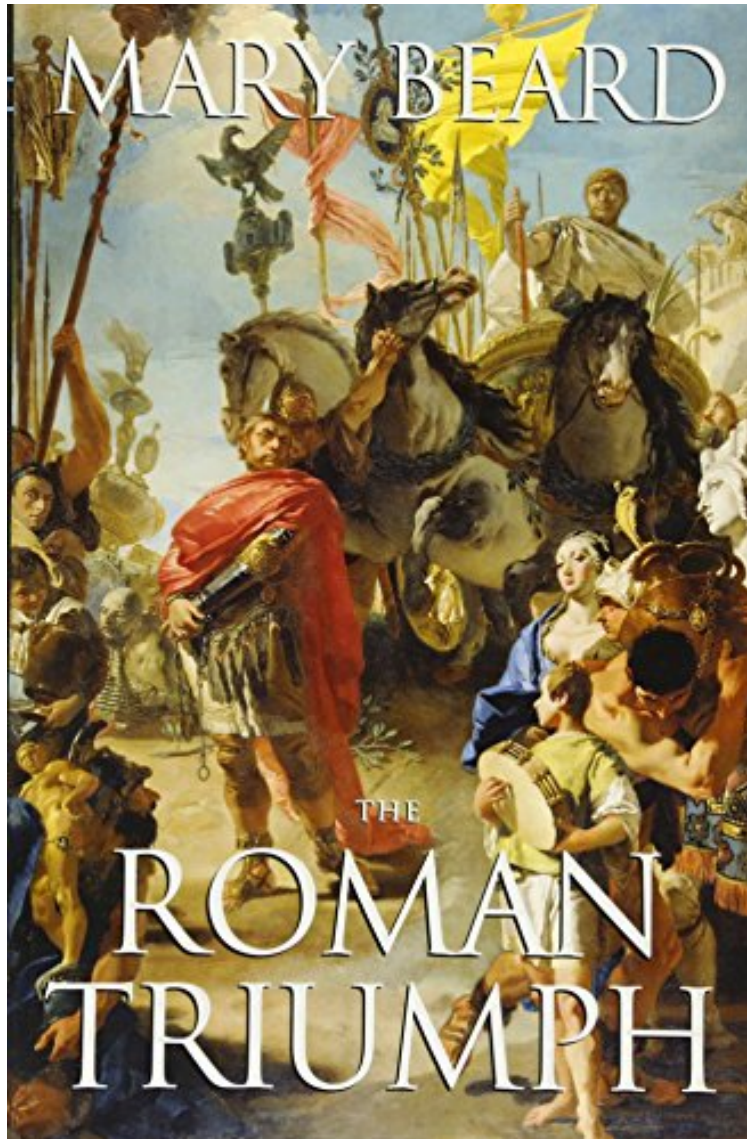


(Free) The Roman Triumph

## The Roman Triumph

Mary Beard

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#512967 in Books Mary Beard 2009-05-31 2009-03-30 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x 1.30 x 6.10l, 1.40 #File Name: 0674032187448 pages The Roman Triumph | File size: 57.Mb

**Mary Beard : The Roman Triumph** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Roman Triumph:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By fred sill This must be the definitive study of the Roman triumphs. Scholarly, and yet engrossing an entertaining. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I like that immensely By Thomas A. Simmons For Mary Beard, Romans are real people. I like that immensely. A monumentally interesting and appealing read. 10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. An approachable historian! By

Dennis Bianchi Not all history books are written to be read by those of us who are not academics. When Mary Beard takes on a subject matter, all that changes and history not only comes alive, it becomes clear and enjoyable. Thank you, Ms. Beard. This book has, of course, led to me looking for related subjects of the Roman Empire, as well as the Republic.

Listen to a short interview with Mary Beard Host: Chris Gondek | Producer: Heron Crane It followed every major military victory in ancient Rome: the successful general drove through the streets to the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill; behind him streamed his raucous soldiers; in front were his most glamorous prisoners, as well as the booty he'd captured, from enemy ships and precious statues to plants and animals from the conquered territory. Occasionally there was so much on display that the show lasted two or three days. A radical reexamination of this most extraordinary of ancient ceremonies, this book explores the magnificence of the Roman triumph--but also its darker side. What did it mean when the axle broke under Julius Caesar's chariot? Or when Pompey's elephants got stuck trying to squeeze through an arch? Or when exotic or pathetic prisoners stole the general's show? And what are the implications of the Roman triumph, as a celebration of imperialism and military might, for questions about military power and "victory" in our own day? The triumph, Mary Beard contends, prompted the Romans to question as well as celebrate military glory. Her richly illustrated work is a testament to the profound importance of the triumph in Roman culture--and for monarchs, dynasts and generals ever since. But how can we re-create the ceremony as it was celebrated in Rome? How can we piece together its elusive traces in art and literature? Beard addresses these questions, opening a window on the intriguing process of sifting through and making sense of what constitutes "history."

