

Slavery and political systems of the romans essay examples

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Slavery and Political Systems of the Romans

The Roman Empire was a creation of the people of Rome, and it was centered in the city of Rome. The Empire lasted for a long time, which is estimated to be from 625 BC to AD 476. The Roman Empire has an extended and elaborate history (Shelton, 1998). Inclusive in this history, is the nature of the political systems of the empire, the social-cultural system and the economic system of the empire. The empire was also large, and it expanded to over three continents. These elements of the empire grew in complexity especially in the way they were administered.

The Roman Empire is by far the mightiest empire that survived the longest in the history of world civilizations (Shelton, 1998). The Roman Empire contributed a lot to the different elements of the life of individuals in the entire world. These elements include the politics, economy and the socio-cultural life of the entire world. Although the long age of the company was based on the three elements, most the political element of the empire was a determining factor of its long age. In view to this, this paper will discuss the contribution of the politics and the socio-economic factors of the Roman Empire to its growth and its long civilization.

The political system

The civilization of the Roman Empire went through many transformations. The first system of governance was a monarchy system, which was followed by an aristocratic republic and lastly there emerged an autocratic empire. Initially, the empire was ruled by kings, who were elected from all the Roman tribes in turn. Each tribe had its own time to rule, and this was a uniting

factor to the citizens of the empire (Shelton, 1998, p. 143). The system was later adapted into a democracy, which had an emperor as the overall ruler. All these varied forms of governance had strong and functional departments. There were the assemblies that included leaders who were directly chosen by the people. These leaders became members of the senate. The senate had an advisory role to the state. Thus, this means that there was participation of the people in governance. The Roman Empire insisted on democracy, and this ensured satisfaction of its people. Thus, the people remained loyal to their empire because their wishes were represented in the government.

Secondly, the political system of the empire incorporated a judicial system in its governance. This system incorporated magistrates. Magistrates in the Roman Empire had varied functions, which included executive, judicial and diplomatic functions. The magistrates performed functions that emphasized on observance of laws of the empire. In the empire, the emperor ruled over the empire, and appointed advisors and other individuals who were beneficial in ruling the Roman Empire. The emperor and all the other leaders of the Roman Empire were responsible for maintaining stability in the empire. This kept the empire strong, allowing space for its growth and expansion. The Roman governance also had a form of legislation. The laws were original and considerate to the rights and privileges of the citizens. The laws stipulated the freedom of speech, the right to life of every law abiding citizens, among other rights and privileges of the citizens of the land.

The Socio-economic system

The Roman Empire had a strong standing army. The army was a major component of the empire. It played a great role in the civilization and the governance of the empire. The Roman Empire based its growth and its long life on military tactics, and so the existence of the army was a mandatory factor. The empire professionalized in the field of military tactics. The first function of the military was protection of the empire from external and even internal enemies. The military was also functional in conquest wars that ensured that the Empire expanded its territories. For instance, the empire came to dominate most continents of the world, including Southern Europe, Western Europe, Asia, and North Africa among many other countries.

The empire, through its strong military tactics won most of its conquest wars. These conquest wars were to ensure that nations paid loyalty to the empire. Conquered lands were established as property of the Roman Empire. Residents of the lands that were conquered were taken to Rome to work as slaves in the empire. However, slaves that were rich enough to buy their own freedom were set free, to live in the conquered lands under the administration of the Roman Empire. This proves that indeed, the Roman Empire and its leaders were crude, but there was an element of sympathy in them. This played a big role in ensuring the empire expanded its territories, at the same time lasting for centuries. The military was also fundamental in ensuring economic stability in the empire. Many of its conquests created provinces for the empire. These provinces were rich in agricultural produce

and other supplements, like water that were important for the growth of the Roman Empire.

The Roman Empire had a reliable economy that was complex and sustainable, and this ensured that the empire kept its citizens happy and obedient. The economy was based on the agrarian method and the slave economy. Agriculture and trade also dominated the economy. The empire traded with foreign countries and countries, and brought food and goods in the form of food to its citizens. The main concern of the empire's economy was to provide food to all the citizens in the empire and all its conquered regions. The Romans were also excellent in metals and ornaments.

Another element that ensured the elongated rule of the Roman Empire was its social life in the form of culture. Latin was the native language of the Roman Empire. The language spread to other regions that were under the Roman Empire. Later, Greek came in as a second language. Greek was known to scholars and prominent people of the empire, but Latin remained to be the most utilized language. The expansion of the empire spread Latin to other continents, ensuring the expansion of the empire. The empire also had a wide music, art and literature collection. The Romans created paintings that represented leaders and philosophers of their age. The expansive literature that included poems, novels and music spread all over the world. The spread ensured that the Roman Empire acquired fame and might. The empire took advantage of this to keep its territories strong, and to conquer more nations that came under it for a very long time, ensuring its elongated period of rule in most regions of the globe.

Similarities between the Roman and the Europe/USA political systems

Europe and the United States seem to have taken tips from the system of government of Rome. For instance, the Roman society and the American society believe in the right of citizens to elect their leaders; though the two states have different types of representations. The Roman Empire exercised direct representation while the United States of America exercises representative democracy. Secondly, Rome entirely emphasized on military strength and the protection of its people and its territory. In the same way, modern day Europe and the United States really emphasize on militarism and protection of their territories. The militaries of these continents are so mighty that they are sent to intervene in wars that involve other territories and regions.

