

Rise and Decline of the Roman Civilization

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Abstract: Rome expanded across the Mediterranean and grew into a huge, diverse empire. By the end of the fourth century B.C.E. Rome was already the dominant power on the Italian Peninsula. For five centuries thereafter Rome's power steadily increased. Rome's destruction of the powerful North African City of Carthage united the entire Mediterranean world and made the Mediterranean itself a "Roman Lake". Rome began as a small city state in Italy. The Romans were an Indo-European people who settled along the Tiber River in small villages. Their neighbors, the Etruscans, ruled much of central Italy, including Rome. After the Romans threw out the hated Etruscan king in 509 B.C., they resolved never to be ruled by a monarch again. Instead they set up a republic, a government in which officials are chosen by the people. At first, the most powerful people in government were Patricians, or members of the landholding upper class. Eventually, commoners, or Plebeians were also elected to the Roman Senate. Military victories put the Romans in control of busy trade routes. Incredible riches flooded into Rome and this caused a series of civil wars. Eventually, a powerful Roman general named Augustus restored order. Under Augustus, who ruled from 31 B.C to A.D.14, the 500 year old republic came to an end. A new age dawned – the age of the Roman Empire. Augustus laid the foundation for a stable government and undertook economic reforms. The 200 years span that began with Augustus ended with emperor Marcus Aurelius. It is known as the Pax Romana, or "Roman Peace". During the time, Roman emperors brought peace, order, unity and prosperity to the lands under their control. Rome acted as a bridge between the east and the west by borrowing and transforming Greek and Hellenistic achievements to produce Greco-Roman Civilization. The Romans greatly admired Greek culture. They took Greek ideas and adapted them in their own ways. Roman sculptors, for instance, used the Greek idea of realism to reveal an individual's character in each stone portrait. Probably the greatest legacy of Rome was its commitment to the rule of law and to justice. These shape western civilization today. After the death of the emperor Marcus Aurelius in A.D.180, turmoil rocked the Roman Empire split into two parts, east and west, each with its own ruler in the west. The foreign invaders marched into Italy and, in 476, took over Rome itself. But the Roman Empire did not disappear from the map. The eastern Roman Empire prospered under the emperor Constantine. In time, the eastern Roman Empire became known as Byzantium. It lasted for another 1,000 years. The article discussed on overall Roman Civilization – the rise and fall of Roman Empire with its political changes and the prosperity of Romans during their rule.

1. Introduction

While the Greeks struggled against the Persians and then each other a new civilization was emerging on the banks of the Tiber River in central Italy. By the end of the fourth century B.C.E. Rome was already the dominant power on the Italian peninsula for five centuries there after Rome's power steadily increased. By the first century C.E., it ruled most of the western Europe. These conquest together with Rome's destruction of the powerful North African city of Carthage, united the entire Mediterranean world and made the Mediterranean itself a "Roman lake". Rome's empire brought Greek Institutions and ideas not only to the western half of the Mediterranean world, but also to Britain, France, Spain, and Romania. Rome was thus the builder of a great historical bridge that connected Europe to the cultural and political heritage of the ancient Near East (Judith G. Coffin, Robert C. Stacey Robert E. Lerner, Standish Meacham,2002).A society highly developed in military and political skills, Rome professionalized its military class and created a system of government called res publica, the inspiration for some modern republics such as the United States and France (Mortimer N.S.Sellers, 90;Robin Luckham, Gordon White,11)In the Empire, Rome entered in its golden times at the hands of Augustus Caesar. Under Trajan, the Empire reached its territorial peak. The republican values started to decline in the imperial times, and civil wars became the common ritual for a new emperor's rise (Guglielmo Ferrero, Sir Alfred Eckhar Zimmer, Henry John Chaytor, 251+, Andrew Hadfield, 68) Christopher B. Gray, p.741). The Eastern Roman Empire survived this crisis and was governed from Constantinople after the division of the Empire. It composed Greece, the Balkans, Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt. Despite the later loss of Syria and Egypt to the Arab- Islamic Empire, the Eastern Roman Empire continued for another millennium until its remnants were finally annexed by the emerging Turkish Ottoman Empire. This eastern, Christian, medieval stage of the Empire is usually called the Byzantine Empire by historians.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Founding Rome

