

Rome: the power and the glory

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Rome, the Power and Glory As the story goes, Rome was founded by a pair of feuding brothers who were allegedly raised by wolves. Romulus and Remus. From that point on, the Roman Empire would play a pivotal role in the development of both Eastern and Western society alike. Its influence can still be noticed. The Empire brought us such inventions as aqueducts, elevators, and innovations like urban planning. This essay will discuss the evolution of the Roman Empire and its impact on the Western World. As the story goes, Rome was founded in 753 B. C by two brothers by the names of Romulus and Remus. The two feuded over leadership and the end result was Romulus killing Remus and becoming emperor on his own. The city was only a small settlement at this time with almost no women. Romulus decided to invite their neighbours, the Sabines to a harvest festival. After they all had arrived, the Romans abducted 600 of their women at sword point. In this way, the growth of Rome was insured. The Romans learnt many of their artistic and technological from a group of people known as the Etruscans who lived in the hills of Tuscany. The Etruscans were notably accomplished artists and inventors. They taught the Roman people how to work metal and many other materials. The gladiatorial games, in fact, came from an old " Etruscan rite. The very first roman Emperors were Etruscans. The first of these was a man known as Serbius Tullius. He was the very first emperor to conduct what would become a yearly tradition. A census. Unfortunately, he was murdered and deposed by another Etruscan by the name of Tarquin, who was hated by the Roman people. Following the murder of a popular Roman woman by the name of Lucretia by Tarquin, the people had him deposed and vowed never to live under the rule of one man again. This would hold true for an extremely long time. The Roman people decided that

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yearly elections would be held to determine which pair of people would rule Rome as Consul's. Yearly elections were held to make sure that no two people would remain in power for an extended period of time. This led to the establishing of the senate and the motto SPQR. The Senate and the People of Rome. This is one of the many ways that Rome had a lasting impact on western civilization. Both the United States and Canada have a senate modeled after the Romans. In this way, Rome became a republic. For at least 100 years after they gained their independence, the Romans were at war with the Etruscans. Finally, the extraordinary long battle was over and Rome was free from the Etruscans forever. It was about time that there was a persisting threat from the Gauls to the north. The Romans were pleased with themselves and having defeated the Etruscans, that they refused to believe that the barbarians would be too much of a threat. They were sadly mistaken. In 386 B. C the Gauls ransacked and occupied Rome. The citizens were devastated. They had never suffered a loss of this magnitude, and the empire was still in its infancy, the citizens decided the only way to win back the city was to go under its infancy. An enigmatic farmer known as Cincinnatus was elected to this position. He rallied the legions into an extremely formidable force and took back Rome from the Gaulish barbarians. After he had accomplished this, he returned to his farm to live a simple life. The first major battle the empire would ever face was that against the Carthaginians led by Hannibal who came over the Alps and invaded Italy. At this time, the legions were led by a general by the name of Scipio. The majority of the army was made up of citizens who could be called together when needed. Otherwise known as the militia. The legions defeated Hannibal and pursued him back to Carthage. In 291 B. C it stretched 52, 000 miles.

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Sulla Sulla was a staunch republican who returned from the Social wars in 88 B. C and demanded land for his soldiers. The senate refused to grant him what he asked for. In response to this, he created a list of politicians that he would like to have killed. A reward was offered for their deaths. Naturally, many poor Romans needed money desperately, and killing a senator was a relatively easy way of getting it. However, Sulla was driven out of Rome after a short time. Most thought that it was the end of him. He returned with 6 legions and marched into the city. The Consuls, having no real military to back them up, fled leaving the city in control of Sulla. Although it seemed that he would become a cruel dictator, the people who believed this were proved wrong. Sulla believed that the key to effective and responsible government was the Senate. He therefore opened 300 new seats and refilled empty ones. Doing this. He thought he would lead Rome into a time of great prosperity. He also instituted standing punishments for all crimes. Which could not be appealed. For reasons like this, the Senate actually opposed him instead of agreeing with him. This led to his eventual deposition. His reign as leader of Rome had lasted less than 4 years. The main reason Sulla is remembered is not because of his attempts of reform, but because he was the first man ever to use troops under his command against Rome itself. After the death of Sulla, there was not a great deal of activity in Rome up until the year 52 B. C. It was at this time that Pompey was elected sole consul by the Roman senate. It was essentially the position of emperor without the actual title. Caesar, who had campaigned with Pompey in the past, was outraged by this and immediately set out to eliminate the would-be emperor. In 48 B. C, at the city of Pharsalus in Greece, Caesar defeated Pompey and returned to Rome where he was greeted with much fervour.

