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THE ANCIENT ROMANS' SOCIO-CULTURAL BORROWINGS IN MODERN SOCIETY

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Rezumat

În rezultatul cercetărilor efectuate, s-a stabilit că Roma Antică a adus contribuții considerabile societății moderne. Roma Antică a contribuit enorm în toate domeniile, dar mai ales în domeniile lingvistic, juridic și cel al vinificației. De asemenea, Roma Antică a avut un rol foarte important în răspîndirea creștinismului în tot Imperiul Roman și care ulterior s-a răspîndit în toată lumea. Astfel contribuțiile Romei Antice au pus bazele civilizației moderne europene.

The Ancient Romans had a considerable contribution to the modern society. The Romans' most important contributions to the modern world are: the Latin alphabet, the Roman Law, the spread of Christianity and the new wine-making technologies.

The first important contribution of the ancient Romans to the modern society is the Latin alphabet. The Latin alphabet spread from Italy to the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea with the expansion of the Roman Empire. Then together with the spread of Christianity, the Latin alphabet spread to the nations of Northern Europe who spoke Germanic languages as well as to the speakers of Baltic languages. In the Middle Ages the Latin alphabet spread to peoples speaking west Slavic languages, such as the forefathers of modern Poles, Czechs, Croats, Slovenes and Slovaks, as these nations adopted Roman Catholicism. From 1492 the Latin alphabet spread to North and South America, Australia, parts of Asia, Africa and the Pacific together with European colonization. Today according to some calculations about 2.6 billion people (36 percent) from all over the world use the Latin alphabet. So according to these

calculations the Latin alphabet is the most widely used alphabetic system in the world.

The Roman Law was perhaps Rome's greatest contribution to mankind. The Twelve Tables is the earliest attempt of the Romans to form a Code of Law. In the middle of the 5th century BC in Rome there was a continuous struggle for civil rights between the common people (plebeians) and the privileged class (patricians). A commission of ten men (Decemviri) was appointed (cca 455 BC) to draw up a Code of Law which would please the both parts. The first Decemvirate completed the first Ten Codes in 450 BC. In 449 BC the second Decemvirate completed the last two codes. The Twelve Tables were written on 12 bronze tables which were posted in the Roman Forum so all Romans could read and know them. The Twelve Tables created a system through which the plebeians were protected from the legal abuses of the ruling patricians. Most of the Roman laws were based on common sense and were quite realistic. Some of the standards of the Roman law are still used nowadays. They are :

- every person has the right to receive equal treatment under the law;
- people are to be prosecuted for deeds not thoughts;
- every person is believed innocent unless proven guilty;
- the burden of proving lays on the accusers not on the accused;
- any law that proved to be unreasonable and unfair can be changed or eliminated.

The Romans also established the rights of personal property, a principle that is regarded as the basis of any democratic society. The principles of the Roman Law formed the foundation of many legal systems in the European countries and other countries influenced by Europe like the U.S.A.

Another important contribution of the Romans to the modern society was the spreading of Christianity. In a few hundred years, mostly due to Romans, a small and unimportant cult became the

dominant religion of the Roman Empire and then of the whole world. This happened with the great support of two Roman Emperors: Constantine I and Theodosius I. Constantine I issued the Edict of Milan in 313 AD, through which he legalized Christianity. The Edict of Milan not only stopped the persecution of the Christians, but also gave them some legal rights such as the return of confiscated property and the right to build churches. But Constantine was not the only emperor who supported the new religion. More than that, Constantine only legalized Christianity, whereas Theodosius I (emperor 379-395 A. D.) made it the official religion of the Roman Empire. Theodosius I signed in 380 AD the Edict of Thessalonica through which he made Christianity the only legal religion of the Roman Empire. Theodosius I also banned all the pagan religious practices and authorized the destruction of the Roman temples. So, these two Roman Emperors contributed a lot to the growth and spread of Christianity.

The technologies of wine-making are probably Rome's most lasting contribution to the society today. Romans considered that wine was a daily necessity of life, that's why the wine was available to everyone regardless of the social class. Even the slaves were drinking wine though of a poorer quality. So ,, the Romans developed the attitude that wine should be available to everyone and established its importance in everyday life. As a result, vineyards were planted and cultivated throughout the Roman Empire whose borders encompassed most of Europe" [5]. That is why the Romans became very interested in the art of wine making. They cared a lot about the taste, aroma and quality of the wine. The ancient Romans introduced a few very important innovations in wine making technology which considerably improved the quality of wine. They introduced props in vine growing. They also improved the presses used for extracting juice. The Romans were the first to store the wine in wooden barrels. And finally they determined which groups of grapes grew best in which climates. This classification helped the

winemakers to be more productive. All these innovations and inventions contributed considerably to the modern wine making industry.

In conclusion we can say that the Romans had a considerable contribution to the modern world. A lot of concepts, ideas and inventions that are used by the modern society were borrowed from the ancient Romans. The Latin alphabet was one of their greatest contributions to the modern society, being today the most widely used alphabetic system in the world. The ancient Roman Law is another important contribution to the mankind. The Romans wrote the Twelve Tables, which is the earliest attempt of the Romans to create a Code of Law. The Twelve Tables are the foundation of the Western Law. The Romans also made important contributions to wine making. They were the first to store the wine in wooden barrels and they also improved the presses used for extracting juice. And finally the Romans' role in spreading Christianity is considered to be very significant. In a few hundred years, mostly due to Romans, the new religion spread all over the Roman Empire and then in the whole world. Constantine I and Theodosius I played a major role in spreading Christianity in the Roman Empire. Constantine the Great was the Roman Emperor who legalized Christianity and Theodosius I established Christianity as the only legal religion in the Empire.

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