

Public Administration in Ancient Rome and Egypt

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Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to define the ancient public administration in Ancient Rome and Ancient Egypt. Public administration theory is not a modern concept; both Ancient Rome and Ancient Egypt had a well-developed public administration and borrowed by many different public administrations in the modern world. Ancient Rome had established different administrative hierarchies for military affairs, law, finance and taxation, internal affairs and foreign affairs, everyone with its central head of states. The administrative structure was well-thought out that later was borrowed by the Roman Catholic Church and applied to its structure. Officers reported back through their superiors to the emperor; the emperors were at the center of the state. On the other hand, Egypt had a well-structured public administration, as well. Ancient Egypt was a unitary system and at the central of the government was the pharaoh and was the chief justice of the country and presided over the entire administration, and under the pharaoh were the viziers. Ancient Egypt was structured with a central government and many local governments.

Keywords: public administration; education; law; ancient; government; Rome; Egypt;

1. Introduction

Ancient Egyptians and ancient Romans were very hands-on when it came to the structure and instruction of the public administration, and this indicated on many aspects of the public administration. Their structures not only made for very organized workers affair, but also enhanced the self-respect and prestige of the services. "The government of ancient Egypt had the structure of the pyramid. The king ruled at the top. Beneath him was a hierarchy of workers. Only a few people held positions of great power. These were the king's chief officers, who included the vizier and the high priest. These men oversaw lower officials in areas such as law, religion, agriculture, and trade. Judges, priests, scribes, and nobles played key roles in government. Lower in the hierarchy, there was a large group of officials who oversaw all the farmers, craftsmen, and the soldiers. Nevertheless, indirectly, all officials obeyed to the orders of the king, whose word was law."(Kaplan, 13) Ancient Rome and Ancient Egypt used well-designed public administration to advance and control their empires for many years to come.

2. Public Administration in Ancient Rome

Many studies made on the state and public administration of Ancient Rome. A well-known writer who has written about public administration in ancient Rome is Marcus Tullius Cicero. He writes that when thinking of the public administration; have to understand that a great civilization as the Roman Empire could not have survived without a significant public administration to run it. "The history of the world can be viewed as a rise and fall of public administrative organizations. Those ancient empires that rose and prevailed were those with better administrative institutions than their competitors. Brave soldiers have been plentiful in every society, but ultimately wasted if not backed up by administrators who can feed and pay them. Marcus Tullius Cicero, the ancient Roman orator, is usually credited with first saying "the sinews of war are infinite money." (Shafritz p.3) Also during the empire the actual administration lay in the hands of the public servants known as praefetus urbi. (Moorman, 501) Ancient Rome, similar to other big ancient city, or modern cities for that matter was very concerned with its management. "essential for running a city knows what the needs of the citizens are and are going to be" (Robinson, 3) Consequently, when this started to change, evidence for this belief again in the history of ancient Rome, the government of which he interprets as increasingly centralized and consolidated as the empire grew. "As it became more insular, it was cut off from local, grassroots concerns. Its corresponding loss of legitimacy contributed to the empire's collapse." (Mosher, 1981, p. 189) Ancient Rome educated its citizens in many issues to the public organization of daily life in the city, including public works, public health, shows and spectacles. It describes the ways in

which roman citizens' behavior attitude if they wanted to get permission to build a house, where they had to go for juridical help, or who was who in administration. (Robison, 3)

