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Ella Greven - AP World History Period 3A History of the World in Six Glasses by Tom Standage Introduction - "Vital Fluids" The author's main thesis in setting up his book is that beverages have influenced the course of human history ever since the very beginning. Standage introduces this argument by mentioning that tens of thousands of years ago, water was the first vital fluid that was crucial to hunting and gathering peoples. Since they knew their existence depended on the availability of water, early humans gathered along rivers and creeks. Water is different from the other beverages that are talked about in this book because humans didn't have to do anything to create water, and we would die without it.

These other drinks were created or discovered for a reason, and that is a part of what makes them vital. In this introduction, the author sets up the six beverages that will be analyzed: beer, wine, spirits, coffee, tea, and cola. I think that using drinks as a way to describe history is quite interesting, and I never thought about how beverages could have such an impact on the world. It makes me wonder what other ways there are to describe or organize world history, because I'm sure there are a lot more. One idea in this introduction that really made me reflect was that each beverage became popular because it aligned with a certain need or historical trend. It's interesting to think about the causes of what happened in history, and that there are almost always specific reasons that certain things are created, or become popular at specific times. Each beverage had different roles; some were to highlight status and power and some were used to celebrate or for certain ceremonies.

So each fluid was vital for different reasons, and they were all pivotal drinks to their historical periods. Standage briefly discusses the significance of each beverage to set up the structure for the rest of the book. The first beverage is beer in Mesopotamia and Egypt, which nourished the first cities and was also used as currency. Next, wine was at the center of the civilization that was the city-states of ancient Greece. Wine was the basis of trade across the Mediterranean which helped to spread Greek philosophy, ideas, and literature. Spirits such as whiskey, rum, and brandy were used to buy slaves and became popular in the creation of the United States. In the Age of Reason, coffee was vital as new ways of thinking were discussed by Western scientists, philosophers, and businessmen.

Tea imported from China was popular in Britain and led to the establishment of tea production in India. The last vital fluid is Coca-Cola, which was vital because it led the way to transforming the US into a superpower because of consumer capitalism. In conclusion, each beverage was vital at the time for different reasons, but each beverage made a lasting impact on the civilizations it touched. " Beer in Mesopotamia and Egypt" Beer was discovered 10, 000 years ago in the Fertile Crescent, where humans started to farm and settle down after living a nomadic, hunting and gathering lifestyle. The wild grains in the region were used to make gruel, and when gruel was left sitting around for a couple of days, it goes through a transformation to turn it into beer. After the discovery of beer, humans found out ways to make the beer better, as well as to make different kinds, flavors, or types of beer.

This might have influenced the transition from Paleolithic to Neolithic societies because after this discovery, humans might have wondered what else they could make through farming and cooking and using different agricultural techniques, therefore moving on from their old hunting and collecting ways. It opened the door for new ways of making food, as well as so much more variety in early humans' diets. Another way that beer could have influenced the adoption of agriculture is that it could have led to skills and specialization of crafts.

Instead of most people having the same responsibilities: either hunting or gathering food, now members of society could have a purpose to specialize in one area of some kind of food producing because of their skillset. In addition, Standage makes the point that beer has a high level of vitamin B which would have compensated for a decline in meat that the humans were used to in their diet. It sounds pretty strange to me that beer could replace meat in someone's diet! But I also thought it was interesting that they both have a high level of vitamin B, and that it was an interesting connection to make.

Furthermore, humans learned to be wary of the water they drink because it could be contaminated so beer was safer to drink. When there was a shortage of food, humans could rely on beer as a sort of liquid nourishment. In Mesopotamia, beer was seen as a civilized drink. Mesopotamians regarded the consumption of beer as well as bread to be something that set them apart from barbarians and made them truly human. This seems similar to beer's dissociation with the previous savage, hunting and gathering lifestyle

of the paleolithic period. Contrasting this with the present day, beer has a reputation for being a common drink that is not just for the civilized in today's world. Whereas in Mesopotamia at this time, beer was a posh, special drink for elites.

