

NOTES ON QUIZ 7

1 What were some of the reasons Alexander's empire did not survive his death intact?

Alexander died unexpectedly and young. He did not make provisions for his succession, and his possible successors were the infant child of his foreign wife and his supposedly mentally deficient half-brother. His protégé, Haephestion, had died a year earlier, and he had no favorites among the generals—indeed, since he was trying to be a more elevated and separate Asian kind of king (like the Persian Great King), he had kept himself apart from his generals and lords. The generals were thus at all the same level, and in rivalry with each other—naturally, they were ready to fight for pieces of the empire after Alexander died.

Alexander's empire also had very little in common. The Aegean world, Mesopotamia, Persia, Bactria, and Egypt all had very different cultures that were only now being brought together through Hellenization. Alexander might have melded them together by building new imperial institutions, but he did not live to do so.

2 In what ways did the Ptolemies of Egypt act like pharaohs? In what ways did they hold onto their Macedonian-Greek heritage?

The Ptolemies ruled as pharaohs, retaining the dress and rituals of Egyptian kings. Some maintained the Egyptian tradition of incestuous marriage in order to consolidate bloodlines, at least for show. They recorded their deeds in statues, paintings, and hieroglyphics reminiscent of ancient pharaohs.

At the same time, Ptolemaic Egypt was a haven for Hellenistic art and learning, with Alexandria on the Nile delta becoming the preeminent center for scholarship, the library there gaining worldwide fame and drawing learned individuals from all over. Greek culture flourished, including fostering plays, visual art, rhetoric, philosophy, and literature. Ptolemaic Egypt was more heterogeneous than Egypt had been, with significant populations of outsiders in Alexandria and elsewhere. The Egyptian religion was modified by grafting on or merging in gods from Greek mythology, while still retaining much of the shape and ritual of Egyptian religion.

3 In your opinion, what is *Clouds* about? Explain your answer. What moments most emphasize this idea?

There are a lot of possible answers to this question. *Clouds* calls attention to the danger posed by abandonment of traditional beliefs and religion, which until recently had been Athens's moral foundation. The sophists teaching relative morality, and people like Socrates challenging traditional beliefs, leads directly to the dissipation of Pheidippides, who spends heedlessly, selfishly puts his father in debt, and ultimately attacks his father because he has been taught morality is whatever you want it to be. The peril is urgent, as already Pheidippides (whose father starts and ends embracing tradition) and the audience itself (during the debate) is compromised and corrupted.

E1 The city-state of Pergamum was known for all of the following EXCEPT:

(d) Their diet consisted mostly of onions [this one was made up, the others are true]

E2 In your opinion, what are some of the reasons the Seleucid empire was so prone to war?

The Seleucid empire was the most divided, with a small Macedonian Greek population in charge who were foreigners to all their subjects. Waging war was one way to bring the empire together, to demonstrate their strength and generate pride and wealth. The Hebrews saw an opportunity to free themselves that they hadn't had under the Persians, forcing the Seleucids to repress them more forcefully. It was also vulnerable in all directions—the Ptolemies to the southwest, the Antigonids to the northwest, and the Punjab/India to the east. Finally, the Seleucid emperors felt the legacy of Alexander most directly, feeling a need to measure up to the great warrior who had set his throne in Babylon.