M. E. Deutsch, “Pompey’s Three Triumphs.”
POMPEY'S THREE TRIUMPHS

Pompey celebrated his first triumph in 79 B.C. for his victories over King Hiarbas of Numidia, his second in 71 B.C. for his victories in Spain, and his third and last in 61 B.C. after his successes in the East, particularly his victory over Mithridates.

That he had celebrated three triumphs was a fact that ancient writers stressed. On six occasions does Cicero allude to it. In his De Divinatione (ii.9.22) he says: "An Cn. Pompeium censes tribus suis consulatibus, tribus triumphis, maximarum rerum gloria laetaturum fuisse, si sciret se in solitudine Aegyptiorum trucidatum iri . . . . ?" In the oration In Pisonem (24.58) he sneers: "ter iam homo stultus triumphavit." And in the De Officiis (i.22.78) appears the boast: "Cn. Pompeius . . . . diceret frustra se triumphum tertium deportaturum fuisse, nisi meo in rem publicam beneficio, ubi triumpharet, esset habiturus."

Lucan alludes to it five times, and in such a manner as to make one feel that the reference to three triumphs at once identified Pompey. In viii.553 he says: "ter Capitolia curru invectus," and in ix.599–600 in almost the same words: "ter Capitolia curru scandere Pompeii." Very similar to this is the statement in ix.177–78: "pictasque togas, velamina summo ter conspecta Iovi." The triple triumph is Pompey's greatest joy in vii.685–86: "quamque fuit laeto per tres infida triumphos, tam misero Fortuna minor." And finally Lucan (viii.813–15) praises Pompey who, after celebrating three triumphs, resumed the garb of the citizen:

Die semper ab armis
   civilem repetisse togam, ter curribus actis
   contentum multos patriae donasse triumphos.

Twice does Plutarch\(^1\) refer to the triple triumph; Pliny mentions it once.\(^2\)

Valerius Maximus,\(^3\) in discussing Pompey's murder, cannot refrain from stressing the three triumphs which had been his: "nam qui Tigranis tempora insigni regio texerat, eius caput tribus coronis triumphalibus spoliatum in suo modo terrarum orbe nusquam sepulturae locum habuit. . . . ."

Petronius\(^4\) also alludes to the triple triumph:

\[\text{modo quem ter ovantem}
\text{Iuppiter horruerat. . . . .}\]

\(^1\) Pompey 40 and 45.  \(^2\) N. H. xxxvii. 2 (6). 13.  \(^3\) v. 1. 10.  \(^4\) 119. 240–41.
And Albinus\(^1\) identifies Pompey by this fact:

\[
\text{ille, cui ternis Capitolia celsa triumphis}
\]

\[
\text{sponte deum patuere. . . .}
\]

As one reads the various passages, he cannot help feeling that the idea of the triply triumphant had firmly attached itself to Pompey. We surely derive the impression that the association of three triumphs with Pompey was a common one, from such an expression as that of Propertius:\(^2\)

\[
\text{Tris ubi Pompeio detraxit harena triumphos!}
\]

That the triple triumph was a thing in which Pompey himself took pride is made sufficiently evident by the fact that on his seal ring he had three trophies carved, and it was only when this ring was brought to Rome after his murder that people believed that Pompey the Great was really dead.\(^3\)

Yet it was not the mere fact that he had received the honor of three triumphs, but that he had celebrated one over each of the three continents and so in a sense had triumphed over the entire world, that the Romans felt to be most notable. Plutarch\(^4\) makes this conception very clear to us:

But that which most enhanced his glory and had never been the lot of any Roman before, was that he celebrated his third triumph over the third continent. For others before him had celebrated three triumphs; but he celebrated his first over Libya, his second over Europe, and this his last over Asia; so that he seemed in a way to have included the whole world in his three triumphs.

Velleius Paterculus\(^5\) makes precisely the same point: "\textit{huius viri fastigium tantis auctibus fortuna extulit, ut primum ex Africa, iterum ex Europa, tertio ex Asia triumpharet et, quot partes orbis terrarum sunt, totidem faceret monumenta victoriae suae.}"

This fact is also stressed by Cicero (\textit{Pro Balbo} 4.9): "\textit{Qui tot habet triumphos quot orae sunt partesque terrarum,}" and again later in the same speech (6.16): "\textit{cuius tres triumphi testes essent totum orbem terrarum nostro imperio teneri.}"

Once more Cicero emphasizes the three triumphs over the three continents in \textit{Pro Sestio} 61.129: "\textit{vir is qui tripertitas orbis terrarum oras atque regiones tribus triumphis adiunctas huic imperio notavit. . . .}"

So also does Velleius Paterculus\(^6\) join the three triumphs and world-conquest:

\[
\text{\textit{hic post tres consulatus et totidem triumphos domitumque terrarum orbem . . . vitae fuit exitus. . . .}}
\]

\(^1\) \textit{Rerum Romanarum I} (Baehrens, \textit{Fr. Poet. Rom.}, p. 406).
\(^2\) iii. 11. 35.
\(^3\) \textit{Dio} 42. 18. 3.
\(^4\) \textit{Pompey} 45 (translation by B. Perrin in the \textit{Loeb Classical Library}).
\(^5\) ii. 40. 4.
\(^6\) ii. 53. 3.
Valerius Maximus\textsuperscript{1} speaks of the world as but now his, and Lucan\textsuperscript{2} calls him \textit{domitor mundi}. Manilius\textsuperscript{3} emphasizes the same two facts:
\begin{quote}
Pompeiusque orbis domitor per trisque triumphos
ante deum\textsuperscript{4} princeps, . . . .
\end{quote}
and he again\textsuperscript{5} unites them as follows:
\begin{quote}
et tris emenso meritos ex orbe triumphos.
\end{quote}
Indeed, in Pompey’s third triumph, after all the other trophies “came one huge one, decked out in costly fashion and bearing an inscription stating that it was a trophy of the inhabited world.”\textsuperscript{6}

It is clear, therefore, in the first place that the association of three triumphs with Pompey was a very common one, so much so, indeed, that a reference to the triply triumphant readily identified him. In the second place, the fact that the three triumphs were celebrated for victories over the three continents evidently made a profound impression. And, finally, since the three triumphs were gained from the three continents of the earth, it became easily possible to conceive of Pompey as the conqueror of the entire world.

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