


2. KINGS, FARMERS AND TOWNS: Early states and economies

| Q. No | Question | Marks |
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| Multiple Choice Question | | |
| Q.34 | Which of the following is <u>NOT</u> one of the sixteen <i>mahajanapadas</i> ? A. Vajji B. Avanti C. Koshala D. Ayodhya | 1 |
| Free Response Question/ Subjective Type | | |
| Q.35 | Examine this coin from the Kushana empire.  (a) Identify the images A and B on the coin and the time period they belong to. (b) What does this coin tell you about the portrayal of rulers? | 3 |
| Q.36 | The ruler of the Magadha <i>mahajanapada</i> has a doubt regarding tax collection. Which literature from 6th century BCE should he refer to clarify this? | 1 |
| Q.37 | Historians have used a variety of sources to reconstruct the history of the Mauryan Empire. Support this statement by giving two sources. | 2 |
| Q.38 | 'Once the kings and chiefs attained power, they attempted to claim social status in a variety of ways.' State two ways in which the new kings who emerged between 1st century BCE to 1st century CE try to achieve this | 3 |

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| Q.39 | <p><i>" The perception of the kings and nobles varied across the social groups in a kingdom and understanding about these perceptions give us insights into the relationship dynamics between various groups."</i></p> <p>How did the perception of common people change towards the kings and nobles as part of changes in the countryside in the first millenium CE? (2)</p> <p>State the ways in which historians drew these conclusions. (1)</p> | 3 |
| Q.40 | <p>One inscription from the 5th century CE describes a grant of land from a queen to a Brahmana. A part of the inscription reads:</p> <p>'Prabhavati Gupta... commands the gramakutumbinas (householders/peasants living in the village), Brahmanas and others living in the village of Dangun.. Be it known to you that we have.. donated this village to the Acharya (teacher) Chanalasvamin... You should obey all (his) commands'</p> <p>The inscription goes on to mention what exemptions in taxation the queen will make on the different things being produced by the peasants in the land.</p> <p>Using features of this inscription how can we reconstruct the power relations that existed during the time between royals and others?</p> | 5 |
| Q.41 | <p>How is the relationship between cultivators and the monarchy perceived by historians on the basis of land grants? State any three points.</p> | 3 |
| Q.42 | <p>In the sixth century BCE, a farmer by the name of Maithri lived in a village on the banks of the Ganga. She wanted to increase her crop yields.</p> <p>Identify the two biggest obstacles Maithri would face as she attempted to enhance her agricultural productivity during that era.</p> | 2 |
| Q.43 | <p>How was Asoka unique in the way he communicated his messages to his subjects and officials?</p> | 2 |
| Q.44 | <p>a) What archaeological sources have been found in several urban areas of the subcontinent from c. sixth century BCE?</p> <p>b) What can they tell us about the urban populations in the urban centres that emerged at that time?</p> | 4 |
| Q.45 | <p>Based on gold coins unearthed in India, write two insights about trade in the early common era. What are two possible reasons for the drop in coin usage after the sixth century?</p> | 4 |
| Q.46 | <p>Historians do not consider inscriptions as a complete source in itself and often use other sources to complement the evidence. Why do historians do so?</p> | 4 |

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| Q.47 | Give one theory for why rulers adopted the practice of land grants in the early centuries of the common era. | 1 |
| Q.48 | Kabir is studying some inscriptions of a particular period found relatively close together. The inscriptions do not mention the ruler who issued them. How can Kabir identify if the inscriptions are from the same ruler? | 1 |
| Q.49 | Kushana rulers built colossal statues of themselves. What could have been the reason for this? | 1 |
| Q.50 | <p>Historians have tried to understand the issues of common people by examining oral tales that were committed to writing in anthologies. One common theme in these stories was the wicked king who collected exorbitant taxes. These stories might reflect the reality of the time, where kings were probably trying to collect more taxes from their subjects.</p> <p>a) Describe the innovations in agriculture made in the first half of the common era in India due to the rise in taxes.</p> <p>b) What evidence do we have from the literature that proved high taxes led to increased inequality within the society?</p> | 6 |
| Q.51 | What are the two approaches to deciphering inscriptions used by historians? Explain both with an example each. | 6 |
| Q.52 | Between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE, explain how the availability of resources helped a region become more powerful than others. Give relevant examples. | 5 |
| Q.53 | Classify the primary and secondary sources that helped the historians in understanding the Mauryan Empire. | 6 |
| Q.54 | <p>'Communication from the central capital to the capitals of provinces was vital for the existence of the Mauryan empire.'</p> <p>Why were provincial capitals important to the Mauryan empire? How was communication between the central capital and provinces accomplished?</p> | 5 |
| Q.55 | Who was Prabhavati Gupta? Why was she an outlier to existing land grant rules of the Deccan region? | 3 |
| Q.56 | State three key characteristics of votive inscription. | 3 |

