

Unit 2-Classical Period, 500 BCE-500 CE
Methods of Rule:
Administration of Power, Social Structures, and Decline

Overview: Governing large states and empires required a complicated mix of political skill, military strength, and good economic judgment. For the AP exam, it is important to recognize and understand how different empires and regimes dealt with key aspects of rulership and methods of control, and are able to compare and contrast the techniques they used. Below is a list of key ideas and concepts referencing administration of power, social structures and labor, and decline.

Part I-Methods of Rule

1. Administrative institutions

- Centralized government
 - Persia, Rome, Qin and Han China,
- City-states
 - Greece (culturally unified but politically decentralized)
- Law codes and courts
 - Enforcing rules, inequality for stability (elites more privileges)
- Bureaucracies
 - Tax collections, law enforcement, military defense, regulation of trade (creation of currencies and standard weights and measure), construction and maintenance of infrastructure,
 - Regional and local levels of gov't (satraps in Persia and proconsuls in Rome, *Jun* in China)

2. Religious justification for rule

- Mandate of Heaven (blessed by gods)

3. Claiming the legacy

4. Secret police or network of informants

5. Official religions vs. religious tolerance

- Creation of unity but possibly resentment
- Conquered people worship as they please as long as they abide by laws and respect gods of conquering (Rome and Persia)

6. Projection of power

- Effective military force
 - Versatile armies, horses, chariots and mobility,
 - Land armies vs. naval warfare (expensive, skilled, economies based on trade rather than agriculture)
 - Siegecraft-capturing cities required knowledge of engineering (Romans, Chinese, and Indians)
 - Hired mercenaries and recruited soldiers from conquered peoples
 - Saved money and human power, troops familiar with region, skilled in particular form of combat (archery, cavalry, or naval warfare)
 - War was costly
- Diplomacy
 - Seek out allies, negotiated treaties, keep rivals fighting each other (Mauryan-“The enemy of enemy is my friend”)
 - Divide and conquer
 - Facing nomadic tribes (China and Rome)
 - Vassal or tributary states (Han China and India)
- Supply lines for effective power projection
 - Food, gear, ammunition, troop movement, collection of taxes
 - Sea lanes (Mediterranean, Indian Ocean) and land routes (silk roads and constructed roads)
 - Royal road-Persia, Rome's networks
 - Fortifications and city walls
 - Hadrian's Wall (Rome) and Great Wall of China

Part II-Social Structures

1. Cities as hubs of trade, gov't, and wealth (intraregional and interregional)

- Seaports or river ports
- Site temples, monasteries, garrisons, and navy yards
- Seat of gov't
- Major cities/capitals of Classical Period-know locations and characteristics
 - Persia-Persepolis
 - Han China-Chang'an
 - India-Pataliputra
 - Greece-Athens
 - Phoenicians-Carthage
 - Hellenistic-Alexandria
 - Rome
 - Eastern Rome and Byzantine-Constantinople
 - Maya-Teotihuacan

2. Class structures and Social Hierarchies

- Grew more complex
- Most developed low social mobility, rigid caste/class systems
- Political elites (rulers and families, advisors) aristocracies (high birth, influential) religious elites (high-ranking priests), merchants and traders, artisans and crafts peoples, unskilled laborers, servants and cultivators (farmers, peasants, and growers of food)
- Elite status typically hereditary-even merit based bureaucracies→ literacy required and only available to a few
- Wealth of aristocratic classes were usually based on land ownership (often inherited)
- Merchants generated wealth through commerce and trade→ strong merchant class USUALLY meant more social mobility (Athens)

3. Organization of Labor and Food Production (labor systems)

- Slaves and serfs commonly used-household tasks and growing of food
- Free members had to pay rents to landowners or state or taxes or tribute in form of goods and food
- **Corvee labor**
 - Organized against will of workers by the state or landlords
 - Typically involved large-scale projects such as cutting forests, draining swamps, irrigating fields, building roads or major architectural projects
 - Andes, Inca-mi'ta
- Conscription/drafted
 - Soldiers, sailors, or rowers of galleys
- Food storage and distribution
 - Emergencies and everyday use
 - Kept order by providing imported grain (Rome)
 - Bread and circuses- lavish entertainment
- Patriarchal-all had however varied in intensity and implementation by society

Part III-Political and Imperial Overreach

1. Collapse from a variety of reasons

- Internal and external factors including OVERREACH
 - State assumed too many responsibilities, expenses, too much territory
 - Created social problems for bureaucracies, armies to handle
- Typically it was a combination of reasons and factors that led to decline

2. Challenges commonly faced by states in crisis or decline

- Unwise or corrupt leadership
- Rebellions and social upheavals
- Civil wars
- Conquest of more territory than one can effectively govern
- Economic downturns and disruptions of regional trade patterns
- Neglect of infrastructure, such as roads
- Constant, long-term frontier harassment by raiding or migrating nomads (Germanic tribes, White Huns, Xiongnu)
- External environmental factors, such as climate change, natural disasters, or appearance of new diseases (such as small pox, measles, or plague)
- Self-inflicted environmental problems, such as overpopulation, overuse of wood (deforestation), overuse of water (desertification), or silting of rivers and the erosion of soil caused by large construction projects or overfarming