

AN EMPIRE ACROSS THREE CONTINENTS

Multiple Choice Type Questions

1. The best kind of wine came to Rome from _____
(a) Fayum
(b) Byzantium
(c) Galilee
(d) Campania
2. The Roman emperor who consolidated the rise of provincial upper classes so as to exclude the senators from military command was
(a) Augustus
(b) Constantine
(c) Gallienus
(d) Tiberius
3. What were Amphorae?
(a) A type of army
(b) A type of container
(c) A type of district administrator
(d) None of the above
4. Augustus, the first Roman Emperor was called the leading citizen whose Latin term is
(a) Basileus
(b) Dominus
(c) Princeps
(d) Res gestae
5. Saint Augustine was bishop of the North African city of
(a) Annaba
(b) Algeria
(c) Hippo
(d) Numidia

Answer

1. (d) 2. (c) 3. (b) 4. (c) 5. (c)

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. How did corruption come in administrative system in the late Roman bureaucracy?

Answer: In the late Roman bureaucracy, the higher and middle echelons, was a comparatively affluent group because it drew the bulk of its salary in gold and invested much of it in buying up assets like land.

There was, of course, a great deal of corruption especially in the judicial system and in the administration of military supplies.

2. How slaves were treated after murder of Lucius Pedanius by his slave Secundus? What was the reaction of crowd at that time?

Answer: After the murder of Lucius Pedanius by his slave Secundus, ancient custom required that every slave residing under the same roof must be executed. But the crowd gathered to save the innocent lives and riots began. The Senate house was overwhelmed. Inside, there was feeling against excessive severity, but the majority opposed any change. However, a huge crowd was ready with stones and torches but prevented the order from being carried out.

3. What does 'Post – Roman' mean in the 540's?

Answer: The general prosperity was especially marked in the East where population was still expanding till the sixth century, despite the impact of the plague which affected the Mediterranean in the 540's. In the West, by contrast, the empire fragmented politically as Germanic groups from the North took over all the major provinces and established kingdoms that are best described as 'Post-Roman'.

4. Who was Columella?

Answer: Columella, a first-century writer who came from the south of Spain, recommended that landowners should keep a reserve stock of implements and tools, twice as many as they needed to improve the better situation of laborers.

5. What had occurred after Prophet Muhammad's death by 642?

Answer: By 642, barely ten years after Prophet Muhammad's death, large parts of both the Eastern Roman and Sasanian empires had fallen to the Arabs in a series of confrontations. Though, those conquests, which eventually a century later extended up to Spain, Sind and Central Asia, began in fact with the subjection of the Arab tribes by the emerging Islamic state, first within Arabia and then in the Syrian desert on the fringes of Iraq.

LONG ANSWER QUESTION

1. What do you think about the importance of Latin and Greek languages in the Roman empire?

Answer: "Greek East" and "Latin West" are the terms that are used to distinguish between the two parts of the Greco-Roman world, especially the eastern regions where Greek was the lingua franca, and the western parts where Latin filled this role. During the Roman Empire a division had persisted between Latin and Greek speaking areas. This division was encouraged by administrative changes in the empire's structure between the third and fifth centuries, which led ultimately to the establishment of separate Eastern and Western Roman empires.

Latin and Greek were the dominant languages of the Roman Empire. The language of the ancient Romans was Latin, which served as the "language of power". Latin was omnipresent in the Roman Empire as the language of the law courts in the West, and of the military everywhere. A great number of Roman citizens would have lacked Latin, though they were expected to acquire at least token knowledge, and Latin remained a marker of "Romanness".

Greek had become a shared language around the Eastern Mediterranean and into Asia Minor as a consequence of the conquests of Alexander the Great. The "linguistic frontier" dividing the Latin West and the Greek East passed through the Balkan Peninsula. Educated Romans, particularly those of the ruling elite,

studied and often achieved a high degree of fluency in Greek, which was useful for diplomatic communications in the East even beyond the borders of the empire. The use of Greek at international level was one condition that enabled the spread of Christianity, as indicated for example by the choice of Greek. With the dissolution of the empire in the West, Greek became the dominant language of the Eastern Roman empire.

2. What do you know about Augustus? Explain.

Answer: Augustus was the founder of the Roman Empire and its first Emperor, ruling from 27 BCE until his death in 14 CE. He was born Gaius Octavius into an old and wealthy equestrian branch of the Plebeian Octavii family. In 44 BCE he was adopted posthumously by his maternal great-uncle Gaius Julius Caesar following Caesar's assassination. Together with Mark Antony and Marcus Lepidus, he formed the Second Triumvirate to defeat the assassins of Caesar. Following their victory at Philippi, the Triumvirate divided the Roman Republic among them and ruled as military dictator.

