

Advanced Placement World History 2019-2020

Instructor:

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Welcome to Advanced Placement World History!

This course will be a most rewarding challenge. In order to prepare for the course, AP World History students are required to complete a summer assignment. Students are expected to pick the required textbook (*World Civilizations: The Global Experience* by Stearns) by the first week of school. The text is not required to complete the summer assignment.

The newly-revised AP test parameters this year covers modern world history from 1200 CE through the present day. Inherent, however, is prerequisite knowledge of civilization's origins, patterns, and growth in earlier time periods. This summer assignment is geared toward familiarizing you with this history and to lay a foundation of historical knowledge that will be built upon throughout the course.

Parts of the Summer Assignment:

1. ***An Evening with John Green***- watch the Crash Course World History videos on YouTube and fill in the worksheet to familiarize you with the themes of the course this year.
2. Read the two provided excerpts from Standage's ***History of the World in Six Glasses*** and answer the questions. These trace the role of two of history's most impactful beverages--beer and wine--as significant cultural catalysts in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. **NOTE: *In no way is this an endorsement or promotion of alcohol consumption; rather, it is an examination of cultural diffusion in early societies, similar to later widespread changes caused by coffee, tea, and Coca-Cola.***



Summer Assignment Notes




- You are encouraged to pick up the text as soon as it is convenient! You can select an e-book or hard copy. Read parts of the textbook to get a feel for the content, vocabulary, and layout.
- **All parts of the Summer Assignment are due the first week of class in either physical or digital format to your instructor.**

An Evening with John Green

Through his YouTube series *Crash Course World History*, John Green he provides an exciting insight to the rise, fall, and intertwining of peoples and civilizations. For this assignment, pop yourself some popcorn and check out these five videos from Green's world history teachings. **You do not need to answer the guiding questions, but they give you a good idea of what you should be learning.** The goal here is to connect and organize information in the themes of the course.

Step 1: Watch the videos and consider the guiding questions. Hyperlinks are included for each.

<p>Video 1: <u>Agricultural Revolution</u></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we have evidence of hunter-gatherers (H-G) and their life ways. • What advantages did H-G have over early agriculturalists? • Where did agriculture emerge? Which food crops are associated with which areas? • What are the advantages and disadvantages of agriculture? • What impact does agriculture have on the environment? • If H-G had a "better and healthier" lifeway, why did people become agriculturalists? • What do historians say are the drawbacks to complex civilizations and agriculture?
<p>Video 2: <u>Indus Valley Civ</u></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does John Green define what constitutes a civilization? How does this compare to other definitions of civilization you have learned? • Where did the earliest civilization emerge? Why there? • Why was the Indus Valley a prime location? How did the environmental impact the people who lived there? • What evidence exists of long-distance trade and with whom?
<p>Video 3: <u>Mesopotamia</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Green begins by discussing one of the most obvious consequences of agriculture... what is it and what are the most immediate consequences for those

 <p>ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA</p>	<p>societies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Mesopotamia compare with the Indus River Valley? Identify both similarities and differences. • Cuneiform: What three points does John Green make about the advent of writing? • What was Hammurabi's most significant contribution? • What are the challenges of an empire? What is the usual result?
<p>Video 4: <u>Egypt</u></p>  <p>ANCIENT EGYPT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What point is John Green making about the different "lenses" we use when we study history? • How did the Nile River shape the worldview of the Egyptians? How did this compare to the Mesopotamian worldview? • How was Egyptian civilization different from most other river valley civilizations? Why do you think this was the case? • What does the construction of the pyramids represent? What was the motivation for building the pyramids? • What protected Egypt from outside peoples? How were the Egyptians eventually conquered by Semitic peoples of the Middle East?
<p>Video 5: <u>Bronze Age</u></p>  <p>BRONZE AGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia have in common? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Trade: what did underwater archaeologists find on the shipwreck? ◦ War: what was one of the main drivers of economic growth? ◦ Family: how did these civilizations share familial relationships? • What are we really talking about when we use the word 'civilization'? • What happened around 1200 BCE to Mycenaeans, Minoans, Hittites, and (partially) Egypt? • How does interdependence in the Bronze Age help lead to its downfall?



Step 2: Fill 1-2 notes/examples for each theme in each video you watch. The themes used here are used throughout the course.

1. Interaction Between Humans and the Environment (ENV)
2. Cultural Development & Interactions (CDI)
3. Governance (GOV)
4. Economic Systems (ECN)
5. Social Interactions & Organization (SIO)
6. Technology and Innovation (TEC)

	Agricultural Revolution	Indus Valley	Mesopotamia	Egypt	Bronze Age
ENV					
CDI					
GOV					
ECN					
SIO					
TEC					



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Beer in Mesopotamia and Egypt

Excerpt from *A History of the World in 6 Glasses* by Tom Standage

Directions: Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

A Pint of Prehistory

Ever since the emergence of "anatomically modern" humans, or *Homo sapiens sapiens*, in Africa around 150,000 years ago, water had been humankind's basic drink. A fluid of primordial importance, it makes up two-thirds of the human body, and no life on Earth can exist without it. But with the switch from the hunter-gatherer lifestyle to a more settled way of life, humans came to rely on a new beverage derived from barley and wheat, the cereal grains that were the first plants to be deliberately cultivated. This drink became central to social, religious, and economic life and was the staple beverage of the earliest civilizations. It was the drink that first helped humanity along the path to the modern world: beer.

Exactly when the first beer was brewed is not known. There was almost certainly no beer before 10,000 BCE, but it was widespread in the Near East by 4000 BCE, when it appears in a pictogram from Mesopotamia, a region that corresponds to modern-day Iraq, depicting two figures drinking beer through reed straws from a

large pottery jar. (Ancient beer had grains, chaff, and other debris floating on its surface, so a straw was necessary to avoid swallowing them.)

