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Rome has been around for quite some time, and its people have made important contributions to Italy and its society. The Roman people were pioneers in a variety of aspects of life, and without their influence one can only wonder if Italy would have turned out to be as successful of a country as it has turned out to be. The foundations of Roman life, though definitely dated in various aspects, still continue to leave a positive impact of Italy and the life of Italian citizens.

Ancient Rome was founded on April 21st, 753 B.C. and was a monarchy for 244 years until it became a Republic in 509 B.C. While it was a monarchy the population was composed of the different groups called "gens" which were composed of families or people within the same socioeconomic status. The upper class, known as the Patrizi, had the most money and therefore held the most power in society. Then, with changing times and kings, the person with the most power in the monarchy was, of course, the king; he had total power of all aspects of life. Once Rome became a Republic in 509 B.C. "la divisione dei poteri" (the division of power) became a bit fairer to the population. Some roles, such as those of the two consoli and the two pretori, were limited to only one year terms of service, and once an individual's time in office had expired he was not allowed to be re-elected for at least another ten years. Also, there were more individuals with powerful roles in society but with roles that were limited to certain "aspects" of life; for example, there was the Pontefice, similar to what is known today as the Pope, whose power was extended to

cover the religious aspect of life.

“La Divisione Dei Poteri” was a monumental decision for the Roman people; whether or not they knew it their decision to separate and limit the power of certain individuals eventually “inspired all modern-day constitutions” (Muntoni). Clearly Contemporary Italy was influenced by the Romans and “La Divisione” because Italy today has various branches of government, many political parties and various Government officials such as Napolitano and Berlusconi (www.traveldocs.com). Without the division of powers who knows if the government of Italy would be as advanced as it is today, perhaps there would be one person playing the role of president, prime minister, various other ministers, international ambassador and so on – that would be quite chaotic and most likely turn out unsuccessful!

Before turning into a Republic, King Servio Tullio, the third king of Rome, surveyed his citizens and divided the population into “six classes based on income” (Muntoni). Individuals were then required to pay taxes and war contributions on how much money they had made. Although this idea seems like common sense in the twenty-first century it was rather innovative and intelligent for someone to devise over 2500 years ago. Logically speaking it is only fair that people are taxed based upon how much money they make; it would be ludicrous for someone who was barely surviving economically to be taxed just as much as one of the most wealthy people in town.

Legislators in Italy today appear to still be in agreement with King Tullio’s idea to base taxation on an individual’s yearly income. According to www.worldwide-tax.com, [t]axation of an individual's income in Italy is progressive. In other words, the higher the income, the higher the rate of tax payable.” It is rather lucid that Tullio’s system, though very old, is still influencing contemporary Italy in 2008, illuminating another way in which

the Roman way of life still affects Italian life today.

“Le Dodici Tavole”, or the Twelve Tables, were laws that were literally written in a bronze table, hung for all of the Romans to see in the Forum (Muntoni copy 202). These laws, which pertained to various aspects of life, were put into action as means of providing guidelines for Romans to follow when living their lives. This was significant because at this time Romans finally had undisputable guidelines in which they had to follow, if they chose to break these laws then there were consequences that had to be carried out. Another advantage to these laws was that they were applicable to all of the population, meaning that there could be little dispute over who the laws applied to at that time. This was to the advantage of the lower-class citizens in a sense because it was not only them who could now be punished; however, the laws clearly highlight the fact that there was still slavery and injustice towards the lower citizens. (Muntoni copy 202). An example of this injustice would be the law that forced a lawbreaker to pay 300 “assi” if he harmed a “free man” but only half of that if he hit “uno schiavo”, a slave (Muntoni copy 202). It was most likely reassuring to the lower class that there were at least laws being circulated in society, even if they may have favored the upper-class citizens.

In Italy today there are obviously laws that all citizens are required to follow, otherwise they will be punished. It is safe to say that the Romans, with their Twelve Tables, definitely influenced Italian societies (among many others) by putting laws into action over 1500 years ago. One of the original laws discusses how if an individual kills a thief who enters his home at night then it is acceptable because he did it justly (Muntoni Copy 202), the validity behind this law seems to be because if a person cannot see who is entering his house illegally then he should have the right to kill him in order to protect himself and his

loved ones – in today’s terminology this would be called “self-defense”. In contemporary Italy, along with many other countries, if a person harms another because his life is in danger then one will probably argue so that he will be acquitted of the crime because he only harmed the perpetrator as means of protection. Clearly the Roman’s development of the Twelve Tables has impacted life in Italy because, had those clever Romans not thought to devise a system like that, one can only wonder if Italy would have any laws today.

Clearly the founding fathers of Rome made significant contributions not only to their respective societies during their respective time periods, but their contributions have continued to be a part of everyday life in modern Italy. It is undeniable that many contemporaries societies have been affected by their predecessors, but with ancestors such as the Ancient Romans it is debatable that the Italians have had the most influential and successful lineage in history.

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