3. Education in Ancient Rome

Education system was an important area in Ancient Rome for the public administration. Governmental employees were one of the first groups to get the most education focus. However, the goal of education did not start as relevant to the public policy, but, as a way to unite the empire and move away from tradition practices. Citizens of Rome recognized this fact and continued to educate their children at home. "The purpose of education in ancient Rome was the perseverance of the established pattern of Roman life. Being practically minded, the Romans had no use for pure philosophy and were suspicious of it, believing it could be used as a method of dissolving tradition. The opposite was true of ethical and political theorizing. They were deeply concerned with human happiness and knowledge was to them the means to such happiness"(Dicicco, 13) There were two kinds of learning that a government official could participate: one was to provide general education, writing and reading for upper grade office workers, and the other, was more simplified and was for lower office personal. "Books and public libraries were also by-products of the new development in educational beliefs. However, the most significant change from the Republic to the Empire was Rome's recognition of the need for a well-trained civil service which required an educated populace. By the second century CE, the ratio of illiterates in the population was at an all-time low despite the tremendous population growth of the Roman Empire and this growth required a literate public service to maintain the city's operation. Further, the increasing number of civil servants supported the continuous expansion of the Empire. Civil servants social mobility and educational attainments valued as a means of advancement. The Roman civil service included doctors and architects and the upper division included the magistrates."(Decicco, 25) To get a job in the public administration became more and more difficult as people become more literate. "The higher post in the imperial service, a law degree was a requirement. The administration of capital, more than any other large town, is likely to be subject to intervention by the central government. (Home 1971: 127) The administration structure in Ancient Rome consisted of four different groups. These organizations were the Emperors household, the imperial council, the executive staff and the legal administration group. Emperor's domestic household group played an important role in state affairs. The second group was the imperial councils; this group took care of the questions addressed on administration and assistant the emperor in his legal duties. The third group composed of the executive department. The fourth group was the judicial administration. (Beyer, 247) The above quote demonstrates the value placed in public administration development in ancient Rome. "Cicero and Quintilian were, therefore, two major Roman advocates of formal education." (Woody, 1970:601) Because of its difficult beginnings to improve the education system, many teachers were brought from Greece. As a result, Roman education was greatly influenced by Greek methods. (Decicco, 25)

4. Law in Ancient Rome

Law was an imperative aspect of the administration in Ancient Rome. "Her constitutional system was a perfect balance of the monarchic (consul), oligarchic (senate), and democratic (assemblies) elements. Moreover, the cement that held it together was the fear of the gods expressed in due performance of the traditional rites." (Ferguson, 24) The Romans had a clear understating that if they want to have their empire at the top of the game; they have to have a well-versed law system. The following quote from Cicero describes the importance of law in ancient Rome. He writes: "We must have magistrates, for without their prudence and watchful care a state cannot exist. In fact, the whole nature of a republic is determined by its arrangements in regard to magistrates. Not only must we inform them of the limits of their administrative authority, we must also instruct the citizens of the extent of their obligation to obey them. Man who rules efficiently must have obeyed others in the past and the man who obeys dutifully appears fit at some later time to be a ruler. Thus, he who obeys ought to expect to be a ruler in the future, and he who rules should remember that, in a short time, he will have to obey" (Cicero, Laws, III, 2) (Chandler, 196) To be a citizen of ancient Rome was to understand the legal ethics of that state. The law services in ancient Rome were to make sure that a fair trade and use of common sense was practiced during a business transaction, this was created to help its citizens. In ancient Rome was believed that the Administrative power rooted in the collaboration of people, and to obey the law or otherwise the state would be nothing without it. Ancients Romans draw The Laws of the Twelve Tables; these were drawn up in the fifth century BCE, the Twelve Tablets replacement of religious law by civil law. "Moreover, priests were replaced by magistrates as the administrators of the law, thereby profoundly altering perceptions of this character of the governmental bureaucracy. The Romans believed

that their Constitution was superior to all others and their laws were based on the work of many rather than being the vision of one. Study of the law was, therefore, valued in ancient Roman society. Cicero regarded the learning of this law as an intellectual training ground for entering into public affairs, as the Twelve Tables" (Decicco, 19) While, these laws were relatively crude, they served as a foundation for the future development of a growing body of civil law. (Decicco, 18) Administrator had to have a great deal of knowledge about the law and their duties and wanted to keep the traditional believe that the support staff was their servants and not their masters. In ancient Rome was used the standardization salary system in their position was practiced and public administrators were paid almost the same as their military organization, which was a lot. Legal formulation or definition was Rome's great strength. Everything in Rome depended on right or jurisdiction. The magistrates had imperium, or absolute power. *Lus* (the ordinary Latin word for force, "civil law") and *fas* ("religious law," what had divine sanction apart from the state) combined in the ruling bodies. Rome might look like a theocracy, but it was not, for all was legal." (Ferguson, 27)

