



<i>NAME</i>	Munshi Saif Hossain
<i>ID</i>	2131139642
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Introduction:

Roman civilization is one of the anchors of Western civilization in terms of its government, architecture, culture, etc. It had its rise, peak, and influence on the Western Part. The Roman government most notably had an impact on Western civilization. The government of Roman civilization underwent three main phases, each of which reflected a unique governing style. The major phases are the Roman Kingdom, the Roman Republic, and the Roman Empire. It transformed Rome from a small city to the most powerful empire.

The Roman Kingdom:

Monarchy:

According to legends, there were seven kings, the first was Romulus. From the ancient Roman tradition, Rome was founded by the twin brothers named Romulus and Remus in 753 BCE. Kings were leaders on the political and religious side, the commander of the army, and served the role of chief judge.

Senate:

Kings were advised by the Senate, and from a pool of candidates, the successor was selected. The Roman Senate was the king's advisory body. They were patricians, the city's most powerful families. They mainly influenced the king in making any decisions, and in the new king's selection, they played an important role. A Popular Assembly was made up of all arms-bearing citizens, and the decisions made by the Senate and the King could be approved by this assembly. The town was under Etruscan rule until 509 BCE. The state became a res publica. It means a state without a monarch, ruled by the Senate and the citizens. There were two classes in the Roman government. The classes were the Patricians and the Plebeians (commoners). The Plebeians were small farmers, artisans, and many clients (dependent on patrician landowners). The plebeians offered political support to their patrician patrons in the ASSEMBLY in return for a means of survival.

The Roman Republic:

The Roman Republic started in 509, and it is said that was the golden age of Roman politics. This system prevented any individual or group from holding too much power. In this period, Rome evolved from a tiny city-state to become the leading force.

The last Etruscan king was removed from authority, and a republic was created by the Patricians.

Consuls:

The rule was assigned to two new officials were called the consuls. They shared executive power. They had a huge responsibility, like commanding the army, administering the government, and controlling both the assemblies and the Senate. They had veto power over each other, and tyranny was less probable when their term was only set for a single year. The consuls, who were selected yearly from the patricians, used their power to carry out the goals of that group.

Senate:

The Senate extended its role and gained popularity as the Republic's most powerful branch. Finances and foreign policy were controlled by the Senate, which advised magistrates on military matters.

In a technical sense, the Senate was advisory. They had a strong impact on Roman politics and government.

Assemblies and Popular Participations:

In government, the citizens of Rome participated in electing magistrates, passing laws, and making decisions on many other sides, and all these took place through popular assemblies.

Electing consuls, voting for major issues like war, etc., important matters took place in the important assembly called Comitia Centuriata.

The Plebeian class was represented by the Comitia Tributa and Concilium Plebis. Officials like the Tribunes of the Plebs could get elected and could pass laws by these assemblies.

Plebeians:

The plebeians struggled for political and social equality for more than two centuries after the establishment of the republic. They were the common citizens of the city, and often they were abused by the patrician officials. The advancement of the Plebeians during the early republic took two main points: their fundamental rights and their share of political power.

Tribunes of the Plebeians:

The plebeians were the common citizens and to protect their interests the office of Tribunes of the Plebeians was created. They had the veto power over the actions of other magistrates.

The duty of tribunes was to protect the plebeians from the abuses by the officials of patricians.

These tribunes were not easy to touch. A tribune's injury could result in death. They carried a lot of weight in the society.

The tribunes were called the guardians of the common people.

They had some powers and functions, among those we talk about the veto power, they had the right to convene and propose laws, and they had the right to convene the Senate, public advocacy, and many more.

There were about ten tribunes, and they possessed significant power to speak and act for common Roman citizens.

The Checks and Balances of the Roman Republic:

The checks and balances were built in a way by which an individual or a group could not hold a lot of power. They divided the power among different offices and limited the terms.

In the popular assemblies, citizens had the power to appeal any decisions made by the magistrates. An imperium system was used to keep magistrates responsible.

The Fall of the Republic System:

There were many reasons for the fall of the republican system. The late republic got internally conflicted. Growing love for money led to political corruption, the lust for power led to social inequality, and the struggle of class between the Patricians and Plebeians also led the way to the collapse of the late republic. The established Roman administration failed to govern the Mediterranean world. Provincial rule got worse. For this, governors, tax collectors, and soldiers shamelessly exploited the provincials. Internal conflict tore Rome apart. Some powerful military generals, Julius Caesar and Pompey, achieved unmatched influence. The aggressiveness for dominance formerly directed against foreign enemies turned into internal conflicts against the people of Rome. In the place of foreign wars and dominance over other lands, it converted into civil war.

