Reading Practice Set 2: Passage and Questions

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions. Give yourself 20 minutes to complete this practice set.

ANCIENT ROME AND GREECE

1 There is a quality of cohesiveness about the Roman world that applied neither to Greece nor perhaps to any other civilization, ancient or modern. Like the stones of a Roman wall, which were held together both by the regularity of the design and by that peculiarly powerful Roman cement, so the various parts of the Roman realm were bonded into a massive, monolithic entity by physical, organizational, and psychological controls. The physical bonds included the network of military garrisons, which were stationed in every province, and the network of stone-built roads that linked the provinces with Rome. The organizational bonds were based on the common principles of law and administration and on the universal army of officials who enforced common standards of conduct. The psychological controls were built on fear and punishment—on the absolute certainty that anyone or anything that threatened the authority of Rome would be utterly destroyed.

2 The source of the Roman obsession with unity and cohesion may well have lain in the pattern of Rome's early development. Whereas Greece had grown from scores of scattered cities, Rome grew from one single organism. While the Greek world had expanded along the Mediterranean sea lanes, the Roman world was assembled by territorial conquest. Of course, the contrast is not quite so stark: in Alexander the Great the Greeks had found the greatest territorial conqueror of all time; and the Romans, once they moved outside Italy, did not fail to learn the lessons of sea power. Yet the essential difference is undeniable. The key to the Greek world lay in its high-powered ships; the key to Roman power lay in its marching legions. The Greeks were wedded to the sea; the Romans, to the land. The Greek was a sailor at heart; the Roman, a landsman.

3 Certainly, in trying to explain the Roman phenomenon, one would have to place great emphasis on this almost animal instinct for the territorial imperative. Roman priorities lay in the organization, exploitation, and defense of their territory. In all probability it was the fertile plain of Latium, where the Latins who founded Rome originated, that created the habits and skills of landed settlement, landed property, landed economy, landed administration, and a land-based society. From this arose the Roman genius for military organization and orderly government. In turn, a deep attachment to the land, and to the stability which rural life engenders, fostered the Roman virtues: gravitas, a sense of responsibility, peitas, a sense of devotion to family and country, and iustitia, a sense of the natural order.

4 Modern attitudes to Roman civilization range from the infinitely impressed to the thoroughly disgusted. As always, there are the power worshippers, especially among historians, who are predisposed to admire whatever is strong, who feel more attracted to the might of Rome than to the subtlety of Greece. At the same time, there is a solid body of opinion that dislikes Rome. For many, Rome is at best the imitator and the continuator of Greece on a larger scale. Greek civilization had quality; Rome, mere quantity. Greece was original; Rome, derivative. Greece had style; Rome had money. Greece was the inventor; Rome, the research and development division. Such indeed was the opinion of some of the more intellectual Romans. "Had the Greeks held novelty in such disdain as we," asked Horace in his Epistles, "what work of ancient date would now exist?"

5 Rome's debt to Greece was enormous. The Romans adopted Greek religion and moral philosophy. In literature, Greek writers were consciously used as models by their Latin successors. It was absolutely accepted that an educated Roman should be fluent in Greek. In speculative philosophy and the sciences, the Romans made virtually no advance on early achievements.

6 Yet it would be wrong to suggest that Rome was somehow a junior partner in GrecoRoman civilization. The Roman genius was projected into new spheres—especially into those of law, military organization, administration, and engineering. Moreover, the tensions that arose within the Roman state produced literary and artistic sensibilities of the highest order. It was no accident that many leading Roman soldiers and statesmen were writers of high caliber.

Directions: Now answer the questions.

15. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in the passage? Incorrect choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

(A) The regularity and power of stone walls inspired Romans attempting to unify the parts of their realm.

(B) Although the Romans used different types of designs when building their walls, they used regular controls to maintain their realm.

(C) Several types of control united the Roman realm, just as design and cement held Roman walls together.

(D) Romans built walls to unite the various parts of their realm into a single entity, which was controlled by powerful laws.

