

WESTERN CIVILIZATION

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Comparison between Charlemagne's Carolingian Dynasty and Ancient Greece

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Generally, the Western Civilization found its origins from the civilizations of the Ancient Greece and Rome, (Roman Empire) and as a result, these two western parts laid key foundations for the rise of ancient Egypt as well as the Mesopotamia. The Western Civilization developed and rose during the medieval Europe, being a Christian religion part of the world, feudal region, the dispersed power and authority structures and the developing dynamic economy. Hence, during this period, Western Civilization spread from Europe to other parts of the world. For instance, the modern world owes various features of the Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire (Carolingian Dynasty (Fornara, 1988)). From their cultural beliefs and values, political systems, economic structures, education systems and even their building structures have created a long lasting impression that can still be viewed or copied by the modern society (Winterer, 2004). Therefore, this article discusses western civilization between the Charlemagne's Carolingian Dynasty and the Ancient Greece based on their gender roles and ideologies, social and economic systems, technological and cultural innovations.

Gender Roles and Ideology Comparison between Charlemagne's Carolingian Dynasty and the Ancient Greece

Indeed, gender is a very unpredictable term that has been applied differently over long period by various researchers, based on their requirements and main objectives. Currently, most researchers such as historians, feminists and many others apply the term gender, to refer to the femininity while others use it to refer to the human sexuality aspect (Halphen & Károly, 2007). Nevertheless, it has emerged that the term gender is mostly used to refer to various factors of behaviors as well as roles within a society. For instance, through defining men as well as women as opposite genders in all the societal aspects, impacting in historical positivity in favor of men while negativity in women's side (Gagarin, 2010). In the ancient ages, women were mainly

defined by their relationships to men, such as daughters, wives, sisters, mothers or maybe widows in the society. For example, in the Charlemagne's Carolingian Dynasty, Dhuoda was the wife of Bernard of Septimania and the mother of William.

Similarly, gender clearly outlined roles of men and women in the society. Men were to marry women and provide for their families. Men also were to protect their families and entire society from any attack (Fornara, 1988). Women in the dynasty were in turn to produce many children to their husbands for the growth of the society, they were not to own any property in the society but were responsible for the family affairs and the wealth. However, in the Carolingian Dynasty, it was big scandal for a woman fail to produce children for her husband, main example was Lothar II' marriage to the Theutaberga in early 850s.

As parents, both a man and women were both expected to advice and take good care of their children. Again, men and women were also allowed to serve as clergies, as women could act as nuns and the Abbesses, while men could fill several duties in the society (Gagarin, 2010). On the other hand, gender roles played a key role towards the civilization in the Ancient Greece. For example, the creation and maintenance of the Greek buildings were done by the women. The Greek men dominated society as they controlled almost everything in the society. Women were expected to give birth to many children for the growth of their families and the Greek society at large (Halphen & Károly, 2007). Children of opposite gender were segregated from any form of sexual interaction.

In the ancient Greek society, women were expected to remain virgin at the time of their marriages. The women were also expected to don those costumes similar to those being worn by the women in the Islamic society to show self respect (Fornara, 1988). Similarly, the married

women were expected to ensure order in their households, to spin as well as weave clothing for the family members, cook, clean, and ensure family domestic cleanliness, and raising of their children. Surprisingly, these female related roles in the Greek society, made it for the female individuals to get married at a very tender age as soon as their adolescence stage (Halphen & Károly, 2007). Men on the other hand were expected to ensure effective hormonal development at the tender age by engaging in sexual experimentation. Also, in the Greek society, men were expected to provide for their families, protect their families and the whole society from attack.

Social and Economic Structures Comparison between Charlemagne's Carolingian Dynasty and the Ancient Greece

In general, the Carolingian Dynasty's powerful leader; Charlemagne had a crucial role in identifying and shaping up the economic future of the entire Europe. By strictly following his late father's economic and social reforms, he abolished the monetary system regarding the gold sou, and also him together with other leader, King Offa of Mercia, they replaced the system with the Pepin system due to the shortage of gold in the region (Gagarin, 2010). The outcome through the standardization of economy helped in harmonizing as well as unifying the complicated array of various currencies that had been initially applied at the beginning of the Charlemagne's power reign, hence this new currency system simplified the trade as well as commerce between the Carolingian empire and its trading partners (Fornara, 1988).

