

## 7-1 Final Project

Haley Gallagher  
His 117 World Civilizations to 1500  
October 17th, 2021

Starting from the late Neolithic period to 1500 CE, humans started creating what we know as societies, empires, and certain states. They created these types of living for different reasons, like for food, defense, and population growth. Another reason for these states, is greed, particularly wanting to be the best and look the best to the outsiders. These communities also gave people the opportunity for rulers and laws, someone to essentially tell them all what to do and how to do it. The Greeks, Romans, and Vikings are three societies and empires that show us great examples of greed and wanting to look the best. When looking at these three communities, we see the glamour of them from the outside, exactly how the rulers wanted us to see them, but that is because we don't look deeper into why that is and why greed and violence go hand in hand to make societies thrive.

I've chosen the Greek empire, Roman empire, and the age of the Vikings because they all seem to have the same idea, greed and violence. I wanted to take a deeper look into each society and empire to find what made each of them that way. It seems that there has always been war and no one has ever escaped it, the Greeks, Romans, and Vikings were plagued with it. Beginning in the ninth century B.C.E., the Greeks organized a series of city-states, which served as the political context for the development of ancient Greek society.<sup>1</sup>

Rome was founded in 753 B.C.E. on good beginnings and things were relatively well for them. Legends say that Romulus, twin to Remus, founded the city of Rome and established himself as its first king. His laws, along with 6 successors, have greed in violence throughout them, proving that the kingdom was started with those ideas in mind. An example of one law, "If

---

<sup>1</sup> Jerry H. Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (McGraw Hill, 2021), 185.

a daughter-in-law strikes her father-in-law she shall be dedicated as a sacrifice to his ancestral deities.”<sup>2</sup> The age of the Vikings began in the late eighth century and ended in the early 12th century, this was not a long period for history, but it was enough time for us to learn about these very interesting people and their raids across Europe. Many Norse were merchants looking for commercial opportunities, some of these were known as Vikings, who turned their skills into raiding. Sometimes Viking fleets attacked without warning, at least 700 ships sailed up the Seine River and besieged Paris.<sup>3</sup> Environment played a part in the creation of societies and empires during this period of time. Societies in the Mediterranean basin were created in their location because of the access they had to water. Between 2200 and 1450 B.C.E., Crete was an important center in the Mediterranean because of its location, they had early influence from Egypt<sup>4</sup>. This geographic location allowed them to advance their craft in sailing, which then allowed them to sail to Greece, Anatolia, Phoenicia, and Egypt to trade their wine and olive oil in exchange for grains and textiles<sup>5</sup>.

Humans created different structures to help during the creation of their societies, a great example is the creation of the Roman Republic. This government and political structure was created after the fall of the kings. This new government was led by two consuls, taking over

---

<sup>2</sup> “Laws of the Kings, 753-510 B.C.”, [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/laws\\_of\\_thekings.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/laws_of_thekings.asp), 2008

<sup>3</sup> Jerry H. Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (McGraw Hill, 2021), 327

<sup>4</sup> Jerry H Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2021), 186.

<sup>5</sup> Jerry H Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2021), 186.

many duties of the kings, including the cities politics and leading soldiers into war<sup>6</sup> With the creation of this structure, it allowed the Romans to further expand the Republic through the century, including an expansion in the Mediterranean. Later on through history Rome expanded into an Empire, during this time society in the Roman Mediterranean included trade through the sea lanes<sup>7</sup>

Societies benefited from these structures and the way they organized themselves around the Mediterranean Sea. The sea allowed them to sail to different societies to trade their goods for other goods, each benefited their communities. Trade was very important the societies during this time in history. Trade gave these communities the opportunity to have products they never knew they could have or produce themselves because of the regions they lived in. Greece concentrated on olives and grapevines, while Syria and Palestine produced fruits, nuts, and wool fabrics<sup>8</sup>. Even century in the future, trade would still be important, as would owning shops of their own. An example of its importance can be found written on a wall in Pompeii. Someone wrote, “A copper pot has been taken from this shop. Whoever brings it back will receive 65 sesterces. If any one shall hand over the thief he will be rewarded”<sup>9</sup>.

The societies of Greek, Roman, and Viking were similar in the ways that their class and gender structures were set up. All three of them had slaves at the bottom, but they did differ in

---

<sup>6</sup> Mary Beard, *SPQR (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2015), 127*

<sup>7</sup> Jerry H Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2021), 217

<sup>8</sup> Jerry H Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2021), 217

<sup>9</sup> “Inscriptions From Pompeii”, <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/ancient/pompeii-inscriptions.asp>, 2021

some ways as well. With the Vikings, there were many poor people who were not slaves and there were many terms for others who were between farmers and warriors in the upper class, like, *hauldr*, *pegn*, and others<sup>10</sup>. The Greek system in Polis allowed men to be the heads of the households, they even had the right to decide to keep infants born to their wives. They could not legally kill the infants, but could take them to mountain tops and leave them on their own<sup>11</sup>.