Conclusion

The Roman Empire is among the strongest empire to ever exist. The stability of the empire is credited to its strong foundation. Another reason is that the leaders of the empire applied democratic ways of leadership. This means that other leaders have got a lot to learn from the way the empire was run

Enslavement

The beginning of slavery in North America was in 1662 when a Dutch docked his ship at port Point Comfort. The slaves were starved and so was everyone else in the ship. The Dutch exchanged the slaves for food supplies and went on. This was the first official record of slaves in North America.

Americans believed that the slavery institute was very brutal, but still went on to enslave people. Most of their slaves were Native Americans. They also hired indentured servants from the European countries. It is also interesting to note that some of these slaves were white.

The way Americans acquired their slaves was different from the way other nations such as Greece, Italy, and Levant. In the ancient Roman civilization, war was a fundamental part of the organization and governance of the kingdom, and it was during these wars that they acquired slaves.

Expansionist wars with other nations aimed at capturing a town, and forcing its people to pay allegiance to the government that had captured them. The inhabitants of a captured town were thus deemed property of their host. It was a common practice for those captured to pay a ransom which bought them their freedom from captivity. The slaves that were captured were taken to slave markets where audiles controlled their sale and ensured that no cheating occurred between the buyers and the sellers of the slaves. Slaves were either bought from slave dealers or from individuals who wanted to dispense off slaves they had previously purchased.

It was a requirement that a slave seller ascertain that the slave they were selling was in good health in addition to certifying that the slave did not belong to some else. The slave was also supposed to be free from any crimes as slave owners were liable for crimes committed by their slaves. Individuals who suffered enslavement as opposed to being born in slavery faced a harsh life reality as they had to shed off their old identities as they were given new names (Joshel, 2010).

The North Americans chose to buy their slaves from Africa. During transportation, slaves deemed as being weak or sickly were thrown into the sea. Those who were strong and managed to reach at the shore were treated as property and could be sold or bought at the wish of the slave owners.

In North America, the slave owners allowed their slaves to marry, while others forced them to. This they did with the intention of acquiring more free labor from the children who would be born thereafter. These marriages were however not recognized by the state. Due to this reason, the masters could break these families by selling off some members whenever they wished.

The Americans did not enslave many slaves, as they preferred to have a few of them for easy management. Again, they feared if they took on many slaves, it would increase the chances of successful revolts by the slaves. However, in the other nations, slaves formed a significant part of the population. In Rome, slaves accounted for nearly thirty percent of the population. The slaves within the city were either owned by the city or by individuals. Slaves owned by the city were used in various infrastructure projects around the city. The jobs that were allocated to slaves were endless. Basically every profession had slaves to the extent that brothels acquired slaves to work as prostitutes. The slaves who were considered lucky were those who worked for wealthy men (Joshel, 2010). Slaves working in the farms were less lucky. This is because they were usually put under the supervision of another slave who would be more demanding than the owner for fear of demotion if farm work was not done to the satisfaction of the slave owner. The supervisor was in most cases someone who had been brought up

in a farm who was accustomed to the rigors of farming. He was never allowed to the city or market place unless he was on the business of selling farm produce. The only luxury that was afforded the slave supervisor was that he was allowed to have a female companion (Joshel, 2010).

Slave laws

The laws pertaining to slaves were very cruel and subjective. For example, in cases where slaves were produced as witnesses before the court, they would first be tortured based on the notion that this was the only way to guarantee that a slave told the truth. The law prescribed that if a slave owner was murdered by one of his slaves, his entire group of slaves would be executed for full retribution. The law was intended to prevent the occurrence of a slave revolt. In the case of Pedanius Secundus, the senate was responsible for the approval that his entire flock of 400 slaves be executed (Joshel, 2010). These cruel laws were common to the enslaving nations.

Slave revolts

There was a genuine fear among the slave owners that one day the slaves would revolt. The fear was genuine given that some slaves were willing to risk their lives for a chance to escape from slavery. This meant that if they formed together, they could risk everything and revolt against the slave owners. Slaves who were used as gladiators were most likely to be at the core of the revolt owing to the fact that they had training on warfare and combat. (Joshel, 2010). Cases of revolts were very common in North America. This was reinforced by the fact that most of the slaves were Native Americans who knew their rights, and did not cow down when trying to fight

for their freedom. The revolts bore fruit much later since most of the slave owners agreed to free their slaves.

Laws to curb cruelty

The imperial period represented the best times historically for the slaves. The senate enacted laws that were intended to end cruelty as genuine sympathy towards slaves spread throughout Rome, North America, Italy, and Levant. The law proscribed extreme punishments but did not explicitly dictate what types of punishments were severe. Hadrian for example forbade slave owners from killing their slaves irrespective of the crimes they committed. Slaves were to be taken before court like ordinary citizens and it was the duty of the court to determine the slave's fate (Joshel, 2010).

Freedmen and freedwomen

Manumission was the practice of freeing slaves. A freedman or freedwoman was a slave who had been relieved of their slave duties. In addition to being freed, slaves in Greece and America, unlike in other societies were awarded citizenship rights. Slaves who worked for private individuals were more likely to receive freedom. The most common ways through which a slave was manumitted were by appearance of the slave and his master before a magistrate or the slave may in his life state that he wished all his slaves manumitted upon his demise (Joshel, 2010).

Conclusion

The institute of slavery is a very brutal one, since it does not have any reference of human rights. With the above information, slavery should be

done away with and anybody caught practicing it should be executed for going against human rights. It is a good thing that the slaves in North America, Greece, and other nations were able to fight and have their freedom back.

References

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