

The Triumphs of Cilicia and Cicero's Proconsulship

Over barely 50 years, at least 9 of the Romans assigned Cilicia requested a triumph and at least 6 received one. Given that many of them had multi-year assignments, this leads to a state of near constant campaigning in southern Asia Minor during the early first century. Even factoring in the conflicts with Mithridates (and perhaps especially then), it is puzzling to see Cilicia as such a volatile province. Clearly, these triumphs did not entail any sort of permanent settlement (see Pittenger 2008). Relying chiefly on the testimony of Cicero, I argue here that Cilicia, which at the time was one of the largest and richest provinces, was also the ideal low-risk province for the triumph-seeker.

While triumphal motives have been discussed recently (e.g. Beard 2007, Pittenger 2008), I present Cilicia as an exemplar of typical triumphal machinations. Cicero did not want to be governor of Cilicia. Nevertheless, in some of his letters (*ad fam.* 2.10 and 8.5), he alludes to the possibility of provoking a fight and attaining a triumph from Cilicia, despite the fact that he arrived as late as he could and left as early as he could. While Cicero's personal motivations here have also been assessed (see Correa 2013, Wistrand 1979), less is said about the ramifications for the province. Among his other letters, he reveals the activities others, such as Appius Claudius Pulcher, pursued in seeking Cilician triumphs.

Hunting for a triumph was not regarded poorly. Cicero rather frankly attributes triumph-hunting to Crassus (cos. 97) and Cotta (cos. 75) who both sought Gallic triumphs from the Alpine tribes. Both men Cicero praises both here (*In Pisonem* 62) and elsewhere. Crassus failed to find a triumph there, though later attained one from the Lusitani, while Cotta would have received one had he not died prematurely. For Cicero, at least, the distinction was to increase the Roman state without breaching treaties with Roman allies. Within these guidelines, war-

mongering was not only permissible but praiseworthy. Certain authors' (e.g. Florus, Appian, or Strabo) later accusations of triumph-hunting generally include erstwhile Roman allies as victims. It was not, however, enough to be an ally of Rome, for the Romans also had to remember the alliance. Cicero later reminds the proconsul Philippus of an alliance to forestall his actions against Antipater of Derbe north of Cilicia. There was no Cilician triumph for Philippus.

Cicero's idiosyncrasies aside, we remain with the question of just what it was about Cilicia that provoked such triumphal desires. I submit that it was the reputation of Cilicia as the homeland of pirates. While perhaps less triumph-worthy than Gaul, Parthia, or Pontus, it was also safer. There were no treaties with pirates. By attributing brigandage of some sort to the locals, the campaign was easily defensible. This is by no means the only reason. The area had long been a source for mercenaries, and it was far from unusual for unemployed mercenaries to take up brigandage. Cilicia's borders were never well defined (see Freeman 1986), and after the 'Balkanization' of southern Anatolia during the second century, Cilicia contained numerous tiny city-states too small to put up a sustained resistance and too unfamiliar to be recognized in Rome. This could be disadvantageous as well. In Cicero's own bid for a triumph, he mourned the unfamiliar name of Pindinessum and played up fears of a Parthian invasion.

Pompey's settlement of the east did not stop repeated triumphs and campaigns in Cilicia. Ostensibly, Pompey had reduced all the pirate strongholds (like Vatia a decade earlier) and resettled the pirates on vacant Cilician farmland. Still, the Roman governors continued waging wars in Cilicia. It might be argued that these were largely against the pirates who chose not to take up farming. That is a convenient defense put forth by the would-be triumphators like Cicero and Appius Claudius Pulcher.

Cilicia, with its large area, numerous unfamiliar states, indeterminate borders, and piratic reputation, provided perfect staging-grounds for 'small victorious campaigns'. While the same tactics were employed by governors elsewhere (especially Hispania), through Cicero's accounts of three governors: Appius Claudius Pulcher, himself, and Phillippus, we have a clear view of the politics of triumph-hunting.

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