Women in ancient Greece, including citizen women, were the non-military half of the population<sup>12</sup>. In Sparta though, women were allowed to participate in athletic contests, went to town by themselves, and joined public festivals<sup>13</sup>.

The effect these structures had on the societies was most likely seen with the women and the slaves of the communities. Women didn't have the rights to government and they were seen as property to their husbands. A law by Romulus, from 753-716 B.C.E., in Rome's early days stated, "A woman united with her husband by a sacred marriage shall share in all his possessions and in his sacred rites," giving the idea that women had a higher position in the household than women in Greece.<sup>14</sup> Literacy was common in upper-class Greece, so the effect of the structure of

---

<sup>10</sup> Else Roesdahl, *The Vikings* (Great Britain: Penguin Random House, 2016), 55

<sup>11</sup> Jerry H Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2021), 199

<sup>12</sup> Paul Cartledge, *Thebes* (New York: Abrams Press, 2020), 62

<sup>13</sup> Jerry H Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2021), 199

<sup>14</sup> "Laws of the Kings, 753-510 B.C.", [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/laws\\_of\\_thekings.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/laws_of_thekings.asp), 2008

gender in Greece, allowed women to earn reputations for literacy talent, including the famous poet, Sappho<sup>15</sup>.

For the Greeks in Thebes, their development of religion was brought on by Boeotian Hesiod from Ascra who flourished around 700 B.C.E. and served as a transition marker, he was a pioneer for all Greece and Greeks in the basic sphere of religion.<sup>16</sup> The Thebens were integral members of the ethos (a group linked by common descent, real or fictitious) of the Boeotians.<sup>17</sup> Greece was not a society that only worship one god, but multiple deities. Apollo, Hercules, and Dionysus were heavily worshipped in Thebe's, but there were many more gods and goddesses in the Greek culture.

The Romans differed only at the early days of their history, the successor of Romulus, the peace-loving Numa, was given the role of 'the founder of Roman religion.'<sup>18</sup> Before Numa, the story of Romulus, he consulted the gods in the Temple of Jupiter in deciding where the new city should be founded. Several laws made by Numa involved the gods, including, "it is an act of impiety to make libations to the gods with wine from unpruned vines."<sup>19</sup> The Romans did draw inspiration from the Greeks, their tradition of rational thoughts and philosophy allowed the

---

<sup>15</sup> Jerry H Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2021), 199

<sup>16</sup> Paul Cartledge, *Thebes* (New York: Abrams Press, 2020), 48

<sup>17</sup> Paul Cartledge, *Thebes* (New York: Abrams Press, 2020), 48

<sup>18</sup> Mary Beard, *SPQR* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2015), 102

<sup>19</sup> "Laws of the Kings, 753-510 B.C.", [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/laws\\_of\\_thekings.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/laws_of_thekings.asp), 2008

Romans to establish political control of the Eastern Mediterranean in the third and second centuries B.C.E.<sup>20</sup>

Every society or empire has their own tools or machines that they have developed over time, during the age of the Vikings, they developed different types of ships, particularly war and travel ships. These ships were built from oak and they included the combination of sailing and rowing which gave the vessel unique maneuverability. Which allowed for passing under low bridges and handling difficult conditions of wind and currents.<sup>21</sup> The way that Vikings were able to built their ships allowed them the ability to travel farther distances than they ever had before, with the aid of these ships, they were able to raid places unknown to them at the time.

A tool that developed in Rome were good roads, which encouraged trade between regions. Trade was very important to the Romans and roads were as asset to them during their travels. In the lands that they conquered, the Romans founded new cities to serve as links between local regions, the paved roads allowed them to travel between the cities.<sup>22</sup> The Romans differed from the Vikings based on their ways of travel. Vikings preferred traveling by ship to the regions they wanted to raid for products and money. While the Romans, traveled by their paved roads between regions, allowing their towns to be connecting in a different way. The Romans also traveled by sea in the Mediterranean for trade. The Greeks were more similar than different to the Romans, trade was also very important to them. They had trade networks by both land and

---

<sup>20</sup> Jerry H Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2021), 222

<sup>21</sup> Else Roesdahl, *The Vikings* (Great Britain: Penguin Random House, 2016), 89

<sup>22</sup> Jerry H Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2021), 216

sea as well, they produced little grain, but much of Greece was suited to cultivate olives and grapes, which allowed for trade of grains and other items.<sup>23</sup>

The early days for the Greeks included Minoan and Mycenaean societies, these societies both had economies that interacted with societies near theirs and a bit further away. Crete, a Minoan society, was a principal center of Mediterranean commerce between 200 and 1450 B.C.E., Cretans traveled by ship with advanced sailing design by the Phoenicians. Minoan ships sailed to Greece, Anatolia, and Egypt, where they would exchange wines, olives oils, and wool for grains and other goods.<sup>24</sup> Mycenaean society expanded beyond peninsular Greece and overpowered Minoan society and even established settlements in Anatolia and Sicily.<sup>25</sup>