Romulus was the eponymous first king of Rome. How he got there is story like many others, involving a rags-to-riches rise in fortune, a miraculous birth (like Jesus), and the exposure of an infant (like Paris of Troy and Oedipus) in a river (like Moses and Sargon). The story of Romulus, his twin brother Remus, and the founding of the city of Rome is one of the most familiar legends about ancient Rome. The basic legend about how Romulus came to be the first king of Rome begins with the god Mars impregnating a Vestal Virgin named Rhea Silvia, daughter of the rightful, but deposed king. After the birth of Mars' sons Romulus and Remus, the king orders them to be left to die in the Tiber River. When the basket in which Romulus and Remus were placed washes up on shore, a wolf suckles them and a woodpecker named Picus feeds them until the shepherd Faustulus finds Romulus and Remus and brings them into his home. When they grow up, Romulus and Remus restore the throne of Alba Longa to its rightful ruler, their maternal grandfather, and set out to found their own city. Sibling rivalry leads Romulus to slay his brother and become the first king and founder of the city of Rome. Rome is named after Romulus. Such is the condensed, skeletal version of the story of Romulus and Remus. Most of the details are believed to be false. It is thought that a prostitute may have cared for the infant twins and the story about the wolf is only an interpretation of a Latin word for brothel.

2.2 Early Republic

The first Roman republican wars were wars of both expansion and defence, aimed at protecting Rome itself from neighboring cities and nations and establishing its territory in the region (Grant, p.33). The Roman republic was the period of the ancient Roman civilization where the government operated as a republic. It began with the overthrow of the Roman monarchy, traditionally dated around 508 BC, and its replacement by a government headed by two consuls, elected annually by the citizens and advised by a senate. A complex constitution gradually developed centered on the principles of a separation of Powers and checks and balances. In practice, Roman society was hierarchical. The evolution of the Constitution of the Roman Republic was heavily influenced by struggle between Rome's land-holding aristocracy (the patricians), who traced their ancestry back to the early history of the Roman Kingdom, and the far more numerous citizens-commoners plebeians. Over time, the laws that gave Patricians exclusive rights to Rome's highest offices were repealed or weakened, and a new aristocracy emerged from among the plebeian class. The leaders of the Republic developed a strong tradition and morality requiring public service and patronage in peace and war, meaning that military and political success were inextricably linked. During the first two centuries of its existence the Republic expanded through a combination of conquest and alliance, from central Italy to the entire Italian peninsula. By the following century it included North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula, Greece, and what is now southern France. Two centuries after that, towards the end of the 1st century BC, it included the rest of modern France, and much of the east. By this time, despite the Republic's traditional and lawful constraints against any individual's acquisition of permanent political powers, Roman politics was dominated by a small number of Roman leaders, their uneasy alliances punctuated by a series of civil wars. The final victor in these civil wars, Octavian (later Augustus), reformed the Republic as a Principate, with himself as Rome's "first citizen" (princeps). The Senate continued to sit and debate. Annual magistrates were elected as before, but final decisions on matters of policy, warfare, diplomacy and appointments were privileged to the princeps as "first among equals" (or emperor due to the holding of imperium, from which the term emperor is derived). His powers were monarchic in all but name, and he held them for his lifetime, on behalf of the Senate and people of Rome. The Roman Republic was never restored, but neither was it abolished, so the event that signaled its transition to Roman Empire is a matter of interpretation. Historians have variously proposed the appointment of Julius Caesar as perpetual dictator in 44 BC, the defeat of Mark Antony at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, and the Roman Senate's grant of extraordinary powers to Octavian (Augustus) under the first settlement in 27 BC, as candidates for the defining pivotal event ending the Republic.