The Republic fought the defensive wars, and they were gaining control over the neighboring territories to neutralize the threat of attack on themselves. They had a belief that as long as they had control over other territories, it would prevent the threat of potential attack from the people of those territories.

The Roman Empire:

Civil war weakened Rome, and the Roman Republic lost ground to the Roman Empire in terms of power. The Roman Republic system was an authority with shared power, but when it got transferred to the Roman Empire, it meant it transferred to an autocratic regime. In this term, the emperor held supreme power over all areas of the government.

The Senate and the assemblies continued to exist but the real authority was held in the emperor's hand, he was the one to control the lawmaking, provincial governance, and the military.

Augustus used a term to avoid the appearance of monarchy, and it is called the principate.

The emperor maintained an appearance of republican governance but in reality, he was holding the absolute authority. Augustus was effectively ruling as an autocrat but kept the external part as the Republic just to show. For this, he kept the Senate and magistrates in place.

Senate under the Empire:

The emperor kept the Senate, and it continued to function but its power was immensely decreased because, at that time of the emperor, it was serving just as an advisory body. At the time of monarchy, the Senate's power and at the time of imperial rule, the Senate's power, almost became the same.

Though the Senators could still govern the provinces, the supreme power over all important political decisions was held in the emperor's hand.

The Governance of Province:

Maintaining peace, collecting taxes, and administering justice were done by the provincial governors but finally responsible to the emperor. The provinces were governed by legates or proconsuls and they were appointed by the emperor or the Senate.

Next Empire and the Dominant:

The Dominate was established by the emperor Diocletian, and the reorganization also happened in the empire during his time, in the late 3rd century. Then the system became a more transparent form of the autocratic government. For this, the emperor became a most powerful figure.

The empire was split into two halves under the rule of Emperor Diocletian. The two halves were the Western and Eastern Roman Empires, and these two halves were governed by separate emperors.

The control over the state became more centralized and the imperial bureaucracy expanded under the time of Diocletian and later emperors.

In this system, the remaining power of the Senate and other Republican institutions was lost.

Fall of the Western Roman Empire:

Economic decline, instability among the internals, and external invasions by barbarian tribes were the main reasons for the decline of the Western Roman Empire.

The fall of the Western Roman Empire happened after the last Roman Empire of the West, Romulus Augustulus, was disposed of. On the other hand, the Eastern Roman Empire continued for nearly a thousand years more.

Comparison between the Government of Ancient Rome and Ancient Greece:

The two most important and influential civilizations are Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome, they made a significant amount of contribution to the concept of governance and their political system shaped the course of Western political thought and governance.

Important Similarities:

1. Both Rome and Greece had mixed governments. Sparta had a dual kingship and Rome had the Republic and they had these to balance different forms of power.
2. They kept the participation of citizens in the governance. Romans allowed citizens to participate in the popular assemblies and also they allowed their power in electing officials. Similarly in Athens, they allowed all the male citizens to participate in the assembly of direct democracy.
3. Both in ancient Rome and Greece they designed their governance system that had the checks and balances of power. In the Roman Republic system, they had the veto power and limits of power that an authority could hold, and in Sparta, check of power of the kings and the Gerousia could be done by the ephors.

Important Differences:

1. In the period of the Roman Empire, they advanced toward a system where one individual, the emperor, was in ultimate power. But in the Greeks, it was the opposite, they maintained unique political systems and didn't do a similar centralization of power.
2. The Roman Republic had a representative system, by which the citizens could elect officials and also the citizens could vote for magistrates, and participate in assemblies. On the other hand, Athens had direct democracy, by which eligible citizens could participate in the process of decision-making and male citizens could vote on laws and policies directly, it was one of their rights.
3. During the Roman Republic, the Senate was the most powerful body and patricians were the dominators of that. On the other hand, the Boule and Assembly were to vast participation by all citizens in the democratic organizations of Athens.

Conclusion:

The Roman Government system was an evolving structure and it was complex also, it shows many government systems like monarchy, democracy, and oligarchy. Terms by terms they showed many systems of the government. During the period of the Roman Republic, they had checks and balances in the power and prevented any singular group from gaining too much control over power, it was the aristocracy. After the end of the Roman Republic, the time span of the Roman Empire began. During the term of the Roman Empire, the power became centralized within the hands of the emperors. Though the Roman government had seen many changes in their system, they left a long-lasting legacy on the modern political system.