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## **History of Western Civilization**

Western civilization describes the development of human civilization beginning in the Middle East and spreading westwards. Its roots may date back to 9000 BCE when humans existing as hunters and gatherers began to settle into agricultural societies. However, the western civilization, in its more strictly defined European spheres, traces its roots back to classical antiquity. The western civilization had spread to northern America, South America and much of Oceania. In western history, there were three seminal periods: the Classical Greece (Hellenic), the pagan roman empire and the ancient Israel. The Greeks believed in democracy and pursuit of intellectual inquiry. The Romans believed in state administration and military organization and the ancient Israel believed in Christianity and the ideals of fellowship of humanity. Fighting in wars became a system of government and society, where slavery was a way of getting manual workforces and mediaeval knights becoming an elite military unit, bounded by a code of chivalry. These military units were trained to be disciplined and to follow all orders given by their generals, much like the armies of today.

Industrialization, which began with the British in the 18th century, was key to the emergence of the age of revolution in America and France and led to the transformation of the west into its industrialized and democratic form. The west brought about the invention of the nuclear, steam forms of power, televisions, computers, cinemas, and brought about great artists like Mozart and Shakespeare. Though it may seem that the western civilization occurred in itself, some great events and activities helped in molding the civilization more to what it is today. These activities involved both conflict and

consensus amongst the individuals. What many have wondered is: which of the two had a greater effect over its development? When it comes to consensus, there were many cases of alliances, treaties and truces between civilizations whose effects can be seen in the years after. For example, there was trade. The Mediterranean Sea provided routes linking Asia, Africa and Europe along which political and religious views could be traded along with timber, copper tin as well as agricultural produce. By 3100BC, the Egyptians were employing sails on boats to enhance better trade and also link with the great cities. Eventually, the great cities were linked and knowledge together with goods were traded. Furthermore, there was religious consensus during the western civilization. This can be characterized by the rise of Christendom. During the time of the Roman empire, there was that respect for Christianity in the European countries so much so that it was the bishops and all the people in the church were given gubernatorial power in the states, the popes were taken to be chief advisors to the kings and even in some kingdoms, were like rulers. The bishops and abbots had been given great pieces of land and given authority over the places they lived. The bishops and the pope had the power to preside over all disputes, handle all, even royal weddings and it was only by the pope's consent would the king be allowed to marry. Their power was so immense that the great king Henry IV stayed bald headed in the snow for three days to receive the Pope's forgiveness. This respect for Christendom encouraged all in Europe to abide by the law. There was also the religious syncretism of the Greco-Buddhism, which led to the rise of the great Byzantine Empire. There was also political stability in many countries that inspired others to follow their example. A

good example was the Greek. The Greek were known everywhere for their philosophical prowess and their stable government. The people followed the rules to the letter, as they feared the wrath of their gods. It is also through their philosophical prowess that it boasted of great names like Aristotle, Socrates and great military leaders like; Alexander the great. Many countries made treaties and truces with the Greek nation to avoid being vanquished by their military stronghold and to learn from them (Noble, Strauss, Duane Neuschel and Accampo 29). Despite the above examples of consensus in the western civilization, there were many cases of conflict that took an effect on it. For example, there were the wars. The wars, like the renaissance and the reformation, took their toll on the European kingdoms and empires. For example, these two wars affected the disintegration of the Roman Empire. Also, World War 1 and 2 saw the end of fascism in the European countries as the Soviet Union (Russia) and the US became global rival powers. Other than in Russia, the European empires disintegrated after world war two and multi-ethnic multi faith migrations to Europe altered the earlier predominance of the ethnic Europeans of the western culture. Moreover, there were many kingdom-to-kingdom wars like that led by King Alexander the great of Greece. He conquered the whole of the Persian Empire bringing forth the downfall of king Darius III and even went on to Thebes in Egypt. After his death, the Greek empire did not last long at its vast size but it did lead to the molding of the European countries we see today. What's more, the town Alexandria was named after him to remember his military prowess. In addition, there were cases of political instability. Julius Caesar was a roman general and played a critical role in the transformation of the roman republic

to the Roman Empire. However, conspirators feared that he was seeking to establish a monarchy and assassinated him. His successor, Augustus Caesar, outmaneuvered the conspirators to become the defacto emperor. His successors became all-powerful and ordered that they be venerated as gods. Moreover, there were cases of religious differences that led to conflict in the western civilization. For example, the feud between the pagans lands Assyria and the Jewish nation Israel. In sum, there have been many cases of feuds and agreements made during the western civilization, but both, to almost equal measure, have brought the world to what it is today. Many of the wars were to mark territories and to expand empires and kingdoms. The aftermaths of wars are the countries and boundaries that can be seen today in the European continent. In addition, there was a trade between kingdoms and, one of the main ones being in Alexandria, Athens and Egypt, great philosophies and commodities were traded. This enhanced strong union amongst the participating countries and exchanging of ideas brought about the great philosophies made during the time. In conclusion, it is true to say that both consensus and conflict made an impact on the western civilization.

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