INTRODUCTION

The Triumph, Memory, and "Being Roman" in the City of Rome

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In 197 B.C., the Roman consul Q. Minucius Rufus celebrated an unofficial triumphal procession on the Alban Mount about thirty kilometers southeast of Rome. This *triumphus in monte Albano*, "unofficial" because the Senate of Rome had not voted him this honor, celebrated victories over the Ligurians and Gallic Boi. According to Livy, Minucius's triumph might not have been condoned by the Senate, but it equaled in standards, wagons, and spoils the triumph voted by the Senate that C. Cornelius celebrated that same year in the city of Rome itself. Over 150 years later, after capturing the Armenian king Artavasdes in 34 B.C., Mark Antony celebrated a sort of triumphal procession even farther afield: in Alexandria. According to Cassius Dio, this procession, replete with spoils, captives, and Antony in a triumphal chariot, made its way into Alexandria to Cleopatra herself.[1]

What did these two processions, so far apart in time and space, have in common? Both men who celebrated them envisioned them as triumphal processions – but ancient authors criticize both processions as inferior to the real triumph. According to Livy, "[Minucius's] triumph was of lesser note *because of the place where it was held*. . .. " As for Antony, Plutarch writes of his Alexandrian "triumph" that " . . . herein particularly did he give offense to the Romans, since he bestowed the honorable and solemn rites of his native country upon the Egyptians for Cleopatra's sake."[2] These triumphal processions were inferior or,

in Antony's case, dishonorable even, because they had taken place outside the city of Rome.[3] Place – the cityscape of Rome – was critical to the Roman triumph. Yet the monuments that came to shape the triumphal route in Rome often get lost in the shuffle of scholarship on the triumph, despite their centrality to understanding the triumph and its place, both literal and figurative, in ancient Rome.

The triumph – an elaborate ritual celebrating Rome's military victories over foreign peoples – was one of ancient Rome's most important institutions, a ritual at once religious and political, military and spectacular. One of the absolute highest honors a Roman man could achieve, the triumph traversed the city of Rome from the early republican through the imperial periods.[4] It was a quintessentially Roman institution, embodying fundamental aspects of Rome's evolving view of itself in terms of military might and world dominance. Even as the ritual underwent changes as Rome itself transformed, the triumph retained a singular significance in Roman society. Its continuing relevance is attested to by the numerous literary and artistic representations of and numismatic and epigraphic references to triumphal processions dating to both the republican and imperial periods – and also by the impressive monuments that generals and emperors built along the triumphal route, many of which survive to the present.

These monuments, and the space they created for Romans to perform, experience, and remember triumphs, remain a tantalizing area for exploration. The monuments that lined the triumphal route accomplished much more than delimiting the ritual's route. Ancient authors themselves describe powerful links between the triumph, monumentalized urban space, and Roman identities.[5] The monuments of the triumphal route were critical for crystallizing Romans' changing views of themselves and their city. They mattered as much for this process as for the ritual performance itself, because it was through permanent monuments that the triumph existed most durably and transformatively as an institution in Roman society. Numerous state reliefs of triumphal processions in architectural settings indicate the important connection between the triumph and the monumental space through which it moved.[6] One cannot fully appreciate the importance of the triumph to Roman society without understanding the interconnections between the ritual – both its physical performance and its role in the Roman cultural imagination – and the monuments among which it unfolded. This book provides a critical study of the complex relation between Romans' memories of the triumph and their interactions with its associated monuments. It argues that monuments played a pivotal role in constructing the triumph as a signature institution of ancient Rome by guiding and manipulating how Romans experienced and remembered the ritual.

Given its extraordinary prominence in Roman society, it is not surprising that the triumph has fascinated students of Rome from the Renaissance

onward. Modern scholars debate the origins, ritual elements, and route of the triumph, as well as its supposed Hellenization under the Republic and the rules for awarding the honor. Yet the physical space of the triumphal route – the structures that literally shaped the ritual's path – has remained less explored, leaving open provocative questions about the effect of public monuments on the performance and reception of the Roman triumph.

This book addresses these questions by analyzing the triumphal route and its monuments at three critical periods: the era of the Punic Wars, the reign of Trajan, and the reign of Septimius Severus. Although the triumph existed, at least mythically, from the time of Romulus, the number of triumphs celebrated – and the number of monuments built along the route – burgeoned during the era of the Punic Wars (264–146 B.C.), when Rome became a truly pan-Mediterranean empire.[7] As Rome fought successful wars against peoples in Carthage, Spain, Gaul, and Greece, victorious generals celebrated numerous triumphs and built a plethora of triumphal monuments, including columns, arches, porticoes, and temples. These monuments gave shape to the nodes of the triumphal route, creating for the first time in Rome's history a lavishly architecturally defined path for triumphs. They introduced exciting, novel forms to Roman architecture: rostrated columns sporting bronze ship beaks, free-standing arches bearing gilded attic statuary, vast porticoes housing Greek statues, and brilliant marble temples with Greek architectural orders.