Shortly after his return, he was declared dictator and made sole ruler by the Senate. Many citizens thought that Caesar assuming power would be a repetition of what had happened with the Etruscans. They were proven wrong. Caesar proved himself to be the champion of Rome. He was loved by all the populace, and most by the poor, who he made life much better for, and the soldiers who were provided with land for them. Unfortunately, under the assumption that he was going to make himself king, the great Caesar was assassinated on the ides of March in 44 B. C. As sole heir to his uncle's empire, Octavian returned to Rome to claim ruler ship by himself. He was forced to battle with first Caesar's assassins Cassius and Brutus, and then with Mark Antony who also sought the position that Caesar had once held. In 31 B. C Octavian emerged the victor and returned to Rome to assume his uncle's rule. 4 years later, the Senate granted Octavian absolute power for life and became commonly know as Augustus, or " victorious general." He died in 14 A. D. Having gained more land than any other emperor before him, and began what would come to be know as the " Pax Romana" or " Peace of Rome" which would last until the year 180. Cicero Cicero was a lawyer and self-made man who gained a high public position using nothing more than his powers of eloquence and his abilities as a civil magistrate. One of Cicero's principal aims was to establish a " consensus omnium bonorum" or Alliance for All Good Men. The principle aim of this was to save the Republic from those who would try to take it down. Cicero received an extraordinarily high public standing and was well loved by the people. He is often thought of as the man who guided the Republic at that time. As stated above, Cicero was one who believed strongly in the Republic and opposed all those who would seek to disrupt it. Chiefly among these was Caesar who he

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hated with a passion. After Caesar was assassinated, Cicero greatly underestimated the effectiveness of Octavian and put him down publicly. This outraged Octavian and on December 7 of the year 44 B. C, he was executed and his head and hands were displayed in the forum. Despite his somewhat early death, Cicero was able to accomplish much in the way of Roman Politics. He was never fully accepted by his fellow politicians because of his lack of noble ancestry. His true goal was to keep Rome a republic at all costs. He often negotiated vigorously with Pompey about compromising ideals to preserve the republic. He realized that a republican government should require the presence of a powerful individual to ensure its stability, which is why he supported Pompey. Cicero, although a small player in the overall revolution of the Roman Empire, played a pivotal role in establishing, and keeping stable, a centralized system of government. Cicero was truly, a man of the people.

Tiberius and Sejanus After the death of Augustus, the emperor Tiberius came into power. Not too long ago, a military unit charged with the protection of the Emperor was created. It was called the Praetorian Guard. Unfortunately, these highly corruptible guardsmen perpetrated many assassinations. In 26 A. D, after finally departing the city of Rome to the island of Capri, he left the administration in the hands of the captain of the Praetorian Guard, Lucius Aelius Sejanus. Sejanus had been conspiring against Tiberius for a very long time, and saw his opportunity once the emperor finally departed. He moved the entire Praetorian cohort into the city, establishing a large power base for himself should any scheming politician's compromise his contention for emperorhood. Sejanus' rise to power continued unchecked until the year 31. He had been elected Consul (Tiberius was still officially emperor at this time although he did nothing) and

