

Legacies of ancient Rome and their impacts on Western civilization: a dialectic perspective

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Abstract: Ancient Rome, the once glorious empire, left behind a rich legacy like a bright star, illuminating the development of Western civilization. On the positive side, the legal legacy of ancient Rome is far-reaching. The Roman legal system was complete and logical, which laid a solid foundation for the development of the later legal system. Its emphasis on the principles of fairness and justice, as well as the protection of private property, has become an important cornerstone of modern law. In terms of political system, the republic and monarchy of ancient Rome provided an important reference for the evolution of western political system. Rome's administrative model and bureaucratic system have influenced the governance structure of later countries to a certain extent. In addition, the architectural achievements of ancient Rome were amazing. The magnificent Colosseum, Pantheon and other buildings not only reflect the superb engineering technology, but also show the aesthetic pursuit and grand spirit of the ancient Romans, providing a source of inspiration for the development of later architectural styles. However, the legacy of ancient Rome was not all positive. The expansion of the Roman Empire brought long periods of war and destruction, bringing great suffering to the peoples of the conquered regions. In terms of culture, the late Roman culture gradually moved towards extravagance and hedonism, which corroded the social atmosphere to a certain extent. At the same time, the huge bureaucratic system of the Roman Empire also had problems such as corruption and inefficiency, which became an area of vigilance in the governance of later states. To sum up, the influence of the ancient Roman legacies on Western civilization is complex and multifaceted. We should not only recognize their positive contributions and draw wisdom and strength from them, but also be alert to their negative factors and take history as a mirror to better promote the development of modern civilization. The Roman Empire is one of the most famous and influential ancient civilizations in European history. The legacies of ancient Rome have had a profound impact on European and world history. This paper will start with the heritage of the ancient Roman Empire and take a dialectical approach to explore the influence of the ancient Roman heritage on Western civilization.

Key words: legacies; ancient Rome; impacts; Western civilization

1 Introduction

The heritage of ancient Rome has exerted a profound influence on Western civilization. From a dialectical point of view, it has both positive and negative influences, including political system, legal system, culture and art, architecture and so on.

2 Roman heritage

2.1 Architecture

2.1.1 "Angel design" - the Pantheon

Pantheon, the Pan means all, and theon means all the gods, which must be worshipped in Rome. Since it was dedicated to the Church in 608 as a shrine to the Virgin, it is the best preserved of the original buildings of the Roman era. The 16 columns on the facade are reminiscent of ancient Greek architecture. The interior of the temple is in perfect proportion: the diameter is equal to the height, about 43 meters. The base of the great dome starts at half the total height [1]. The circular curve of the top of the hall continues to extend downward, forming a complete sphere and the ground. This is a miracle in the history of architecture, showing the profound architectural knowledge and sophisticated calculation methods of the ancient Roman architects. The Pantheon was also the first to focus on the interior rather than the exterior.

The Pantheon uses a centralized form covered by a dome, which is a representative of architecture with a single space and a centralized composition, and is also the highest representative of Roman dome technology. And it is an important symbol of ancient Roman culture, representing the ancient Romans' worship of gods and understanding of the universe. Its architectural style and artistic characteristics have had a profound impact on later architecture and culture.

2.1.2 A scar of slave society - the Roman Colosseum

The magnificent arena, completed in 80 AD, is a model of public architecture. Here you can see one of the most basic structures and greatest achievements of ancient Roman architecture: the arch structure. A series of arches, vaults and well-arranged oval building elements make the building extremely strong. At that time, the architecture relied on this high-level structural form, so that the internal space was liberated. The arena was designed with spacious staircases and corridors, and eighty arches were designed, each with a number at the entrance to allow the audience to quickly find their seats, allowing 50,000 people to enter and sit in the theater within ten minutes. Such a design is very advanced even today. The functional design of the arena is also very reasonable, with a clear distribution of places for gladiators to come in and out, places to rest, places to keep the beasts and places for the dead and wounded to be carried out. No wonder Chen Yunhe's poem called the Colosseum "probably just a scar on slave society" [2].

2.2 Laws

2.2.1 The Roman law, spanning the whole period of the Roman Empire

The Roman law, spanning the whole period of the Roman Empire, had a profound impact on the promotion of the spirit and concept of the rule of law in modern society. It has spanned the long historical flow and regional development, and its legal system and rule of law ideology have already exceeded the influence of Rome on the later generations [3]. In terms of the society at that time, Roman law was obviously designed to protect the interests of slave owners through legal forms, but the concept of natural law equality and rights contained in it promoted the relative equality and prosperity of the whole Roman society.