2.3 Government of the Early Republic

Rome underwent a very slow political evolution. Even the replacement of the monarchy was about as conservative a political change to be. Its chief effect was to substitute for the king two elected officials called *consuls*, and to exalt the position of the Senate by granting it control over the public funds. Although the consuls were chosen by the *comitia centuriata* (literally, the Roman "people-in-arms"), this body differed greatly from the citizen assembly of ancient Athens because it met in groups. Each group in the Roman assembly had one vote, and since groups consisting of the wealthiest

citizens voted first, a majority could be reached even before the votes of the poorer groups was cast. Consequently the consuls, who served annually, were usually senators who acted as the agents of aristocratic interests. Each consul was supposed to possess the full executive and judicial authority that had previously been wielded by the king, limited by the right each possessed to veto the action of the other. If a conflict arose between them, the Senate might be called on to decide; or in time of grave emergency, a dictator might be appointed for a term of not greater than months. (Judith G. Coffin, Robert C. Stacey Robert E. Lerner, Standish Meacham, 2002 p.189) .After the establishment of the Republic the political dominance of the early aristocracy , known as the *patricians*, began to be challenged by the *plebeians*, who made up nearly 98 percent of the citizen population but who initially had no access to political power. The plebeians were a diverse group. Some had grown wealthy through trade or agriculture, but most were small-holding, prosperous farmers, merchants, or the urban poor. The grievances of the plebeians were numerous. Forced to serve in the army in time of war, they were nevertheless excluded from holding office. They frequently felt themselves the victims of discriminatory decisions in judicial trials. They did not even know what legal rights they were suppose to enjoy, for the laws were unwritten, and the patricians alone had the power to interpret them. Worst was the oppression that could stem from debt because a debtor could be sold into slavery outside Rome by his creditor. (Judith G. Coffin, Robert C. Stacey Robert E. Lerner, Standish Meacham, 2002 p.189). These grievances prompted a plebeian in the early fifth century B.C.E. that forced the patricians to agree to the election of new officers known as *tribunes* who could protect the plebeians by voting unlawful patrician acts. This victory was followed by a successful demand for codification of the laws about 450 B.C.E. The result was the issuance of the famous Law of the Twelve Tables, so called because it was written on tablets ("tables") of wood. Although this law was later revered by the Romans as a kind of charter of the people's liberties, it was really nothing of the sort, for it mostly perpetuated ancient custom without even abolishing enslavement for debt .Nevertheless; at least there was now a clear definition of law. Roughly a generation later the plebeians won eligibility to positions as lesser magistrates, and about 367 B.C.E. the first plebeian consul was elected .Gradually, plebeians also gained access to the Senate. The final plebeians victory came in 287 B.C.E. with the passage of a law stipulating that measures enacted by the *concilium plebis* (a more democratically organized assembly composed only of plebeians) would be binding on the Roman government whether the Senate approved them or not. It is from this citizen assembly that English derives its modern word *plebiscite*.

3. Constitution of the Roman Republic

The Constitution of the Roman Republic was a set of guidelines and principles passed down mainly through precedent (Byrd, 161). The constitution was largely unwritten, uncodified, and constantly evolving. Rather than creating a government that was primarily a democracy (as was ancient Athens), an aristocracy (as was ancient Sparta), or a monarchy (as was Rome before and, in many respects, after the Republic), the Roman constitution mixed these three elements, thus creating three separate branches of government(Holland,24).According to Polybius the democratic element took the form of the legislative assemblies, the aristocratic element took the form of the Senate, and the monarchical element took the form of the many term-limited consuls(Polybius).The ultimate source of sovereignty in this ancient republic, as in modern republics, was the *demos* (people)(Holland,24). The People of Rome gathered into legislative assemblies to pass laws and to elect executive magistrates (Lintott, 40). Election to a magisterial office resulted in automatic membership in the Senate (for life, unless impeached)(Abbott,46). The Senate managed the day-to-day affairs in Rome, while senators presided over the courts (Lintott, 65). Executive magistrates enforced the law, and presided over the Senate and the legislative assemblies (Byrd, 179). A complex set of checks and balances developed between these three branches, so as to minimize the risk of tyranny and corruption, and to maximize the likelihood of good government. However, the separation of powers between these three branches of government was not absolute. Also, there was the frequent usage of several constitutional devices that were out of harmony with the genius of the Roman constitution (Abbott, 46). A constitutional crisis began in 133 BC, as a result of the struggles between the aristocracy and the common people (Abbott,90). This crisis ultimately led to the collapse of the Roman Republic and its eventual subversion into a much more autocratic form of government, the Roman Empire (Abbott, 133).