Since the first examples of writing date from around 3400 BCE, the earliest written documents can shed no direct light on beer's origins. What is clear, however, is that the rise of beer was closely associated with the domestication of the cereal grains from which it is made and the adoption of farming. It came into existence during a turbulent period in human history that witnessed the switch from a nomadic to a settled lifestyle, followed by a sudden increase in social complexity manifested most strikingly in the emergence of cities. Beer is a liquid relic from human prehistory, and its origins are closely intertwined with the origins of civilization itself.

Beer was not invented but discovered. Its discovery was inevitable once the gathering of wild grains became widespread after the end of the last ice age, around 10,000 BCE, in a region known as the Fertile Crescent. This area stretches from modern-day Egypt,



up the Mediterranean coast to the southeast corner of Turkey, and then down again to the border between Iraq and Iran. It is so named because of a happy accident of geography.

When the ice age ended, the uplands of the region provided an ideal environment for wild sheep, goats, cattle, and pigs – and, in some areas, for dense stands of wild wheat and barley. This meant the Fertile Crescent provided unusually rich pickings for roving bands of human hunter-gatherers. They not only hunted animals and gathered edible plants but collected the abundant cereal grains growing wild in the region.

Such grains provided an unexciting but reliable source of food. Although unsuitable for consumption when raw, they can be made edible by roughly pounding or crushing them and then soaking them in water. Initially, they were probably just mixed into soup. A variety of ingredients such as fish, nuts, and berries would have been mixed with water in a plastered or bitumen-lined basket. Stones, heated in a fire, were then dropped in, using a forked stick. Grains contain tiny granules of starch, and when placed in hot water they absorb moisture and then burst, releasing the starch into the soup and thickening it considerably.

Cereal grains, it was soon discovered, had another unusual property: Unlike other foodstuffs, they could be stored for consumption months or even years later, if

kept dry and safe. When no other foodstuffs were available to make soup, they could be used on their own to make either a thick porridge or a thin broth or gruel. This discovery led to the development of tools and techniques to collect, process, and store grain. It involved quite a lot of effort but provided a way to guard against the possibility of future food shortages. Throughout the Fertile Crescent there is archaeological evidence from around 10,000 BCE of flint-bladed sickles for harvesting cereal grains, woven baskets for carrying them, stone hearths for drying them, underground pits for storing them, and grindstones for processing them.

The result was the first permanent settlements, such as those established on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean from around 10,000 BCE. Cereal grains, which started off as relatively unimportant foodstuffs, took on greater significance following the discovery that they had two more unusual properties. The first was that grain soaked in water, so that it starts to sprout, tastes sweet. It was difficult to make storage pits perfectly watertight, so this property would have become apparent as soon as humans first began to store grain. The cause of this sweetness is now understood: Moistened grain produces diastase enzymes, which convert starch within the grain into maltose sugar, or malt. (This process occurs in all cereal grains, but barley produces by far the most diastase enzymes and hence the most maltose sugar.) At a time when few other sources of



sugar were available, the sweetness of this "malted" grain would have been highly valued, prompting the development of deliberate malting techniques, in which the grain was first soaked and then dried.

The second discovery was even more momentous. Gruel that was left sitting around for a couple of days underwent a mysterious transformation, particularly if it had been made with malted grain: It became slightly fizzy and pleasantly intoxicating, as the action of wild yeasts from the air fermented the sugar in the gruel into alcohol. The gruel, in short, turned into beer. Even so, beer was not necessarily the first form of alcohol to pass human lips. At the time of beer's discovery, alcohol from the accidental fermentation of fruit juice (to make wine) or water and honey (to make mead) would have occurred naturally in small quantities as people tried to store fruit or honey. But fruit is seasonal and perishes easily, wild honey was only available in limited quantities, and neither wine nor mead could be stored for very long without pottery, which did not emerge until around 6000 BCE. Beer, on the other hand, could be made from cereal crops, which were abundant and could be easily stored, allowing beer to be made reliably, and in quantity, when needed. Long before pottery was available, it could have been brewed in pitch-lined baskets, leather bags or animal stomachs, hollowed-out trees, large shells, or stone vessels. Shells were used for cooking as recently as the nineteenth century in the Amazon basin,

and Sahti, a traditional beer made in Finland, is still brewed in hollowed-out trees today.

Once the crucial discovery of beer had been made, its quality was improved through trial and error. The more malted grain there is in the original gruel, for example, and the longer it is left to ferment, the stronger the beer. More malt means more sugar, and a longer fermentation means more of the sugar is turned into alcohol. Thoroughly cooking the gruel also contributes to the beer's strength. The malting process converts only around 15 percent of the starch found in barley grains into sugar, but when malted barley is mixed with water and brought to the boil, other starch-converting enzymes, which become active at higher temperatures, turn more of the starch into sugar, so there is more sugar for the yeast to transform into alcohol.

The Mesopotamian use of bread in brewing has led to much debate among archaeologists, some of whom have suggested that bread must therefore be an offshoot of beer making, while others have argued that bread came first and was subsequently used as an ingredient in beer. It seems most likely, however, that both bread and beer were derived from gruel. A thick gruel could be baked in the sun or on a hot stone to make flatbread; a thin gruel could be left to ferment into beer. The two were different sides of the same coin: Bread was solid beer, and beer was liquid bread.



Under the Influence of Beer?