The innovative, lavish, and eye-catching appearance of many of these triumphal monuments invited aesthetic contemplation. More important, perhaps, and certainly concurrently, they evoked and shaped memories of triumphal processions that highlighted the aspect of Rome's military domination of foreign peoples. These buildings thus became instrumental in forging a sense of what it meant to "be Roman" as a resident of the capital city at the time that Rome was coming into increasing contact with foreign cultures such as those of Greece and Carthage. They helped to create an urban identity – a sense of belonging to the city of Rome specifically – that opposed itself to Greekness and other foreign cultures even as it was complexly intertwined with them. Manubial monuments not only commemorated past triumphs, however; they also enabled Romans to envision what *future* triumphs should be like, creating a prospective memory of triumphs that enabled the triumph to endure as one of Rome's most significant ritual institutions.

The boom in construction along the triumphal route in the third and second centuries B.C. was tied deeply not only to Rome's aggressive geographic expansion but also to the intense competition among aristocratic Roman men for triumphs and the political capital they brought. When Augustus became Rome's first *princeps*, triumphs, and buildings that lined their route, quickly became the prerogative of only the emperor and his heirs. Triumphs, consequently, became much rarer occurrences than during the republican period.

As a result, the construction of permanent spectator buildings along the triumphal route intensified during the imperial period as emperors sought a means to make their triumphs more spectacular and more memorable. This trend, which encompasses the Theater of Marcellus and perhaps even the Colosseum, culminated under Trajan (r. A.D. 98–117), who is often overlooked in connection to the triumphal route but who celebrated two lavish triumphs over the Dacians and who transformed the Circus Maximus into the single most important permanent viewing space along the triumphal route. Trajan's Circus Maximus has rarely been considered in the context of the triumph, but it had an outsized impact on the ritual's performance. Trajan, for the first time, built the Circus Maximus as a colossal vaulted structure in concrete, brick, and stone, with an opulent decorative program of marble sheathing and gilded bronze ornament. He transformed the Circus, previously mostly wood, into a permanent structure that could welcome nearly a quarter of Rome's population – 250,000 spectators – for his and future triumphal processions.

The atmosphere in the Circus during triumphal processions would have been electric, generating an intense feeling of collectivity amongst the Romans gathered within. The experiential intensity generated by Trajan's massive spectacle building would have made his triumphal processions more memorable, as cognitive research has demonstrated that emotional arousal can enhance memory. Moreover, the Trajanic Circus presented a permanent, stone facade to Romans that served as a constantly visible and impressive reminder of triumphal processions. Trajan's Circus Maximus truly provided a fitting home for triumphs and for Romans, creating a space in which Romans could envision themselves as the dominant people at the center of a vast, multicultural empire – even if conflicts on the ground in the provinces belied the reality of this perception.

By the time of Septimius Severus (r. A.D. 193–211), however, perceptions in the capital city of Rome's stability and centrality had begun to shift. The civil war that brought Septimius to power – the first in Rome in over a century – generated a sense of political and military unease in Rome. Unlike Trajan's resounding Dacian victories, which brought extraordinary wealth to Rome, Septimius Severus presided over more tenuous victories. Septimius hailed his Parthian wars as a success, but Rome gained little of enduring value from his efforts. It is unclear whether Septimius even celebrated a triumph. Most scholars believe he did, in A.D. 202, yet no ancient author explicitly states that Septimius triumphed.

In spite of, or perhaps because of, the uncertainty of his military accomplishments and triumphs, Septimius Severus built heavily along the triumphal route. An area of the route that received particular embellishment was the eastern slope of the Palatine, a charged point in the landscape where triumphs proceeded from the Circus Maximus to the Sacra Via. At the

southeast corner of the Palatine, Septimius expanded the imperial palace so that it loomed even larger over the road below. He also built the towering Septizodium, a fountain with an enormous facade decorated with columns and statues, at the precise point where triumphs exited the Circus Maximus. At the northeast corner of the Palatine, Septimius built a massive temple-terrace complex at the site of the present Vigna Barberini. Finally, Septimius's other major contribution to the triumphal route was his eponymous arch in the Forum Romanum, the largest triumphal arch ever built in the Forum, which was faced by the Equus Severi, his colossal bronze equestrian statue.

