

# GREEK & ROMAN CIVILAZTION





# LEARNING JOURNAL UNIT 6

*HIST 1421-01 GREEK & ROMAN CIVILIZATION - AY2024-T3*



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## COMPARING LIFE AS A GREEK VS ROMAN SLAVE

If I look back in the history, I will rather say the life of a Greek slave was comparably better than that of a Roman slave. Greek society and philosophy placed more value on human life and acknowledged that slaves were still human beings deserving of some basic rights and dignities. “Greece used slaves for farming but did not torture their slaves by giving them life threatening tasks such as giving them life threatening tasks such as fighting one another to death or battling a lion just for entertainment” (Prezi, 2016).

Greek slaves were allowed to practice their cultural traditions, maintain family units, and even had legal paths to potentially buy their freedom one day. Many skilled or educated Greek slaves held respected positions as tutors, accountants, or artists within households.

In contrast, Roman slavery was harsher and more dehumanizing. Slaves were considered property with no rights. Brutal punishments like whipping, branding and execution were common. “Rome used slaves as Gladiators for entertainment and farming” (Prezi, 2016). Roman slaves were prohibited from cultural/family life and viewed as subhuman. Their grueling labor sent many to early graves working in mines, quarries, and galleys. “Also, in coliseum's Roman slaves were forced to either fight each other to death or battle a lion which they could be killed because of how dangerous the tasks could be” (Prezi, 2016).

So, while slavery itself was undesirable, Greek culture seemed to have a more enlightened, humanistic perspective that afforded slaves better living conditions and opportunities compared to Rome's particularly oppressive, abusive system of slavery.

## GREEK VS ROMAN WOMEN'S SOCIETAL ROLE

“Unlike modern-day society, women had a very limited role to play in the ancient civilizations. In Ancient Greece, for example, women were expected to manage the household and raise children. They had limited rights and were usually not allowed to participate in public events and politics” (THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME, n.d.).

As for the role of women in Greek and Roman societies, I believe Roman women enjoyed somewhat more active involvement outside the domestic sphere compared to their Greek counterparts.

In ancient Greece, cultural norms and philosophical ideals emphasized women's role as primarily centered around the home - managing the household and raising children with very little public presence. Wealthy women lived largely secluded lives confined indoors.

Roman society, on the other hand, granted women more legal rights and autonomy. While still expected to be wives and mothers first, Roman women could inherit property, file for divorce, own businesses and appear in court hearings. Some notable Roman women like the Empress Livia wielded considerable societal influence.

Additionally, Roman religion featured prominent female priestly roles and public rituals that respected women's importance, unlike Greece where women were excluded from major religious rites. Some affluent Roman women hosted intellectual salons and played active patrons of the arts.

So, while both cultures still relegated women to a lower status than men overall, the evidence suggests Roman women experienced a bit more mobility and visibility as members of

their society compared to the heavy constraints placed on their Greek counterparts. But of course, for the vast majority, domestic obligations remained their primary focus.

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