 34.58 with Cooley 2009 *ad* 24.1 and Lapatin 2010, 259. Despite his statements in *RGDA*, Augustus engages in plundering of his own; see chapter 6.

of his fellow humans makes him an ideal figure for coping with the uncomfortable aspects of Roman imperial conquest and subsequent rule. Any excessive plundering or ill-treatment of conquered peoples can be explained by pointing to one greedy individual who stopped at nothing to satisfy his desires. By the same token, a competent general with an impeccable reputation is incapable of committing a temple robbery. When he removes sacred objects from a sacred space, the act must be regarded as appropriate and justifiable within its context. Temple robbery in the Roman world is therefore much more than just the removal of sacred property. Stealing from the gods is a manifestation of a whole host of undesirable behaviors and character traits that, so our ancient sources posit, very few Romans exhibit.

Temple robbery, then, even when it is committed by prominent Romans such as Mark Antony, is always the work of people who are firmly "the other." Their acts give proper Romans the chance to show their exemplary qualities. By claiming to have returned what Antony plundered, Augustus steps into a long tradition of rulers repatriating objects that their enemies have stolen.[6] As we saw with Scipio in chapter 2, such an act celebrates a leader's generosity and piety, and, most importantly, shows that he is not a rapacious plunderer.

Very few objects, however, find their way back home. Another way in which a Roman military leader can signal that he is not a temple robber is by putting his loot on public display in Rome. Descriptions of the city in various literary works often include references to the foreign treasures that a viewer would encounter. These do not always come from temples; in fact, authors rarely comment on their exact origins. The more important factor is that the work of art now beautifies a public place in Rome rather than being hidden in someone's house.[7] It follows that temple robbers steal to satisfy their personal lust for an object and will want to keep it for themselves. Real Romans, by contrast, use their rightfully obtained plunder to benefit their community.

The capture of Alexandria in 30 BCE gives rise to a particularly interest-

6. For copious examples, see Lapatin 2009 and 2010.

7. See, e.g., Pliny the Elder's discussion of a statue of Hercules that was taken as plunder by Lucullus during his campaign against Mithridates. It is of interest to Pliny both because it shows Hercules wearing a tunic (he states that this statue is the only one that shows the god in this outfit) and because the inscriptions added to it in Rome allow one to trace its display history; after coming to Rome, the statue was dedicated by Lucullus' son and was then taken into private ownership by an unknown person. It was later rededicated (Plin. *HN* 34.93).

ing take on the relationship between Roman conquests and temple robbery. Dio reports:

> χρήματα . . . πολλὰ μὲν ἐν τῷ βασιλικῷ εὑρέθη (πάντα γὰρ ὡς εἰπεῖν καὶ τὰ ἐκ τῶν ἁγιωτάτων ἱερῶν ἀναθήματα ἡ Κλεοπάτρα ἀνελομένη συνεπλήθυσε τὰ λάφυρα τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις ἄνευ τινὸς οἰκείου αὐτῶν μιάσματος), πολλὰ δὲ καὶ παρ᾽ ἑκάστου τῶν αἰτιαθέντων τι ἠθροίσθη.[8]
>
> Large sums of money were found in the palace (for since Cleopatra had carried off more or less all the offerings even from the holiest sanctuaries, she supplied loot for the Romans without any of them incurring pollution). Much money was also collected from those who were accused of some offense.

Cleopatra's temple robberies are a boon to the Roman victors; they can take the treasures without having to worry about the religious and ethical implications of *sacrilegium*. Accordingly, Dio not only explains that the queen's previous offenses absolve the Romans from any guilt, but also underscores this claim by desacralizing the treasures through language. Whereas Cleopatra takes sacred offerings (ἀναθήματα), the Romans take money (χρήματα). The parallel μέν . . . δέ construction supports the conclusion that the sacred treasures are now no different from possessions confiscated from a private individual.[9] Real Romans do not plunder temples. They can, however, profit from the misdeeds of others.

8. Dio Cass. 51.17.6.

9. The treasures nevertheless largely appear to have ended up on public display (Dio Cass. 51.22.1–3).

Appendix

Robberies in Cicero's Verrines

The following table is based on Pape 1975 (206–7) with additions. It aims to be comprehensive and lists both objects that are mentioned only in passing (for example, as part of a larger catalog) and those whose thefts are narrated in detail. Robberies that are explicitly identified as temple robberies are indicated under Origin with an asterisk [*].