3.1 Senate of the Roman Republic

The Senate's ultimate authority derived from the esteem and prestige of the Senate (Byrd, 161). This esteem and prestige was based on precedent and custom, as well as the high calibre and prestige of the Senators (Cicero, 239).The Senate passed decrees, which were called *senatus consultum*. This was officially "advice" from the Senate to a magistrate. In practice, however, these were usually obeyed by the magistrates (Byrd, 44). The focus of the Roman

Senate was directed towards foreign policy (Polybius, 133). Though it technically had no official role in the management of military conflict, the Senate ultimately was the force that oversaw such affairs.

3.2 Legislative Assemblies

It was the People of Rome – and thus the assemblies – who had the final say regarding the election of magistrates, the enactment of new laws, the carrying out of capital punishment, the declaration of war and peace, and the creation (or dissolution) of alliances (Polybius, 133-134). There were two types of legislative assemblies. The first was the *comitia* ("committees") (Lintott, 42), which were assemblies of all citizens. The second was the *concilia* ("councils"), which were assemblies of specific groups of citizens (Abbott, 251).

3.3 Assembly of the Centuries

Citizens were organized on the basis of centuries and tribes. The centuries and the tribes would each gather into their own assemblies. The *Comitia Centuriata* ("Century Assembly") was the assembly of the centuries. The president of the *Comitia Centuriata* was usually a consul (Polybius, 132). The centuries would vote, one at a time, until a measure received support from a majority of the centuries. The *Comitia Centuriata* would elect magistrates who had *imperium* powers (consuls and praetors). It also elected censors. Only the *Comitia Centuriata* could declare war, and ratify the results of a census (Abbott, 257). It also served as the highest court of appeal in certain judicial cases (Cicero, 235).

3.4 Assembly of the Tribes

The assembly of the tribes, the *Comitia Tributa*, was presided over by a consul, and was composed of 35 tribes. The tribes were not ethnic or kinship groups, but rather geographical subdivisions (Lintott, 51). The order that the thirty-five tribes would vote in was selected randomly by lot (Taylor, 77). Once a measure received support from a majority of the tribes, the voting would end. While it did not pass many laws, the *Comitia Tributa* did elect quaestors, curule aediles, and military tribunes (Taylor, 78).

3.5 Plebeian Council

The Plebeian Council was an assembly of plebeians, the non-patrician citizens of Rome, who would gather into their respective tribes. They elected their own officers, plebeian tribunes and plebeian aediles (Abbott, 196). Usually a plebeian tribune would preside over the assembly. This assembly passed most laws, and could also act as a court of appeal. Since it was organized on the basis of the tribes, its rules and procedures were nearly identical to those of the *Comitia Tributa*.

3.6 Executive Magistrates

Each magistrate was vested with a degree of *maior potestas* ("major power") (Abbott, 257). Each magistrate could veto any action that was taken by a magistrate of an equal or lower rank. Plebeian tribunes and plebeian aediles, on the other hand, were independent of the other magistrates (Abbott, 151).

