
Empires In World History

What do historians mean by Romanisation, and to what extent does this theory explain the success of the Roman Empire?

At its core Romanisation is an exchange or transfer of Roman culture into local non-Roman societies, these could be areas around where a legion's camp had been set. This cultural exchange can be seen to give the Roman Empire more control over the region indirectly by imparting their culture to leaders of local regions and in turn spreading their control as these local leaders want to be Roman. However, this isn't obviously the only way Rome was able to take and maintain control of areas so successfully. The success of the Roman Empire was down to not just the concept of Romanisation but also due to other factors such as their heavy military power. This essay will look to explain and demonstrate the success of the Roman Empire and how big of an impact that Romanisation had on its success.

Romanisation can be seen to be a key reason for the prolonged success of the Roman Empire and why it was able to become the dominant power in the world at the time, encompassing territories of Western Europe and North Africa. The theory of Romanisation does not explain the success of the Roman Empire throughout all its territories; however, it is useful in understanding ways that Romanisation to an extent led to some success of the empire. Though the Roman Empire took many territories militarily, Romanisation suggests that they indirectly adopted territories into the empire through non-Roman cultures adopting Roman culture. From things such as; learning Latin, adopting Roman dress, from this wanting to be Roman by earning citizenship through military service as it was one way to earn citizenship. In addition to this archaeological evidence found also shows non-Roman cultures having their own public bath houses. Furthermore, the introduction of Roman law in replacement of the tribal laws furthered the association with Rome and maintaining control and would lead to the overall success of the Roman Empire giving them much easier control. Other ways of Romanisation included the Latinisation of names to make them more similar to Roman names, by having them be more Latin sounding, as this was the language of Rome. Romanisation also went both ways, with Roman civilisation adopting some parts of other local cultures. This alone can be seen from the Romans adopting parts of the Hellenic culture, majorly this can be seen with the Roman gods sharing similar characteristics to their Greek counterpart. In addition to religion, Greek influence in Roman culture can be seen from other areas of society such as literature drama and art; with the latter being influence for Roman artists during the time. This also demonstrates the success of the Roman Empire with their way to adopt other cultures and mix it with their own to better integrate non-Roman cultures into their Empire. Overall, from what can be seen in this paragraph, Romanisation was a key part to the prolonged success of the Roman Empire. By creating a sense of familiarity by integrating other cultures with Roman culture it would make it much easier for these cultures to adopt the Roman culture as it wouldn't be too far gone from what the native or local culture was previously. This demonstrates that Romanisation, to a large extent, is key to explaining the success of the Roman Empire.

However, there were other reasons for the success of the Roman Empire the major one being its military might, being the strongest and most uniform of any other power during the ancient world. This was key to securing and maintaining control of territories, as not all of them would

want to be part of the Empire, as they had civilisations of their own. This can be seen even from before Rome truly became an Empire and was still a Republic, but also throughout the Empire period of Rome. Prior to Rome becoming an Empire its military power still reigned as a powerful force in the world. This can be seen during the Republic from the Macedonian Wars that were fought spanning from 214 BCE all the way until 148 BCE, in which Rome came out victorious. By the end of the third Macedonian War, the kingdom was annexed and divided into client republics that were subjects of Rome. The fourth and Final Macedonian war, that was an uprising against the Romans also ended up in Macedonian defeat and led to Macedonia becoming formal Roman provinces of Achaëa and Epirus. Despite the continued perseverance of Macedonia, Rome came out victorious. Showing that the military power of Rome was unmatched and even with the persistent wars with Macedonia it could not prevent being absorbed into the Republic. Demonstrating that it wasn't just Romanisation that was integral to Rome's success, but also its military that was always a key part of maintaining its Empire and making sure that it succeeded. These wars also spanned throughout its dawn as an Imperial power. Looking now then at the invasion of Britain and showing the extent in which not just romanisation was to play a key role within the Roman Empire, as it took many military battles to secure their hold on the territory. Making their way up from the south to secure control until reaching modern day Scotland in which many tried and failed attempts to secure the region failed, thus the construction of Hadrian's wall to be a defensible area from the Scots. Taking a long fought near 40 year campaign to secure the island nation from 43 CE to 83 CE. Fighting off uprisings and battles across modern day England and Wales. This demonstrates that the might and the military dedication of the military is also core to the success of the Roman empire. Though surely not just military prowess alone could keep control of all its territory and thus Romanisation was still incredibly vital even if not as large an extent as previously thought.

The success of the Roman Empire can be seen as initially due to the military prowess of the Roman legions, however its maintaining the control over the territory that truly make it successful, as without maintaining control of the territories, there isn't much of an Empire. It is a mix of both military factors as well as the theory of Romanisation that leads to the success of the Roman Empire. We need look no further than the occupation and Roman control over Britain. The invasion that can be seen evidenced in the previous paragraph shows how the military might of Rome was able to gain initial control of the area. However, it is the Romanisation after the invasion that leads to show true success of the Roman Empire through Romanisation. Evidence of Roman public baths in Britain show this Romanisation in the territory. Further evidence of Romanisation can be found from the construction of roads that weren't previously seen in Britain, religion also came to be Romanised or introduced, the previous religion of Britain was pagan with them believing in various superstition of gods and spirits. Roman religion was still introduced with the construction of religious sites, even though the Romans allowed the native and local cultures to maintain their old religion. With the Romanisation of Britain comes a sort of amalgamation of cultures between the local culture. This shows that Romanisation was of key importance in gaining and maintaining control over a region as without the intervention of the Romans and the introduction of their technologies they would be no different to more barbaric ways. Showing that the success of the empire at least in Britain was due to a reliance on them for a successful society.