From the start, it seems that beer had an important function as a social drink. Sumerian depictions of beer from the third millennium BCE generally show two people drinking through straws from a shared vessel. By the Sumerian period, however, it was possible to filter the grains, chaff, and other debris from beer, and the advent of pottery meant it could just as easily have been served in individual cups. That beer drinkers are, nonetheless, so widely depicted using straws suggests that it was a ritual that persisted even when straws were no longer necessary.

Since beer was a gift from the gods, it was also the logical thing to present as a religious offering. Beer was certainly used in religious ceremonies, agricultural fertility rites, and funerals by the Sumerians and the Egyptians, so it seems likely that its religious use goes back further still. Indeed, the religious significance of beer seems to be common to every beer-drinking culture, whether in the Americas, Africa, or Eurasia. The Incas offered their beer, called chicha, to the rising sun in a golden cup, and poured it on the ground or spat out their first mouthful as an offering to the gods of the Earth; the Aztecs offered their beer, called pulque, to Mayahuel, the goddess of fertility. In China, beers made from millet and rice were used in funerals and other ceremonies. The practice of raising a glass to wish someone good health, a happy marriage, or a safe passage into the afterlife, or to celebrate the successful completion of

a project, is the modern echo of the ancient idea that alcohol has the power to invoke supernatural forces.

The Urban Revolution

The world's first cities arose in Mesopotamia, "the land between the streams," the name given to the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers that roughly corresponds to modern Iraq. Most of the inhabitants of these cities were farmers, who lived within the city walls and walked out to tend their fields each morning. Administrators and craftsmen who did not work in the fields were the earliest humans to live entirely urban lives. Wheeled vehicles trundled through the matrix of city streets; people bought and sold goods in bustling marketplaces. Religious ceremonies and public holidays passed by in a reassuringly regular cycle.

Exactly why people chose to live in large cities rather than small villages remains unclear. It was probably the result of several overlapping factors: People may have wanted to be near important religious or trading centers, for example, and in the case of Mesopotamia, security may have been a significant motivation. The lack of natural boundaries—Mesopotamia is essentially a large open plain—meant the area was subject to repeated invasions and attacks. From around 4300 BCE villages began to band together, forming ever-larger towns and eventually cities, each of which sat at the center of its own system of fields and irrigation channels. By 3000 BCE the city of



Uruk, the largest of its day, had a population of around fifty thousand and was surrounded by a circle of fields ten miles in radius. By 2000 BCE almost the entire population in southern Mesopotamia was living in a few dozen large city-states, including Uruk, Ur, Lagash, Eridu, and Nippur. Thereafter Egypt took the lead, and its cities, such as Memphis and Thebes, grew to become the ancient world's largest.

These two earliest examples of civilization—a word that simply means "living in cities"—were different in many ways. Political unification enabled Egyptian culture to endure almost unchanged for nearly three thousand years, for example, while Mesopotamia was the scene of constant political and military upheaval. But in one vital respect they were similar: Both cultures were made possible by an agricultural surplus, in particular an excess of grain. This surplus not only freed a small elite of administrators and craftsmen from the need to produce their own food but also funded vast public works such as canals, temples, and pyramids. As well as being the logical medium of exchange, grain was the basis of the national diet in both Egypt and Mesopotamia. It was a sort of edible money, and it was consumed in both solid and liquid forms, as bread and beer.

The Drink of the Civilized Man

The recorded history of beer, and indeed of everything else, begins in Sumer, a region in southern Mesopotamia where writing first began to emerge around 3400 BCE. That

beer drinking was seen as a hallmark of civilization by the Mesopotamians is particularly apparent in a passage from the Epic of Gilgamesh, the world's first great literary work.

Beer was just as important in ancient Egyptian culture, where references to it go back almost as far. It is mentioned in documents from the third dynasty, which began in 2650 BCE, and several varieties of beer are mentioned in "Pyramid Texts," the funerary texts found inscribed in pyramids from the end of the fifth dynasty, around 2350 BCE. (The Egyptians developed their own form of writing shortly after the Sumerians, to record both mundane transactions and kingly exploits, but whether it was an independent development or inspired by Sumerian writing remains unclear.) One survey of Egyptian literature found that beer, the Egyptian word for which was *hekt*, was mentioned more times than any other foodstuff. As in Mesopotamia, beer was thought to have ancient and mythological origins, and it appears in prayers, myths, and legends.

In contrast to the Mesopotamians' relaxed attitude toward intoxication, however, a strong disapproval of drunkenness was expressed in the practice texts copied out by apprentice scribes in Egypt, many of which have survived in large quantities in rubbish mounds. One passage admonishes young scribes: "Beer, it scareth men from thee, it sendeth thy soul to perdition. Thou art like



a broken steering-oar in a ship, that is obedient on neither side."

Mesopotamians and Egyptians alike saw beer as an ancient, god-given drink that underpinned their existence, formed part of their cultural and religious identity, and had great social importance. "To make a beer hall" and "to sit in the beer hall" were popular Egyptian expressions that meant "to have a good time" or "to carouse," while the Sumerian expression a "pouring of beer" referred to a banquet or celebratory feast, and formal visits by the king to high officials' homes to receive tribute were recorded as "when the king drank beer at the house of so-and-so." In both cultures, beer was a staple food stuff without which no meal was complete. It was consumed by everyone, rich and poor, men and women, adults and children, from the top of the social pyramid to the bottom. It was truly the defining drink of these first great civilizations.