3.7 Magisterial powers, and checks on those powers

Each republican magistrate held certain constitutional powers. Only the People of Rome (both plebeians and patricians) had the right to confer these powers on any individual magistrate (Lintott, 195). The most powerful constitutional power was *imperium*. *Imperium* was held by both consuls and praetors. *Imperium* gave a magistrate the authority to command a military force. All magistrates also had the power of coercion. This was used by magistrates to maintain public order (Lintott, 97). While in Rome, all citizens had a judgment against coercion. This protection was called *provocatio* (see below). Magistrates also had both the power and the duty to look for omens. This power would often be used to obstruct political opponents. One check over a magistrate's power was his collegiality. Each magisterial office would be held concurrently by at least two people. Another check over the power of a magistrate was *provocatio*. *Provocatio* was a primordial form of due process. It was a precursor to *habeas corpus*. If any magistrate was attempting to use the powers of the state against a citizen, that citizen could appeal the decision of the magistrate to a tribune (Cicero, 235). In

addition, once a magistrate's annual term in office expired, he would have to wait ten years before serving in that office again. Since this did create problems for some consuls and praetors, these magistrates would occasionally have their *imperium* extended. In effect, they would retain the powers of the office, without officially holding that office (Lintott, 97).

3.8 Consuls, praetors, censors, aediles, quaestors, tribunes, and dictators

The consul of the Roman Republic was the highest ranking ordinary magistrate; each consul served for one year. Consuls had supreme power in both civil and military matters. While in the city of Rome, the consuls were the head of the Roman government. They would preside over the senate and the assemblies. While abroad, each consul would command an army (Byrd, 179). His authority abroad would be nearly absolute. Praetors would administer civil law and command provincial armies. Every five years, two censors would be elected for an eighteen month term. During their term in office, the two censors would conduct a census. During the census, they could enroll citizens in the senate, or purge them from the senate. Aediles were officers elected to conduct domestic affairs in Rome, such as managing public games and shows. The quaestors would usually assist the consuls in Rome, and the governors in the provinces. Their duties were often financial (Byrd, 26). Since the tribunes were considered to be the embodiment of the plebeians, they were sacrosanct. Their sacrosanctity was enforced by a pledge, taken by the plebeians, to kill any person who harmed or interfered with a tribune during his term of office. All of the powers of the tribune derived from their sacrosanctity. One obvious consequence of this sacrosanctity was the fact that it was considered a capital offense to harm a tribune, to disregard his veto, or to interfere with a tribune. In times of military emergency, a dictator would be appointed for a term of six months. Constitutional government would dissolve, and the dictator would become the absolute master of the state (Byrd, 37). When the dictator's term ended, constitutional government would be restored.

4. Culture and Society of the Roman Civilization

Political changes in early republic Rome moved glacially. Education was largely limited to instruction imparted by fathers to sons in manly sports, practical arts, and military virtues; as a result, literary culture long remained minor part of Roman life, even among the aristocracy. War and agriculture continued to be the chief occupations for the bulk of the population. Life in ancient Rome revolved around the city of Rome, its famed seven hills, and its monumental structures such as the Flavian Amphitheatre (now called the Colosseum), the Forum of Trajan, and the Pantheon. The city also had several theaters, gymnasiums, and many taverns, baths, and brothels. Throughout the territory under ancient Rome's control, residential architecture ranged from very modest houses to country villas, and in the capital city of Rome, there were imperial residences on the elegant Palatine Hill, from which the word "*palace*" is derived. The vast majority of the population lived in the city center, packed into *insulae* (apartment blocks). The city of Rome was the largest megalopolis of that time, with a population that may well have exceeded one million people, with a high end estimate of 3.5 million and a low end estimate of 450,000. Historical estimates indicate that around 30 percent of the population under the city's jurisdiction lived in innumerable urban centers, with population of at least 10,000 and several military settlements, a very high rate of urbanization by pre-industrial standards. The most urbanized part of the Empire was Italy, which had an estimated rate of urbanization of 32%, the same rate of urbanization of England in 1800. Most Roman towns and cities had a forum, temples and the same type of buildings, on a smaller scale, as found in Rome. Starting in the middle of the 2nd century BC, private Greek culture was increasingly in ascendancy, in spite of tirades against the "softening" effects of Hellenized culture from the conservative moralists. By the time of Augustus, cultured Greek household slaves taught the Roman young (sometimes even the girls); chefs, decorators, secretaries, doctors, and hairdressers—all came from the Greek East. Greek sculptures adorned Hellenistic landscape gardening on the Palatine or in the villas, or were imitated in Roman sculpture yards by Greek slaves. The Roman cuisine preserved in the cookery books ascribed to Apicius is essentially Greek. Roman writers disdained Latin for a cultured Greek style. Only in law and governance was the Italic nature of Rome's accretive culture supreme. Against this human background, both the urban and rural setting, one of history's most influential civilizations took shape, leaving behind a cultural legacy that survives in part today. During the time of the Roman Republic (founded in 509 BC) Roman citizens were allowed to vote. These included patricians and plebeians. Women, slaves, and children were not allowed to vote. There were two assemblies, the assembly of centuries (*comitia centuriata*) and the assembly of tribes (*comitia tributa*), which were made up of all the citizens of Rome. In the *comitia centuriata* the Romans were divided according to age, wealth and residence. The citizens in each tribe were divided into five classes based on property and then each group was subdivided into two centuries by age. In ancient Rome, the cloth and the dress distinguished one class of people from the other class. The tunic worn by plebeians (common people) like

