The Rise of Pompey: Cicero's Consulship

A lecture on Pompey's rise to power and on the conspiracy of Catiline.

The Focus of this Class

1. The career of Pompey, leading to his political alliance with Julius Caesar and Crassus.
2. The First Triumvirate, in 60 BCE
3. The Decades of the 70's and 60's, tumultuous years with wars on all fronts.
4. We catch a glimpse of Caesar, whom we discuss in the next class.
5. We shall also pause briefly to recognize Cicero in these years.

Fall of the Republic Part I

Part 1 - The model is established: Consistency in methods

1. Gracchi- had privileged the People's Assembly over all else.
2. Marius- had privileged the consul and the army over all else.
3. Sulla - had privileged the senate over all else.
   1. These men defined the Optimates and the Populares and set a precedent of civil war.

Part 2 - Variations on the model: More complex set of methods (and/or perhaps better primary sources)

1. Personal alliances became more influential.
2. Optimates and Populares loyalties became harder to discern.
   1. This becomes apparent in Pompey's early career
3. Pompey
4. Caesar
5. Cicero
6. Mark Antony
7. Octavian
This map was prepared to accompany the *The Romans from Village to Empire* by Mary T. Boatwright, Daniel Gargola and Richard J.A. Talbert, Oxford University Press, 2004.

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**Pompey the Great, 106-48 BCE**
A new focus on foreign conquest for its own sake to build a power base

1. "Magnus" is an ironic nickname, given by Sulla and his troops.
2. Pompey supported Sulla 83 BCE.
   a. Called the "teenage butcher"
   b. During the Social War, his father was an effective but unpopular consul.
   c. Pompey entered public life by marching 3 of his father's legions into Rome in 83 to support Sulla.
      1. As a private citizen, he demanded a triumph at the age of 23, which Sulla grants.
   d. He showed his ambitious, charismatic, and talented character.
      1. Some think he lacked the instincts of a ruler.
3. Defeated Spartacus, the leader of a massive slave revolt.
4. 1st consulship in 70 BCE
   a. He claimed consulship with the threat of his army.
   b. He was too young, and had never held office.
   c. Dismantled Sulla's reforms
      a. He restored the full powers of the tribunes.
      b. He staffed law court juries with senators and equestrians.
      c. He revived the position of censor to enroll new Italian citizens in voting tribes.

Spartacus and the Slave War, 73-71 BCE: a very precarious time
for Rome

Conditions leading to the revolt

1. Spartacus, a Thracian, had served in the Roman army as an auxiliary.
2. He and 70 others escaped their barracks in Capua, setting up a base of resistance on Mt. Vesuvius.
3. "The growth of the rebel movement was not a ... carefully orchestrated phenomenon." ~K. Bradley
4. "Freedom from slavery was the intent of the fugitives; the slavery system itself remained unaffected." K. Bradley
5. Eventually 70,000-100,000 slaves join.
   1. That Kirk Douglas' movie promotes the idea that they were ideologically motivated -- were protesting institutional slavery, wanted to set up a utopian community of ex-slaves-- may be a communist projection onto history.
6. The movement had initial success against the Roman legions.
7. More slaves were attracted to the rebellion because of:
   a. Successes against the Roman army
   b. The deprivations of their servile existence.

Defeat of Spartacus

1. By Crassus in southern Italy
2. By Pompey in Etruria
3. There was competition between Crassus and Pompey for public glory.

Results

1. Romans continued to practice slavery.
2. Owners of latifundia began shifting their workforce to free tenants in fear of slave revolts.
3. 6,000 slaves crucified on the Appian way from Rome to Capua.

Pompey's Extraordinary Commands
Special imperium (power/command) vs. pirates, 67 BCE

Pompey cleared the seas in 90 days with 500 ships, settling the pirates in Cilicia.

Great Mithridatic War, 74-63 BCE

1. Mithridates was on the offensive and angered about King Nicomedes of Bithynia bequeathing his kingdom to Rome.
2. Pompey vs. Lucullus
   a. Lucullus was a successful Roman general but unpopular.
   b. He gave tax relief to Asian provincials.
3. Manilian Law, 67 BCE; Cicero's speech *Pro Lege Manilia*
   a. G. Manilius, tribune, proposed giving Pompey complete control over the war.
   b. Cicero, as praetor, in *Pro Lege Manilia*, argues for the proposal.

Results of Pompey's eastern campaign

1. Pacification and reorganization of Asia
2. New provincial territories
a. Syria became a new province, with the client state of Palestine (including Jerusalem) under its control.
   b. This created a stronghold against the threat of the Parthians and Armenians in the East.

**Marcus Tullius Cicero 106-43 BCE**

- Supporter of Pompey
- Consul 63 BCE
- Provincial governor of Cilicia in 57 BCE.

**Conspiracy of Catiline**

1. Catiline was an impoverished patrician who unsuccessfully ran for consulship on a platform of reduced debts- a demagogue.
2. He attracted the worst parts of Roman society to his cause.
3. Cicero sniffed out the plot and used a *senatus consultum ultimum*.
4. Cicero rounded up the remnants of Catiline’s rag tag army and condemned them to death without a trial.
5. Cicero hailed as Pater Patriae

**Value of Cicero's writings**

1. His Latin prose style was imitated by all the most learned thinkers for centuries to come.
2. He gave Romans the vocabulary to express their unique views on philosophy, politics, and history.

**Prelude to the "First Triumvirate"**
1. Pompey opposed by *Optimates*
   a. Roman senate denied ratification of Eastern settlement
   b. Roman senate denied land for his veterans.
2. Crassus opposed by Optimates
   1. Equestrian tax-collectors denied a reduction of contract payments on collection of taxes in Asia.
3. Caesar denied by Optimates
   a. Caesar had waged successful campaigns in Spain, where he had been governor.
   b. He was denied exception to hold triumph and stand for consulship simultaneously.

Questions

1. Was the special imperium granted to Pompey the only solution to Rome's distress during the 60's BCE?
2. What interconnected factors contributing to the fall of the Republic appear especially clearly in Pompey's career?


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