In this highly individual book Mary Beard plays havoc with conventional ideas about the Roman triumph, while at the same time scrupulously presenting the evidence with which we can make up our own minds. It is the most important statement to date by a major historian of Roman culture. (William V. Harris, Shepherd Professor of History, Columbia University) Occasionally one comes across a work of history which lights up a whole era as if by a lightning flash. Mary Beard's new book falls into this rare category. By focusing on the specific ritual of the triumph, she brilliantly illuminates the Roman world in all its aspects--military and political, social and literary, religious and geographical--and also reminds us how much of our own language and culture of success is drawn from this gaudy and often bloody spectacle. (Robert Harris, author of *Imperium*) From the first (uncertain) moment when Romans came to think of triumph as a bundle of victory rites that could be repeatedly improved upon, generals fought and lobbied for their moment in the limelight. Enemies, rivals and spectators could not resist being drawn into the show. Beard's Roman Triumph will exercise a similar fascination on its readers. (Greg Woolf *The Guardian* 2007-12-22) Beautifully written, brilliantly insightful, this book is highly recommended to all those Romanists, professional and amateur, excavators and tourists, who want to get under the skin of the empire-builders of ancient Rome. (Neil Faulkner *Current Archaeology* 2008-02-01) [Beard] is immensely knowledgeable, and lays forth one of the paradoxes of history (and not only ancient history, one may add). This is that the more we know, the less certain we can be of anything... This is a fascinating book which offers another paradox. By showing how much that we thought we knew is uncertain, Mary Beard teaches us far more than any confident account of the triumphal ceremony ever could. (Allan Massie *Literary* 2007-11-01) Conjectures and conclusions grow from and around the triumphus like kudzu. It takes the mighty vorpal sword of Mary Beard to clear a path through this jabberwocky jungle, snicker-snack. She stands in the great tradition of myth-puncturing Latin classicists--scholars like Richard Bentley, Basil Gildersleeve, A. E. Housman, or Ronald Syme--when she points out that almost all the established views on the triumph are dubious or plain wrong... Her prose, for all its learning, is jaunty. Her book is, in short, a triumph. (Garry Wills *New York of Books* 2007-12-20) A book that manages to be simultaneously both brilliantly subtle and splendidly swaggering. Throughout it, [Beard] subjects our sources for the Roman triumph to merciless dissection, exposing with a pathologist's scalpel how beneath all its outward sheen there lurked profound insecurities and ambivalences... [It] can be enjoyed by readers far beyond the purlieu of classics departments... A book that is, in every sense of that complex word, a triumph. (Tom Holland *Sunday Times* 2007-11-11) At every turn Beard happily strips away misconceptions and hypotheses, emphasizing the fragility of the facts... It's hard to imagine a more perceptive and questioning study of a central cultural practice that lasted into the Christian era, and was constantly being subverted, extended, and absorbed into representations of empire and even of divinity. (Helen Meany *Irish Times* 2007-11-17) Thorough, minutely detailed and closely argued... [Beard's] account certainly brings us closer to the complex and fascinating reality than any Rome according to MGM or Paramount. (Christopher Hart *Independent on Sunday* 2007-11-18) This rich and provocative book offers such a full account of what it means to call ancient Rome "a triumphal culture." (William Fitzgerald *Times Literary Supplement* 2007-12-07) Brilliant, original and challenging, this book is a triumph in itself. (The Scotsman 2007-12-01) [An] arresting and highly readable new book... A highly amusing as well as illuminating read... Overall, Beard is giving us a lesson in how to understand and study ritual. Its early students (not least Frazer, one of the founders of modern anthropology, in *The Golden Bough*), saw it as a strait-jacket, constraining behavior within tightly defined