shepherds and slaves was made from coarse and dark material, whereas the tunic worn by patricians was of linen or white wool. A magistrate would wear the *tunica angusticlavi*; senators wore tunics with purple stripes (*clavi*), called *tunica laticlavi*. Military tunics were shorter than the ones worn by civilians. The *bulla* was a locket-like amulet worn by children. Men typically wore a toga, and women a *stola*. The woman's *stola* was a dress worn over a tunic, and was usually brightly colored. A *fibula* (or brooch) would be used as ornamentation or to hold the *stola* in place. A *palla*, or shawl, was often worn with the *stola*.

4.1 Dining

Since the beginning of the Republic until 200 BC, ancient Romans had very simple food habits. Simple food was simple, generally consumed at around 11 o'clock, and consisted of bread, salad, olives, cheese, fruits, nuts, and cold meat left over from the dinner the night before. Breakfast was called *ientaculum*, lunch was *prandium*, and dinner was called *cena*. Appetizers were called *gustatio*, and dessert was called *secunda mensa* (or *second table*). Usually, a nap or rest followed this. The family ate together, sitting on stools around a table. Later on, a separate dining room with dining couches was designed, called a *triclinium*.

4.2 Education

Schooling in a more formal sense was begun around 200 BC. Education began at the age of around six, and in the next six to seven years, boys and girls were expected to learn the basics of reading, writing and counting. By the age of twelve, they would be learning Latin, Greek, grammar and literature, followed by training for public speaking. Oratory was an art to be practiced and learnt and good orators commanded respect; to become an effective orator was one of the objectives of education and learning. Poor children could not afford education. In some cases, services of gifted slaves were utilized for imparting education. The language of Rome has had a profound impact on later cultures, as demonstrated by this Latin Bible from 1407. The native language of the Romans was Latin, an Italic language in the Indo-European family. Several forms of Latin existed, and the language evolved considerably over time, eventually becoming the Romance languages spoken today. Silver Age Latin was the most popular. Initially a highly inflectional and synthetic language, older forms of Latin rely little on word order, conveying meaning through a system of affixes attached to word stems. Like other Indo-European languages, Latin gradually became much more analytic over time and acquired conventionalized word orders as it lost more and more of its case system and associated inflections. Its alphabet, the Latin alphabet, is based on the Old Italic alphabet, which is in turn derived from the Greek alphabet. The Latin alphabet is still used today to write most European and many other languages. Although surviving Latin literature consists almost entirely of Classical Latin, an artificial and highly stylized and polished literary language from the 1st century BC, the actual spoken language of the Roman Empire was Vulgar Latin, which significantly differed from Classical Latin in grammar, vocabulary, and eventually pronunciation. Also, although Latin remained the main written language of the Roman Empire, Greek came to be the language spoken by the well-educated elite, as most of the literature studied by Romans was written in Greek. In the eastern half of the Roman Empire, which became the Byzantine Empire; Greek was the main lingua franca as it had been since the time of Alexander the Great, while Latin was mostly used by the Roman administration and its soldiers. Eventually Greek would supplant Latin as both the official written and spoken language of the Eastern Roman Empire, while the various dialects of Vulgar Latin used in the Western Roman Empire evolved into the modern Romance languages still used today.