In addition, being drunk seems to have a very different meaning such that today, it is seen as unprofessional and uncivilized. On the other hand, drunkenness in Mesopotamian society was seen simply as human. In Egyptian society, however, intoxication was something that was strongly disapproved of. Beer was the defining drink for both of these civilizations because no meal was complete without it and it was consumed everyone: men and women, rich and poor, adults and children, elite and peasants. I think that beer was very important in the growth and diffusion of the earliest societies. It helped to start the growing economies in each civilization, and also led to the need for a writing system to record information.

All this eventually led to taxation, which they also needed to keep records of. I think that beer just started the whole process of the growth and diffusion of Mesopotamia and Egypt, and I wouldn't say that it was the most important factor. The need for records and taxation gave way to tokens and coins, which also contributed to the growing economies of these early civilizations. I think that the earliest civilizations of SW Asia and Egypt would not have been as prosperous without the discovery of beer because without it, the same amount of progress could not have been made.

“ Wine in Greece and Rome” Wine became popular as a social and religious beverage in the Eastern Mediterranean and Near East around 3000 BCE. As it started to become more largely produced, it started to be a lot more accessible to more members of society. In the Assyrian Empire, two centuries later, wine had lost its expensive and exotic aura and was no longer used as an offering in the tribute system.

Everyone in Assyrian society was granted a ration of wine, no matter who they were. Wine in Mesopotamia was a symbol of great wealth, and only the elites had the privilege to drink it. Unlike in Assyrian society, wine was not as accessible or affordable to people not in wine-producing areas.

In Greece, wine was drunk at formal drinking parties, or symposia, which had a highly intellectual atmosphere. The Greeks liked to think of how civilized they were compared to the barbarians who drank beer. The Greeks were different, and they thought they were superior because they drank wine. This shows a lot about social and gender roles in the Mediterranean world.

Wine became very influential in their economy and culture, as well as social and gender roles. For example, the private drinking parties, or symposion, were all-male aristocratic rituals. Women were not allowed to sit with the men and discuss their ideas, they could only be there to serve, dance, or entertain. Wine had a huge effect on Greek culture because it embodied cultural and intellectual sophistication and encouraged philosophical questions or discussions. The Greek gods also held a lot of importance in Greek culture and beliefs. There is even a Greek god of wine, Dionysus, who

would often appear on the drinking vessels that wine would be drank out of, as well as many other places like coins. The Greek philosopher Plato believed that wine was helpful in the pursuit of truth about a man's character.

In his book, *The Republic*, Plato makes many allusions to the symposion. The Romans borrowed a lot from Greek culture, and wine bridged the two of them closer together. Rome was becoming the leading Mediterranean power around 150 BCE and vines were transplanted from Greek islands to Italy, the new center of trade. To the Romans, wine was a universal staple, but the quality of the wine that you drank was a symbol of your status and wealth.

Similar to Greek symposion, the Romans had the convivium, which was more of a chance to emphasize social divisions rather than set them aside. Wine had a close association with Christianity because it was important in the Bible. As the Roman empire crumbled, Christianity had an important role in keeping the wine production alive. However, drinking patterns changed dramatically as a result of the rise of Islam. Muslims believe in abstention from alcoholic drinks due to Muhammad's beliefs stated in the Quran.

With the rise of Islam, power shifted from the Mediterranean to Arabia. The ban on alcohol was practiced less intensely in certain areas and wine was celebrated in the work of certain Arab poets. "Spirits in the Colonial Period" How did spirits advance/accelerate colonialism? Arab scholars in Cordoba were making advancements in astronomy, mathematics, philosophy, and medicine. They developed a new technique called distillation which led to a whole new range of drinks.

Distilling wine makes it much stronger, so the alcohol content increases with repeated distillation, which is also known as rectification. In the 18th century, how did spirits change the balance of power amongst the western European nations (particularly Britain and France) How did spirits help in the building and shaping of early America (politically and economically)?