

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Roman roads were used by the army and by traders, but also by imperial messengers, who carried government information on horseback from one part of the empire to another. All the main roads had post-houses where messengers could stop when their horses were tired to get fresh ones. In an emergency, news could travel as far as 240km (150 miles) within a single day.

Imperial messengers were sometimes attacked by rebels from native tribes. Here, you can see a messenger being ambushed by warriors.



A stone carving showing a Roman tax collector at work

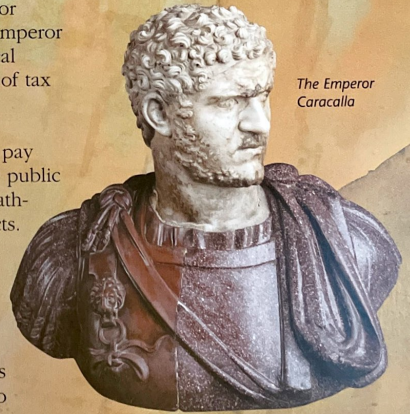
COLLECTING TAXES

The Romans collected taxes from all over the empire, but people in the provinces had to pay much more than those who lived in Italy. At first, the money was collected by tax collectors, but many of these men were corrupt and kept lots of money for themselves. So the Emperor Augustus put the local governors in charge of tax collection.

The taxes helped to pay for the army and for public buildings, such as bath-houses and aqueducts. All this was very expensive and, despite the taxes, the State sometimes ran short of money. The Emperor Marcus Aurelius once had to sell some of his own furniture to raise funds.

CITIZENS OF THE EMPIRE

In 89BC, the Romans allowed anyone living in Italy to become a Roman citizen. Some provincial leaders were also given this privilege, but most people in the provinces were still classed as non-citizens.



The Emperor Caracalla

Then, in AD212, the Emperor Caracalla granted citizenship to every free man living within Roman territory. This gave people a sense of belonging, and helped to unite the different parts of the empire.