16. according to paragraph 1, all of the following are controls that held together the Roman world EXCEPT

(A) administrative and legal systems
(B) the presence of the military
(C) a common language
(D) transportation networks

17. The phrase "obsession with" in the passage is closest in meaning to

(A) thinking about
(B) fixation on
(C) interest in
(D) attitude toward

18. according to paragraph 2, which of the following was NOT characteristic of Rome's early development?

(A) Expansion by sea invasion
(B) Territorial expansion
(C) Expansion from one original settlement
(D) Expansion through invading armies

19. Why does the author mention "alexander the great" in the passage?

(A) To acknowledge that Greek civilization also expanded by land conquest
(B) To compare Greek leaders to Roman leaders
(C) To give an example of a Greek leader whom Romans studied
(D) To indicate the superior organization of the Greek military

20. The word "fostered" in the passage is closest in meaning to

(A) accepted
(B) combined
(C) introduced
(D) encouraged

21. Paragraph 3 suggests which of the following about the people of Latium?

(A) Their economy was based on trade relations with other settlements.
(B) They held different values than the people of Rome.
(C) Agriculture played a significant role in their society.
(D) They possessed unusual knowledge of animal instincts.

22. Paragraph 4 indicates that some historians admire Roman civilization because of
(A) the diversity of cultures within Roman society
(B) its strength
(C) its innovative nature
(D) the large body of literature that it developed

23. In paragraph 4, the author develops a description of Roman civilization by
(A) comparing the opinions of Roman intellectuals to Greek intellectuals
(B) identifying which characteristics of Roman civilization were copied from Greece
(C) explaining how the differences between Rome and Greece developed as time passed
(D) contrasting characteristics of Roman civilization with characteristics of Greek civilization

24. according to paragraph 4, intellectual Romans such as Horace held which of the following opinions about their civilization?
(A) Ancient works of Greece held little value in the Roman world.
(B) The Greek civilization had been surpassed by the Romans.
(C) Roman civilization produced little that was original or memorable.
(D) Romans valued certain types of innovations that had been ignored by ancient Greeks.

25. The word "spheres" in the passage is closest in meaning to
(A) abilities
(B) Areas
(C) combinations
(D) models

26. Which of the following statements about leading Roman soldiers is supported by paragraphs 5 and 6?
(A) They could read and write the Greek language.
(B) They frequently wrote poetry and plays.
(C) They focused their writing on military matters.
(D) They wrote according to the philosophical laws of the Greeks.

27. In paragraph 4 of the passage, there is a missing sentence. The paragraph is repeated below and shows four letters (A, B, C, and D) that indicate where the following sentence could be added.

They esteem symbols of Roman power, such as the massive Colosseum.

Where would the sentence best fit?

> Modern attitudes to Roman civilization range from the infinitely impressed to the thoroughly disgusted. (A) As always, there are the power worshippers, especially among historians, who are predisposed to admire whatever is strong, who feel more attracted to the might of Rome than to the subtlety of Greece. (B) At the same time, there is a solid body of opinion that dislikes Rome. (C) For many, Rome is at best the imitator and the continuator of Greece on a larger scale. (D) Greek civilization had quality; Rome, mere quantity. Greece was original; Rome, derivative. Greece had style; Rome had money. Greece was the inventor; Rome, the research and development division. Such indeed was the opinion of some of the more intellectual Romans. "Had the Greeks held novelty in such disdain as we," asked Horace in his Epistles, "what work of ancient date would now exist?"

(A) Option A
(B) Option B
(C) Option C
(D) Option D

28. Directions: an introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage.

This question is worth 2 points.

Write your answer choices in the spaces where they belong. You can either write the letter of your answer choice or you can copy the sentence.

The Roman world drew its strength from several important sources.

-
-
-

Answer Choices

(A) Numerous controls imposed by Roman rulers held its territory together.
(B) The Roman military was organized differently from older military organizations.
(C) Romans valued sea power as did the Latins, the original inhabitants of Rome.
(D) Roman values were rooted in a strong attachment to the land and the stability of rural life.
(E) Rome combined aspects of ancient Greek civilization with its own contributions in new areas.
(F) Educated Romans modeled their own literature and philosophy on the ancient Greeks.