

NOTES ON QUIZ 3

1 How did the Romans govern the territories over which they had direct rule? How were these governments different from Rome's?

The Romans set up territories they ruled over as provinces — literally, a job or responsibility for an ex-magistrate. A consul or praetor, after his year in office, would have his powers continued for another year for the purpose of accepting responsibility for governing a conquered territory. He was now a proconsul (or propraeator), and was the sole Roman authority in the territory he'd been given. A large enough province might have a Roman legion stationed there, of which the proconsul or propraeator was the commander.

Because there were only eight magistrates a year (two consuls and six praetors), and therefore only eight potential new governors, once there were more than eight provinces it became increasingly necessary to prorogue, or hold over, the sitting governors in their territories, with the result that some governors ended up ruling over their provinces for several years, allowing them to build up a power base there among the local nobles and their own legions. Thus the provincial governments allowed one man to have complete executive authority (rather than two as back at Rome), without a colleague or a senate or assembly to get in the way of his ambition; and many of them stayed in place for multiple years, rather than one year only as was the rule back at Rome.

The other key element of Roman provincial government was tax farming. Because the governors had no supporting bureaucracy, tax collection was outsourced to for-profit corporations run by Roman middle class businessmen (*publicani*). These corporations gouged the populace by collecting as much money as they could, handing over to the Roman state the fixed amount the senate decreed for that province and pocketing the rest. This resulted in resentment, rebellion, and increased need for Roman military presence and oppression in the provinces.

2 What were some of the ways Romans self-consciously cultivated Greek culture in the middle Republic?

The aristocracy of Rome developed a liking for Greek things as a sign of status and sophistication during the eastward expansion. Often this involved a Roman take on Greek ideas, like the triumphal arch. Examples include architecture and construction (Greek-style buildings in the Forum and so on; Greek-scale large buildings and monuments made possible by the Roman development of molded concrete; homes with Greek elements like pools and colonnaded walkways), marble sculpture in place of Roman bronze and terracotta; and the cultivation of the Greek language and Greek forms of expression, including history, rhetoric, philosophy, tragedy and comedy, poetry, and prose literature. Greek influence was also seen in legal theory, religious practice, and education.

EC1 The *publicani* were all of the following EXCEPT

(c) Outlawed by the *lex Villia Annalis*

EC2 Why do you think Romans—even the most conservative, like Cato the Elder—went to such lengths to cultivate Greek culture in this period?

There are a number of possible answers to this question. The Romans, aware they were an upstart nation from the outer fringes of the civilized world, would have had a complex attitude toward the older peoples like the Greeks and the Egyptians, admiring their achievements while scorning their decadence. People like Cato would have seen the ideal society as one that combined the Romans' strength and moral fiber with the Greeks' cultural greatness. More practically, only a hellenized Rome could be an economic and cultural power in the Hellenistic east.