



Summary :

The death of the king of Pergamon, Attalus III (133 BC), and the ensuing formation of the province of Asia (129 BC) presented Rome directly with the problems of that region. However, the clumsy handling at the level of both external (mainly with respect to the Pontus) and internal policy led to the tumult of the Mithradatic Wars in 88 BC.

Date

129-126 BC

Geographical Location

Asia Minor

1. Historical Framework

Following the will of [Attalus III](#) (138-133 BC), king of [Pergamon](#), his kingdom was bequeathed to the Romans posthumously (133 BC). After the acceptance of this inheritance, Rome gained access to a fertile region, ready to be exploited by the [senators](#) and the Roman entrepreneurs.¹ Taking advantage of the occasion, [tribunus](#) Tiberius Gracchus suggested that the Roman colonists and part of the King Attalus' treasure should be appropriated.

[Aristonicus](#) (died in 128 BC), the illegitimate son of King [Eumenes II](#) (197-159 BC), staged a revolt suppressed by general M. Perperna ([consul](#) in 130 BC). However, the latter died and the administrative reorganisation of the new province was assigned to M. Aquilius ([consul](#) in 129 BC) and ten delegates of Rome before it was ratified through a senate edict.

2. Reconstruction of Asia Minor

In brief, the new regulations were as follows:

a. The largest part of the kingdom of Attalus was annexed to Rome as a new Roman province called Asia. Furthermore, the road system was developed by M. Aquilius, who reconstructed the roads in the southern part of the Kingdom of [Pergamon](#) and attempted to connect the different parts of the province of Asia with [Ephesus](#), which was intended to become the major harbour of the province. In commemoration of this project he erected mileposts with his name and title in Greek and Latin: M. Aquilius M. f. Consul.² Finally he reconstructed a third road, which led to the north from [Smyrna](#) to Hadramyttium.³ In this way, M. Aquilius managed to connect the major harbour of the province with the hinterland and the Euphrates River and secured the unobstructed communication among the great cities of the western Asia Minor coast, thus creating the necessary conditions for the development of commerce in the area.⁴

b. Some of the less fertile areas were ceded to local rulers (i.e., [Lycaonia](#) to the king of [Cappadocia](#)). The fate of [Phrygia](#) Major remained uncertain for more than a decade before finally the district formed a confederation.⁵

c. Some cities of the new province were proclaimed free (liberae), while the revolted cities were forced to pay taxes.

d. Gaius Gracchus reorganised the tax system and imposed the tithe on the arable land and other fees for pastures. The measure must have included all the cities, whether free or enslaved. There were several autonomous cities, although Rome probably avoided intervening directly in the internal affairs of the cities.

1. Magie, D., *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third Century after Christ* 1 (Oxford 1950), pp. 3-52.



2. About the road system of Aquilius, see *RPhil* 33 (1899), from p. 293 onwards (Hassoulier); Magie, D., *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third Century after Christ* 1 (Oxford 1950), pp. 157-158.
3. Magie, D., *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third Century after Christ* 1 (Oxford 1950), pp. 157-158.
4. Magie, D., *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third Century after Christ* 1 (Oxford 1950), pp. 157-158.
5. Phrygia Major was claimed by the kings of the Pontus and Bithynia. Aquilius, possibly bribed by the king of the Pontus, prevailed. He was later tried by the Senate

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Webliography :

	Province of Asia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia_Province	

Glossary :

	consul, -lis
An official of the Roman state. In the period of the Republic, it was the highest military and political office: two consuls were elected each year. The consular office survived into the Imperial period (and further into the early Byzantine period), becoming a honorary post.	
	senator, the (1. Roman, 2. Byzantine)
1. A Roman body of men that originally advised the king and then the consuls; Heredity was not the only means of joining the senate and “new men” or <i>novi homines</i> could become part of it; Augustus revised the senate and left the body with less power and bolstered hereditary claims as a means to enter the senate; it continued to make laws and conferred powers on new emperors. 2. Member of the senate. The senate, a roman institution transferred from Rome to Constantinople by Constantine I during the Byzantine period was an advisory body whose rights and responsibilities were not clearly defined. It was consisted of imperial officers coming from the upper and were ranked according to hierarchical levels: <i>virii illustri</i> (perfectus praetoriae and the magister), <i>virii spectabili</i> (proconsul, vicarius and the comes), <i>virii clarissimi</i> (consul praetoriae) and <i>virii perfectissimi</i> (praeses and duces). Since the 6th c. AD a new title was established for the upper officers (<i>virii gloriosi</i>). The years that followed officials were entitled to officers regardless their position as senators or if they were about to be admitted to this body.	



tribune, the (tribunus plebis)

Officer responsible for the security of the lower classes.(plebs). His office was inviolate and o tribunus had the right to exercise veto on the decisions of other officers (dictators were an exception). During the Roman Democratical time, there were ten tribuni plebis. However, when Augustus became an emperor he included the tribunicia potestas (the tribunus' power) in his responsibilities.