

Free the history of rome: rulership essay example

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Introduction

Rome is believed to date 2, 766 years whereby it originated from a small Latin village. Rome grew to be a superpower, dominating the entire Mediterranean for many centuries (Arnason and Raaflaub 35). It was during the rule of the Julio-Claudians that Rome attained its highest levels of wealth and power. It could be referred to as the Golden time of the Roman Empire in terms of arts and literature. However, this period was also marked by notoriety and extravagance. The self-centeredness of the Julio-Claudians was evident, a phenomenon that was apparent in the persisting conflicts of interest and conflicts of duty (Arnason and Raaflaub 47). Some of these emperors such as Nero took the Roman citizens through hell because of the barbaric way in which he treated people. In fact, Caligula is referred to as the evil emperor who got to the point of proclaiming himself a god.

Rome had three rulership methods in the course of history. These include 144 years under Monarchy rulership. This was between 853 BC and 509 BC. Rome also underwent 482 years of republic rulership between 409 BC and 27 BC. For the last 503 years (27BC-476 AD), it was ruled by emperors. Most of the emperors were dictators, but despite their refusal to be referred as monarchs.

The first 5 Roman emperors are referred to as the Julio-Claudian dynasty. They dominated the empire in the formative years of Rome. They include Augustus, Tiberia, Caligula/ Gaius and Nero. They all belonged to the same family until the line was discontinued by Nero upon his suicide. The Rulership of Ancient Rome

Each emperor is known for a legendary deed or an embarrassing act they

committed while in power. For example, Augustus is famous for being the first roman emperor. Nero is known for his maltreatment of Christians based on the claim that they had burnt Rome. Otho is remembered for his greed and short reign of only three months. Vitellius is known for having murdered his son and Vespasian is referred to as the emperor who constructed the Colosseum (Arnason and Raaflaub 47). Titus is known for having been the one who brought the temple in Jerusalem down while Domitian is famous for the way he persecuted Christians. All these emperors left Rome at a whole new dimension by the end of their reign. They laid a strong foundation for the empire that Rome became.

Augustus was the founder of the Roman Imperial Army. The number of soldiers was about 5, 000, a figure that later doubled towards the end of the first century. Augustus improved the economy of Rome by ensuring that the Legion Rankers received a good remuneration. The soldiers had come from Polytheistic communities. The Roman system allowed them the freedom of worship. The romans were open minded in terms of religion and innovation. For example, the only cults they had banned were those that conflicted with the roman religion. Another reason a cult or religion would be banned was if it was politically subversive. The most opposed religions at that time were such as Druidism and Christianity. Mithraism and Syncretism were among the popular cults which people were allowed to follow.

Many records on the history of ancient Rome have been destroyed or lost. As for records available concerning the activities of the Roman armies, works by people such as Caius Julius Caesar showed Causer's conquest of Gaul and a civil war he led against Pompey, his rival. The imperial army of the Roman

Empire was one that was highly bureaucratized. Every activity by the army was usually recorded and these documentation can be found in Egypt. The Burning of Rome (Nero's Era)

The " Great Fire of Rome" is an important marker in the history of Rome. The fire started on 19th July. This was in the year 64 AD. Tacitus, an author of the history of Rome recorded that the fire spread rapidly and burnt continuously for six days straight. 10 districts of Rome out of the 14 were burned. Major temples (Juppiter Captiolinus and Apollo), public buildings and the Circus Maximus survived. Nero's temple was especially destroyed. Out of anger and a sense of loss, Nero ordered for all Christians to be prosecuted for this act (Arnason and Raaflaub 49). The Domus Aurea was a landscaped villa that was located at the heart of Rome. It had extravagant décor and advanced architecture. Upon Nero's suicide, the palace was stripped of its décor and with time, it was buried under sand. In fact, another building was built on top of it. What is amazing is that the architecture remained and can be seen to this day.

