



Reorganization of the East by Pompeius

Περίληψη :

This entry refers to the reorganisation by Pompey of the territory added to the Roman empire after the 3rd Mithridatic War (66-62 B.C.).

Χρονολόγηση

66-62 BC

Γεωγραφικός εντοπισμός

The Roman province of Asia and bordering regions, especially Cilicia and Syria (modern Turkey and Syria).

1. Historical background

For almost forty years the Romans had been in conflict with [Mithridates VI](#) and had fought three wars against him. The [Third Mithridatic War](#) begun in 74 B.C. The Romans were led first by [Lucullus](#) and then, from 66 B.C. onwards, by [Pompey](#) who brought it to a successful conclusion. The result was the annexation of new territories to the Roman empire which required a reorganisation. Pompey, with his well-known flair for organisation, undertook the task. It is not quite known by what authority he acted. He was certainly not aided by the usual senatorial commission, which oversaw the erection of a new province. Some think he might have been authorised by a clause in the [Lex Manilia](#) but this seems unlikely in view of the fact that he had to seek ratification for his acts from the senate. Before Pompey's conquests, Rome possessed only two territories on the Asian mainland: the [province of Asia](#) and [Cilicia](#). Now the following territories were added: [Lycaonia](#), [Pisidia](#), [Pamphylia](#) and southern [Phrygia](#). For all of these places suitable arrangements would have to be made.

2. The Reorganisation

First of all, provisions had to be made for the [Kingdom of Pontus](#). Its greater part was unified with the neighbouring [Kingdom of Bithynia](#). The northern frontier of the new province was the Black Sea. To the west it bordered with the province of Asia while to the south with Cilicia. Although there is still dispute among scholars as to where the eastern frontier was located, some argue for the Halys River (Kizil).

The province itself was divided into eleven communities ([conventus](#)), each with a town as its centre. These were either new foundations or were founded on the site of an existing town. There is some disagreement among scholars as to the names of all these places, but most feel that some of these towns were not of great significance and were mere administrative centres. In these new settlements, the citizen body elected magistrates and a council, which was in effect the governing body of the territory and saw to the collection of the taxes imposed by the Romans. The governor was in charge of law and order and the administration of justice.

A great deal of the province of Pontus-Bithynia area was not, however, thought to be fit for Roman rule. The decision was therefore to be given to client kings who had shown loyalty to Rome. Pharnaces II (63-47 B.C.) was one of them. Pharnaces was actually son of Mithridates VI but had deserted from his father's camp. He now had his reward in the Black Sea region, in the form of Cimmerian Bosphorus. Aristarchus was established in Colchis presumably in the expectation he would be a deterrent to the Iberians. Deiotorus I, prince of the [Galatians](#), had been a conspicuous Roman ally helping first Lucullus and then Pompey. He now had been given tracts of land in the Pontus area. He is also said to have received the kingdom of [Armenia Minor](#) but some think this may have happened a little later and that the original recipient was another Galatian prince, [Brogitarus](#). [Archelaus](#) was the son of one of Mithridates' generals who had fought against Rome in the [First Mithridatic war](#). The father had fled to Rome soon after and the son spent some time there. He was something of a favourite with Pompey who appointed him high priest and ruler of the Temple State of Pontic Comana on the river Iris. Another loyal friend of Rome was [Ariobarzanes I](#) of Cappadocia. Although he had been driven out from his kingdom by [Tigranes the Great](#) of Armenia, the Romans had restored him and added to his realm certain Cilician strongholds. Another buffer for both Cilicia was Seleucia on the Euphrates. This was given to the king of Commagene, [Antiochus A](#).



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In the south, Pompey had some problems to deal with. First, there was the remains of the old Seleucid kingdom ruled by Antiochus XIII. As the latter was now powerless, Pompey had him deposed and created the province of Syria. Within this, some loyal dynasts survived most conspicuous among whom was Sumpsicorumus in Pieria who became a close friend of Pompey. Some cities too in Coele Syria were detached from Judaea and added to Syria. A problem with hostile Arabs to the north, at Amanus Mountain, was solved by setting a loyal prince over them. Pompey had also during his campaigns intervened in the civil war which had been raging in Judaea. He appointed Hyrcanus, one of the protagonists there, as ruler with the status of client king.

Separate and special mention should be made of Pompey's dealings with Parthia and Armenia whose fates are linked. Prior to this time, Rome had already recognised Parthia for the great power it was, and treaties had been concluded by Sulla and Lucullus. Now (66 B.C.) Pompey made his own with these kingdoms. It seems to have been envisaged they would make a joint attack on Armenia. Armenia, under its king Tigranes, was a great empire. As being the son-in-law of Mithridates VI, Tigranes had aided him against Lucullus only to receive a severe mauling at the Roman general's hands. Pompey now resolved to finish the business by invading Armenia itself. The son of Tigranes, also called Tigranes, had already risen in rebellion and had fled to Parthia. The Parthian king, Phraates, made a brief incursion into Armenia but then advised young Tigranes to throw himself on the mercy of Pompey which he duly did. Pompey engineered reconciliation between father and son giving Armenia to the father and Sophene to the son. The Parthians soon reappeared to say they thought their treaty with Rome was being endangered by Pompey's behaviour. Meantime, the young Tigranes had fallen foul of Pompey who put him in chains. He called on the Parthians for help and they occupied Gordyene. Pompey now demanded they withdraw and this they did when he sent a force against them. Another Parthian embassy then appeared asking for the release of Tigranes junior and the fixing of Euphrates as the boundary between the Roman and the Parthian empires. This provoked another Parthian invasion of Armenia in support of Tigranes the son, in 64 B.C. The elder Tigranes who was still on the throne made much of the fact that he was a friend of Rome. Eventually both sides turned to Pompey. He appointed three arbitrators whose decision was to be accepted by both sides. We do not know exactly what was decided but it seems certain the treaty was renewed.

3. Consequences

The result of Pompey's work was the foundation of provinces at the Black Sea and the coast of Asia Minor: Pontus, Bithynia, Asia, Cilicia and Syria. Next there was an inner ring of client kingdoms: Bosphorus, Colchis, Armenia minor, Paphlagonia, Galatia, Cappadocia, Commagene, the principdoms of Syria and Cilicia, Judaea. It is generally agreed that matters were better ordered in the north than they were in the south. There things appear to have been more hastily carried out and the inner ring of defences was less stable. The durability of Pompey's work should not, however, be doubted. It is shown in the simple fact that his arrangements for Bithynia were not altered until the third century A.D.

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Reorganization of the East by Pompeius

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Γλωσσάριο :

	conventus, us
In the Roman provinces, the term referred to the meetings of the provincials in places appointed by the praetor or the proconsul of the province for the purpose of administering justice. In order to facilitate the procedure, the province was divided into districts or circuits called conventus, forum or jurisdictio. The Roman citizens living in a province under the jurisdiction of the proconsul, and accordingly had to settle any business at a conventus had to appear there.	
	lex Manilia
A law passed in Rome in 66 B.C., on the initiative of Gaius Manilius. The law mandated that Pompey took command of the war against Mithridates instead of Lucullus.	