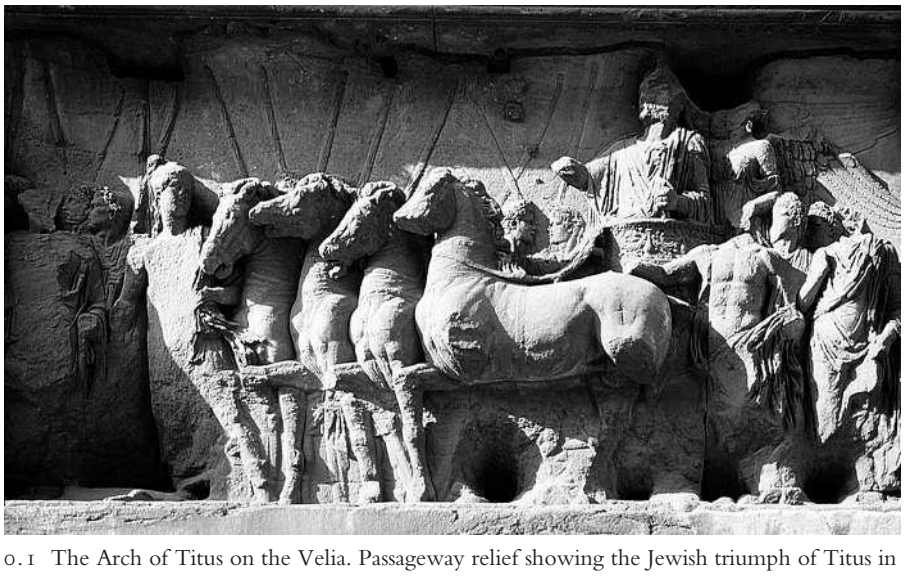
The Arch of Septimius's visual appearance, sculptural decoration, and prominent location on the triumphal route make it clear that Septimius wanted it to be viewed as a triumphal arch. Likewise, his cluster of monuments on the Palatine monumentalized the eastern side of the hill and made it a strikingly scenographic setting for triumphal processions passing below. Truly, Septimius built like an emperor who was commemorating multiple triumphs. Yet a careful examination of the evidence for a Severan triumph in A.D. 202 reveals that it is entirely possible that no triumph was celebrated. In the face of his precarious military victories, Septimius's monuments along the triumphal route emerge as an attempt to aggrandize his tenuous military victories or even to generate false memories of a triumph that might not have existed – to create a sort of virtual triumph. Cognitive research on how visual stimuli can manipulate memories and create distorted memories illuminates how these Severan monuments could have successfully constructed memories of a potentially illusory triumph.

What emerges throughout the following pages is that public monuments played an absolutely critical role in constructing the triumph as a central institution in Roman society. At a basic level, the monuments shaped the urban space through which triumphs could pass. They molded Romans' experiences of triumphs, providing viewing areas that could intensify the experience of watching the ritual. In the everyday lives of Romans, monuments along the triumphal route evoked past triumphs but also, in a phenomenon not previously explored, shaped how Romans remembered these triumphs and how they envisioned future triumphs. As permanent visual stimuli encountered daily, the monuments along the triumphal route had a potent impact on Romans' memories of triumphs. The buildings could highlight in memories certain aspect of triumphs, such as Roman conquest of foreign peoples. They could make triumphs more memorable through the emotional arousal of a crowd experience, and they could evoke sentiments of collectivity among Romans. They could even generate potentially false memories of triumphs that never existed. Although these different modes of memory appear particularly starkly at different periods, it seems probable that they coexisted to a certain extent throughout Rome's history.