Roman law is formally divided into customary law and statute law. The whole structure is divided into citizenship law and law of nations. And it is the first relatively complete law code in European history, and its influence is extensive and far-reaching. It became the source of modern bourgeois jurisprudence and the forerunner of modern law. The legal concept of equality and supreme justice contained in Roman law has an eternal value that transcends time, region and nation. The ideological principles in Roman law became a weapon for the bourgeoisie to oppose the feudal system and promote the development of capitalism.

2.2.2 Twelve Bronze Tables, the foundation of the development of Roman law

As early as the middle of the fifth century BC, the Romans made laws according to their own habits. After that, Flavius further broke the aristocracy's knowledge and monopoly of the law, and he compiled the specific procedure and

legal terminology together, so that the general public could understand the law and learn to defend their rights and interests.

2.3 Literature

2.3.1 The beginning of the "literati epic" - *The Aeneid*

The Aeneid, one of the greatest epics of the Roman Empire, tells the legendary story of a Roman hero named Aeneas, which further formalized the structure, characters and rhyme of the ancient epic, and had a great influence on the later European epic genre.

The beginning of *The Aeneid* tells the story of the Trojan hero Aeneas, who fled Troy after the city was captured by the Greek allied forces, with the mission of establishing a new homeland, leading his people to flee Troy and go through a perilous journey on the sea. The poem begins with a description of the fall of Troy and the tragic sight Aeneas witnessed, the destruction of the city and the slaughter of its people. Aeneas, under the guidance of God, decided to lead the survivors to find a new habitat. They embarked on a challenging journey, facing storms, shipwrecks and other difficulties, but they kept going. During the escape, Aeneas and his people encountered many hardships, but also some magical experiences, such as encounters and interactions with various gods and goddesses. This beginning sets the stage for the epic story of Aeneas' courage, tenacity, and sense of purpose, as well as the unknowns and challenges that lie ahead for them, and also foreshadows their eventual journey to Italy to establish a new nation, become the ancestors of the Romans, and fulfill their God-given mission. *The Aeneid* is an epic poem created by Virgil, which has important literary value and historical significance. It integrates elements such as myth, legend and history to show the culture and values of ancient Rome.

2.3.2 A tome detailing the history of the Roman Empire--*The History of Rome*

The History of Rome is divided into five volumes, mainly describing the turbulent period of the Roman Empire, taking political history as the main line, and exploring topics such as economy, law, religion, culture and art. This part occupies a considerable length, which shows the breadth of Monson's historical knowledge and vision.

3 Positive impact

Before that, I read a book called *The Glory of the Ancient Roman Empire*, and then I had a certain understanding of Western civilization. The Roman legal system laid the foundation for western legal civilization, and one of the salient features of Western civilization is its legal civilization. It is a solid foundation for the stability and development of Western society since the establishment of the capitalist system. The source and cornerstone of Western legal civilization is the legal system created by the ancient Romans. Christian civilization laid the direction for the development of Western civilization [4]. Through the efforts of the Latin fathers, Christianity continuously enriched and improved its doctrine and ideological system, and finally laid the foundation of Christian civilization that decided the future development direction of Western civilization and influenced secular society and secular politics in the form of a social spiritual ethic.

4 Negative impact

As far as I know, the influence of Roman Empire title led to the delay in the unification of Italy and Germany in the Middle Ages, and the political status of Rome led to the establishment of the Christian Roman Church in the Middle Ages, which hindered the progress of Western Europe [5]. Slavery also brought about many negative effects, involving social, economic, moral, cultural and political fields. It deprived human dignity, limited economic development, and intensified the contradictions and conflicts between laborers and capitalists.

5 Conclusion

All in all, the heritage of ancient Rome involves cultural, political, legal and other aspects. Its influence on Western civilization is both positive and negative. It can be said that ancient Rome is the source of Western civilization. The culture of ancient Rome set the standard for many areas of the Western world, influenced the history of European religion and

philosophy, and provided useful inspiration for European political systems. But at the same time, the spread of the ancient Roman concept of military and conquest often led to wars, aggression and colonialism. Social fragmentation and rising inequality emerged. Slavery cast a long shadow over Western civilization. Large-scale construction also led to excessive consumption of water resources and environmental degradation. There have been cultural assimilation and stigmatization, negatively affecting the diversity and inclusion of Western civilization. Therefore, in assessing the influence of ancient Roman inheritance on Western civilization, multiple factors and perspectives need to be considered [6].

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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