

Cicero *Pro Plancio* 1



We have been concentrating our efforts on Virgil's Aeneid but now that we have actually translated all the lines of the IGCSE exam set text we will take a break from Virgil and look at Cicero. Before we start it might be a good idea to review the three lessons from Year 2 Term 1 Weeks 1/2/3 Day 2 which give background information on Cicero and his time in Sicily. The picture above shows the temple at Segesta in Sicily.

The first of your set passages from Cicero comes from *Pro Plancio*. Gnaeus Plancius was tried on a charge of *sodalitium*, a form of electoral bribery in 54 BC. Cicero successfully defended him. The extract which you have been set from Cicero's defence of Plancius has nothing really to do with Plancius or the charges against him. Cicero makes a digression in this speech describing an incident which happened to himself. It has been chosen for part of your set text because it relates to Cicero's time in Sicily and in it Cicero gives his own opinion of his quaestorship in Sicily and how it was viewed by others. This links to the other Cicero set text which comes from Cicero's prosecution of Verres for his misgovernment of Sicily. In the recommended edition it is headed "A Useful Lesson".

We can tackle Cicero in the same way as we did Virgil. Remember that you are not expected to be able to translate the set passages unaided. BUT you are expected to be able to *remember* the translation which you have prepared in advance with help (from me). To help you do that I suggest you make yourself flashcards as you did for the Virgil lines or you can use this set from quizlet.

<https://quizlet.com/321570959/latin-cicero-a-useful-lesson-translation-flash-cards/>

Now would be a good time to brush up on the subjunctive which crops up quite frequently in Cicero and we also had some examples in Virgil. Look at Year 2 Term 2 Week 6 Day 3, Year 2 Term 2 Week 7 Day 1, Year 2, Year 2 Term 2 Week 7 Day 3 and Year 2 Term 2 Week 8 Day 1.

Reminder: in Latin the subjunctive is used in circumstances where the action is unreal, not true, hypothetical etc. Remember the Bible example:

abominatio Domini omnis arrogans, etiam si manus ad manum fuerit non erit innocens Proverbs 16:5

Every one proud is an abomination to the Lord: even if hand was to hand, he shall not/would not/let him not/he may not be blameless.

Here are the opening lines of today's extract:

Non vereor ne mihi aliquid, iudices, videar adrogare si de quaestura mea dixero. nec vereor ne quis audeat dicere ullius in Sicilia quaesturam aut gratiorem aut clariorem fuisse.

This may look tricky at first but don't worry. We can pull it apart step by step and get the meaning. If nothing else you can see the parallel *Non vereor ne... nec vereor ne...* and the word *Sicilia* should leap out at you. Also as we know that Cicero was a quaestor in Sicily: *quaestura* and *quaesturam*.

You also know *aut... aut* “either... or”.

Let's look at the first sentence. *Vereri* is a deponent verb¹ meaning “to fear”. *Videar* is subjunctive “it should seem” *Aliquid* “somewhat” goes with *adrogare* “to boast”. *Ne* is “if” here. *Judices* is vocative – Cicero is addressing them – they are jurors rather than judges.

Then the next sentence. *Quis* “someone” *audeat* is subjunctive “might dare”. *Fuisse* is perfect infinitive so literally “to have been” but we would probably just say “was”. The *...orem* endings should flag up to you that these are comparative adjectives “more popular” “more distinguished.”

Have a shot and don't worry if you get a different answer! Just learn the correct translation and try to understand why it is correct. My attempt is over the page.

¹ We have not covered deponent verbs yet. They look like passive verbs but are in fact active. For the time being imagine the verb shorn of its *r* at the end!

I do not fear, jurors, lest it should seem, that I boast somewhat if I should speak of my quaestorship. Nor do I fear lest someone should dare to say that the questorship of anyone in Sicily was either more popular or more distinguished.

If you are puzzled as to how it all fits together I've set it out below in a way that might help.

<i>Non vereor</i>	I do not fear,
<i>iudices</i>	jurors,
<i>ne</i>	if
<i>videar</i>	it should seem
<i>mihi</i>	that I
<i>aliquid adrogare</i>	boast somewhat
<i>si</i>	if
<i>dixero</i>	I should speak
<i>de quaestura mea.</i>	of my quaestorship.
<i>nec vereor ne</i>	Nor do I fear if
<i>quis</i>	someone
<i>audeat dicere</i>	should dare to say that
<i>quaesturam</i>	the questorship
<i>ullius</i>	of anyone
<i>in Sicilia</i>	in Sicily
<i>fuisse</i>	was
<i>aut gratiorem</i>	either more popular
<i>aut clariorem.</i>	or more distinguished

Note: *iudices*. Cicero addresses them directly. This is a rhetorical device called **apostrophe**. It is designed to attract the attention of the listener so he does not grow bored. You will find Cicero doing this several times in the set works you study.