



IENE 6



Contemporary large migration waves into Europe: Enabling health workers to provide psychological support to migrants and refugees and develop strategies for dealing with their own emotional needs.

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Intellectual Output 8

Bitesized Learning Tool No 7: Ethnohistory of Greece

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Ethnohistory of Greece

Learning objectives

To raise knowledge and awareness about the culture and history of Greece as well as to get a better understanding of the country's long history with migration.

Official Name: Hellenic Republic

Capital: Athens

Official language: Greek

Population: 10.768.477 (July 2017 est.)

Geography

- Greece located in south-eastern Europe, on the southern end of the Balkan Peninsula, lies at the meeting point of three continents – Europe, Asia and Africa. It borders to the North on Bulgaria and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (F.Y.R.O.M.), to the Northwest on Albania, to the Northeast on Turkey; to the West it is washed by the Ionian Sea; to the South by the Mediterranean Sea and to the East by the Aegean Sea.
- The country consists of nine geographic regions: **Thrace**, **Macedonia**, **Epirus**, **Thessaly**, **Central Greece**, **the Peloponnese**, the **Aegean Islands**, the **Ionian Islands**, and **Crete**.
- Around 6.000 islands and islets are scattered in the Aegean and Ionian Sea, most of them grouped in clusters, constituting the unique Greek archipelago. Crete, Rhodes, Corfu, the Dodecanese and the Cyclades are some of the famous and popular islands and island clusters in Greece.
- Greece has the longest coastline on the Mediterranean Basin and the 11th longest coastline in the world at 13,676 km (8,498 mi) in length.
- 80% of the country consists of mountains or hills, making Greece one of the most mountainous countries of Europe.

History

- The first traces of human habitation in Greece appeared during the **Paleolithic Age** (approx. 120000 - 10000 B.C.).
- During the **Neolithic Age** that followed (approx. 7000 - 3000 B.C.), a plethora of Neolithic buildings spread throughout the country. Buildings and cemeteries have been discovered in Thessaly (**Sesklo, Dimini**), Macedonia, the Peloponnese, etc.
- The beginning of the **Bronze Age** (approx. 3000-1100 B.C.) is marked by the appearance of the first urban centres in the Aegean region (Poliochni on Limnos).

From Minoan Crete to Mycenae

At the beginning of the 2nd Millennium B.C., organized palatial societies appeared on **Minoan Crete**, resulting in the development of the first systematic scripts. The Minoans, with Knossos Palace as their epicenter, developed a communications network with races from the Eastern Mediterranean region, adopted certain elements and in turn decisively influenced cultures on the Greek mainland and the islands of the Aegean.

On Mainland Greece, the **Mycenaean Greeks** –taking advantage of the destruction caused on Crete by the volcanic eruption on Santorini (around 1500 B.C.)- became the dominant force in the Aegean during the last centuries of the 2nd Millennium B.C. The Mycenaean acropolises (citadels) in **Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos, Thiva, Glas, Athens** and **Iolcus**, then comprised the centres of the bureaucratically organized kingdoms.

The extensive destruction of the Mycenaean centres around 1200 B.C. led to the decline of the Mycenaean civilization and caused the population to migrate to the coastal regions of Asia Minor and Cyprus (1st Greek colonization).

9th – 8th Century B.C.:

After approximately two centuries of economic and cultural inactivity, which also became known as the Dark Years (1150 - 900 B.C.), the **Geometric Period** then followed. This was the beginning of the Greek Renaissance Years. This period was marked by the formation of the Greek City-States, the creation of the **Greek alphabet** and the composition of the **Homeric epics** (end of the 8th Century B.C.).

7th – 6th Century B.C.:

The **Archaic Years** that subsequently followed were a period of major social and political changes. The Greek City-States established colonies as far as Spain to the west, the Black Sea to the north and N. Africa to the south (2nd Greek colonization) and laid the foundations for the acme during the Classical Period.

5th – 4th Century B.C.:

The **Classical Years** were characterized by the cultural and political dominance of Athens, so much so that the second half of the 5th Century B.C. was subsequently called the “Golden Age” of **Pericles**. With the end of the Peloponnesian War in 404 B.C., Athens lost its leading role

Alexander the Great, the Roman occupation and the Byzantine Empire

New forces emerged during the 4th Century B.C. The Macedonians, with Philip II and his son Alexander the Great, began to play a leading role in Greece. Alexander’s campaign to the East and the conquest of all the regions as far as the Indus River radically changed the situation in the world, as it was at that time.