The Origins of Writing

The earliest written documents are Sumerian wage lists and tax receipts, in which the symbol for beer, a clay vessel with diagonal linear markings drawn inside it, is one of the most common words, along with the symbols for grain, textiles, and livestock. That is because writing was originally invented to record the collection and distribution of grain, beer, bread, and other goods. It arose as a natural extension of the Neolithic custom of using tokens to account for contributions to a communal

storehouse. Indeed, Sumerian society was a logical continuation of Neolithic social structures but on a far larger scale, the culmination of thousands of years of increasing economic and cultural complexity. Just as the chieftain of a Neolithic village collected surplus food, the priests of the Sumerian cities collected surplus barley, wheat, sheep, and textiles. Officially, these goods were offerings to the gods, but in practice they were compulsory taxes that were consumed by the temple bureaucracy or traded for other goods and services. The priests could, for example, pay for the maintenance of irrigation systems and the construction of public buildings by handing out rations of bread and beer.

The oldest written documents, dating from around 3400 BCE from the city of Uruk, are small, flat tablets of clay that fit comfortably into the palm of one hand. They are commonly divided into columns and then subdivided into rectangles by straight lines. Each compartment contains a group of symbols, some made by pressing tokens into the clay, and others scratched using a stylus. Although these symbols are read from left to right and top to bottom, in all other respects this early script is utterly unlike modern writing and can only be read by specialists. But look closely, and the pictogram for beer—a jar on its side, with diagonal linear markings inside it—is easy to spot. It appears in wage lists, in administrative documents, and in word lists written by scribes in training, which include dozens of brewing terms. Many tablets



consist of lists of names, next to each of which is the indication "beer and bread for one day" – a standard wage issued by the temple.

Having started out as a means of recording tax receipts and ration payments, writing soon evolved into a more flexible, expressive, and abstract medium. By around 3000 BCE some symbols had come to stand for particular sounds. At the same time, pictograms made up of deep, wedge-shaped impressions took over from those composed of shallow scratches. This made writing faster but reduced the pictographic quality of the symbols, so that writing began to look more abstract. The end result was the first general-purpose form of writing, based on wedge-shaped, or "cuneiform," indentations made in clay tablets using reeds. It is the ancestor of modern Western alphabets, which are descended from it via the Ugaritic and Phoenician alphabets devised during the second millennium BCE.

Liquid Wealth and Health

In Egypt, as in Mesopotamia, taxes in the form of grain and other goods were presented at the temple and were then redistributed to fund public works. This meant that in both civilizations barley and wheat, and their processed solid and liquid forms, bread and beer, became more than just staple foodstuffs; they were convenient and widespread forms of payment and currency. In Mesopotamia, cuneiform records indicate that the lowest-ranking

members of the Sumerian temple workforce were issued a sila of beer a day – roughly equivalent to a liter, or two American pints – as part of their ration.

What is without doubt the most spectacular example of the use of beer as a form of payment can be seen on Egypt's Giza plateau. The workers who built the pyramids were paid in beer, according to records found at a nearby town where the construction workers ate and slept. The records indicate that at the time of the pyramids' construction, around 2500 BCE, the standard ration for a laborer was three or four loaves of bread and two jugs containing about four liters (eight American pints) of beer. Managers and officials received larger quantities of both.

Beer also had a more direct link to health, for both the Mesopotamians and Egyptians used it medicinally. A cuneiform tablet from the Sumerian city of Nippur, dated to around 2100 BCE, contains a pharmacopoeia, or list of medical recipes, based on beer. It is the oldest surviving record of the use of alcohol in medicine. In Egypt, beer's use as a mild sedative was recognized, and it was also the basis for several medicinal concoctions of herbs and spices. Beer was, of course, less likely to be contaminated than water, being made with boiled water, and also had the advantage that some ingredients dissolve more easily in it.



The Egyptians also believed that their well-being in the afterlife depended on having an adequate supply of bread and beer. The standard funerary offering consisted of bread, beer, oxen, geese, cloth, and natron, a purification agent. In some Egyptian funeral texts the deceased is promised "beer that would not turn sour" — signaling both a desire to be able to pursue beer drinking eternally and the difficulty of storing beer. Scenes and models of brewing and baking have been found in Egyptian tombs, along with jars of beer (long since evaporated) and beer-making equipment. Special sieves for beer making were found in the tomb of Tutankhamen, who died around 1335 BCE. Ordinary citizens who were laid to rest in simple shallow graves were also buried with small jars of beer.

A Drink from the Dawn of Civilization

Beer permeated the lives of Egyptians and Mesopotamians from the cradle to the grave. Their enthusiasm for it was almost inevitable because the emergence of complex societies, the need to keep written records, and the popularity of beer all followed from the surplus of grain. Since

the Fertile Crescent had the best climatic conditions for grain cultivation, that was where farming began, where the earliest civilizations arose, where writing first emerged, and where beer was most abundant. Although neither Mesopotamian nor Egyptian beer contained hops, which only became a standard ingredient in medieval times, both the beverage and some of its related customs would still be recognizable to beer drinkers today, thousands of years later. While beer is no longer used as a form of payment, and people no longer greet each other with the expression "bread and beer," in much of the world it is still considered the staple drink of the working man. Toasting someone's health before drinking beer is a remnant of the ancient belief in beer's magical properties. And beer's association with friendly, unpretentious social interaction remains unchanged; it is a beverage that is meant to be shared. Whether in stone-age villages, Mesopotamian banqueting halls, or modern pubs and bars, beer has brought people together since the dawn of civilization.

Answer the following questions completely.

1. Concisely summarize the selection in 4-6 sentences.

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2. How is the discovery of beer linked to the growth of the first “civilizations”?

