

## Pompey's Conquest of the East

Appian, *Mithridatic Wars*, 114-119. Source: William Stearns Davis, ed., *Readings in Ancient History: Illustrative Extracts from the Sources*, 2 Vols. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1912-13), Vol. II: *Rome and the West*, pp. 118-120, 123-127. Scanned by: J. S. Arkenberg, Dept. of History, Cal. State Fullerton. Prof. Arkenberg has modernized the text.

*Pompey is usually overshadowed in most histories by his greater rival, Caesar, but he won marked successes along certain lines. The greatest thing that he did was to consolidate and organize the Roman power in Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine. How important this work was, and how magnificent was the triumph that Pompey celebrated in Rome (September 30th, 61 B.C.) is told by Appian.*

Pompeius Magnus [i.e., Pompey], having cleaned out the robber dens, and prostrated the greatest king living [Mithridates] in one and the same war; and having fought successful battles, besides those of the Pontic war, with Colchians, Albanians, Iberians, Armenians, Medes, Arabs, Jews, and other Eastern nations, extended the Roman sway as far as Egypt. He let some of the subjugated nations go free, and made them allies. Others he placed at once under Roman rule; still others he distributed to various vassal-kings.

He founded cities also: in Lesser Armenia was Nicopolis named for his victory; in Pontus Eupatoria (which Mithridates Eupator had built and named after himself, but destroyed because it had received the Romans without a fight) Pompeius Magnus rebuilt, and named it Magnopolis. In Cappadocia he rebuilt Mazaca, which had been completely ruined by the war. He restored other towns in many places, that had been destroyed or damaged, in Pontus, Palestine, Coele Syria, and Cilicia, in which he settled the greater part of the pirates he had conquered, and where the city formerly called Soli is now known as Pompeiopolis. The city of Tauri [in Pontus] Mithridates had used as a store house of furniture. Here were found 2000 drinking cups made of onyx welded with gold, and many cups, wine coolers, and drinking horns, bridles for horses, etc....all ornamented in like manner with gold and precious stones. The quantity of this store was so great that the inventory of it occupied thirty days. These things had been inherited from Darius the Great of Persia and other mighty rulers.

At the end of the winter [63-62 BCE] Pompey distributed rewards to the army, 1500 Attic drachmas [Arkenberg: about \$3857 in 1998 dollars] to each soldier, and in like proportion to the officers, the whole, it was said, amounting to 16,000 talents [Arkenberg: about \$229 million in 1998 dollars]. Then he marched to Ephesus, embarked for Italy, and hastened to Rome, having dismissed his soldiers at Brundisium to their homes, by which act his popularity was greatly increased among the Romans.

As he approached the city he was met by successive processions, first of youths, farthest from the city; then bands

of men of different ages came out as far as they severally could walk; last of all came the Senate, which was lost in wonder at his exploits, for no one had ever before vanquished so powerful an enemy and at the same time brought so many great nations under subjection and extended the Roman rule to the Euphrates.

He was awarded a triumph exceeding in brilliancy any that had gone before. It occupied two successive days; and many nations were represented in the procession from Pontus, Armenia, Cappadocia, Cilicia, all the peoples of Syria, besides Albanians, Heniochi, Achaeans, Scythians, and Eastern Iberians; 700 complete ships were brought into the harbor; in the triumphal procession were two-horse carriages and litters laden with gold or with other ornaments of various kinds, also the couch of Darius [the Great], the son of Hystaspes, the throne and scepter of Mithridates Eupator himself, and his image, eight cubits high, made of solid gold, and 75,000,000 drachmae of silver coin [Arkenberg: about \$193 million in 1998 dollars]. The number of wagons carrying arms was infinite and the number of prows of ships. After these came the multitude of captives and pirates, none of them bound, but all arrayed in their native costume.

Before Pompey himself were led the satraps, sons and generals of the kings against whom he had fought, who were present---some having been captured, some given as hostages---to the number of three hundred and twenty-four. Among them were five sons of Mithridates, and two daughters; also Aristobulus, king of the Jews; the tyrants of the Cilicians, and other potentates. There were carried in the procession images of those who were not present, of Tigranes king of Armenia, and of Mithridates, representing them as fighting, as vanquished, and as fleeing. Even the besieging of Mithridates and his silent flight by night were represented. Finally, it was shown how he died, and the daughters who perished with him were pictured also, and there were figures of the sons and daughters who died before him, and images of the barbarian gods decked out in the fashion of their countries. ...

Pompey himself was borne in a chariot studded with gems, wearing, it is said, the cloak of Alexander the Great, if any one can believe that. This was supposed to have been found among the possessions of Mithridates....His chariot was followed by the officers who had shared the campaigns with him, some on horseback, and others on foot. When he reached the Capitol, he did not put any prisoners to death, as had been customary at other triumphs, but sent them all home at the public expense, except the kings. Of these Aristobulus alone was shortly put to death, and Tigranes son of Tigranes the king of Armenia some time later.