Lepidus was kept into exile and stripped of his position and Antony committed suicide following his defeat at the Battle of Actium by Augustus in 31 BC.

After the demise of the Second Triumvirate, Augustus restored the outward facade of the free Republic, with governmental power vested in the Roman Senate, the executive magistrates, and the legislative assemblies. In reality, however, he retained his autocratic power over the Republic as a military dictator. By law, Augustus held a collection of powers granted to him for life by the Senate, including supreme military command, and those of tribune and censor. It took several years for Augustus to develop the framework within which a formally republican state could be led under his rule. He rejected monarchical titles, and instead called himself *Princeps Civitatis* ("First Citizen"). The resulting constitutional framework became known as the Principate, the first phase of the Roman Empire.

3. How was the reign of Augustus by 27 BC? Discuss.

Answer: The reign of Augustus initiated an era of relative peace known as the Pax Romana (The Roman Peace). Despite continuous wars or imperial expansion on the empire's frontiers and one year-long civil war over the imperial succession, the Roman world was largely free from large-scale conflict for more than two centuries. Augustus dramatically enlarged the empire, annexing Egypt, Dalmatia, Pannonia, Noricum, and Raetia, expanded possessions in Africa and Germania, and completed the conquest of Hispania.

Beyond the frontiers, he secured the empire with a buffer region of client states, and made peace with the Parthian empire through diplomacy. He reformed the Roman system of taxation, developed networks of roads with an official courier system, established a standing army, and also the Praetorian Guard, created official police and fire-fighting services for Rome, and rebuilt much of the city during his reign.

Augustus died in 14 AD at the age of 75. He might have died from natural causes. He was succeeded as emperor by his adopted son (also steps on and former son-in-law), Tiberius.

4. Explain the system of administration governed by politicians of senatorial rank in Rome.

Answer: In ancient Rome, provinces were generally governed by politicians of senatorial rank, usually former consuls. A later exception was the province of Egypt, incorporated by Augustus. After the death of Cleopatra it was ruled by a governor of equestrian rank only, perhaps as a discouragement to senatorial ambition as Egypt was considered Augustus's personal property, following the tradition of earlier, Hellenistic kings.

The territory of people who were defeated in war might be brought under various forms of treaty, in some cases entailing complete subjection. The formal annexation of a territory created a “province” in the modern sense of an administrative unit that was geographically defined. Republican provinces were administered in one-year term by the consuls and praetors who had held office the previous year.

Rome started expanding beyond Italy during the First Punic War. The first permanent provinces to be annexed were Sicily in 241 BC and Sardinia in 237 BC. Military expansionism kept increasing the number of these administrative provinces, until there were no longer enough qualified individuals to fill the posts. The terms of provincial governors often had to be extended for multiple years, and on occasion the Senate awarded *imperium* even to private citizens, most notably Pompey the Great. *Prorogation* undermined the republican constitutional principle of annual elected magistracies, and the amassing of disproportionate wealth and military power by a few men through their provincial commands was a major factor in the transition from a republic to imperial autocracy.

5. What was the policy of education in the Roman Empire?

Answer: Education in the Roman Empire contributed to the social mobility that characterized the earlier period of Imperial history known as the *Principate*.

Education was available only for those who could pay for it, since there was no state- supported system of schools with public funding.

A higher rate of literacy is indicated among military personnel than among the general population. Educated women were not unusual, and there was an expectation that upper-class girls would at least attend primary school, probably in the same classes as boys. Only an elite few, regardless of gender, went on to receive secondary education.

Modest number of slaves was educated and they played a key role in promoting education and the culture of literacy. Teachers, scribes, and secretaries were likely to be slaves. The education of slaves was not discouraged, and slave-children might attend classes with the children of their masters. Book stores were already well-established in Rome by the beginning of the Imperial period, and are found also in urban centers of the provinces.

Books were expensive, but by the later period, popular genres of literature indicated reading for pleasure among non-elites. Emperor sponsored libraries that were to some extent public, and a wealthy individual might donate a library for a community, or accumulate impressive private collections to which in-house scholars might be attached. Literacy is thought to have declined in late antiquity during the transition away from the classical institutions and practices that supported it.