Ancient Greek And Roman Empires Essay, Research Paper

Ancient Greek and Roman similarities.

The ancient Greek and Roman civilizations of Europe began to progress toward a more civilized order of society. As there were no previous establishment to base their ideals on, it was understandable that there were some difficulties in their progression as a society. Although the ancient Greek and Roman governments fell, both had similar paths of creation, conquest, and destruction.

Greek society began by the formation of the city-state. “The city-state, based on tribal allegiances, was generally the first political association during the early stages of civilization.” ( Perry, 45) This was the first step in the progression toward early self-government. “Greek city-states generally moved through four stages: rule by a king (monarchy), rule by landowning aristocrats (oligarchy), rule by one man who seized power (tyranny), and rule by the people (democracy). (Perry, 46)

Roman society began by the influences of surrounding cultures and quickly grew beyond the confines of a city-state status economy. “The more advanced civilizations of both Etruscans and Greeks were gradually absorbed by the Romans. From them, Romans acquired architectural styles and skills in road construction, sanitation, hydraulic engineering (including underground conduits), metallurgy, ceramics, and portrait sculpture.” (Perry, 84) Their need for growth led them to form a republic. “As in the Greek cities, the transition from theocratic monarchy to republic offered possibilities for political and legal growth. (Perry 85)

Both Greeks and Romans tried to realize some form of democracy. “It is to Greece that we ultimately trace the idea of democracy and all that accompanies it: citizenship, constitutions, equality before the law, government by law, reasoned debate, respect for the individual, and confidence in human intelligence.” (Perry, 52)

Because Rome tried to maintain a republic it had different needs compared to the Greeks. “The Romans, unlike the Greeks, were distinguished by practicality and common sense, not by a love of abstract thought. In their pragmatic and empirical fashion, they gradually developed the procedures of public politics and the legal state.” (Perry 88)

The fall of the Greeks was a direct result of a breakdown of social theories. “When people no longer regarded the law as an expression of sacred traditions ordained by the gods but saw it as a merely human contrivance, respect for the law diminished, weakening the foundations of the society. The results were party conflicts, politicians who scrambled for personal power, and moral uncertainty.” (Perry 55)

The Romans suffered a similar fate as a result of an unfocused administration. “Instead of developing a professional civil service to administer the conquered lands, Roman leaders attempted to govern an empire with city-state institutions, which had evolved for a different purpose.” (Perry 95)

The Greek and Roman cultures truly revolutionized the art of civilization. They initiated new ideals for the interaction of people in a society. They both had similar paths of creation, conquest, and destruction. They shared similar beliefs and as a result shared similar fates. Future societies can look at the mistakes made in the past and build from them, but if we are not careful, future mistakes may be built from past societies.