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had eliminated 2 of the 3 successful heirs to the Empire. His downfall began at that time. Recently, he had transferred his position temporarily to a good friend of his who immediately ordered his arrest. As he was sitting in the Senate being read a letter from Tiberius who was voicing his suspicions about Sejanus, he was killed. Sejanus' body was dragged through the streets and dumped into the Tiber. The same was done with many of his supporters and friends. His family suffered and even worse fate, which will not be elaborated upon. Tiberius lived out the remainder of his reign on the island of Capri. His last days were fraught with paranoia and distrust until Caligula's good friend Marco finally smothered him with a pillow. Caligula then succeeded him. Caligula was an extraordinary ruthless and unskilled emperor. He cared little for the affairs of the Empire and instead focused more on having shrines built to himself and things of that sort. He displayed his contempt for the Senate by attempting to have his horse elected Consul. This act is, however, partly attributed to madness. Caligula was a very strange individual to say the least. He was assassinated like many of the emperors before and after him. Nero Nero was Caligula's heir and became emperor in the year 56. At the beginning of his reign, he seemed to be a rather nice emperor. He claimed that he would follow in the footsteps of Augustus and applied himself rigorously to judicial and political duties. He granted the Senate more power and made promises to increase the treasury, and introduced legislation to improve public order. Indeed, at first Nero seemed to be a very kind and benevolent man. It was an indication of madness to come. Slowly, Nero gradually began to neglect his duties and focused more on personal pleasure. He occupied his time with things such as horse racing, sexual escapades, and even acting, which enraged the public

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and Senate alike. He had his mother murdered in the year 59 because she disapproved of his acting. He claimed that she had been plotting to kill him to justify his actions to the Senators. His madness soon escalated. He would often give public performances of him playing the lyre and singing. Nobody was allowed to leave during the performance for any reason whatsoever. History is fraught with tales of men pretending to die so that they could be carried out, and women giving birth during these recitals. His greatest mistake was allegedly starting the great fire. In the year 64, a massive fire ravaged Rome for 6 days on end. Of the 14 districts, only 3 escaped unscathed. The blame immediately fell to Nero. The populace claimed that he had purposely set the fire so that he might rebuild the city in his own image. Nero denied this and blamed it solely on the Christians. In 68, because of his disgusting display of emperor, the Praetorian prefect at the time convinced the guard to abandon their allegiance to Nero. The Senate soon did the same and condemned him to be flogged to death. Once word of this reached his ears, the emperor committed suicide. That was the end of the worst emperor Rome would ever have. In the year 75 the construction of the coliseum was begun. It was completed 5 years later and became one of the wonders of the world. The games played a huge part in the life of the Roman people. In order to keep the citizens happy, games were a constant part of Roman life. Gladiators were admired by all and lived only to die for others amusement. The games played a pivotal role in the development of Roman culture, and are still the focus of study for many historians today. The decline of Rome began in the year 180 after the death of Marcus Aurellius. The emperor Commodus was incapable of ruling properly and started ruling frivolously. After Marcus Aurellius conquered the remaining Germanic tribes, <https://assignbuster.com/rome-the-power-and-the-glory/>

there was nobody left to fight. As a result, no additional money was entering the Roman treasury. Rome then declared a second war on Carthage, who had gained back most of their territory. The Romans attacked, and lost. They brought back with them the most devastating thing ever to enter the empire. The plague. In a few short years, it had wiped out 1 quarter of the population. A staggering number considering that in the year 100 50 million people were living in the empire. The onset of the plague only worsened the news that barbarians were once again beginning to invade Rome. The Legions were horribly out of practice and were not able to provide adequate defense. As a result, Rome was launched into a downward spiral of turmoil from which it would never recover. Gradually, the empire diminished until what was left was barely a glimpse of what the past had held for the once great city which rose into an empire that encompassed nearly all of Europe, most of Asia, and some Africa. Rome left a lasting impact on the Western world, however. The Roman government was the basis for the political system in Canada and the United States. They provided us with marvels in engineering. Things like the aqueduct system, the elevator, and many others. Hitler was greatly influenced by the Roman Empire, and Napoleon even claimed to be a descendant of the emperors. For these reasons and many more, it remains clear that even though the Roman Empire is long since gone, it has left an indelible mark in history.