parameters. This book gives us the Roman triumph as a case study in the lessons of more recent anthropology. Parameters are broad: malleable enough for ritual to be used to attempt to justify behavior, and not just to dictate it...Instead of unchanging ritual, Beard gives us a world of invented precedent and "convenient amnesia," of substantial success but also manifold failure as individual Roman generals attempted to mold general practice to their own--usually political--purposes. (Peter Heather BBC History Magazine 2007-12-01)In *The Roman Triumph*, many cherished assumptions are robustly interrogated or put to the sword...Beard takes us on a dizzying trip back and forth across triumphs and centuries (Pompey, Romulus, Nero, Augustus). Only after she has unpicked accounts of Pompey's triumph, and reflected on captives, spoils, rules and ritual, does she pause briefly to end at origins...Simultaneously a re-evaluation of the triumph, of Roman culture more broadly, and of the problems of scholarship on ancient societies, this is an ambitious project. (Maria Wyke *The Independent* 2007-12-14)How much do we really know about Rome's supreme honor, and how much is myth and invention? Not much and quite a lot, it turns out. Beard's brilliant analysis locates the ritual in the shifting political, social and martial worlds of Rome. Illuminating moments abound. (Marc Lambert *Scotland on Sunday* 2008-01-06)So you thought you knew about the Roman Triumph? Conventional wisdom states that triumphant generals in Rome painted their faces red. They rode in a chariot with a slave who whispered to them: "Remember that you are a man." For that one day, they impersonated the king of the gods, Jupiter Best and Greatest, wearing his costume, consisting of a purple toga and a tunic decorated with a palm-leaf pattern, a laurel wreath and other accessories...If you thought you knew some or all of these facts, Mary Beard's excellent book will prove you wrong...It makes healthily astringent (as well as fascinating) reading...The book can be heartily recommended. (Jonathan Powell *Times Higher Education Supplement* 2008-01-04)This is no ordinary history. It is not a reconstruction but a deconstruction, a virtuoso display of how to interrogate one's sources. Not only that, it is written with sly subtlety, delightful humor and an agreeable absence of jargon. (Christian Tyler *Financial Times* 2008-01-12)This book gives a bracing lesson in the use and abuse of evidence, as Beard teases apart the various bits and pieces that have gone to make up the conglomerate picture of the timeless essence of the triumph. In the process, she unpicks many of our basic assumptions about those quintessentially Roman characteristics we normally see embodied in it. The triumph and its reception here become fractals of Roman culture--and of the way Roman culture is studied...Illuminating perspectives [are] offered throughout the book...This learned and spirited book could have been no more than an exercise in debunking and dismantling. Beard enjoys debunking and dismantling, and does it with panache, but her unpicking of the evidence and her demolition of the consensus is not meant to create an epistemological no-man's-land; she wants to highlight the rewarding difficulty of the project of history, not its impossibility. There are things to be known about the past, and there are things to be known about how we come to know them. Beard stages her own show, demonstrating by practice, and in the process has given us a piece of scholarship that has lessons to teach anyone engaged in the study of the past. (Denis Feeney *London of Books* 2008-02-21)[This] book succeeds as a case study in ancient history, but also as an implicit invitation to reconsider representations of victory and loss in our own culture. Beard ranges among literary, historiographical, artistic, architectural, numismatic, epigraphical, and archaeological sources with impressive ease and fluency, showing that the preoccupation with triumph haunts all these different fields of Roman cultural life--from Ovid's cheeky claim that triumphal processions can be good for picking up girls, and his presentation of himself as the victim of Cupid's triumphal chariot, to the many triumphal arches that the triumphalist Romans erected, which Beard reads as attempts to construct a permanent memorial from an essentially fleeting parade...Beard brilliantly shows that most of this story about the typical Roman triumph is a scholarly or literary fabrication, supported by very slender evidence, or by none at all; or it is a reconstruction based on evidence from authors in widely different time periods, each of whom has his own axe to grind...The demolition work is the most obvious accomplishment of her book. (Emily Wilson *New Republic* 2008-06-11)Beard's approach to the triumph is uncomfortably subversive, as she labels a quip of Seneca at the start of her study...Beard shows us throughout her study that, as the old cliché aptly puts it, the triumph is still good to think with and also good to think about. Her book is as much about doing ancient history as reconstructing the history of an ancient ceremony, and perhaps more about writing and the writing of an account of *The Roman Triumph* than actually writing the account itself..I found this an eminently readable and hugely entertaining book in which Beard enthusiastically conveys her commitment to reviewing the evidence for the triumph. (Robert Tatam *Journal of Classics Teaching*)About the AuthorMary Beard has a Chair of Classics at Cambridge and is a Fellow of Newnham College. She is classics editor of *The Times Literary Supplement* and author of the blog *A Dons Life*. She is also a winner of the 2008 Wolfson History Prize.