⇒

3. What does this history of beer in the ancient world tell us about the early civilizations?

⇒

4. What were some of the uses of beer by ancient cultures?

⇒

5. *How did beer “civilize” man, according to Standage?*

⇒

6. *What is the relationship between beer and writing, commerce, and health?*

⇒



Wine in Greece and Rome

Excerpt from *A History of the World in 6 Glasses* by Tom Standage

Directions: Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

A Great Feast

One of the greatest feasts in history was given by King Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria, around 870 BCE, to mark the inauguration of his new capital at Nimrud. Elaborate murals celebrated the king's military exploits in foreign lands. The palace was surrounded by canals and waterfalls, and by orchards and gardens filled with both local plants and those gathered during the king's far-flung military campaigns. Ashurnasirpal populated his new capital with people from throughout his empire, which covered much of northern Mesopotamia.

The feasting went on for ten days. The official record attests that the celebration was attended by 69,574 people. The aim was to demonstrate the king's power and wealth, both to his own people and to foreign representatives. The attendees were collectively served 1,000 fattened cattle, 1,000 calves, 10,000 sheep, 15,000 lambs, 1,000 spring lambs, 500 gazelles, 1,000 ducks, 1,000 geese, 20,000 doves, 12,000 other small birds, 10,000 fish, 10,000 jerboa (a kind of small rodent), and 10,000 eggs. Yet what was most impressive, and most significant, was the king's choice of drink. Despite his Mesopotamian heritage,

Ashurnasirpal did not give pride of place at his feast to the Mesopotamians' usual beverage. He served wine.

Beer had not been banished: Ashurnasirpal served ten thousand jars of it at his feast. But he also served ten thousand skins of wine – an equal quantity, but a far more impressive display of wealth. Previously, wine had only been available in Mesopotamia in very small quantities, since it had to be imported from the mountainous, wine-growing lands to the northeast. The cost of transporting wine down from the mountains to the plains made it at least ten times more expensive than beer, so it was regarded as an exotic foreign drink. Accordingly, only the elite could afford to drink it, and its main use was religious; its scarcity and high price made it worthy for consumption by the gods, when it was available. Most people never tasted it at all.

So Ashurnasirpal's ability to make wine and beer available to his seventy thousand guests in equal abundance was a vivid illustration of his wealth. Serving wine from distant regions within his empire also underlined the extent of his power.



Wine in Mesopotamia

Wine was newly fashionable, but it was anything but new. As with beer, its origins are lost in prehistory: its invention, or discovery, was so ancient that it is recorded only indirectly, in myth and legend. But archaeological evidence suggests that wine was first produced during the Neolithic period, between 9000 and 4000 BCE, in the Zagros Mountains in the region that roughly corresponds to modern Armenia and northern Iran. The convergence of three factors made wine production in this area possible: the presence of the wild Eurasian grape vine, *Vitis vinifera sylvestris*, the availability of cereal crops to provide year-round food reserves for wine-making communities, and, around 6000 BCE, the invention of pottery, instrumental for making, storing, and serving wine.

Wine consists simply of the fermented juice of crushed grapes. Natural yeasts, present on the grape skins, convert the sugars in the juice into alcohol. Attempts to store grapes or grape juice for long periods in pottery vessels would therefore have resulted in wine. The earliest physical evidence for it, in the form of reddish residue inside a pottery jar, comes from a Neolithic village in the Zagros Mountains. The jar has been dated to 5400 BCE. Wine's probable origin in this region is reflected in the biblical story of Noah, who is said to have planted the first vineyard on the slopes of nearby Mount Ararat after being delivered from the flood.

From this birthplace, knowledge of wine making spread west to Greece and Anatolia (modern-day Turkey), and south through the Levant (modern-day Syria, Lebanon, and Israel) to Egypt. Once the pharaohs acquired a taste for wine, they established their own vineyards in the Nile Delta, and limited domestic production was under way by 3000 BCE. As in Mesopotamia, however, consumption was restricted to the elite, since the climate was unsuitable for large-scale production. Winemaking scenes appear in tomb paintings, but these give a disproportionate impression of its prevalence in Egyptian society, for only the wine-drinking rich could afford lavish tombs. The masses drank beer.

A similar situation prevailed in the eastern Mediterranean, where vines were being cultivated by 2500 BCE on Crete, and possibly in mainland Greece too. Grapevines were grown alongside olives, wheat, and barley and were often intertwined with olive or fig trees. In the Mycenaean and Minoan cultures of the second millennium BCE, access to wine was a mark of status.

The establishment of ever-larger states and empires boosted the availability of wine, for the fewer borders there were to cross, the fewer taxes and tolls there were to pay, and the cheaper it was to transport wine over long distances.

As the enthusiasm for wine spread south into Mesopotamia, where local production



was impractical, the wine trade along the Euphrates and Tigris rivers expanded. Given its heavy and perishable nature, wine was difficult to transport over land. So though wine became more fashionable in Mesopotamian society, it never became widely affordable outside wine-producing areas. During the first millennium BCE, even the beer-loving Mesopotamians turned their backs on beer, which was dethroned as the most cultured and civilized of drinks, and the age of wine began.

The Cradle of Western Thought

The origins of contemporary Western thought can be traced back to the golden age of ancient Greece in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, when Greek thinkers laid the foundations for modern Western politics, philosophy, science, and law. Their novel approach was to pursue rational inquiry through adversarial discussion: The best way to evaluate one set of ideas, they decided, was by testing it against another set of ideas. In the political sphere, the result was democracy, in which supporters of rival policies vied for rhetorical supremacy; in philosophy, it led to reasoned arguments and dialogues about the nature of the world; in science, it prompted the construction of competing theories to try to explain natural phenomena; in the field of law, the result was the adversarial legal system. This approach underpins the modern Western way of life, in which politics, commerce,

science, and law are all rooted in orderly competition.