4.3 Literature

Roman literature was from its very inception influenced heavily by Greek authors. Some of the earliest works we possess are of historical epics telling the early military history of Rome. As the Republic expanded, authors began to produce poetry, comedy, history, and tragedy. During the reign of the early emperors of Rome there was a golden age of historical literature. Works such as the 'Histories' of Tacitus, the 'Gallic Wars' by Julius Caesar and 'History of Rome' by Livy have been passed down to us. Unfortunately, in the case of Livy, much of the script has been lost and we are left with a few specific areas: the founding of the city, the war with Hannibal, and its aftermath. Virgil represents the pinnacle of Roman epic poetry. His *Aeneid* was produced at the request of Maecenas and tells the story of flight of Aeneas from Troy and his settlement of the city that would become Rome. Lucretius, in his *On the Nature of Things*, attempted to explicate science in an epic poem. Some of his science seems remarkably modern, but other ideas, especially his theory of light, are no longer accepted. Later Ovid produced his *Metamorphoses*, written in dactylic hexameter verse, the meter of epic,

attempting a complete mythology from the creation of the earth to his own time. He unifies his subject matter through the theme of metamorphosis. It was noted in classical times that Ovid's work lacked the *gravitas* possessed by traditional epic poetry. A great deal of the literary work produced by Roman authors in the early Republic was political or satirical in nature. The rhetorical works of Cicero, a self-distinguished linguist, translator, and philosopher, in particular, were popular. In addition, Cicero's personal letters are considered to be one of the best bodies of correspondence recorded in antiquity.

4.4 Architecture

In the initial stages, the ancient Roman architecture reflected elements of architectural styles of the Etruscans and the Greeks. Over a period of time, the style was modified in tune with their urban requirements, and the civil engineering and building construction technology became developed and refined. The Roman concrete has remained a riddle, and even after more than two thousand years some of ancient Roman structures still stand magnificently, like the Pantheon (with one of the largest single span domes in the world) located in the business district of today's Rome. The architectural style of the capital city of ancient Rome was emulated by other urban centers under Roman control and influence, like the Verona Arena, Verona, Italy; Arch of Hadrian, Athens, Greece; Temple of Hadrian, Ephesos, Turkey; a Theatre at Orange, France; and at several other locations, for example, Lepcis Magna, located in Libya. Roman cities were well planned, efficiently managed and neatly maintained. Palaces, private dwellings and villas, were elaborately designed and town planning was comprehensive with provisions for different activities by the urban resident population, and for countless migratory population of travelers, traders and visitors passing through their cities. Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, a 1st century BCE Roman architect's treatise "De architectura," with various sections, dealing with urban planning, building materials, temple construction, public and private buildings, and hydraulics, remained a classic text until the Renaissance.

4.5 Sports and entertainment

The ancient city of Rome had a place called the Campus, a sort of drill ground for Roman soldiers, which was located near the Tiber River. Later, the Campus became Rome's track and field playground, which even Julius Caesar and Augustus were said to have frequented. Imitating the Campus in Rome, similar grounds were developed in several other urban centers and military settlements. In the campus, the youth assembled to play and exercise, which included jumping, wrestling, boxing and racing. Riding, throwing, and swimming were also preferred physical activities. In the countryside, pastimes also included fishing and hunting. Females did not participate in these activities. Ball playing was a popular sport and ancient Romans had several ball games, which included Handball (*Expulsim Ludere*), field hockey, catch, and some form of Soccer. There were several other activities to keep people engaged like chariot races, musical and theatrical performances, public executions and gladiatorial combat. In the Colosseum, Rome's amphitheatre, 50,000 persons could be accommodated. There are also accounts of the Colosseum's floor being flooded to hold mock naval battles for the public to watch.

