

Rituals in religion for
ancient rome
theology religion
essay



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Religion can be simplified as a belief or the faith that is believed to aid people in the problems of life. The beliefs are organized in relation to humanity and the spiritual world. In every 'religion in the world' there are narrative, symbols, traditions and even histories that explain the religion belief. Each religion tries to give a meaning to life as well as explain the origin of life and the universe. Religions matters include rituals, sermons and even commemoration which differ from one religion practice to the other (Adkins & Roy, 274). They define this through their religious scriptures and holy places.

Religion in Ancient Rome was so intense the Romans regarded it, as theirs. They (Romans) also regarded themselves highly in terms of religion. They even attribute their success in the world to the unity and good relation with their gods. Historically, their leaders claimed to be in direct negotiations with their gods. 'This in turn' made religion among Romans to be a hugely significant aspect. They did all they had to be identified religiously. The leaders were supposed to identify in terms of religion, and they mostly used to be the pontiffs. There is acutely much in the religion of the Romans and the way they carried out their religious practices. The Roman religion was something that was termed as practical and contractual. It was mainly based on knowledge, and the practice of prayer rituals and the sacrifices offered and not based on faith.

Rome is thought to be the source of the religion particularly the catholic practice. However other communities in the world had their own beliefs and practices not to mention their religions. However, the Roman Empire is

thought to have contributed to significant changes in other religions of the world. What is the impact of religion and rituals in the ancient Rome?

The god's and goddesses of Rome were identified with the cities and lives in each of the cities. The gods lead people as they were consorted before any actions. They were offered sacrifices frequently in order to please them. The roman religious attitudes resulted to the state cult and influence on political as well as military events. Family heads were responsible in overseeing domestic rituals and players. In the Roman Empire, the issues to do with the religion were left in the hands of the state officials and not in the individuals care. During the ancient times in Rome there existed a number of religious posts where each one of them served a pivotal role in the organization (Rupke, 259). The early times in the roman religion, it was based on spirits and the people did not build mythologies like their Greek counterparts as they believed everything had spirit. The spirits were held responsible for any good or evil in the communities. This obliged the Romans to keep the spirits happy through various worshipping and sacrifice offering to them. Proper performance of the rituals and the sacrifices was believed to keep the gods happy.

The Romans had a practical approach to the issue of religion. This explained why they had a number of gods rather than believe in one powerful god.

Their religion was not centrally originating or believed but was comprised of a number of rituals, superstitions and taboos. There also contained different traditions ' which were collected from different sources over time'. Their religion was less spiritual but a relationship with external forces that they

believed controlled their existence and well being. Various Origins are <https://assignbuster.com/rituals-in-religion-for-ancient-rome-theology-religion-essay/>

credited for the roman religion. Several gods and goddesses were bled for several religious influences. Many of these came via the Greek colonies from the southern part of Italy. Other had their origin from the old religions that existed in society. For example, they had a god known as Diana which was believed to originate from Latin.

Many of the rituals and the sacrifices made by the Romans were done as per their belief that the gods and the goddesses needed to be pleased. They also prayed for them to have the good fortune in their actions. Therefore, sacrificial offerings were made to the roman gods. These sacrifices were specific and were highly respected in the society as well as highly ritualized. For example, the sex of animal sacrificed was supposed to correspond with the sex of the goddess or the gods to whom the sacrifice was meant for (Browne, 86). The upper gods were offered white animals and the black ones were offered to the underworld gods. There were public, and even private offerings done statues were erected along the streets and market places. Some of the sacrifices made during games, ceremonies, altar among others. The five posts (Vestal virgins, pontiffs, Haruspex, Flamens Augurs) formed the basis for the sacrifices made by the Romans. Each of the post had a meaning in the Roman Empire. Pontiffs were the advisors to the magistrates the Haruspex was a priest who was greatly regarded in the society and he was for predicting the future. The Augars were used to tell whether the gods were in support of any of the government action. The vestal virgins were never to let out the flame as their duty was to guard the sacred fire. They were also supposed to bake the sacred salt cake for use in a number of ceremonies. They were supposed to remain virgins (Browne, 90).

The Roman calendar contained months and corresponding festivals. I. e. each month had festivals that were in honor of their gods. They were comprised of sober, joyful and dignified events. For example in the month of February, people were given 9 days to worship their dead ancestors, at this time businesses were closed, and no marriages were allowed as well as closing of the temples. A number of festivals followed where each occasion had a meaning to the Romans. Religion in the ancient roman religion was incorporated together with the state in their belief system. For example, a sacrifice to the gods or an oath was legally binding.

Despite the strict following of religion by the Romans, the survival of religion depended on renewal and also affirmation of their beliefs as time changed as also the social and the attitude changes. Their beliefs were on unconnected traditions where many of them came from Greek rather than Italian foundation. As they lacked core basis of their beliefs, other religions found it easy to establish themselves in the Rome. Some of the cults that managed to find their way into Roman Empire are religions such as the goddess Cybele and Isis and Osiris from Egypt (North, 44). The initial roman religion continued to be undermined by the increasing impact of the Greek philosophy such as the stoicism which in itself taught that there was a single god.

As I summarize, it is clear that the issue of religion in the ancient Rome was rather municipal and not personal. When this is compared to today's Christianity, it is different. This is because 'in Christianity' god is worshiped from the people's love and the trust they have for him rather than fear as shown by the Romans in the ancient times. The roman took part in offerings
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to their gods as well as making sacrifices. They went ahead and established family religious practices which were carried out in their homes. They had a number of god and goddesses whom they believed were responsible for watching and take care of them if they treated them in accordance. This explains why the Romans performed the rituals and the actions they did.

The roman religion was defined by a set of rules and rituals that were performed in the community. As seen, the religion community, tradition and the community prescribed the rituals that were to be performed at any given time. ' As time moved on there were changes and people could choose the religious group to follow from different groups that existed. The groups came in between the time of Caesar and Augustine who ruled in the 4th and 5th centuries' respectively. The impact of religion in the Roman Empire was felt all over the nation. However, from the incoming religious believes the Romans adopted a number of them and followed them. This left the Romans divided as they did into have their own established religion (Warrior, 7). In the ancient times, religion was interconnected with politics, and it is the politicians who taught the religion as it was treated to be a public matter and not at the individual level. In addition to this, they performed rituals, which were a sign of believers and dedication to their gods and goddesses. From the case of Roman religion, it is clear that various rituals were performed which were pivotal in the interaction between the people and the gods/goddesses. Rituals were marked by several event celebrations and public events.