The idea of the distinction between Western and Eastern worlds is also Greek in origin. Ancient Greece was not a unified nation but a loose collection of city-states, settlements, and colonies whose allegiances and rivalries shifted constantly. But as early as the eighth century BCE, a distinction was being made between the Greek-speaking peoples and foreigners, who were known as *barbaroi* because their language sounded like incomprehensible babbling to Greek ears. Chief among these barbarians were the Persians to the east, whose vast empire encompassed Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, and Asia Minor (modern Turkey). At first the leading Greek city-states, Athens and Sparta, united to fend off the Persians, but Persia later backed both Sparta and Athens in turn as they fought each other. Eventually, Alexander the Great united the Greeks and defeated Persia in the fourth century BCE. The Greeks defined themselves in opposition to the Persians, believing themselves to be fundamentally different from (and indeed superior to) Asian peoples.

Enthusiasm for civilized competition and Greece's presumed superiority over foreigners were apparent in the Greek love of wine. It was drunk at formal drinking parties, or *symposia*, which were venues for playful but adversarial discussion in which drinkers would try to outdo each other in wit, poetry, or rhetoric. The formal,



intellectual atmosphere of the *symposion* also reminded the Greeks how civilized they were, in contrast to the barbarians, who either drank lowly, unsophisticated beer or – even worse – drank wine but failed to do so in a manner that met with Greek approval.

Wine was plentiful enough to be widely affordable because the climate and terrain of the Greek islands and mainland were ideal for viticulture. The Greeks were the first to produce wine on a large commercial scale and took a methodical, even scientific approach to viticulture. Greek vintners devised improvements to the wine press and adopted the practice of growing vines in neat rows, on trellises and stakes, rather than up trees. This allowed more vines to be packed into a given space, increasing yields and providing easier access for harvesting.

Gradually, grain farming was overtaken by the cultivation of grapevines and olives, and wine production switched from subsistence to industrial farming. Rather than being consumed by the farmer and his dependents, wine was produced specifically as a commercial product. And no wonder; a farmer could earn up to twenty times as much from cultivating vines on his land as he could from growing grain. Wine became one of Greece's main exports and was traded by sea for other commodities. Wine was wealth; by the sixth century BCE, the property-owning classes in Athens were

categorized according to their vineyard holdings.

The commercial significance of the wine trade also meant that vineyards became prime targets in the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta and were often trampled and burned. On one occasion, in 424 BCE, Spartan troops arrived just before harvest time at Acanthus, a wine-producing city in Macedonia that was allied with Athens. Fearing for their grapes, and swayed by the oratory of Brasidas, the Spartan leader, the locals held a ballot and decided to switch allegiances. The harvest was then able to continue unaffected.

As wine became more widely available – so widely available that even the slaves drank it – what mattered was no longer whether or not you drank wine, but what kind it was. For while the availability of wine was more democratic in Greek society than in other cultures, wine could still be used to delineate social distinctions.

For the Greeks, wine drinking was synonymous with civilization and refinement: What kind of wine you drank, and its age, indicated how cultured you were. Wine was preferred over beer, fine wines were preferred over ordinary ones, and older wines over young. What mattered even more than your choice of wine, however, was how you behaved when you drank it, which was even more revealing of your innermost nature.



How to Drink Like a Greek

What most distinguished the Greek approach to wine from that of other cultures was the Greek practice of mixing wine with water before consumption. The pinnacle of social sophistication was the consumption of the resulting mixture at a private drinking party, or *symposion*. This was an all-male aristocratic ritual that took place in a special "men's room," or *andron*. Its walls were often decorated with drinking-related murals or paraphernalia, and the use of a special room emphasized the separation between everyday life and the symposion, during which different rules applied. Its importance was such that houses were often designed around it.

The men sat on special couches, with a cushion under one arm, a fashion imported from the Near East in the eighth century BCE. Although women were not allowed to sit with the men, female servers, dancers, and musicians were often present. Food was served first, with little or nothing to drink. Then the tables were cleared away, and the wine was brought out. The Athenian tradition was to pour three libations: one to the gods, one to fallen heroes, particularly one's ancestors, and one to Zeus, the king of the gods.

The wine was first mixed with water in a large, urn-shaped bowl called a *krater*. Water was always added to wine, rather than the other way around. The amount of water added determined how quickly everyone would become intoxicated. A

mixture of equal parts of water and wine was regarded as "strong wine"; some concentrated wines, which were boiled down before shipping to a half or a third of their original volume, had to be mixed with eight or even twenty times as much water.

Drinking even a fine wine without first mixing it with water was considered barbaric by the Greeks. Macedonians were notorious for their fondness for unmixed wine. Alexander the Great and his father, Philip II, were both reputed to have been heavy drinkers. Alexander killed his friend Clitus in a drunken brawl, and there is some evidence that heavy wine drinking contributed to his death from a mysterious illness in 323 BCE.

Water made wine safe; but wine also made water safe. As well as being free of pathogens, wine contains natural antibacterial agents that are liberated during the fermentation process. The Greeks were unaware of this, though they were familiar with the dangers of drinking contaminated water; they preferred water from springs and deep wells, or rainwater collected in cisterns. The observation that wounds treated with wine were less likely to become infected than those treated with water may also have suggested that wine had the power to clean and purify.

Not drinking wine at all was considered just as bad as drinking it neat. The Greek practice of mixing wine and water was thus a middle ground between barbarians who



overindulged and those who did not drink at all.