In conclusion the success of the Roman Empire was due to different factors, the theory of Romanisation is a key part of the success of the Empire's success and how it was able to maintain control and hold it for so long. The theory of Romanisation to a large extent explains the success of the Roman Empire. It shows how they were able to adapt to a variety different

cultures and how the integration of Roman culture into non-Roman societies were successfully integrated into the Empire and for such a prolonged period until the fall of the western empire. Other factors certainly played a part in the success of the Roman Empire; however, the theory of Romanisation certainly explains why it was so successful and long lasting.

How did John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson change imperial historiography?

To begin with knowing what John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson did is vital in understanding their impact on the historiography of imperialism but more specifically Imperial historiography. Originally it was believed that free trade was anti-imperial, it was passive. Robinson and Gallagher argued the alternative, free trade was the basis for relentless expansion during the 19th century and Victorian period into Africa and Asia, areas that previously had not been influenced by Britain or its Empire. Their article on imperialism and free trade did have opposition at the time and this alone shows impact to the historiography that previously was dominant in history of empire.

Firstly, taking a more in depth view on the argument originally presented by Gallagher and Robinson, they wrote that the new imperialism that begun during the 19th century could best be identified as a longer term policy of free trade within the informal empire, with this being favoured over formal annexation and control over a territory. Informal empire being the areas that weren't formerly under any sort of imperial control but that did have an imperial powers economic and political influence. This can be seen from investment that took place during the 19th and early 20th century in Argentina. With Argentina relying on investment and trade, by 1913 £1.18 billion of capital. In addition to this Robinson and Gallagher opposed two main trains of thought on imperial historiography at the time. Opposing both New Commonwealth historians, those who focused on constitution and legal history of empire (Gallagher and Robinson believing they were apologists of empire), and the Marxist historians, believing that empire was for the sole purpose of economic gain and material factors such as investment and trading. Both of these ideas don't shed much light on the idea of informal empire, not looking below the iceberg as they put it. Focusing primarily on formal empire, the parts that were visible to all perspectives not really paying attention to the informal parts of empire, which spanned a much larger area of influence. This informal empire spread a much farther area as it could be identified in many different ways, this includes; diplomacy, coercion, gunboat diplomacy and the implementation of free trade. The impact that this had on imperial historiography depends of course on which perspective you agree with. However, this did give way to a much deeper look into imperial influence in other nations. With the idea and concept of informal empire, which previously was a more subtle area of empire was now peeking its way to the surface more than before.

Of course, there is opposition and problems with the Gallagher and Robinsons perspective. For a start the ambiguity of the term informal empire can create some issues, is any form of influence with another nation classed as informal empire, how much or how little constitutes the concept of informal empire? The lack of any sort of formal definition of informal empire leads to some problems with the idea of informal empire as it is incredibly broad. This just creates issues when looking at informal empire as it suggests that any sort of imperial influence is informal empire when that is certainly not the case. Of course, there are also arguments to be made of the context of Robinson and Gallagher's work, are they just products of their time. Being

influenced by the global events that were taking place during their works such as the era of the Cold War with increased globalization and the emergence of supranational companies. In addition to this, Opposition for lack of a better term could be found to outline these issues with the Robinson and Gallagher works and naturally opposition to long standing ideas of imperial historiography. However it can be seen that, New Commonwealth and Marxist historians can both agree and disagree with this. The New Commonwealth historians could still see this as being part of empire as it regards the civil service and the economic gains of Britain in a semi-official capacity. In addition to this the Marxist historians believe in sole economic gain of empire which is still clarified as informal empire is just the benefits without the formal control. Though Robinson and Gallagher don't agree with either of these views its not too far from them still having significance within empire, but just a more openminded and detailed perspective of the opposing views that challenges empire.

Though opposition of the ideas and terms put forward by Robinson and Gallagher is warranted it doesn't outright invalidate their ideas and their impact of the historiography of imperialism nor does it oppose the changes that came forward from their works. The change presented by them was pioneering at the time, opposing views that were common at the time and presenting their own new ideas on empire, looking below the surface of what was typical at the time and looking at more on how the influence of empire can be favorable to the imperial nations providing a much more laid back attitude to imperial control through the use of economic and political influence. Not only that but the gunboat diplomacy as previously stated was an effective tool of imperial powers. For example, the use of it by the Britain in China during the Opium Wars. This was used effectively for Britain as it allowed them to secure trading privileges in China as well as territory in the nearby waters. Looking at another power, though not necessarily imperial, the United States and them firing shells upon Japanese ports in an effort to end their isolationism. Which in turn led to Japan themselves becoming their own imperial power for a time. The overall outlook that Gallagher and Robinson present can be seen to be as simple as demonstrating and showing that imperial power its effectively used and exercised in a variety of ways, not just the most obvious. Their works only go to push forward that there can be much more than that is officially stated. Not only that but they implemented many new terms and definitions into the language of imperial historiography. Not just for the history of Empire but for imperial historiography as a whole. Which includes Ancient Empires as well as the Empire of Modern History such as those of Europe in the past centuries.

Overall, Robinson and Gallagher changed historiography at the time the way that hadn't been looked at previously. They introduced a range of language and terms for the idea of imperial rule with informal empire being the major one as part of their original work 'Imperialism and Free Trade'. Their work can show to change the historiography of empire in a significant way, by showing that not all of imperial policy is through the official rule over a place but also through informal means such as investment and trade that cause nations to rely on them as well as the use of military dominance and threat to gain advantages in different regions. Showing that imperial power in exercised in a multitude of ways, not just what is official policy. That is fundamentally how Gallagher and Robinsons work changed imperial historiography, by revolutionizing the ways that imperial influence and rule can be seen.