4.6 Religion and Philosophy

Roman religious beliefs date back to the founding of Rome, around 800 BC, but the Roman religion commonly associated with the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire did not start forming until around 500 BC when Romans came in contact with Greek culture and adopted many of the Greek's religious beliefs including the representation of Greek gods in the form of humans. Private and personal worship was an important aspect of religious practices of ancient Rome. In a sense, each household in ancient Rome was a temple to the gods. Each household had an altar (*Iararium*), at which the family members would offer prayers, perform rites, and interact with the household gods. Many of the gods that Romans worshiped came from the Proto-Indo-European pantheon, others were based on Greek gods. The three central deities were Jupiter (who was the god of rain, thunder, and lightning, of Proto-Indo-European origin), Mars (the god of warfare; identified with the Greek Ares), and Quirinus (who watched over the senate house), one of the truly Roman gods who was associated with the Sabines and with the founder of Rome, Romulus. From simplest form of such private worships and religious practices, religion in ancient Rome developed into an elaborate system, with temples, altars, rituals and ceremonies, priesthood, beliefs of traditional paganism and the cult of the Roman emperors. The power of ancient Rome spread ever further across a vast geographical area and Romans met with other cults and religions, like cults of Cybele, Bacchus, and Isis, as well as Judaism. With its cultural influence spreading over most of the Mediterranean, Romans began accepting foreign gods into their own culture, as well as other philosophical traditions such as Cynicism and

Stoicism. There were even attempts by many Roman and Greek philosophers to accept other gods that countered their religion, such as the Jewish deity Yahweh (viewed as the only supreme God by the Israelites) by stating that the Jews merely worshiped Jupiter but just under a different name and therefore there should be an acceptance of the Jewish culture. With the fall of the Roman Republic and the start of the reign of the emperors which created the Roman Empire in, the Roman emperors were considered to be gods incarnate. Two major philosophical schools of thought that derived from Greek religion and philosophy that became prominent in Rome in the 1st and 2nd century AD was Cynicism and Stoicism which, according to Cora Lutz were "fairly well merged" in the early years of the Roman Empire. Cynicism taught that civilization was corrupt and people needed to break away from it and its trappings and Stoicism taught that one must give up all earthly goods by remaining detached from civilization and help others. Because of their negative views on civilization and of their way of life, in where many of them just wore a dirty cloak, carried a staff, and a coin purse, and slept outdoors, they were the targets of the Roman aristocracy and of the emperor and many were persecuted by the Roman government for being "subversive". Much of the Roman practices of their religion and philosophy began to dwindle after 312, when the Roman Emperor Galerius legalized Christianity, hitherto brutally suppressed. Soon after his death, Emperor Constantine switched allegiance from Apollo to Christus as his patron, and won the battle of Milvian Bridge in 313. Under Constantine's direction, the Council of Nicaea (325) was held to decide the elements of orthodox Christianity, although Constantine himself was only baptized shortly before his death. Through all this, a few pagans clung to the old Roman religion – even enjoying something of a brief Renaissance under Julian the Apostate (361–63) – and continued to be tolerated until the reign of Theodosius I, who finally outlawed paganism in 390. Christianity had originally arisen in the Roman province of Judea, growing out of Judaism, and picking up influences from Greek philosophy as it spread throughout the Roman Empire

5. Conclusion

Focusing our attention on the dynamics of Rome's decline in the should not cause us to overlook the many ways in which Roman society was a towering success. No state has ever encompassed so much territory, with such territory, with such a large percentage of the world's population under its dominion, for so long a span of time. Roman rule maintained its vitality in the West from the Second Punic War to the end of the fourth century C.E. In the East, the Roman empire survived until 1453. Part of that success resulted from the Roman government's ability to create and maintain systems of communication, trade, and travel as no other state had done before, and as none would do again until modern times. So, The contributions of the Roman heritage on the modern West cannot be overemphasized. Even from ancient times the Roman Republic, and later the Roman Empire, was regarded as a successful template for all of civilization. The Romans had a superb ability to organize and administer to the needs of their citizens and also developed a tremendous legal system that is fundamentally in use even today.

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