

Fall of rome essay sample



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Political Problems

1. The senate became extremely corrupt and political instability came into existence. Consuls and officials would offer positions in office for those who could pay a lump sum of denarii (currency). Furthermore, they accepted bribes in exchange for favours of a wide assortment. A series of very incompetent, rather crazy Emperors were elected and the Plebians suffered as a result. Civil revolts sprung up, lead by rebellious citizens.

2. Emperor Constantine divided the empire into two halves. He declared Constantinople the new capital of Roman society, claiming rule over all Eastern provinces. The Western Roman Empire lost its power over towns in the East, causing a great reduction in profits from the treasury and weakening them dramatically in warfare. Now their strength had been dwindled.

-Military Problems

1. By 300 AD the majority of the Roman army was comprised of barbarian trained soldiers- much less effective than the superior infantry that Rome had in previous centuries. This made the battles against enemies very difficult, Rome no longer had a firm grip or control over military situations.

2. Well at least Rome still had new recruits enlisting.... Not! Another problem was that many of the Roman citizens who were expected to enlist in the legions refused and sneakily signed their slaves in their position. As you can imagine, the new forces were very sluggish, had low morale, didn't fight with

courage and really, they couldn't care less about the development of Rome, after all they were servants to them!

3. Ok, Rome's been run down a lot in warfare.. but we can still rely on the older, more experienced troops to back us up, right? Unfortunately for the Romans, many of the men who had gallantly served their nation years ago had retired to estates or farms and simply did not want to be bothered with government affairs.

4. In remote locations under lenient Roman governing, it was common for soldiers to marry and adopt local customs, attitudes, values and beliefs, instead of keeping their original Italian heritage. This caused disloyalty, hesitation and disillusion worldwide among legions facing the same problems. Southern Britain is a great example. Oak tablets found by archaeologists show how most of the Roman army deserted or refused to carry out orders when fighting Pictish tribes in Scotland. They didn't want to destroy the culture they had integrated with. When Emperor Trajan requested the remaining men to campaign in Dacia, no one was eager to participate. This was a big issue because it accounts for a decline in moral obligations.

5. Barbaric hordes of fearsome warriors gathered in the North/East of Europe in large groups, slowly gaining huge influence (Vandals, Goths, Huns). After Emperor Trajan's death in 117 AD, Hadrian took his place and adopted a defensive stance. He realised that Rome was no longer in the position to continue their expansion, and so he ordered the construction of thick stone walls bordering Roman land. The legionaries could barely hold their ground,

having to defend such a wide, vast area. In fact, it was literally impossible to do so, as constant waves of barbarians aimed to break down the fortifications. Again, England is a good instance. Rome paid the Pictish tribes large sums of tribute so that they didn't attack. It was however, inevitable, and these nomadic tribes would soon occupy dominions within the Roman Empire, slowly breaking down the money within coffers and Roman authority itself.

Economic Problems

1. Rome depended on its empire for funds, (farming practices and mining) it became very poor and had trouble coping economically. Rome had nothing to trade, and couldn't rebuild itself. In any war you need money to be victorious. Soon enough, other cities within the Empire stopped sending funds to Rome.
2. During certain Imperators regimes, they debased the currency. This meant that a coin didn't have a default value. Instead, it was represented by the amount of silver it contained. When Emperor Claudius was in power, coinage wasn't even made up of 1% actual silver. As a result, severe inflation occurred.
3. High taxes was another issue which wasn't resolved easily. It caused distress and anxiousness among many classes in Ancient Rome.
4. Disease most likely had a massive impact. Malaria and other plagues became regular occurrences, killing up to 20% of Rome's population in 150

years. This meant significantly reduced numbers when it came to running all aspects of society, such as education, warfare training and the economy.

The Official end to Rome's rule

1. The deciding factor. All this pressure was too much for Rome to handle, it had struggled endlessly with immense problems for hundreds of years.

Alaric, leader of the Visigoths sacks Rome in 410 AD. Later, Rome is spared from being pillaged again – Attila the Hun, another barbaric warlord decides to retire his reign in 452 AD but destroys many cities in Italy. 3 years after Rome is looted by Geiseric, King of the Vandals. So Rome endured a lot of economic damage and infrastructure demolition