Answer Key & Marking Scheme

| Q.No | Answers | Marks |
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| Q.34 | D. Ayodhya | 1 |
| Q.35 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A- King Kanishka -B- a deity - They belong to the time period between 1 BCE and 1 CE. - The coin signals that Kushana rulers accorded themselves divine status. | 3 |
| Q.36 | Dharmasutras | 1 |
| Q.37 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - archaeological sources like sculptures, coins, inscriptions - travellers accounts of the period - <i>prashastis</i>, poems and other sources of oral traditions - contemporary works such as the account of Megasthenes, a Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya - the <i>Arthashastra</i>, parts of which were probably composed by Kautilya or Chanakya, is traditionally believed to be the minister of Chandragupta (any two to be evaluated) | 2 |
| Q.38 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by building colossal statues of the rulers - by adopting titles like 'devaputra' that signify godlike characteristics - by commissioning prashastis to poets in praise of kings - through powerful portrayal of kings on the coins (any three points to be evaluated) | 3 |
| Q.39 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The kings generally had a strained relationship with the people in countryside where the kings demand high taxes, and peasants particularly found such demands oppressive. - Sometimes people escaped into forests in order to escape harsh laws of kings. - Historians have tried to reach these conclusions by examining stories contained in anthologies such as the Jatakas and the Panchatantra | 3 |
| Q.40 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The inscription talks about a queen granting land. The queen owned land which she then transferred to the brahmana and made him the chief of the village. | 5 |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The village had peasants, Brahmanas, and the peasants were expected to be in servitude to royals and provide a share of their produce to them. - According to the inscription, the people of the village would have to obey the new lord of the village, and perhaps pay him all these dues instead of to the queen. - The grant of land might be a way in which the royals were trying to maintain power by allying themselves with new rural elites (here the Brahmana Chandalasvamin) - It might also have been the case that royals tried to present at least a facade of power while actual power resided with the rural elites already. | |
| Q.41 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some feel that land grants were part of a strategy adopted by ruling lineages to extend agriculture to new areas. - Others suggest that land grants were indicative of weakening political power: as kings were losing control over their samantas, they tried to win allies by making grants of land. - Some others also feel that kings tried to project themselves as supermen because they were losing control: they wanted to present at least a facade of power. | 3 |
| Q.42 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of infrastructure for irrigation - unavailability of fertile land in all areas of cultivation - lack of tools like the plough <p>(Evaluate any two points)</p> | 2 |
| Q.43 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asoka was the first ruler who inscribed his messages to his subjects and officials on stone surfaces. - Asoka was the only ruler who tried to hold his empire together by propagating dhamma, the principles of which, as we have seen, were simple and were applicable universally. | 2 |
| Q.44 | <p>a) - A wide range of artefacts like pottery bowls and dishes known as Northern Black Polished Ware have been recovered from archaeological sites of fortified cities, probably used by rich people.</p> <p>- By the second century BCE, we find short votive inscriptions that record gifts made to religious institutions, in a number of cities.</p> <p>b) - The votive inscriptions mention the name of the donor, and sometimes specify his/ her occupation as well. They tell us about people who lived in towns.</p> <p>- Sometimes, guilds or <i>shrenis</i>, organisations of craft producers and merchants, are mentioned as well. These guilds probably procured raw materials, regulated production, and marketed the finished product.</p> | 4 |