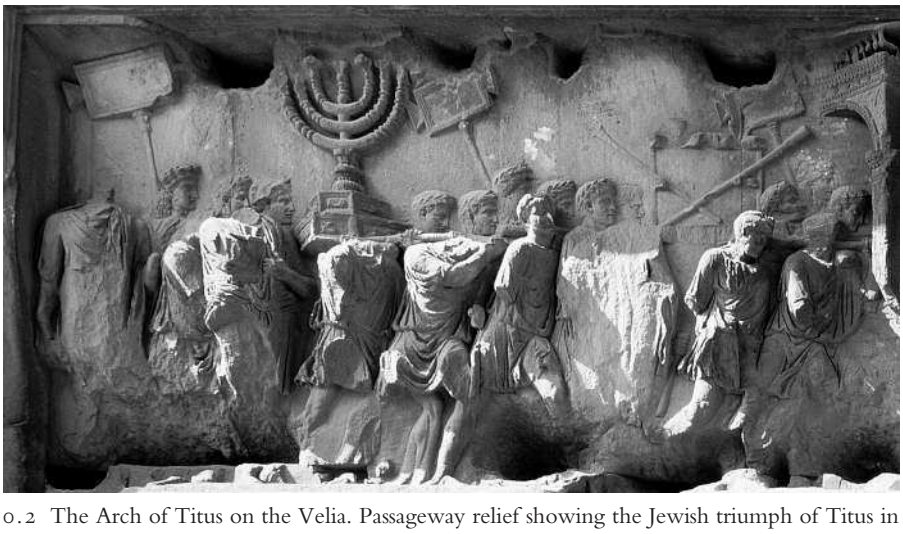
THE ROMAN TRIUMPH: AN OVERVIEW

A ritual as rich and complex as the society that celebrated it, the triumph was controversial in antiquity as well as today.[8] It fascinated Latin and Greek writers alike, and ancient artists depicted it on numerous surviving reliefs, including the famous passageway reliefs of the Arch of Titus on the Sacra Via and the relief panel of Marcus Aurelius now in the Palazzo dei Conservatori (Figures 0.1–0.3). The triumph has also engrossed and frustrated post-antique scholars, who have tried since at least the Renaissance to define it as a purification rite, thanksgiving ritual to the gods, victory celebration, individual honor, or entertainment for the masses. In reality, the ritual encompassed all these aspects, and more. A detailed review of the copious scholarship on the triumph is neither necessary nor feasible here, but a sketch of the major approaches to it demonstrates how a study of the triumphal route's monuments can augment our existing understanding of the ritual's place in Roman society.[9]

The traditional view of the Roman triumph reconstructs it as an often lavish procession, in which the victorious general and his army re-entered the city by crossing the *pomerium* (Rome's sacred boundary). They then paraded through the streets of Rome, ultimately offering a sacrifice to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Rome's chief state god. Roman magistrates and senators headed the parade, accompanied by cartloads of booty often including statues and paintings, animals for games and sacrifices, and foreign captives, followed by the general atop his chariot. The chariot, drawn by four horses, may have



0.1 The Arch of Titus on the Velia. Passageway relief showing the Jewish triumph of Titus in A.D. 71, with Titus in triumphal chariot. Werner Forman Archive/ . Location: 01. Photo Credit: HIP/Art Resource, NY.



0.2 The Arch of Titus on the Velia. Passageway relief showing the Jewish triumph of Titus in A.D. 71, with the spoils from the temple in Jerusalem. Werner Forman Archive/ . Location: 01. Photo Credit: HIP/Art Resource, NY.

been bedecked with a phallus hanging from the undercarriage as an apotropaion, along with the golden bulla and iron finger ring worn by the triumphant general. The general also sported the *tunica palmata* and *toga picta* or *purpurea*, as well as a crown of laurel. He held a sprig of laurel in his right hand and an ivory scepter surmounted by an eagle in his left; his face was colored red. A slave may have accompanied the general in the chariot. Behind the general marched the military officers on horseback, Roman citizens rescued from slavery on foot, and, finally, the troops, singing ribald songs about their general.[10]

The triumph is generally thought to have mustered in the area of the Circus Flaminius, crossed the *pomerium* in the area of the Porta Carmentalis, and then processed through the Circus Maximus, around the Palatine, into the Forum Romanum. Along the way, crowds of spectators, both residents of the city and visitors from afar, watched the spectacle.[11] The parade paused in front of the Carcer, Rome's most notorious prison, at the northwest corner of the Forum, for the execution of high-profile captives, after which the general proceeded up to the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline Hill to offer the culminating sacrifice. The triumphal route will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

This reconstruction of the procession and its route, though controversial of late, remains prevalent.[12] So do several approaches to studying the ritual, which may be categorized loosely as: (1) inquiries into the origins of the triumph and its supposed Hellenization during the republican period; (2) attempts to reconstruct the elements of the ritual procession; (3) investigations into the politics

0.3 Panel relief of Marcus Aurelius in triumph. Rome, Musei Capitolini, Palazzo dei Conservatori, inv. no. 0808. Photo Credit: Nimatallah/Art Resource, NY.

and supposed rules for awarding triumphs; and (4) topographical reconstructions of the triumphal route.[13]

The predominant view on the origins of the triumph – a topic of great interest to ancient authors as well – is that Rome adopted the triumph from

