1. Comment on the travel conditions in the Roman Empire at the time of Plinius. You may need to look at map over a wider area than the one above.

**There is immediate discussion of two travel modes in Letter XIV: land and sea. The Roman Empire spanned area surrounding the Mediterranean. Both modes of transportation posed their challenges. Land masses were often dry and heated, making travel uncomfortable during the summer. Travel by sea, however, was subject to delays due to the Etesian winds which affect sea travel (remember, this pre-dated steamboat travel so winds were extremely important when traveling by sea).**

1. Why did Plinus choose to travel by land in what is now Turkey rather than by water? Check for the etesian winds on Wikipedia.

**Everyone did well on this questions. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etesian**

1. How were local public (e.g., baths, water supply) financed? Was the central government (Rome) involved?

**Local public goods included public baths, aqueducts, a location for “gymnastic diversions” and, potentially, other services (see Letters XXXIV, XLVI, and XLIX). Such goods and services were financed through both public and private funds. In Letter XXXIV, Pliny asks to the rebuilding of a bath that lies in ruin – indicating that there are sufficient funds in the form of (a) “debts from private persons” (local taxes) and (b) funds they are raising separately by themselves. The Emperor approves his request but provides no *new* tax be levied and no funds be reallocated from other necessary services. Rome was involved in the form of approving requests as indicated in Letter XXXV**.

1. Why did the emperor react the way he did to the proposal for a fire brigade?

**The emperor reacted in this way because he fears threats to his power. Pliny requests a company of firemen in Letter XLII, pre-emptively assuaging the emperor with promises that the group shall consist “*only* of one hundred and fifty members” and that “this corporate body will be restricted to so small a number of members, it will be easy to keep them under proper regulation.” The emperor is apprehensive and, based on past experiences, states that groups of this nature have “greatly disturbed the peace” before and “will not fail to form themselves into factious assemblies” (Letter XLIII). His fear is that such individuals will organize and threaten the government by gaining political power in the future.**

1. Were the government finances strained at the time?

**Finances do not seem to be strained so much as they are being spent wastefully and inefficiently. While Pliny does refer to “extremely great” expenses of the city of Byzantium in Letter LII, the expenses appear to be in the form of projects that are incomplete and purposeless. In Letter XLVIII, Pliny discusses the ten millions of sesterces used for building a purposeless theatre which are exhausted before it is finished. Moreover, as money is being spent on public projects of this sort, there is reference to problems raising capital as there are no individuals “willing to borrow of the public” due to high interest rates relative to the private market (Letter LXII). Meanwhile, funding is approved to improve the public bath – so long as it is reallocated away from necessary. What is clear through the letters is that the financial situation plaguing the empire is messy one. What is clear is that financial issues are plaguing the Empire and it appears that the situation is messy**

1. What is the overall impression that we may get from the letters about the administration of a province?

**The letters illustrate the hierarchical nature of the Roman Empire. While Pliny maintained significant power as governor of Bithynia, he was in consistent communication with the Emperor over provincial matters of even the smallest degree. Rome relied on the governors of each province to “police” local matters (i.e. determine when infrastructure was in need of repair) and to propose solutions to provincial issues. However, all decisions required Rome’s approval – particularly if it involved financial provisions – and, therefore, any action taken in the provinces was a result of a final stamp of approval from the central government in Rome.**

1. Compare the letters with the description by Hopkins of the method of administration of the Roman Empire.

**N/A.**