

# Roman empire collapse

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Lecturer Essay # Collapse of the Roman Empire The decline and eventual fall of the Roman Empire in 476 was as a result of a number of factors. First, during the third century A. D, the economy of Rome weakened significantly (Fergusson, 4). This was as a result of disruption of trade by hostile communities that existed outside the boundaries of the Roman Empire. This forced the government to raise taxes in order to collect revenue, and this led to inflation. In addition, there was a sharp decline in the middle class. This comprised of artisans and merchants who supported the Roman economy. This decline was brought about by the heavy taxes. This made it difficult for the Roman economy to function.

Secondly, during this period, the military was in total disarray. The generals had become indisciplined and disloyal. Most of the generals were pursuing personal ambitions either to be named emperor or become 'Master of Soldiers.' This brought disunity in the army, and this greatly weakened the empire which drew much of its strength from the army. For example, Constantine II and Constans are two emperors who openly fought each other (Fergusson, 4). Roman soldiers were giving their allegiance to those commanders they supported and not to Rome. The government was forced to hire foreign soldiers who had no sense of loyalty. In addition, the general public became less patriotic, and no one was willing to defend the empire. Finally, the heavy taxes imposed on the poor citizens created class divisions, and the people's loyalty to the government faded (Fergusson, 5). Many felt that the government was oppressing them, and this further increased the tension in the empire. The anger of the population was demonstrated through revolts, and this forced the government to use its military resources

to quell the revolts. The internal conflicts made it difficult for the government to survive amid reduced resources.

#### Works Cited

Fergusson, James. "The Division and Fall of the Roman Empire." in *Journey to the West: Essays in History, Politics and Culture*, 2006. Pp. 1-18.