

Student's Name:

Tutor's Name:

Course Title:

Due Date:

## **As the Romans Did**

### **Introduction**

Shelton's 2<sup>nd</sup> edition book represents a collection of 473 translations of selections from papyri, texts and inscriptions, relating to fifteen broad aspects of Roman life and society. The chapters featured in the book center on the Roman society: marriage; families; housing and city life; education; domestic and personal concerns; slaves; occupations; government and politics; freedmen and freedwomen; the provinces; Roman army; leisure and entertainment; women in Roman society; philosophy and religion. Each chapter in the book comprises general commentary and translations, set in the introduction, and expository, which are brief and written in clear prose. The book also features five charts: elaboration of "Roman money;" a glossary of sources; an up-to-date bibliography; genealogy charts; plans of buildings and; schedule of crucial dates and events.

### **Discussion**

Shelton's book features an account of Roman life, by an English-speaking investigator. Each section, in the book, represents an interpretation of ancient Roman documents that have been translated, and fully annotated, to give essential insights into the historical and cultural background of Romans. Furthermore, the book features comprehensive background material to widen and enhance understanding of the sections. The contents of the book are arranged, thematically, into chapters, which elucidate the ambitions and desires of, both the affluent and

average, Roman citizens. The revised book on Roman social history remains a popular source book since it offers a rich, refreshing look at everyday Roman life and represents a concise, lively translation of a mesmerizing collection of documents, derived from Latin and Greek source material, based on personal letters, medical texts, farming manuals, graffiti, recipes for poetry and tombstone inscriptions. The new edition features over 50 additional selections, which serve to introduce fresh topics and broaden coverage of the existing topics, with commentary that mirrors topical scholarship on cultural and social life of ancient Romans. The new edition presents a logical account of Roman life, in all its diversity, ranging from the successes and failures of Rome's ostentatious imperialist policies, to the adversities and pleasures of everyday life.

Shelton's book contains information on the character of ancient Rome, which is essential for teaching the historical method, as well as the significance of the documentary source approach. The first chapter of the book explores the structure of Roman society: class structure; putting together a broad range of writings to document the overall organization of the Roman society, from the aristocracy to the other class divisions; patronage and its challenges. The second chapter, on the other hand, features families and brings the Romans nearer to modernity, sharing relationships and emotions, which qualify the subtitle "As the Roman Did." The third chapter of the book explores marriage and its expectations, and brings the ancient Romans even closer to modern times, encompassing topics such as birth control, family, welfare assistance and rearing children. The fourth chapter centers on housing and city, while the fifth chapter features domestic and personal concerns giving the readers reprieve from the human interest aspect. Overall, the book's chapters provide a general view, especially, on the cultural and organizational contributions of ancient Rome to modernity.

The book provides a detailed overview of the Romans' lifestyle, their noteworthy achievements and contributions. The book provides a refreshing account of Rome, by highlighting the facts and events that depict the real character of the Roman people, the progressive development of Rome as a world power, and elucidates on the impact that Rome has had on modern civilization. The history of Rome can be considered, in numerous respects, the tale of a great epic. The Roman Empire can be regarded as one of the most enduring empires of the past, which can offer historical lessons and inspiration. The book may enable to understand the profound and the highly noticeable influence of the Romans, on the cultural and political history of Europe and the rest of the world.

The book provides an intellectual context and illuminates concepts derived from the Roman perspective. Although, the ancient world may appear remote and divorced from the present, insights from ancient history can help us to make sense of the world, as it exists today. Roman social history is worthy of attention owing to the fact that Rome was one of the biggest powers of the ancient world and exercised significant influence on all modern nations. Shelton's book has a concise structure, features excellent introductions and cross referencing, all of which render the book informative and accessible. The quotes, tidbits and conversations, provide invaluable insight into the Roman life and culture.

The subtitle of the book, "A Sourcebook in Roman Social History," can be regarded as slightly misleading, especially, given that author's definition of social history, which is relatively conventional. The book explores the identity of the Romans, as well as how they lived. However, the book lacks in the provision of explanatory material that is likely to provide students with an understanding of the materials they are reading, in terms of authorship, genre and historical

context. As such, one can argue that the book might not be sufficient by itself, but might prove usable in conjunction with other books on the social history of Rome.

The book fails to teach genre, or adequately instill a comprehension of it, to explain students how to utilize the sources and how to work with the sources effectively. As such, the book appears to downplay the historical significance of the individual pieces and the circumstances about which the author was writing, and the function of certain events in the interpretation of passages. Although the book does not derive much from acquired understanding and knowledge throughout, especially, overlooking the historical circumstances by presenting incidentals as fact, the book, in a significant way, supplements what exists within other fields of Roman history and elevates the field into the realm of scholarship.

Overall, the book is pedagogically effective, given that the highlighted limitations only serve to stimulate further discussion and inquiry. The book remains a useful reference for both students and instructors, during lectures and lessons, especially, since its contents are readily accessible. Evidently, Shelton's book occupies a distinct spot among available texts, when studying civilization, especially, because Shelton's perspective is receptive to place and status of non-elites, and its translations are comprehensible and illustrative. However, the book can be accused of being hostile to aristocracy. In one of her analyses, Shelton claims that the aristocrats were convinced that they were superior to the poor in every way: talent, intelligence and ethical conduct. The broad generalization may suggest that the book fails to weigh the evidence fairly, as highlighted by discussions on rustic life and archeology.

## **Conclusion**

Shelton's book offers a brilliant and enthralling insight into numerous aspects of Roman life and society, through the translation of original sources in all forms of Roman social history. The source book is also fun to read owing to the humorous quotations; Shelton successfully takes the reader through the life of Romans, including their norms, practices, peculiarities and values. Shelton successfully describes the Roman world as a living, progressing, enduring society, rather than merely a historical account. Shelton's book is valuable because it consolidates information on the Roman culture and can be a valuable reference for courses in Roman civilization, social history of Rome and ancient Roman history.