

The foundations of roman empire's success

[History](#), [Empires](#)



During the ancient times, imperialism was not a very uncommon phenomenon. Those were the days wherein bloodsheds happened almost everyday—those were the days wherein land conquests were the emerging trend and helmets, shields and heavy armory are considered as distinct fashion statements. Although fear and anxiety crippled the lives of many individuals, it cannot be denied that imperialism is one of those unforgettable events that readily shaped and moved the face of history. Generally speaking, the word empire originated from the Latin expression “imperium (Howe 13). Imperium, in return, translates to exercising sovereignty and authority. In the meantime, emperor is the title given to empire rulers. However, it is important to note that emperors go beyond being a political figure. More often than not, an emperor is viewed as someone who has the skills and influence of a military person. One of the most celebrated empires that have ever existed on this planet is the Roman Empire. It is known for its wide scope and reach. Long before sea explorers have circumnavigated the world, the Roman Empire has already conquered the Western horizon.

For the founders of these regimes, the act of observing authority and sovereignty translates to two core concepts. First, to achieve authority, more lands should be conquered, thus waging or creating wars is a must. Second, in order to ensure sovereignty, laws should be established and fully implemented. The success of the Roman Empire is indeed a notable one. Its major accomplishments remained unmatched and it had certainly contributed to the creation of civilization's main pillars.

Despite of the fact that the empire suffered from an ill-fated decline, it cannot be denied that its victory came about because of successful law implementations, efficient leaders and of course, a complex and highly organized military system wherein defeat was close to being non-existent. Roman Empire A Brief Overview From 509 BC to 264 BC, it would be too hard to imagine that Rome was actually plagued by different threats and invasion attacks (Spielgovel 75). It never occurred to anyone that this great empire was once belittled by those who attempted to conquer it.

However, instead of perishing into oblivion, the darkest times of the Roman Empire worked well to its advantage. The scourge that almost annihilated it, turned out to be its greatest blessing. Instead of accepting its ill fate, the Roman Empire decided to strengthen their military force. The empire knew that if it has the strength and the necessary skills, it would not only defend its territories, it can also conquer other domains and therefore exercise its power and authority. The Roman Republic played an important role in the empire's growth.

Once and for all, the institution permitted the fusion of the government and the military rule (Spielvogel 76). In this case, the military, since it has a political function can participate on how to embark on their missions rather than waiting for the rulers' permission (Spielvogel 76). This set-up also allowed Rome to further develop their army's strengths and skills. These efforts did not go in vain. By the time 266 BC came, Rome has finally taken over the whole Italian peninsula (" Roman Empire"). Yet, the empire's

strength was further highlighted when it was able to conquer Carthage (Spielvogel 79).

Carthage is an important domain for the empire. Aside from the fact that it controlled trade in the Mediterranean, it was also a strategic location (Spielvogel 79). Even though Hannibal, a renowned Carthage general was popular for his military skill and prowess, he has no matched for the newly reformed Roman army (Spielvogel 79). Carthage's unfortunate loss meant that Spain, Sicily and North Africa would soon become Rome's provinces ("Roman Empire"). Soon, Rome's territory extended to Asia Minor, Syria, Judea, Greece and modern France ("Roman Empire").

The Pillars of Success One of the main reasons behind the formidable success of the Roman Empire can be attributed to its seemingly invincible army (Whittock 14). More than anything else, it is the empire's military that is responsible for its glory and prestige. Even in recent years, the elite Roman Army symbolizes the bastion of highly remarkable skills in combat and warfare. If Roman politics did contribute, this is simply secondary to what the army did. As Christopher Mackay described, the Roman Empire's political triumph was primarily based on militarism (p. 59).

