

Compare and contrast techniques of administration in classical empires

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Analyze the similarities and differences in techniques of imperial administration in two of the following empires. The Han Dynasty was established in 206 BCE to 220 CE, more than 400 years of rule split into two distinct periods: early Han and later Han. During the establishment of the Han dynasty, the Maurya Empire was declining to its end, when it finally ended during 185 BCE. Several events marked the transition from Republic to imperial rule, including Julius Caesar's appointment as dictator (44 BCE); the Battle of Actium (September 31 BCE); and the title of emperor passed onto Octavian by the Roman Senate (January 27 BCE). Similarities of techniques of imperial administration of the Han and Imperial Rome was the use of prior knowledge from cultural diffusion of past empires, such as Persia, imperial expansion of both empires, and centralized government system of both empires, with an emperor. A noticeable difference between the two empires was the role of religion or philosophies in the case of Han dynasty in imperial administration. The Persians and Greeks heavily influenced the Romans in their management of imperial administration. During the Qin dynasty, ideas and attributes of those empires may have diffused to the Han dynasty. Like Persia and the Qin dynasty, Imperial Rome and Han dynasty both had standardized currency, weights, measurements, and system of centralized government with a strong ruler. The emperor was the central authority with definite powers. In imperial Rome, Augustus reorganized the military system and created a new standing army with commanders who owed allegiance directly to the emperor and integrated them in the government. Similarly in Han China, the emperor positioned the Grand Commandant, was the irregularly posted commander of the military

and then regent during the Western Han period. He owed direct allegiance to the emperor of Han. The government system of both empires was the central government with smaller regional governments or provinces (senatorial provinces for Rome) led by a governor. At the basis was the patriarchal family: the pater familias in Rome, and filial piety in Han. The Roman Empire tolerated regional rule, such as retaining their community laws, but under a national Roman law, which set the basis for many modern elements of our law system, such as precedence and the defendant is not guilty until proven guilty. The Han dynasty also had an existing judicial system of courts with adoption of the Qin law. The internal government of both empires had factions and divisions. The Han had eunuchs and families competing for power, while the Roman government had extreme cases of bribery and patron-client relationships. This was a main cause of the decay of the empires and eventually the effects were the collapse of the empire. Another problem found prominently in both empires was the inequality of land distribution. Individual economic problems brought on by poor harvests, high taxes, or crushing burdens of debt forced many small landowners to sell their property under unfavorable conditions or even to forfeit it in exchange for cancellation of their debts. By the end of the first century BCE, land had accumulated in the hands of a small number of individuals who owned vast estates, also known as latifundia in Imperial Rome. Wang Mang, the imperial usurper of the Han dynasty, tried to bring about a redistributing of land resources in classical China. He limited the amount of land that a family could hold and ordered officials to break up large estates, redistribute them, and provide landless individuals with property to cultivate. Like Wang Mang

and the Gracchus brothers, Julius Caesar also favored liberal policies and social reform during the Imperial Rome era. He confiscated property from the conservatives and distributed it to veterans of his armies and other supporters. He also launched large-scale building projects in Rome as a way to provide employment for the urban poor. However, the existence of inequality between the rich and poor continued and remained to be a threat to the stability of the empires, leading to the Yellow Turban Revolution in Han dynasty in 184 CE. During the imperial rule of Augustus, the Roman armies conquered distant lands and integrated them into a larger economy and society, expanding the Roman Empire into its greatest heights. Also Han Wudi whom worked strenuously to expand the empire and administrative centralization, expanded further partly into Xiongnu and into Vietnam and Korea. As the increased demand for food and grain rose, the Roman Empire expanded even further. This opened the access of larger natural resources needed by the empires, but also proved to be fatal as the increased size of the empire proved to be too much to be handled. Later as a result, Emperor Diocletian split the empire into two administrative districts. A co-emperor ruled each district with the aid of a powerful lieutenant, and the four officials, known as the tetrarchs were able to administer the vast empire more effectively than an individual emperor could. Later Constantine reunified the east and west districts of the empire, but was faced with a threat of foreign Germanic and Hun people who spoke a Turkish language, and perhaps cousins of the nomadic Xiongnu. The Han dynasty also faced pressures of foreign neighboring nomads to the north called the Xiongnu. However, Han Wudi, took on a different strategy of defending the Han by attacking the

Xiongnu people, bringing much of the empire under Chinese military control. The drain of the economy and heavy taxation depleted the economy of Han China. As a result, the foreign neighboring invaders of both empires proved to be fatal in the survival of the empires, ending in the collapse of the empires. A unique aspect of the Chinese social system was that religion was not a major significance of the empire, until late Han, when Buddhism emerged. Unlike China, the Romans basically adopted the polytheistic Greek mythology and tweaked it to Roman names. Gods were important to the Romans, and religion gave political divine legitimacy of the emperor, whereas in Han China, the mandate of heaven served as the political legitimacy of the emperor and rulers. The sons of heaven were the rulers that gained the mandate of heaven. Also the government of Han dynasty was based on legalism; however, depended on a Confucian education system to train their bureaucracy and young men for government service. Han Wudi established the Imperial University in 124 BCE, where students could be enrolled under Confucian education system to become government workers in the bureaucracy. As the Han dynasty expanded, it enforced the education systems into both northern Vietnam and Korea. In the Roman government, it was totally different, filled with bribery and the existence of the spoils system, where leaders can appoint positions and titles as favors, acquaintances, and family; described in the writings of Tacitus. The differences caused a distinct difference in the government workers that made up the government, which may have affected the long 400 and more years of Han rule. The Han dynasty and Imperial Rome were similar in their techniques of imperial administration particularly in the centralization of the

government and the policies that addressed the problem of the land inequality. Both Imperial Rome and Han China faced pressures due to foreign invaders and imperial expansion. Although Imperial Rome was heavily influenced by Greek mythology, China stayed secular until the end of the Han dynasty, in were they establish educational systems for young men in government services based off Confucianism. This may have caused the long rule of the Han for over 400 years.