Public Administration was a large part of the Roman Military. As a result, the government took great care and dedication. "According to the Roman constitution, every free-born citizen was a soldier, and bound to serve if called upon, in the armies of the state, at any period of life, from the age of sixteen to forty-six, until he had accomplished a term service of sixteen years on foot, or ten years on a horse; nor at first, was anyone deemed qualified to fill the higher offices of government who had not served ten campaigns." (Goodrich, p.279) On the other hand, Cicero makes the success of the Roman Empire on the success of the public administration. "Rome and other Empires before it conquer much of the ancient world because it had an organizational doctrine that made its soldiers far more efficient than competing forces – and because its legions, supported by a sophisticated administrative system of supply based on regular, if not equitable taxes. The Roman Empire only fell when its legions degenerated. Soldiers to not march on an empty stomach as Napoleon said. However, they march on the proverbial backs of tax collections, and the roads build by administrators." (Zhafritz, 3) Cicero also writes that many other empires had soldiers, but the administration structure was an important element that made the Ancient Romans successful in their missions to battle and win many battles, at the same time maintain their status as a great power in the ancient world.

5. Public Administration in Ancient Egypt

On the other hand, public administration, in Ancient Egypt, was as well developed as ancient Rome. Ancient Egyptians structured with a central government and many local governments. "First in authority under the king was the vizier or prime minister. He presided over the entire administrative hierarchy but also was the chief justice of the country, with both original and appellate jurisdiction, had charge of the state's central records office, and served as the king's chief architect. Under the general supervision of the viziers were a number of significant administrative departments, among them the treasury, the granaries, agriculture, public works, the armory, and the army. In addition, there were the temples of the state gods and the mortuary temples of kings" (Beyer, 243) The ancient Egypt system was so good that many times borrowed by many great civilizations like Rome and Greece. Discovery of hundreds of administrative seal stamps shows that an elaborate administrative system was operational. Many of the stamps found, as well as three hieratic inscriptions, concern activities carried out by different official agents, including some cereal transfer involving the chief of the village. "All these activities were supervised by a large and complex," (Garcia, 2013) Ancient Egypt developed on the principle of centralization and control by the government. In ancient Egypt, the government was divided into two systems the local government and the central government. The head of the central government was the pharaoh. "Under the general supervision of the vizier were a number of significant administrative departments, among them the treasury, the granaries, agriculture, public works, the armory, and the army. In addition, there were the temples of the state gods and the mortuary temples of the kings." (Beyer, 243) Everything was for the State and through the State, nothing for the individual, except the mere possibility of a grey existence, which saved the worker from starvation. Ancient Egypt used a system called 'Ptolemies.' "From the beginning of their rule in ancient Egypt, the Ptolemies adopted a decisive line of policy in combating the elements that weakened and disintegrated the central authority. They appropriated a politico-religious principle, which had ever been the basis of the Egyptian state. The substance of this policy was that the king alone held absolute power and unlimited rights of disposal over the material resources of the country as a whole and the wealth of individuals in particular. On this system of "divine right" the Ptolemies founded their administrative, social, and economic policy. They elaborated it in detail and constrained the feudal element in Egypt, especially the temples and the priesthood, to obey it." (Rostovtzeff, p.164) The economic, social and political structure of Ptolemaic Egypt has become more and clearer. Nash, for example, argues that one of the causes for the decline of Egypt after 1100 B.C.E. was "a decline in the effectiveness of the administrative system," since the priest-managers propagated a "stern, dry, and

religious formalism," and did not want to make even the slightest changes in the prevailing administrative traditions." (Nash, 16) Establishment of administration all over the country accomplished by construction of temples and ceremonial centers which marked, all together, the range of the domain and power of the reigning pharaoh. Nevertheless, the collaboration of the local elite was an indispensable, and not always self-evident, aspect of the administration. (Garcia, 95)