The torture inflicted on the Christians was such as the crucifixion, being fed to dogs and loins in the Colosseum and being burnt alive. It was, therefore, unimaginable that the Roman Empire would at one point live at peace with the Christians. This was the case in Lactantius between Domitian and Delcius. Rome under the Ruler ship of Vespasian

Vespasian ruled during the Flavian Dynasty. Vespasian was a brave emperor, free from vice. He loved money but was never accused of extortion.

Vespasian played a significant role in restoring the vigour that had at one time been the order of the Roman government. Several events took place in

Rome under his reign. Vitellius was defeated and this made way for the termination of military anarchy. Rome experienced peace and prosperity under his reign.

After the suicide of Nero, there was a civil war in Rome, a war that saw the rise of the four emperors in a single year. The emperors were Galba, Otho, Vitellius and Vespasian. He was the first ruler of the Flavian dynasty.

Vespasian is known for having constructed the Colosseum, reformed Rome's tax system and re-incorporated discipline in the army. He was also involved in the construction of roads and schools. During his reign, Rome experienced great heights of development in terms of infrastructure and economy.

Titus was another emperor who ruled in the Flavian dynasty long after Vespasian. Titus is known for his legendary act of destroying the temple in Jerusalem. He is one of the few Roman Emperors who are known to have been human. He preferred justice over victimisation. His act of destroying the temple did not concur with his nature and attributed it to having been out of a sense of duty. The fall of Rome

Several factors are attributed to the fall of Rome. These are such as The Battle of Adrianople that occurred in 378; the death of Theodosius, one in 395 and the death of Majorian in 461. There are four schools of thought that give explanations for the fall of the Roman Empire. They include:

- The Catastrophic Collapse: J. B. Bury criticised the theory of moral decay in his book, "History of the Later Roman Empire (1889/1923)." Bury felt that the collapse of the Roman Empire was a gradual process caused by accumulative contingent events. He opposes the theories that attribute the collapse to one general reason stating that evidence can support his theory.

He recorded a series of misfortunes that he referred to as having been catastrophic for the existence of Rome. These were such as the economic decline of the empire, the rapid decrease in the population in Italy, the murder of Aetius and the lack of a successor.

- The Transformation: This theory argues that the Barbarians had only come into the empire to share in the ways and development of the Romans, not to destroy them. However, misinterpretation resulted in the collapse of the empire leaving inhabitants without a leader or a sense of direction.

- Monocausal Decay: William H. McNeill recorded that Rome suffered a severe Antoine plague back in 165 AD- 185 AD. Epidemics such as measles and smallpox killed masses. According to the Historian, this made it difficult for a small population left to support the army. The result was severe social and economic decline which resulted in death of the Western empire.

Decay as a result of General Malaise: This is explained by Edward Gibbon who says that Rome had never been built on a firm foundation in the first place. He states the fall as having been inevitable. He described Rome's conduct in its development as " immoderate greatness." Sectors such as the army declined a great deal. There was also a severe decline in agriculture whereby peasants had difficulties paying their taxes. This agricultural decline could be owed to the frequent barbarian invasions into Rome. Conclusion

The Roman Empire rose in a way that was unexpected. It was a miracle for the empire to have survived through the many tyrant emperors that ruled it. Rome was among the earliest civilizations and its art and architecture is something that should be appreciated by the whole world. Some emperors only pulled the empire backward. However, the majority of them were

concerned about the welfare of the empire. Sometimes this concern surpassed the emperors' concern for their human subjects. A good example is Nero who would kill anyone who threatened to challenge him. He even ordered his wife and children to be killed when he doubted that they were conspiring against him. He was a tyrant. The fact that the Eastern Empire continued to exist even 1000 years after the collapse of the west is yet to be clarified.

Works Cited

Arnason, Johann P. and Kurt A. Raaflaub. The Roman Empire in Context: Historical and Comparative Perspectives. New York, NY : John Wiley & Sons, 2010.