An Amphora of Culture

With its carefully calibrated social divisions, its reputation for unparalleled cultural sophistication, and its encouragement of both hedonism and philosophical inquiry, wine embodied Greek culture. These values went along with Greek wine as it was exported far and wide. The distribution of Greek wine jars, or *amphorae*, provides archaeological evidence for Greek wine's widespread popularity and the far-reaching influence of Greek customs and values. By the fifth century BCE, Greek wine was being exported as far afield as southern France to the west, Egypt to the south, the Crimean Peninsula to the east, and the Danube region to the north. It was traded on a massive scale; a single wreck found off the southern coast of France contained an astonishing 10,000 amphorae, equivalent to 250,000 liters or 333,000 modern wine bottles. As well as spreading wine itself, Greek traders and colonists spread knowledge of its cultivation, introducing wine making to Sicily, southern Italy, and southern France, though whether viticulture was introduced to Spain and Portugal by the Greeks or the Phoenicians (a seafaring culture based in a region of modern-day Syria and Lebanon) is unclear.

The Imperial Vine

By the middle of the second century BCE the Romans, a people from central Italy, had displaced the Greeks as the dominant

power in the Mediterranean basin. Yet it was a strange sort of victory, since the Romans, like many other European peoples, liked to show how sophisticated they were by appropriating aspects of Greek culture. They borrowed Greek gods and their associated myths, adopted a modified form of the Greek alphabet, and imitated Greek architecture. The Roman constitution was modeled on Greek lines. Educated Romans studied Greek literature and could speak the language.

Wine provided a way to bridge Greek and Roman values. The Romans were proud of their origins and saw themselves as a nation of unpretentious farmers turned soldiers and administrators. After successful campaigns, Roman soldiers were often rewarded with tracts of farmland. The most prestigious crop to grow was the vine; by doing so, Roman gentleman farmers could convince themselves that they were remaining true to their roots, even as they also enjoyed lavish feasts and drinking parties in Greek-style villas.

At the beginning of the second century BCE, Greek wine still dominated the Mediterranean wine trade and was the only product being exported in significant quantities to the Italian peninsula. But the Romans were catching up fast, as wine making spread northward from the former Greek colonies in the south. The Italian peninsula became the world's foremost wine-producing region around 146 BCE, just as Rome became the leading



Mediterranean power with the fall of Carthage in northern Africa and the sack of the Greek city of Corinth.

Just as they assimilated and then distributed so many other aspects of Greek culture, the Romans embraced Greece's finest wines and wine-making techniques. Such was the popularity of wine that subsistence farming could not meet demand, and the ideal of the noble farmer was displaced by a more commercial approach, based on large villa estates operated by slaves. Wine production expanded at the expense of grain production, so that Rome became dependent on grain imports from its African colonies.

The expansion of the villa estates also displaced the rural population as small farmers sold their property and moved to the city. Rome's population swelled from around one hundred thousand in 300 BCE to around a million by 0 CE, making it the world's most populous metropolis. Meanwhile, as wine production intensified at the heart of the Roman world, consumption spread on its fringes. People adopted wine drinking, along with other Roman customs, wherever Roman rule extended – and beyond. Wealthy Britons put aside beer and mead in favor of wines imported from as far away as the Aegean; Italian wine was shipped as far as the southern Nile and northern India. In the first century, wine production in the Roman provinces of southern Gaul and Spain was stepped up to keep pace with demand,

though Italian wines were still regarded as the best.

Wine was shipped from one part of the Mediterranean to another in freighters typically capable of carrying two thousand to three thousand clay amphorae, along with secondary cargoes of slaves, nuts, glassware, perfumes, and other luxury items. Most of the best wine ended up in Rome itself. Arriving at the port of Ostia, a few miles to the southwest of Rome, a wine ship would be unloaded by a swarm of stevedores, skilled in handling the heavy and unwieldy amphorae across precarious gangplanks. Divers stood ready to rescue any amphorae that fell overboard. Once transferred into smaller vessels, the wine continued its journey up the river Tiber to the city of Rome. It was then manhandled into the dim cellars of wholesale warehouses. From here it was sold to retailers and transported in smaller amphorae through the city's narrow alleyways on handcarts.

Having made its way through the chaotic streets, wine was sold by the jug from neighborhood shops, or by the amphora when larger quantities were needed. Roman households sent slaves laden with empty jugs to buy wine, or arranged to have regular supplies delivered; wine vendors wheeled their wares from house to house on carts. Wine from the far provinces of the Roman world then reached the tables, and ultimately the lips, of Rome's citizens.



A Drink for Everyone?

Like the Greeks before them, the Romans regarded wine as a universal staple. It was drunk by both caesar and slave alike. While the richest Romans drank the finest wines, poorer citizens drank lesser vintages, and so on down the social ladder.

Like the Greeks, the Romans drank their wine in the "civilized" manner, namely, mixed with water, which was brought into their cities via elaborate aqueducts. These coarser, cheaper wines were often adulterated with various additives, either to serve as preservatives or to conceal the fact that they had spoiled. Pitch, which was sometimes used to seal amphorae, was occasionally added to wine as a preservative, as were small quantities of salt or seawater, a practice inherited from the Greeks. Below these adulterated wines was *posca*, a drink made by mixing water with wine that had turned sour and vinegar-like. Posca was commonly issued to Roman soldiers when better wines were unavailable, for example, during long campaigns. It was, in effect, a form of portable water-purification technology for the Roman army. Finally, at the bottom of the Roman scale of wines was *lora*, the drink normally served to slaves, which hardly qualified as wine at all. It was made by soaking and pressing the skins, seeds, and stalks left over from wine making to produce a thin, weak, and bitter wine. There was a wine for every rung on the social ladder.