Etruria as a religious ceremony that purified, ensured good fortune, held Dionysiac significance, or gave thanks to the gods.[14] This view has led to a common narrative in which the triumph evolved from a solemn religious ritual of the regal and early republican periods into a purely honorific, materially spectacular show in the last several centuries of the Republic. M. Claudius Marcellus's sack of Syracuse in 212 B.C. and his subsequent *ovatio* (the so-called lesser triumph in which the general walked on foot and did not wear the full triumphal paraphernalia) in 211 B.C., in which he displayed the artworks from the Greek city, are often posited as watershed moments in the ritual's transformation. Subsequently, some argue, triumphal processions evolved into lavish spectacles designed to dazzle the attending crowds with their material riches – a process fueled by Rome's conquest of the Hellenistic monarchs.[15] One should not exaggerate the relative poverty of early republican triumphs. But while "Hellenizing" aspects of the triumph, such as the display of booty, were constitutive parts of the triumph from its inception, it remains likely that displays of booty became richer and more striking upon the conquest of the Hellenistic kingdoms, when exponentially increased luxury became available to Rome.

One reason for the controversy over the material development of the triumph is that the components of triumphal processions can be difficult to piece together. Literary descriptions and artistic representations of triumphs provide tantalizing, but incomplete and sometimes contradictory, information about what exactly made up a triumphal procession. Some studies have focused on aspects such as the dress and paraphernalia of the general, the triumphal chariot and its decoration and team, the parading of captives and spoils of war, and the display of triumphal paintings – by no means an exhaustive list. Others focus on individual triumphs or even more narrowly on one particular aspect of an individual triumph, such as its putative date or the display of a famous work of art.[16]

In addition to the origins and alleged Hellenization of the triumph and its constitutive elements, the supposed rules for awarding triumphs have inspired much research, including a vigorous debate about whether *imperium* or *auspicium* was the ultimate requirement for a general to triumph. Valerius Maximus's discussion of triumphal law (*de iure triumphi*) plays a pivotal role in such inquiries, as does Polybius's description of rules for awarding triumphs. From the literary evidence, scholars have attempted to reconstruct the conditions under which the Senate could award a triumph, such as the magisterial status of the general, the status of the defeated enemy, and so on. As with much about the triumph and other Roman ceremonies, there is contradiction in the ancient sources about the "rules," making the wisest conclusion perhaps that the rules were not hard and fast but instead depended on political influence and personal relations.[17]

A final major line of scholarly inquiry from the Renaissance onward has been the triumphal route. The debates surrounding the triumphal route will be treated in depth in this book's first chapter. Here, however, it is worth noting that scholarship has focused largely on the route's topographical path (that is, where it went), not on the appearance of the monuments that lined it (that is, how the route looked). Although this book is necessarily concerned with where the route went in order to determine which monuments defined it, it interrogates the appearance of these monuments and their impact on experiences and memories of triumphs. The Circus Maximus, for example, determined a major segment of the triumphal route, but its massive and lavish appearance, particularly after Trajan rebuilt it, created an incomparably exciting viewing experience of triumphs. Put simply, this book is concerned not only with the linear route followed by triumphs but also with the aesthetic, affective, experiential, and memorial aspects of the ritual's monumental space.

Some recent studies of the triumph have expanded beyond the traditional parameters just outlined. An effort spearheaded by Mary Beard has questioned the documentary nature of literary descriptions of triumphs and instead sought to mine them for what they can tell us about the specific cultural and social milieus in which they were written. The challenge, however, is to contextualize ancient authors culturally and socially without dismissing entirely their historical validity – to balance judiciously their value as simultaneously historical and literary sources.[18]

Another recent emphasis has been on the triumph as spectacle, a ritual experienced holistically and performatively by Romans.[19] This approach is critical for the aims of this book, which in part examines how Romans experienced triumphal processions. For although it is a worthwhile endeavor to reconstruct the ritual of the triumph in as much detail as possible – to think about how the general's chariot was decorated, what precisely he was wearing, and so on – it was likely the overall sensory experience of the triumphal parade, the overwhelming combination of all these details rather than one detail, that most impressed spectators. The present work is indebted to the performative turn in triumph studies, paralleled by an emphasis on performative aspects in current classical scholarship more generally.[20] It builds upon this previous work by exploring how monuments, in addition to the constitutive elements of a triumphal procession, contributed to spectators' overall sensory experience.

A trend of particular concern here is the attempt to connect the triumph with a so-called Roman collective memory. The triumph is often posited as somehow defining Roman memory or inscribing memory in the Roman cityscape. One can commonly read that monuments served as repositories for the memory of triumphs.[21] Such assertions raise several questions: namely, what exactly is collective memory, and how do monuments "ensure" or