

# The role of religion in roman republic essay

[Religion](#), [God](#)



Roman Republic, the antique state that centered on the city of Rome. It was the period of ancient roman civilization that was characterized by a republican system of administration. It lasted for 418 years after it started in 508 BC. It was ultimately subverted by the imperial period, participate form of government and a series of civil wars. The republic was governed by a complex constitution that was centered on checks, balances and separation of powers. Its religion is polytheistic in nature and was greatly influenced by the Hellenistic Greece. In addition to the Hellenistic belief, Rome was also a syncretism of aboriginal religions. Religion and religious activities were of utter importance to the leadership of the republic. Religion absolutely molded the politics of Roman Republic and fundamentally all political activities were in one way or another associated with religion (Scullard, 87). The links between religion and politics was vital for Rome's internal supremacy, universal relationships and growth from kingdom to republic. To begin with, the Romans believed that the republic was given by God though its origin is still not certain. The city's origin is miraculous but closely tied to the Romans it is closely linked to God who ordained it (Gallia, 128). They considered the city to be sacred and under a total coverage of God's care and blessings. Furthermore, religion played a major role in transforming the republic to an empire. The kings had been allocated authority by the religion. All political activities were conducted under the divine gaze and auspices in the name of senate and the romans.

In reality, the senate was the caretaker of romans relationship with the divine. This illustrates how some people gained political autonomy due to religion and actually held offices that were of great importance in the

running of the political affairs of the roman republic. Therefore, by their very nature religious engagements had political implications (Scullard, 16).

Serving God and serving roman kings were actually taken to be one and the same. It is this perception of religion that actually enabled the political leaders to closely relate their rules and orders to some other divine rules knowing very well that such rules or orders will face little objection from the subject. Additionally, the importance of religion in Rome's politics is further reiterated by the fact that each of the republics legendary kings is associated with one or more religious institutions that are known even today.

Religion was actually inseparable from the state. According to Gallia (32), when one commands great numbers of men, he/she finds the emotional forces bottled up in them very sturdy. Ancient leaders in the roman republic realized this fact and they guided the emotions of their subjects into patriotic channels that will assure them of a smooth reign. This trend grew so much that it was at times difficult to distinguish patriotism and religion. Leaders actually used religion to propagate and reinforce patriotism (Gallia, 98). This helped them gain enough support that enabled them to rule unquestionably. However, some leaders misused the power bestowed unto them by religion and used their positions for their own egocentric interests at the expense of their subjects (Scullard, 136). Religion dictated whether the romans would go into war or have peace. Additionally, it decided when generals should brawl and when to retreat, whether the senate's decisions would stand or be declared invalid.

The uniqueness of the state, religion and the roman republic was not highly

regarded as important to the time of roman ruling. The non-existence of responsibility among the citizens was what was considered as so unique at the time. The Roman state officials took care of religious responsibilities as described by Boren in 1965. The state officials ensured the protection of their religious practices against the unruly citizens who were always against it. In providing a suitable example on this, when Caesar got into power, he had no interest about the religious activities of the roman. This prompted the citizens to start a fight against him. The citizens viewed Caser as a political leader who had no interest in respecting the religious activities that had been practiced for thousands of years. Due to this, the roman decided to seek a new faith in their religion somewhere else where political power and religious activities were equally distributed.

Moreover, the set of believes among the romans on religion had brought a new dimension in political activities in Roman Republic at the time (Bringmann, 38). The state officials highly protected the religious activities among the citizens and they held accountable on everything that was going around the republic. This clearly indicates that the Romans were not religious but rather they followed their old traditional rituals as means to propel their " political" activities. The roman bounded their faith on political system rather than the so called religious activities. It was considered as a set of believes with non-existence of the actual practices.

In addition, the function of religion among the Romans was changed and started being used as a propeller to political destination. The administration was separated into binary political parties that transformed the faith on traditional activities among the Romans. This change warranted that the

political system remained strong and that it teach people to adhered to the rules of the Republic (North, 56). The old individuals in the society had a perception that gods never existed and hence had a convincing power to all the other persons in the society.

The Roman Republic used the twelve tables system which ensured the laws of the roman traditions were preserved to steer the progress of the government. This was done under the commands of the Plebeians. The plebeians being political figures in the community by then ensured that the Patricians were powerless (North, 98). In doing this, the Roman republic enjoyed the most of this religion-political relationship. Each specific table dealt with specific law that provided a guideline on the relationship of politics and traditional religious activities within the emperor. The supervision of the roman republic solely depended on the relationship of the two inseparable identities. The suppression of religion from the roman authorities created an open opportunity to take full control on the decision of the people. The large group of people could only be taken control over and brought under the supervision of one common government through manipulation of their worshipped religion.

In a concluding remark, due to constant manipulation of people through religion as a steering tool, the multitude was controlled and converted from one religion to another. This gave a clear opportunity for the politicians to divide the people according to their ethnics rather than a unified Rome republic. Therefore religion was the determinant on the political system in Roman Republic at the time and played a major role in shaping the present day Rome.

## **Works cited**

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