The Vikings economy was different from most states or empires, they acquired most of their silver and coins from expeditions, or raids, in Eastern or Western Europe, which helped their economy. It is said that Frankish rulers defrayed at least 44,000 lbs of precious metal to the Vikings.<sup>26</sup>

Roman expansion from republic to empire showed huge effects in regions that were newly incorporated into the empire. When Roman soldier, diplomats, governors, and merchants arrived in large numbers to these new towns, they began to stimulate the local economies and states. They sought access to resources like tin, and wanted locals to start the cultivating of

---

<sup>23</sup> Jerry H Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2021), 198

<sup>24</sup> Jerry H Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2021), 186

<sup>25</sup> Jerry H Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2021), 186

<sup>26</sup> Else Roesdahl, *The Vikings* (Great Britain: Penguin Random House, 2016), 116

wheat, olives, and grapes.<sup>27</sup> Roads and seas lanes allowed the Romans to trade with cities at further distances, the sea lands linked ports from Syria and Palestine to Spain and north Africa. The Romans even called the Mediterranean *mare nostrum*, meaning “our sea”, they found ways to maintain communications with all regions of their empire.<sup>28</sup>

For Romans, it didn’t seem like much was ever in their way, but that wasn’t the case when it came to the Parthian empire. The Parthian empire affected the development of furthering the Roman Empire expansion to the East, which also affected furthering roads and trading in the areas. A major event between the Romans and Parthians happened in 53 B.C., Crassus and over 40,000 Roman troops were beaten by the Parthian forces at the Battle of Carrhae, on what is now the border between Turkey and Syria. If Parthia was overtaken by the Roman Empire, the empire would have grown and with it the economy would have grown developed trade routes and roads between the cities now within the empire.

Later on during the time of Mycenaean society, conflict with the city of Troy in Anatolia began about 1200 B.C.E. This war included invasions of foreign mariners in the Mycenaean homeland, with these disturbances, the society found it impossible to maintain an economy and relations with their neighbors, which lead them to find themselves in the beginning of ruin.<sup>29</sup> The fall of Mycenaean society most likely saw the most interactions with neighboring societies from the inhabitants that fled to the islands of the Aegean Sea, Anatolia, or Cyprus.

---

<sup>27</sup> Jerry H Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2021), 213

<sup>28</sup> Jerry H Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2021), 216

<sup>29</sup> Jerry H Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2021), 187

Trends in neighboring areas for the Vikings started to affect their economy and profits in the mid tenth-century, with many fortifications being built in Western Europe. The Danevirke protected Denmark's southern border and is one of the largest ancient defenses in Northern Europe.<sup>30</sup> No written sources record the political and military reasons for the construction, but around this time the Danes had a king named Ongendus, who refused to be converted to Christianity.<sup>31</sup>

By increasing global networks, the societies or empires were given the opportunity to travel further to other regions outside of their own. When given these opportunities, trade increased, helping the people and the economy of local towns and cities. With the rise of cities from growing economies, it helped to bring more citizens to the towns. In Greece, most manufactures usually operated small, but there are records of workshops with near 60 employees.<sup>32</sup>

Once again, looking at the three communities of the Greeks, Romans, and the Vikings, we have always seen the glamour and how the rulers wanted us to see them in the future, looking more into greed and violence in these communities shows us that they were not as glamorous as we wanted to believe they were. Rome rose from conquering the lands of other empires and societies around them, the Greeks had a history with more war and battles, including invasions as well. The Vikings plundered and raided their way through parts of Europe in search of silver, goods, and other valuable items that would be beneficial to them back in their homelands. All of

---

<sup>30</sup> Else Roesdahl, *The Vikings* (Great Britain: Penguin Random House, 2016), 140

<sup>31</sup> Else Roesdahl, *The Vikings* (Great Britain: Penguin Random House, 2016), 140

<sup>32</sup> Jerry H Bentley, Herbert F. Ziegler, Heather E. Streets-Salter, Craig Benjamin, *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2021), 198

these individual groups form a group identity as a whole, an identity filled with one of greed and violence just to get what they want, no matter the costs.

### Bibliography

Beard, Mary. 2015. *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome*. New York, NY: Liveright Publishing Corporation.

Bentley, Jerry, Herbert Ziegler, and Heather Streets Salter. 2020. *ISE Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past*. 7th ed. Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill Education.

Cartledge, Paul. 2021. *Thebes: The Forgotten City of Ancient Greece*. New York, NY: Abrams Press.

Hopkins, Edward C. D. 2021. "History of Parthia." Parthia.Com. 2021. [https://www.parthia.com/parthia\\_history.htm](https://www.parthia.com/parthia_history.htm).

"Inscriptions From Pompeii." n.d. Fordham.Edu. Accessed October 9, 2021. <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/ancient/pompeii-inscriptions.asp>.

"Laws of the Kings, 753-510 B.C." n.d. Yale.Edu. Accessed October 9, 2021. [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/laws\\_of\\_the\\_kings.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/laws_of_the_kings.asp).

Roesdahl, Else. 2016. *The Vikings*. Harlow, England: Penguin Books.