Similarly, Charlemagne created and introduced a new standard called the *livre carolinienne*, which is the modern pound in Europe, as the main unit of exchange in the region. He also established various accounting principles and practices through the Capitulare de villis of 802, which presented very strict regulations and policies for the manner in which revenues as

well as costs were to be recorded for the transparency in the trade (Halphen & Károly, 2007). Earlier on, Charlemagne applied trade laws which enabled the Jews to monopolize the money borrowing. Based on the social developments and reforms in the Carolingian Empire, Charlemagne increased the reform programs of the church unlike his father and uncle who did not make any social reform in the empire.

The Carolingian Empire had four major social classes in the society; the King, Lord, Knight and the Peasants (Winterer, 2004). The spiritual life was later introduced and made main public policy as well as the royal administration. Most of his social reforms mainly focused on strengthening of the power structures of the church, enhancing skills and moral quality of the clergy, improving the liturgical practices, enhancing on the necessary tenets of the faith as well as moral and stopping the paganism in the empire (Story, 2005). While in the Ancient Greek, their economic development was majorly defined based on the region's reliance on the imported products and as a result of the poor quality of the Greek soil, the agricultural business was very significant (Gagarin, 2010). The trade craftsmanship as well as the commerce became essential aspects of the economic expansion of the Greece. The majority of the ancient Greeks developed crafts, pottery, metal working to earn a living.

They also participated in the maritime commerce, whereby the participants called *emporoi* fully participated in the trade. The ancient Greek government collected the duty of about 1% to 2% on the *emporoi*'s cargo at the Athens' main port, Piraeus. By 414, the Athens stopped the collection of the tribute from all the ports of its empire and then imposed about 5% duty with the aim of increasing its income (Story, 2005). The Ancient Greece also developed the retail business in the region by promoting various peasants and the artisans by selling their wares on their behalves. Some retail merchants called *Kapeloι* sold fish, olive oil, vegetables and many

products which boosted the economy of Greece (Nussbaum, & Sihvola, 2002). The Greeks also used common coinage monetary system such as electrum, Athenian coins, and the Athenian Agora as the main means of exchange.

Based on its social development, the ancient Greece social system began fairly simple, that is one was either a foreigner, native or a slave. In most Greek cities such as Athens and Sparta, there exist three different and unique social classes. For instance, the native Spartans, who controlled and managed politics and the Greek military. The second social class in Greek's city, Sparta was the free foreigners, who managed and controlled trade as well as the communication with other Greek cities and towns (Halphen & Károly, 2007). And finally the Helot social group who were the slaves of the Greek's Spartan community and other cities. On the other hand, the Athenian society was divided into four major social groups; upper class, the metics, lower class and the slave class.

Cultural Innovations Comparison between Charlemagne's Carolingian Dynasty and Ancient Greece

Usually, the ancient Greeks are appreciated by being the founders of the modern building structures. The ancient Greek is the source up on which the western civilization and cultures are developed. This particular credit is due to their technological or cultural inventions and contributions towards a broad range of human activities in various fields like, sports, health sector, architecture and many others (Halphen & Károly, 2007). Therefore, the following are major contributions of the Ancient Greeks due to the cultural inventions: Columns and Stadia inventions, human sculpture in arts, structural and architectural buildings, science and astronomy

development, invention of Olympic Games, philosophy and many other inventions which have been copied by other world countries.

On the other hand, in Carolingian Empire, Charlemagne influences various cultural and technological inventions during his reign which helped in shaping up western civilization in Europe and other parts of the world (Gagarin, 2010). Majorly, Charlemagne's invention of the medieval system of ruling helped in defining his political future during his era (Nussbaum & Sihvola, 2002). Again, through his powers, Charlemagne gave rise to the Holy Roman Empire by inventing various cultural artifacts such as the Carolingian arts with the aim of reviving the Roman Empire during his reign. He invented various artifacts, designs and agricultural improvements such as the crop rotation between the three fields, and application of the compound plough method of cultivation and also improved history education across the globe.

Conclusions

Overall, through the western civilization, both Ancient Greece and the Charlemagne's Carolingian Empire share some common similarities and differences based on the economic growth, cultural beliefs and customs, gender roles and ideologies and technological inventions. Hence, these factors make them the sole roots of western civilization in Europe and other parts of the world.

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