After the death of Alexander, the vast empire he had created was then divided among his generals, leading to the creation of the kingdoms that would prevail during the **Hellenistic Period** (3rd - 1st Century B.C.). In this period the Greek City-States remained more or less autonomous but lost much of their old power and prestige. The appearance of the Romans on the scene and the final conquest of Greece in 146 B.C. forced the country to join the vast Roman Empire.

During the Roman occupation period (1st Century B.C. - 3rd Century A.D.), most of the Roman emperors, who admired Greek culture, acted as benefactors to the Greek cities, and especially Athens.

The decision by Constantine the Great to move the capital of the empire from Rome to Constantinople in 324 A.D., shifted the focus of attention to the eastern part of the empire. This shift marked the beginning of the Byzantine Years, during which Greece became part of the Byzantine Empire.

After 1204, when Constantinople was taken by Western crusaders, parts of Greece was apportioned out to western leaders, while the Venetians occupied strategic positions in the Aegean (islands or coastal cities), in order to control the trade routes. The reoccupation of Constantinople by the Byzantines in 1262 marked the last stages of the empire’s existence.

Ottoman domination to Modern Era:

The Ottomans gradually began to seize parts of the empire from the 14th Century A.D. and completed the breakup of the empire with the capture of Constantinople in 1453. Crete was the final area of Greece that was occupied by the Ottomans in 1669.

Around four centuries of Ottoman domination then followed, up to the beginning of the Greek War of Independence in 1821. The result of the Greek War of Independence was the creation of an independent Greek Kingdom in 1830, but with limited sovereign land. During the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, new areas with compact Greek populations were gradually inducted into the Greek State. Greece's sovereign land would reach its maximum after the end of World War I in 1920, with the substantial contribution of then Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos. The Greek State took its current form after the end of World War II with the incorporation of the Dodecanese Islands.

In 1974, after the seven-year dictatorship period a referendum was held, and the government changed from a Constitutional Monarchy to a Presidential Parliamentary Democracy, and in 1981 Greece became a member of the European Union.

Greek Diaspora and a history of migration

The Greek diaspora, Hellenic diaspora or Omogenia, refers to the communities of Greek people living outside Greece. The Greek diaspora is one of the oldest and historically most significant in the world, with an almost unbroken presence from Homeric times to present.

In ancient times, the trading and colonizing activities of the Greek tribes from the Balkans and Asia Minor spread people of Greek culture, religion and language around the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins, establishing Greek city-states in southern Italy, northern Libya, eastern Spain, the south of France, and the Black Sea coasts. Greeks founded more than 400 colonies. Alexander the Great's conquest of the Achaemenid Empire marked the beginning of the Hellenistic period, which was characterized by a new wave of Greek colonization in Asia and Africa, with Greek ruling classes established in Egypt, southwest Asia, and northwest India.

Many Greeks migrated to the new Hellenistic cities founded in Alexander's wake, as geographically dispersed as Uzbekistan, the northern Indian subcontinent (including modern-day Pakistan), and Kuwait. The Hellenistic cities of Seleucia, Antioch and Alexandria were among the largest cities in the world during Hellenistic and Roman times. Under the Roman Empire, movement of people spread Greeks across the Empire and in the eastern territories Greek became the lingua franca rather than Latin. The Roman Empire became Christianized in the fourth century AD, and in the late Byzantine period, the practice of the Greek Orthodox form of Christianity became a defining hallmark of Greek identity.

After the Byzantine–Ottoman Wars, which resulted in the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the Ottoman Empire's conquest of Greek lands, many Greeks fled Constantinople, (what is now Istanbul) and found refuge in Italy, bringing with them many ancient Greek writings that had been lost in the West. These helped contribute to the European Renaissance. Most of these Greeks settled in Venice, Florence, and Rome.

Greeks were spread through many provinces of the Ottoman Empire and took a major role in its economic life. Other Greeks settled outside their homelands in the southern Balkans to areas further north through service in the Orthodox church or as a result of population transfers and massacres by the Ottoman authorities following Greek rebellions against the Ottoman rule or suspected Greek collaboration with Russia in the many Russo-Turkish wars fought between 1774 and 1878.

During and after the Greek War of Independence, Greeks of the diaspora were important in establishing the fledgling state, raising funds and awareness abroad and in several cases serving as senior officers in Russian armies that fought against the Ottomans as a means of helping liberate Greeks still living under Ottoman subjugation in Macedonia, Epirus, and Thrace.

After the formation of the modern Greek state in the early 1830s two important waves of mass emigration took place, one from the late 19th to the early 20th century, and another following World War II.

The first wave of emigration was spurred by the economic crisis of 1893. In the period 1890-1914, almost a sixth of the population of Greece emigrated, mostly to the United States and Egypt. This emigration was, in a sense, encouraged by Greek authorities, who saw remittances as helping to improve the balance of payments of the Greek economy.

