**Rome –Middle Ages DBQ**

In the third century AD Rome faced many problems. In addition to internal

decay, the invasion by the Germanic tribes seemed to sound the death knell for the Western Roman Empire. Historians have examined both the internal conditions that weakened the empire and the external force of the barbarian invasions and have presented many of explanations for the fall of the Western Roman Empire.

**Document 1**

Textbook, *The Course of Civilization* by Strayer, Gatzke & Harbison (1961)

The basic trouble was that very few inhabitants of the empire believed that

the old civilization was worth saving … the overwhelming majority of the

population had been systematically excluded from political responsibilities.

They could not organize to protect themselves; they could not serve in the

army . . . Their economic plight was hopeless. Most of them were serfs

bound to the soil, and the small urban groups saw their cities slipping into

uninterrupted decline.

**1. What were the basic problems facing the Western Roman Empire**

**according to the authors?**

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**Document 2**

Excerpt from *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbon.

The decline of Rome was the natural and inevitable effect of immoderate

greatness (large size)…The introduction … of Christianity, had some

influence on the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. The clergy

successfully preached the doctrine of patience; the active virtues of society

were discouraged; and the last remains of military spirit were buried in the

cloister; a large portion of public & private wealth was consecrated to the

…demands of charity and devotion …

**2. According to the excerpt from Gibbon, what were two causes for the fall of Rome? Explain both.**

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**Document 3**

This excerpt is from *Uses of the Past* by Herbert J. Muller.

First the economic factor …While the empire was expanding, its prosperity

was fed by plundered wealth and by new markets in the semibarbaric

provinces. When the empire ceased to expand, however, economic progress soon ceased…. The abundance of slaves led to growth of the *latifundia,* the great estates that … came to dominate agriculture and ruin the free *coloni* (farmers) who drifted to the cities, to add to the unemployment there. The abundance of slaves kept wages low.

**3a. What issues does Muller identify as causes for decline?**

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**Document 4**

This excerpt, from *The New deal in Old Rome* by Henry Haskell, blames the decline on the taxation required to support the government expenses.

…Part of the money went into … the maintenance of the army and of the vast bureaucracy required by a centralized government…the expense led to strangling taxation… The heart was taken out of enterprising men…tenants fled from their farms and businessmen and workmen from their occupations. Private enterprise was crushed & the state was forced to take over many kinds of businesses to keep the machine running. People learned to expect something for nothing. The old Roman virtues of self reliance & initiative were lost in that part of the population on relief (welfare)…The central government undertook such far reaching

responsibility in affairs that the fiber of the citizens weakened.

**4a. Why did the Roman government have large expenses?**

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**4b. What was the effect of high taxation on the people?**

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**Task 1: What caused the fall of the Western Roman Empire?**

List a cause for each of the categories on the left using the documents and

your studies of Ancient Rome. Write the cause under the category in the left column, then provide details in the middle column. Circle the source(s) in the right column.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Cause | Details | Source |
| Social - |  | 1 2  3 4 |
| Economic - |  | 1 2  3 4 |
| Political - |  | 1 2  3 4 |

**Task 2: Cause and Effect – Ancient Rome – Middle Ages**

**For each cause of the fall of Rome, list at least one way it led to the beginning of the Middle Ages.**

**Effects**

**Causes**