

Was the Roman Republic a Democracy

Democracy: A government or a country by representatives elected by the people. The Roman Republic was a massive empire. There are some interpretations of its power structure that say it was a democracy and others that show it was not. There are three historians who studied the Roman Republic determining if it was a democracy or not.

Polybius was a Greek historian who absolutely adored the Roman empire. Polybius wrote about the Roman Republic in 167-119 BCE.

According to Polybius the Roman Republic was partially a democracy. Polybius states "It is the people in the assemblies who grant office to those who deserve it through elections. The assemblies also have the say in passing or repealing laws and most important of all it is that they make the final decision on the question of peace or war." This quote proves part of his point in how much power the assemblies really have. An assembly is (Small group of people who the citizens voted for that vote for them) Polybius can't really decide if the Roman Republic was a democracy or not.

Professor Fergus Millar was a British Professor of history at Oxford University. Millar thinks, "Every adult male citizen, unless specifically disqualified, had a vote and there was no formal exclusion of the poor. Free slaves also had a vote..." From this quote he says "There was no formal exclusion of the poor." This is very unique from other voting systems like ours, which make it very difficult for people of lower income to vote. Millar clearly shows that he thinks the Roman Republic was a democracy.

Professor Alan Ward at the University of Connecticut believes that the Roman Republic is not a democracy. "Historian Ramsey MacMullen

persuasively argues that only 2% of Roman citizens usually voted, Which makes any notion of direct democracy nugatory.” This quote shows that Ward believes that not enough citizens to put up a compelling argument between who takes office makes the whole concept of democracy totally impossible. Ward also states that to vote, Roman Citizens had to make it into the city which was very dangerous and expensive.

In my opinion I agree with Ward because it just totally rules out the others opinions based on fact and information examples such as that 2% of the Roman citizens usually vote totally proves that this is definitely not a democracy.. In conclusion I think that the Roman Republic was not a democracy.