6. Education in Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egypt had a well-established education system. "In technology, medicine and mathematic, ancient Egypt achieved relatively high standards of productivity and sophistication. The Egyptians created their alphabet and a decimal system." (Mobi, 42) As a result, its higher standards in education, public administration benefited the most and was given an upper hand to education. Education was mainly used to prepare the civil services so they can perform their work as efficiently as they could. "The prestige of the Egyptian civil service was such that it was the most sought after the vocation in the society. Royal schools were established to train civil servants in the techniques of statecraft. More senior departmental officials were themselves instructors. However, instructional programs in these "stables of education," as they called, were not limited to teaching students about the practical work of government departments. They were also designed to provide for a liberal education and intellectual development of Egypt's future administrators. For graduates, there were well-paid positions with regular extras for meritorious service, clear lines of promotion, and a high degree of professional stability" (Chandler, 200) We can see how imperative public administration was in ancient Egypt and the importance placed on educating government employees.

7. Law in Ancient Egypt

Law in ancient Egypt was taken solemn by the lawmakers and its citizens. Punishment "People who broke the law in ancient Egypt got punished. The local police had the job of catching criminals. Courts decided how criminals should punish. "The pharaoh was the absolute monarch of the country and at least in theory, wielded complete control of the land and its resources. The king was also the supreme military commander, which relied on the bureaucrats to manage his affairs. In charge of the administration was his second in command, the vizier, who acted as the king's representative and coordinated land surveys, the treasury, building projects, the legal system, and an archive. At a local level, the country was divided into as many as 42 administrative regions called nomes each governed by a nomarch, who was accountable to the vizier for his jurisdiction."(Mobi, 20)There were two kinds of courts in ancient Egypt. The first was the local court, or Kenbet, which handled most cases. The second was the High Court, located in the capital. This court managed serious crimes. The viziers handed the court system. Judges tried to keep citizens from misbehaving by making examples of criminals. Beatings with sticks were common. Criminals who tried to escape got their nose, or ear cutoff. A person could is killed for serious crimes, such as plotting to harm the king."(Kaplan, 17) Administration of law was imperative for the ancient Egyptians to keep the peace and order in the ancient Egypt. Also, the ancient Egyptians viewed men and women, including people from all social classes (except slaves) as equal under the law. "Both men and women had the right to own and sell property, make contracts, marry and divorce, receive inheritance, and pursue legal dispute in court."(Mobi, 22)

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, Roman Empire and Egypt have many things in common when it comes to public administration structure and importance placed upon its institutions. "The hierarchical form of organization, full- time professional staffs, social stratification of the service, clearly marked paths of promotion, relative security of tenure-these were characteristics of both services. Both, moreover, had the same tragic endings, in becoming oppressive and burdensome to the people" (Beyer, 249) Public administration was an imperative role in Ancient times, in Egypt and Rome, shown from many aspects of its development. Citizens of these cities understood the importance of public work. As a result, father wants to have their children in their footstep, which gave a high degree of stability in the ancient Egyptian bureaucracy. "By custom if not by law, many of the public posts went from father to son or to some other close relative, particularly, true of the governorships of the nomes. Priestly offices, too, were to an extent hereditary that is, entry into priestly ranks was hereditary, but not the hierarchical level. Speaking, the Egyptian official, regardless of his level or departmental location, had a strong desire to leave his office to his son, and often he was able to do so." (Beyer, 243) Working for the

government was an imperative task and difficult to have in ancient Rome and Egypt. Public administrators benefited from its lucrative pay and training that came with the job. For these two great powers having a well-structured public administration, was a very critical factor to their success and development in their cities.

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