

## Literature Year 2

### Lesson 3

### Cicero



Pictured above are the remains of a temple situated on a hill just outside the site of the ancient city of Segesta, Sicily. The temple possibly dates back as far as the 420s BC. Read on to find out the significance of this beautiful building to your set works for IGCSE Latin ...

For the 2023-25 syllabus there are two extracts from Cicero. The first extract is short and describes an incident that occurred when Cicero was on his way home to Rome from Sicily.

Cicero served as quaestor in western Sicily in 75 BC and demonstrated honesty and integrity in his dealings with the inhabitants. The Sicilians did not forget his upright dealings with them.

A quaestorship was the first rung on the political ladder known as the *Cursus Honorum*. The minimum age for a quaestor was 31. The next rung on the ladder was aedile (minimum age 37) then praetor (minimum age 40) then consul (minimum age 43). Cicero eventually climbed all these rungs at the minimum prescribed ages.

The quaestors were responsible for finance and often helped the governors of provinces. It was a kind of apprenticeship because the young quaestor was under the supervision of the more experienced general or governor in charge. The quaestor's job was twofold. He had to look after the finances of the general or governor and he was also in charge of the stores.

The governor of Sicily during Cicero's quaestorship was the praetor Sextus Peducaeus. Sicily was a main supplier of corn to Rome and this was such an important matter that two quaestors were sent to Sicily each year to ensure the grain supply. One was based at Syracuse and the other at Lilybaeum (called Marsala today), which was Cicero's post.

It is interesting to notice how the two sets of extracts set for 2023-5 IGCSE, intersect. In the *Aeneid* Book 3, following the extracts you have to study, the Trojans arrive in Sicily. Although this is not the version of the story Virgil uses in the *Aeneid*, the Greek writer Thucydides says that not all the Trojans continued with Aeneas when he left the island. Some stayed and founded the city of Segesta. The Romans were actually fond of this idea because it gave them some claim to the fertile grain-growing island of Sicily via the link with Aeneas' Trojan followers. The Romans took over Sicily from Carthage during the first Punic War (264-241BC) and it became the first Roman Province. The Carthaginians had plundered Sicily, removing valuables including a huge statue of the Goddess Diana. The Roman general Scipio Africanus the Younger insisted on the statue's return when Rome defeated Carthage.

Gaius Verres (c. 120–43 BC) was appointed governor of Sicily in 73BC. He enriched himself by extortion from local farmers and plundering temples. When he returned to Rome the angry Sicilians asked Cicero, now a newly appointed aedile, to prosecute him. They knew from experience that Verres' conduct would have revolted him. One of the items stolen by Verres was the very statue that Scipio Africanus had had returned from Carthage. Supporting Verres against Cicero is Publius Scipio a descendant of the ancient Scipio family. Cicero does not fail to make the most of this irony in his speech.

The extracts set give a picture of the corruption of government and the administration of justice we discussed in a previous lesson at this period in Rome's history. It also illustrates the illogical attitude of the Romans to the idols they worshipped. Verres is not concerned that stealing the statue of Diana will result in any punishment from the gods. Diana herself does nothing to protect her statue. None of this diminishes its value in the eyes of the Sicilians or indeed of Cicero.