Pompey the Great (106-48)

“After having rescued the seacoast from pirates and restored to the Roman people the command of the sea, he celebrated triumphs over Asia, Pontus, Armenia, Paphlagonia, Cappadocia, Cilicia, Syria, the Scythians, the Jews, the Albanians, Iberia, the Island of Crete, and in addition to these, over King Mithridates & King Tigranes... He routed, scattered, slew, or received the surrender of 12,380,000 people; sank or captured 846 ships; received the capitulation of 1,538 towns & forts...”

• Pompey’s boast: “I found Asia the furthest off of Rome’s provinces & left her at center of Rome’s empire”

The “last generation” of the Republic

• Final tipping point between a Rome controlled by small groups of super-imperialists who want to be considered principes (first men)—and a Rome ruled by one man: the only princeps.

“Pompey could not bear having a superior. But Caesar could not even bear having an equal.”

Gnaeus Pompeius (Magnus)

• Greatest conqueror of Roman Republic
  — or just most opportunistic? Best at taking credit?
• Fighting under Sulla, Pompey (in his 20’s)
  — adopts surname Magnus: The Great
  — others call him adulescens carnifex: Teenage Butcher
• dominated Roman politics for 30 years after Sulla
• Individualist general and imitator of Alexander
  — BUT, by accident of history, gets painted as last bastion of old Rome—symbol of lost Republic, bulldozed by Caesar.
  — From teenage butcher & violator of constitution to guardian of mos maiorum???
Rise of Pompey
- Son of successful general, Gnaeus Pompeius Strabo. Inherited thousands of clients when father died in 87 (Pompey just 19)
- Joins Sulla in 82, having raised 3 legions of his clients
- Marries Sulla’s step-daughter
- Becomes Sulla’s roving hitman...
- After success vs. Sulla’s foes, Pompey demands Triumph — But Pompey just 25 years old & has never held office — Sulla says no— that would be unconstitutional!
- Pompey refuses to disband army until Triumph given — 25 year old (non-senator!) Pompey gets Triumph...

Lepidus, consul in 78
- Right after Sulla’s death, Lepidus, tries to reverse Sulla’s reforms: restore tribunes & grain subsidies
- Senate delays
- Lepidus about to march on Rome
- Senate orders SCU, putting Pompey in command ag. Lepidus
- Pompey crushes rebellion, but refuses to disband army until given new command...

Pompey vs. Sertorius
- Marian who fled to Spain in 82
- In 80, raises rebellion in Spain
- Offers refuge for all who oppose optimates and Sullan senate — Supporters of Marius and Cinna — Many Gallic and Spanish tribes — Pirates and Mithridates of Pontus
- Charisma: Robin-hood figure
- In 77, Pompey sent against him & begins retaking Spain
- 72, Sertorius murdered by his own lieutenant
- 71, on way back to Rome, Pompey aids Crassus with Spartacus & takes credit

Pompey seeks consulship
- Pompey, successful against both Sertorius and Spartacus, camps outside Rome with army — Demands Senate to allow him to stand for consulship
- Crassus & Pompey consuls for 70 BC, even though Pompey has never held any office (& too young)
- Work together to dismantle Sullan constitution! — Pompey’s breach of cursus honorum — Law-courts go back to equites — Tribunes reinstated
The paradox of the year 70:
- Sulla had instituted new regime
  - Various discontented factions try to overturn Sullan regime: Lepidus, Sertorius, Spartacus
  - But Senate’s generals crush revolts
- Eventually those very generals (two of Sulla’s former men) manage to undo Sulla’s dream
- What does Pompey want?
  - Like Marius, just victories and glory: no other ideal
- Didn’t aspire to one-man rule, but transgressive actions still paved way for rise of sole ruler

Pompey Away in the East
- 67 BC: Tribunes get Pompey command of entire Med. to subdue pirates
  - 270 warships + 100,000 soldiers
  - Brilliant campaign: in just 3 months– pirates gone
- And then? Pompey wants another war!
  - 74-67 BC: Lucullus defeating Mithridates of Pontus
  - 66 BC: Lucullus’ command given to Pompey
- Pompey finishes war and...
  - Conquers Armenia and Syria; captures Jerusalem
  - Sets up client kings all over East; creates provinces; makes laws; founds towns– like Alexander

Meanwhile at Rome in the 60’s?
- Pompey’s shadow over Rome: Another Sulla??
- Crassus schemes to corner land-market in Italy
  - so that Pompey will need to negotiate with him to find his veterans land
- 64-3 Catiline’s conspiracy
  - Cicero (at first a hero, then at risk)
  - senate debate sets up Caesar vs. Cato

Pompey Returns: 62 BC
- Pompey returns peacefully and disbands army
  - Has only two needs:
    1) for the Senate to ratify his actions in the East
    2) Land for his veterans
  - But Optimates within Senate refuse (esp. Cato)...
- Senate delays response to Pompey’s requests
  - Big mistake!
- Senate also blocks ambitions of Caesar, who asks for Triumph after victories in Spain
  - Even bigger mistake!
Caesar (100-44)
- Caesar allies himself w/ both Pompey & Crassus
- 60 BC: “1st triumvirate”—promise of friendship
- Why would these three men team up? Don’t they hate each other?
  - Caesar needs consulship
  - Pompey needs land & ratification of actions in East
  - Crassus needs help getting *publicani* out of bad contract with the Senate
- Pompey marries Caesar’s daughter, Julia

Year 59
- Caesar elected consul for 59
  - Ratifies Pompey’s Eastern activities & gets land to Pompey’s vets
  - remission of contract price for Crassus’ *publicani* friends
  - Secures himself pro-consular command in Gaul for 5 years
- Caesar’s methods?
  - abuses consular colleague, Bibulus
  - bypasses Senate—*populares* behavior

What do we call this agreement between Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar?
- *Amicitia* (friendship)? 1st triumvirate? conspiracy? Domination? beginning of civil war?
  “3 men, backed by armed force, by the urban populace and by many of the *Equites*, imposed their will on the State and destroyed the power of the Senate ... The State and constitution were now at the mercy of dynasts who strove for power and *dignitas*.”

58 BC: Caesar goes to conquer Gaul

53 BC: Crassus killed trying to conquer Parthia

Meanwhile: Pompey tries to keep order at Rome

Julia dies in childbirth