Stealing from the Gods

Origin	Objects	Location in *In Verrem*
Achaia (various places)	Statues and paintings	2.1.45
*Athens	Gold from the temple of Minerva	2.1.45
*Delos	Statues [attempted] from the temple of Apollo	2.1.46–48
Chios	Statues	2.1.49
Erythrae	Statues	2.1.49
Halicarnassus	Statues	2.1.49
*Tenedos	Statue of Tenes	2.1.49
*Samos	Statues and other objects from the temple of Juno	2.1.50–52
Aspendos	"Everything"	2.1.53
*Perga	Various objects and gold from the temple of Diana	2.1.54
[unknown]	Silver plate taken from the household of Malleolus from the rightful heirs after Malleolus' death	2.1.91–93
Messana	Sacred objects and household gods from the household of C. Heius [see also 2.4.4–28 below]	2.2.13

Origin	Objects	Location in *In Verrem*
Messana	Silver and tapestries from the household of Dio	2.2.19–24
Thermae Himeraeae	Bronze vessels, plate, paintings from the household of Sthenius	2.2.83–85; 89–118
Thermae Himeraeae	Bronze statues [attempted]	2.2.86–88
Syracuse	Gold, silver, ivory, luxury fabrics, Corinthian vases, tapestries . . .	2.2.176
Messana	Eros of Praxiteles, other statues, household goods from the household of C. Heius	2.4.4–28
Centuripa	Bosses from Phylarchus	2.4.29
Panhormus	Bosses from Aristus	2.4.29
Tyndaris	Bosses from Cratippus	2.4.29
Lilybaeum	Vessels from Pamphilus	2.4.32
Lilybaeum	Vessels from Diocles	2.4.35
Lilybaeum	Whatever pleased Verres from M. Coelius	2.4.37
Lilybaeum	Furniture from C. Cacurius	2.4.37
Lilybaeum	Table from Q. Lutatius Diodorus	2.4.37
Drepanum	Silver plate from Apollonius	2.4.37
Lilybaeum	Statue of Apollo from Lyso	2.4.37
Lilybaeum	Goblets and money from Heius	2.4.37
Melita	Cups from Diodorus	2.4.38–42
[unknown]	Cups from Cn. Calidius [claimed to be a purchase]	2.4.42
[unknown]	Silver from L. Curidius [later returned]	2.4.44
[unknown]	Censer from L. Papinius ["all the censers of Sicily" follow]	2.4.46
Tyndaris	Bowl from Aeschylus	2.4.48
Tyndaris	Dish from Thraso	2.4.48
Agrigentum	Censer from Nymphodorus	2.4.48
Tyndaris	Plate [decorations only] from Cn. Pompeius	2.4.48
Calacte	Bosses from cups from Eupolemus	2.4.49
Catina	All the silver	2.4.50
Centuripa	All the silver	2.4.50
Agyrium	Corinthian bronzes	2.4.50
Haluntium	Silver and Corinthian bronzes	2.4.51
Agrigentum	Signet ring from the finger of L. Titius	2.4.58
Syracuse	Various precious objects from the sons of Antiochus of Syria [designated as votive gifts for Jupiter Capitolinus]	2.4.60–67
*Segesta	Bronze statue of Diana from the temple	2.4.74–83

Origin	Objects	Location in *In Verrem*
*Tyndaris	Statue of Mercury from the temple	2.4.84–92
*Agrigentum	Statue of Apollo from a temple	2.4.93
*Agrigentum	Bronze statue of Hercules from the temple [attempted]	2.4.94–95
*Assorus	Statue of the river god Chrysas from the temple [attempted]	2.4.96
*Engyium	Votives from the temple of the Magna Mater	2.4.97–98
*Catina	Statue of Ceres from the temple	2.4.99–102
*Melita	Ivory votives from the temple of Juno	2.4.103–5
*Henna	Statues from the temple of Ceres	2.4.106–12
*Syracuse	Everything (including door decorations) from the temple of Minerva	2.4.122–24
Syracuse	Statue of Sappho from the town hall	2.4.126–27
*Syracuse	Statue of Apollo from a temple	2.4.127
*Syracuse	Statue of the god Aristaeus from a temple	2.4.128
*Syracuse	Statues of Jupiter from temples	2.4.128–31
*Syracuse	Various votive offerings	2.4.131

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