In land conquests, it is the army that ensures the defeat of the empire's enemy. This is something that cannot be readily accomplished by the ruling politicians of Rome. In addition to that, defending the empire from unexpected counter-attacks was also performed by the military. It is for this reason that the Roman army can be described as one of Rome's main pillars and foundations. The Roman Army readily reflected its Greek influences

(Whittock 14). However, one of the striking differences was that it was more organized and it continued to improve as the empire invaded more lands or territories.

In the beginning, military men were ranked according to their respective social classes (Whittock 14). Those who have the means have the privilege of wearing armored suits that can protect them throughout the battle (Whittock 14). However, the lower classes had to purchase their own battle gears (Whittock 14). On a critical perspective, this situation was really unfair to those who are at the bottom of the economic hierarchy. To risk their lives in war wherein there is uncertainty of whether they will go home alive or not, cannot be really described as a noble activity. Therefore, loyalty in this case cannot be assured ("The Roman Army").

Later on, joining the military became a profitable source of income for those who wanted to take part in the group (Whittock 14). Basically, the discrepancies based on social class slowly disappeared. Being a military man became a profession (Whittock 14). Those who were enlisted were given gold coins and a piece of land upon their retirement (Whittock 14). This particular reform appealed to many. On a much closer examination, soldiers often have to worry not only about the injuries that they may suffer in the war. They are also worried about leaving their families behind.

More than anyone else, they need security. The gold coins and the piece of land gave these individuals the assurance that they have something to come back for. In a sense, this also served as a motivational force for them to continue fighting and win wars ("The Roman Army"). It was also this reform

that paved the way for the Roman Empire's notable legion (Whittock 14). On the other hand, it was not only the benefits of being a military man that inspired the Roman Army to win. According to Whittock, the army was also very strict and highly disciplined when it comes to their training (p. 15).

As a matter of fact, the group even built practice camps so that they can handle their opponents very well (Whittock 15). Relatively, as the army subdued more lands, the size of the army became bigger and bigger and as the old saying goes, there is indeed strength in numbers. There was an overflowing supply of soldiers needed to win the battle. There were also craftsmen, engineers and swordsmen, ready to build the necessary infrastructures to build the city of Rome and the weapons that they need in the war. Rome indeed suffered during the early years, but still they emerged as the victorious one in the end.

As Roberts described it " Rome usually lost its first battle but always won the last (p. 306). " Aside from the military strength that the empire once possessed, another reason for its success can be attributed to the emperors' efficient leadership. This is most especially true as for the case of Augustus (Potter xiii). Under his rule, Rome was still at the onset of recovering from the ravages of war and series of political upheaval (" Roman Empire"). It is also important to note that Augustus replaced Caesar who was then assassinated (" Roman Empire"). In this case, civil unrest was indeed, inevitable.

However, the moment that he was put on power, he made various political reforms, which are primarily patterned on strengthening family relationships,

thus making the empire more united (Potter xiii). As Sheffer mentioned, Augustus represents the “ innovative leadership (p. 26). It was under his rule that Pax Romana was basically achieved, thus giving the empire a more stable and dependable government (“ Roman Empire”). He reconstructed the Senate (“ Roman Empire”) and it was also under his regime that land grants and retirement benefits were given to the military (Wells 18).

Consequently, the foundations established by Augustus gave the succeeding emperors a framework wherein they can efficiently rule the government. Good leadership did not only bring stability, it also garnered the support and loyalty of the Roman public. Given this situation at hand, the next rulers of Rome simply needed to continue what Augustus started. Lastly it cannot be denied that the creation of a legal system (Saxonhouse) sustained the success of the Roman Empire. If there is a government, then it follows that a set of rules should be applied.

This will ensure that the decisions made by politicians would be of service of the whole populace. In addition to that, the legal system assured that the people are systematically governed, thus preventing total anarchy.

Conclusion Indeed, without the military, the Roman Empire would never be established. However, if not for its strong leader such as Augustus, for example, managing Rome and its colonies would soon turn into a disaster. Moreover, the legal system ensured that the interests of the majority shall overcome the interests of the few.