Position Paper for Caecillia, a featured rebel in, The Third Serville Revolt By: Emily Alice Ioffe

Compared to all of the great wars that the Roman Republic & its Legions fought, the one that remains most memorable is the revolt of Spartacus and his gladiators. This compelling event in time, happened at around, 73-71 BC. Spartacus and his diverse rebel legion of slaves, prisoners-of-war, peasants, and former gladiators terrorized Southern Italy in a horrific revolt. This then, ultimately threatened the salvation and the dignity of Rome. Spartacus had his differing rebel legion that consisted of slaves, prisoners-of-war, peasants, and former gladiators terrorized Southern Italy. It is famously known as the Gladiator War and the Third Servile War in relation to the two other preceding major slave revolts in Sicily 135-132 BC and in 104-110 BC. It was the war which Spartacus brought Rome and it was significant because it fought on the Roman mainland. However, it threatened the existence of the Roman Empire. An insufficient amount of information is known about Spartacus. However, Historians have found several surviving Roman manuscripts that can connect information about their lives then, for us living now.

The crimson War of Spartacus ended in April of 71 BC. Spartacus and his gladiator allies & brothers-in-arms Crixus and Onemaus (Celts, from continental Europe) led the successful initial revolt. In the spring and summer of 73 BC the gladiators broke out of Capua and began their guerilla war throughout Southern and Central Italy. The first major action of the Spartacus war was the surprise attack on Praetor Glaber atop Mount Vesuvius. The Sparticist rebels ransacked the camp; into the evening they celebrated their first major victory of the revolt. After raiding Campania and Lucania, Spartacus and his army pushed further north engaging small Roman forces, token resistance. The Praetors of Rome were taken aback on how these men were trained for the glory of Rome, for the pride of the nation, would stage an uprising and murder Roman cohorts. Most certainly there was great alarm and fear that such a large host could assemble to Rome. By the spring-summer of 72, Spartacus had probably somewhere between 18,000-40,000 men in arms along to fight. However, many factors were put against these worriers. The cultural differences between the many different rebels under Spartacus including the Thracians, Celts, Gauls, and Romans, made the attachment of his force difficult. In the end, Spartacus lost his life and the rebellion in which he and so many others had fought so dauntlessly and remorselessly in of April 71 BC.

One character, in pretiqular, whom is connected to the rebel side of the revolt, is Caecillia. She belongs to the minority of the few fully trained female gladiators, at the time. Caecilla is diligent to train young slave women and the young priestesses (Bacchantes) how to fight. In addition, she has persuasive/eloquent skills when trying to get women and their children to join the revolt. Belonging to the minority group of women, at the time of the Spartan revolt, she was illiterate. However, her work with the slave families has allowed her to become fluent in many languages and dialects which benefits her to be able to communicate to any rebel following the revolt. She is almost the, dark horse, of the revolt. She may be a woman, but, she is no force to be reckoned with.

All in all, at the end of the revolt, Crassus attained his total revenge. Justice for the cohorts and Roman citizens killed by the gladiators and slaves in the south following the escape from Capua in 73 BC. Spartacus avoided punishment, death by crucifixion through his death in battle. The surviving rebels, the comrades in arms who had fought so fiercely for their general, were crucified. Though the life and death of Spartacus remains covered in speculation, the history and battle of the Spartacus War is proof to the history of slavery and its desire for peoples everywhere to attain emancipation and integrity. Through this, it is clear that, Spartacus is a symbol of freedom and revenge (to fight for you and your people). The people withstand enslavement for too long, and through this, they have suffered under the hand of the wealthy and the powerful Roman citizens through the years. The reason to the revolt was to establish greater equality and freedom in their ancient society. Spartacus’s armies rise & downfall remains an icon of Roman history, as well as an icon of warfare & military history in the ancient ages. Today, Spartacus, is showcased as a positive image of a slave leader, he is seen as an image of deliverance of the poor and of the working class of Ancient Rome.

The Goal of this conference is to not only to fight, but to win the war against the Roman military. Solutions will arise for the people, and to maintain a good fight. However, in the end, the solution is to perhaps, not attack Rome with such force at the start. After defeating Athens in the Peloponnesian war, Sparta had great power in Greece. Spartan's discipline crumbled quickly with all of the opportunities for wealth and power which came from the supreme power. Over time, Class divisions among the minority of full Spartan citizens weakened the state. This then caused the richer citizens to skip out on their military obligations while poorer ones resented fighting to protect the rich. By his time Sparta was just a small regional power in a world dominated by Macedonia and Rome. When he was assassinated, Sparta was forced into the Achaean league, losing its independence forever. Fifty years later all of Greece was turned into a Roman province after the Achaeans tried and failed to push the Romans out. Some flaws still remain in the downfall of Sparta, some include, the changes over time, the series of events, and how the system was built with error that would end up causing the whole downfall to happen. Two of these events were detrimental, this was the earthquake that hit Sparta very hard killing of a large part of the population, and the Peloponnesian War against Athens that was immensely draining. These events would end up causing the detriment of Sparta and its peoples. Also there was in error in its build, to become Spartan you had to have Spartan parents. They did not accept immigrants nor did they assimilate conquered territories. Therefore, because of this error, the number of Spartan peoples were limited to natural growth, and when hit with events that drastically lower the population of the people and the battle after battle, were very detrimental and concerning. The fact that the Spartan people also didn’t take this into account, also didn’t benefit them in the long-run. Also, lastly, the changing times put a strain on Sparta. Sparta was one of the most powerful city states, yet, the times were changing. Nearby empires had started to rise (Macedon, Rome, etc.), and since Sparta did not allow immigrants and because they had been hit by major depopulating events, they had a hard time standing up to the emerging/growing empires. My solution would be, to somehow avoid or to better plan, so in the case of these events, the harm that eventually wiped-out Sparta, would be surveyed and disciplined.

End.

Sources for Emily Ioffe’s Position Paper:

1. <http://warfarehistorian.blogspot.ca/2012/07/spartacus-war-73-71-bc-great-gladiator.html>
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3. <http://www.ssuns.org/static/BG/Rebel.pdf>
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