

UNIT 02 / 07 · LEARN & TRY

Rome: governing an empire across regions

Name: _____ Date: _____

Goal: Analyse imperial governance and compare different sources about Roman society.

Learn

The Roman Empire linked regions around the Mediterranean through conquest, administration and exchange. Its provinces differed in languages, local institutions and economic resources. An emperor could not govern this territory through personal commands alone; military organisation, provincial officials and local elites helped connect the centre with diverse communities. Taxes and supplies supported the army and administration, while roads and sea routes moved people and goods. These connections also depended on coercion and unequal power. Economic life included agriculture, urban crafts and trade, and labour arrangements varied across time and place. Slavery was important but did not describe every worker. Written histories often privilege political leaders; inscriptions, papyri, coins and archaeology supply other perspectives. An empire should therefore be analysed as a changing system, not a permanently uniform society. Separate evidence of official claims from evidence of actual practice, and consider how local cooperation and resistance affected imperial power.

Worked example

Original fictional source exercise: An imperial inscription praises order, while a local petition complains about excessive collection. They reveal different positions within government and need not cancel each other out.

1. Why would regional officials be necessary even under a powerful emperor? [2 marks]