Following World War II, the countries of Southern Europe, Greece among them, were the main contributors to migration to the industrialized nations of Northern Europe. However, the oil crises of 1973 and 1980 caused economic uncertainty and a sharp fall in the demand for labour, which in turn led northern states to introduce restrictive immigration policies. As these countries became less welcoming to their former invitees, return migration to Greece soon followed.

More than one million Greeks migrated in this second wave, which mainly fell between 1950 and 1974. Most emigrated to Western Europe, the U.S., Canada, and Australia. Economic and political reasons often motivated their move, both connected with the consequences of a 1946-1949 civil war and the 1967-1974 period of military junta rule that followed. The majority of these migrants came from rural areas, and they supplied both the national and international labour markets.

[Greece as a host country](#)

From 2013 onwards, Europe is facing the biggest wave of migration since the Second World War. More than 90% of the arrivals in Europe come from countries involved in wars and conflicts, such as Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia. Fleeing death, violence, oppression and persecution in their countries of origin, these people are desperate to reach the European continent and, in some cases, have found themselves in the need to risk their lives in doing so.

In the Mediterranean region, refugees now follow mainly three migratory sea routes: that of the Eastern Mediterranean from Turkey to Greece, that of the Central Mediterranean from Libya to Italy and that of the Western Mediterranean from Morocco to Spain.

During 2015, migration flows to Greece reached their peak, with almost one million refugees and migrants arriving in the country, in their majority viewing Greece as their first stop and as a transit country towards their final destination to central and northern European states.

Gradually and, especially, in February 2016 the situation on the borders along the Balkan migratory routes changed drastically, with the Greek border closure, resulting in large number of people being stranded in Greece. More temporary accommodation sites, but also unofficial settlements, such as Idomeni, the port of Piraeus and Victoria square, were created. The living and hygiene conditions were in many cases unacceptable and the short-term stay soon turned into long term hosting.

The 20 March 2016 EU-Turkey agreement had further significant consequences in the refugee crisis in Greece. Undocumented migrants and those who do not apply for asylum or their application is rejected will be sent back to Turkey, which is considered as a “safe third country” while the hot spots were turned into detention centers. As a result, large numbers of people remained trapped in the islands, either in closed centers or in a status of restriction of their liberties. Parallel to this, the efforts by Third Country Nationals to enter Europe continued, but the routes and entry points have been constantly changing. So far in 2017, the number of refugees and migrants that have reached Greece has decreased significantly, but there is an increase in the arrivals in Italy, Spain and Cyprus.

During 2017, a significant decrease in the number of refugees and migrants that arrived in Greece by sea has been noted in comparison to the arrivals of the previous year. During 2017 29,718 persons have arrived in Greece by sea crossing the Aegean¹. Only in September 2017, there were 4,886 new arrivals, an increase of 63% in comparison to September 2016². From the beginning of 2018 until today it is estimated that around 6,745 people crossed the Aegean Sea to the Greek islands³.

There has also been registered a significant rise in land arrivals, with 171 during May and 753 during June 2017, marking a 360% rise⁴. The main nationalities of refugees/migrants that enter Greece are still Syrian and Iraqi, and there is a significant rise of arrivals from Africa. Syrians represent the majority of the arrivals, as a result of a fierce civil conflict, which has ravaged their country since 2011. The main islands in Greece that have been regularly receiving the majority of refugees are Lesbos, Samos, Chios, Kos and Leros, with the addition of Kastelorizo as one of the main entry points in the country since 2017.

¹ <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179>

² <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179>

³ <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179>

⁴ http://migration.iom.int/docs/Monthly_Flows_Compilation_Report_June_2017.pdf

It is estimated that until the end of February 2018, 50,800 refugees resided in Greece: 39,800 in the continental part of the country and 11,000 in the islands⁵.

ACTIVITY: QUIZ

1. When was the “Golden Age” of Pericles?
2. Greece consists of how many geographical regions?
3. From where to where does Constantine the Great move the capital of the empire in 324 A.D.?

Answers at the end of this tool!!

Reflections: use this space to write down your reflections about the topic of this learning tool

⁵ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/62950>

References and useful resources

- Refugee / Migrant Crisis in Greece. (2018). Activity Report. Athens: Doctors of the World Greece, pp. 3-4.
- <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179>
- <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/62950>
- http://migration.iom.int/docs/Monthly_Flows_Compilation_Report_June_2017.pdf
- http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/general_info
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece#Ancient_and_Classical_periods
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_diaspora
- www.migrationpolicy.org/article/greece-history-migration

Answers to quiz: 1) Second half of the 5th Century B.C., 2) 9, 3) From Rome to Constantinople