Why Christians Drink Wine and Muslims Do Not

The end of the reign of Marcus Aurelius in 180 CE, a period of relative peace, stability, and prosperity, is often taken to mark the end of the golden age of Rome. There followed a succession of short-lived emperors, almost none of whom died of natural causes, and who did their best to defend the empire from the onslaught of barbarians from all sides. Lying on his deathbed in 395 CE, the emperor Theodosius I divided the empire into western and eastern halves, each to be ruled by one of his sons, in an attempt to make it easier to defend. But the western empire soon crumbled: The Visigoths, a Germanic tribe, sacked Rome in 410 CE and then established a kingdom covering much of Spain and western Gaul. Rome was plundered again in 455 CE by the Vandals, and before long the western empire had been carved up into a multitude of separate kingdoms.

According to centuries-old Roman and Greek prejudices, the influx of the northern tribes ought to have displaced the civilized wine-drinking culture in favor of beer-drinking barbarism. Yet despite their reputation as vulgar beer lovers, the tribes of northern Europe, where the climate was less suitable for viticulture, had nothing against wine. Of course, many aspects of Roman life were swept away, trade was disrupted, and the availability of wine in some regions diminished; Romanized Britons seem to have switched from wine



back to beer as the empire crumbled, for example. But there was also cultural fusion between Roman, Christian, and Germanic traditions as new rulers took over from the Romans. One example of continuity was the widespread survival of Mediterranean wine-drinking culture, which was deep-rooted enough to survive the passing of its Greek and Roman parents. The Visigothic law code, for instance, drawn up between the fifth and seventh centuries, specified detailed punishments for anyone who damaged a vineyard – hardly what you would expect of barbarians.

Another factor in maintaining the wine-drinking culture was its close association with Christianity, the rise of which during the first millennium elevated wine to a position of utmost symbolic significance. According to the Bible, Christ's first miracle, at the beginning of his ministry, was the transformation of six jars of water into wine at a wedding near the Sea of Galilee. Christ's offering of wine to his disciples at the Last Supper then led to its role in the Eucharist, the central Christian ritual in which bread and wine symbolize Christ's body and blood. This was, in many ways, a continuation of the tradition established by members of the cults of Dionysus and his Roman incarnation, Bacchus. The Greek and Roman wine gods, like Christ, were associated with wine-making miracles and resurrection after death; their worshipers, like Christians, regarded wine drinking as a form of sacred communion. Yet there are

also marked differences. The Christian ritual is nothing like its Dionysian counterpart, and while the former involves very small quantities of wine, the latter calls for large quantities drunk in excess.

Although the wine culture remained reasonably intact in Christian Europe, drinking patterns changed dramatically in other parts of the former Roman world, as a result of the rise of Islam. Its founder, the prophet Muhammad, was born around 570 CE. At the age of forty he felt himself called to become a prophet, and experienced a series of visions during which the Koran was revealed to him by Allah. Muhammad's new teachings made him unpopular in Mecca, a city whose prosperity depended on the traditional Arab religion, so he fled to Medina, where his following grew. By the time of Muhammad's death in 632 CE, Islam had become the dominant faith in most of Arabia. A century later, his adherents had conquered all of Persia, Mesopotamia, Palestine and Syria, Egypt and the rest of the northern African coast, and most of Spain. Muslims' duties include frequent prayer, almsgiving, and abstention from alcoholic drinks.

It seems likely that the Muslim ban on alcohol was also the result of wider cultural forces. With the rise of Islam, power shifted away from the peoples of the Mediterranean coast and toward the desert tribes of Arabia. These tribes expressed their superiority over the previous elites by replacing wheeled vehicles with camels,



chairs and tables with cushions, and by banning the consumption of wine, that most potent symbol of sophistication. In so doing, Muslims signaled their rejection of the old notions of civilization. Wine's central role in the rival creed of Christianity also predisposed Muslims against it; even its medical use was banned. After much argument the prohibition was extended to other alcoholic drinks too. As Islam spread, so did the prohibition of alcohol. The ban on alcohol was, however, enforced more rigorously in some places than in others. Only wine made from grapes had been explicitly banned, presumably on the basis of its strength.

The advance of Islam into Europe was halted in 732 CE at the Battle of Tours, in central France, where the Arab troops were defeated by Charles Martel, the most charismatic of the princes of the Frankish kingdom that roughly corresponds with modern France. This battle, one of the turning points in world history, marked the high-water mark of Arab influence in Europe. The subsequent crowning of Martel's grandson, Charlemagne, as Holy Roman Emperor in 800 CE heralded the start of a period of consolidation and eventual reinvigoration of European culture.

The King of Drinks

Modern European drinking patterns crystallized during the middle of the first millennium and were largely determined by the reach of Greek and Roman influences. Wine drinking, usually in moderation and with meals, still predominates in the south of Europe, within the former boundaries of the Roman Empire. In the north of Europe beyond the reach of Roman rule, beer drinking, typically without the accompaniment of food, is more common. Today, the world's leading producers of wine are France, Italy, and Spain; and the people of Luxembourg, France, and Italy are the leading consumers of wine, drinking an average of around fifty-five liters per person per year. The countries where the most beer is consumed, in contrast, would mostly have been regarded as barbarian territory by the Romans: Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the Czech Republic, Britain, and Ireland.

Wherever alcohol is drunk, wine is regarded as the most civilized and cultured of drinks. In those countries, wine, not beer, is served at state banquets and political summits, an illustration of wine's enduring association with status, power, and wealth. It is a scene that a time-traveling Roman would recognize at once.

Answer the following questions completely.

1. Concisely summarize the selection in 4-6 sentences.

⇒

2. How did the use of wine differ from that of beer in ancient Greece and Rome?

⇒

3. How and why did wine develop into a form of a status symbol in Greece?

⇒

4. How did the use of wine in Roman culture differ from that of ancient Greece?

⇒

5. *What is the relationship between wine and empire, medicine, and religion.*

⇒