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| Q.45 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The widespread use of gold coins indicates the enormous value of the transactions that were taking place. - It is obvious that there were close connections through trade that was not confined within political boundaries. - One reason attributed is that with the collapse of the Western Roman Empire long-distance trade declined. - It is also pointed out that though finds of coins of that time are fewer, coins continue to be mentioned in inscriptions and texts. | 4 |
| Q.46 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The content of inscriptions generally takes the perspective of those who commissioned them. So, they need to be compared with other perspectives to arrive at a better understanding of the past. - Not everything that we may consider politically or economically significant was necessarily recorded in inscriptions. So it is important to study other relevant evidences from artefacts, literature, coins etc. - Not all inscriptions have been deciphered. Besides, many more inscriptions must have existed, which have not survived till now. So to get a complete picture, historians have to compare with other evidence. - It is not easy to be sure about the exact meaning of the words used in inscriptions. Thus it is important for historians to compare it with artefacts of the period and other linguistic clues. | 4 |
| Q.47 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One theory is that land grants were a strategy adopted by rulers to extend agriculture to new areas. - Another theory is that land grants were indicative of weakening political power. Kings tried to win allies by making grants of land as they were losing control. <p>(any one point to be evaluated)</p> | 1 |
| Q.48 | Kabir can study these inscriptions in terms of content, style, language and palaeography (style of writing). If they match well, it is highly likely that the inscriptions were issued by the same ruler. | 1 |
| Q.49 | The Kushana rulers were claiming high status by identifying themselves as godlike. | 1 |
| Q.50 | <p>a) -The rise in taxes led farmers to adopt strategies aimed at increasing production.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This included the use of the iron ploughshare to turn the alluvial soil in areas which had high rainfall. - Another technological development linked to this was the use of irrigation, through wells and tanks, and less commonly, canals. | 6 |

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| | <p>b) - stories from this time usually refer to landless agricultural labourers, small peasants, as well as large landholders. The large landholders, as well as the village headman emerged as powerful figures, and often exercised control over other cultivators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early Tamil literature also mentions different categories of people living in the villages. - It is likely that these differences were based on differential access to land, labour and some of the new technologies. | |
| Q.51 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One approach is by working backwards from contemporary manuscripts. - The Asokan Brahmi script was deciphered in this way from contemporary Bengali and Devanagari (the script used to write Hindi) manuscripts, comparing their letters with older specimens. - Scholars who studied early inscriptions assumed these were in Sanskrit, although the earliest inscriptions were, in fact, in Prakrit. - Another approach is by working from a source which consisted of the same writing in two different scripts. If one of the scripts is known, the other script can be read letter by letter. - The Kharosthi script was deciphered using this approach. Coins were found which contain the names of kings written in Greek and Kharosthi scripts. European scholars who could read the former compared the letters. - Kharosthi script was also identified as Prakrit. | 6 |
| Q.52 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Magadha became the most powerful mahajanapada between the sixth and the fourth centuries BCE. This was due to the availability and development of resources. - Magadha had a surplus in all agricultural products because it was a region where agriculture was productive. - Resources for tools and weapons were provided by the iron mines that were available in the region. - Elephants, an important component of the army, were found in forests in the region. - The Ganga and its tributaries provided a means of cheap and convenient communication. | 5 |
| Q.53 | <p>Primary sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the inscriptions of Asoka on rocks and pillars. - contemporary works, such as the account of Megasthenes (a Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya), which survives in fragments. - the Arthashastra, parts of which were probably composed by Kautilya or Chanakya, traditionally believed to be the minister of Chandragupta Maurya. | 6 |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - archaeological finds, especially sculpture <p>Secondary sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Mauryas are mentioned in later Buddhist, Jaina and Puranic literature, as well as in Sanskrit literary works. <p><i>(1 mark for each correct point and 1 mark for classifying the sources)</i></p> | |
| Q.54 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Historians argue that the Mauryan empire was too diverse to rule effectively from the central capital alone. Thus provincial capitals have been speculated to have had importance in the administration of the empire. - These provincial capitals were chosen so as to be useful for the administration. Some were situated on important long-distance trade routes, and others located near important natural resources. - Communication between capital and the provinces happened along both land and riverine routes. - Journeys from the centre to the provinces took a long time. So provisions and protection had to be provided for the journey. - The army was an important means for ensuring the protection of people undertaking the journey from the capital to the provinces. | 5 |
| Q.55 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Prabhavati Gupta was the daughter of Chandragupta II and was married into Vakatakas. 2) She defied established land grant norms according to Sanskrit legal texts. 3) She had access to land which she then granted. | 3 |
| Q.56 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - found in a number of cities by the second century BCE - contains name of the donors, occupations - details about people living in town - they record gifts made to religious institutions - any other relevant point <p><i>(any three points to be evaluated)</i></p> | 3 |