

Katlynn Rushing

Title: “Spartacus and the Third Servile War”

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My name is **Katlynn Rushing** and I am a senior History major here at IPFW. I recently graduated this past May from IPFW with a Legal Studies (Pre-Law) degree with a History minor. I came back to study history because I have a passion to learn it and enjoy taking the history classes here at IPFW. I will be done again with my degree this May and plan to take the LSAT this September. My ultimate goal is to go to law school in the Fall of 2018 to study and eventually practice law.

Abstract

The Third Servile War, also known as the Spartacus War, was the only one of three slave wars to directly threaten the heart of Rome due to its repeated victories over the Roman army and rapidly expanded numbers. The rebel slave responsible for the success of this uprising was Spartacus. Originally from the land of Thrace, Spartacus was an auxiliary of the Imperial Roman army. It was not until after Spartacus received formal Roman gladiatorial combat training at what was called a “ludus” that he was able to spark a slave rebellion that shook the very foundation of Rome’s ideologies and culture.

Slave defiance, let alone full-fledged slave uprisings, was a rarity within Rome because slavery itself was a norm in its caste system. The fact that Spartacus, along with his other fellow gladiators, was so successful is a nuance that merits great historical analysis to this day. In this paper, I aim to illustrate how the perception of Spartacus and what he represents has changed throughout time. During this era, the slave uprising posed as a mere political opportunity to advance those already in power such as Marcus Crassus and Pompey. To the Romans themselves, this revolt was a threat to their traditional social system and their own personal well-being. Today, the legacy of Spartacus represents how a slave can reverse the traditional role and epitomize the very thing he was denied during this time— freedom.

Bibliographical Note

I used a variety of primary and secondary sources in my paper. However, to further my thesis on deciphering the “how” and “why” the slave revolt led by Spartacus was more successful and groundbreaking than previous revolts, I narrowed my research on secondary sources to gauge the overall story of the revolt itself.