



II Seminario de HISTORIA DE LAS IDEAS POLÍTICAS

1 La constitución de los Antoninos

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7 de noviembre de 2019, 19 h.

La constitución de los Antoninos

¿“Decadencia y ruina del Imperio romano” o “Antigüedad tardía”? Dos paradigmas en confrontación (Edward Gibbon y Peter Brown). Segunda sofística, élites coloniales e historiografía: la conciencia de la época. Tácito y los *arcana imperii*. La constitución de los Antoninos y la filosofía política platónica: los filósofos-rey (*Resp.* 471 c-474 c). La idea estoica de la ciudad y las *Repúblicas* perdidas: del republicanismo al derecho natural.

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Texto 1

In the second century of the Christian era, the empire of Rome comprehended the fairest part of the earth, and the most civilised portion of mankind. The frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and disciplined valour. The gentle, but powerful, influence of laws and manners had gradually cemented the union

of the provinces. Their peaceful inhabitants enjoyed and abused the advantages of wealth and luxury. The image of a free constitution was preserved with decent reverence. The Roman senate appeared to possess the sovereign authority, and devolved on the emperors all the executive powers of government. During a happy period of more than fourscore years, the public administration was conducted by the virtue and abilities of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines. It is the design of this and of the two succeeding chapters, to describe the prosperous condition of their empire; and afterwards, from the death of Marcus Antoninus, to deduce the most important circumstances of its decline and fall: a revolution which will ever be remembered, and is still felt by the nations of the earth.

EDWARD GIBBON *Decline and Fall* 1 (*in princ.*)

Texto 2

If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive emperors, whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws. Such princes deserved the honour of restoring the republic, had the Romans of their days been capable of enjoying a rational freedom. [...] The division of Europe into a number of independent states, connected, however, with each other, by the general resemblance of religion, language, and manners, is productive of the most beneficial consequences to the liberty of mankind. A modern tyrant, who should find no resistance either in his own breast or in his people, would soon experience a gentle restraint from the example of his equals, the dread of present censure, the advice of his allies, and the apprehension of his enemies. The object of his displeasure, escaping from the narrow limits of his dominions, would easily obtain, in a happier climate, a secure refuge, a new fortune adequate to his merit, the freedom of complaint, and perhaps the means of revenge. But the empire of the Romans filled the world, and, when that empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. The slave of Imperial despotism, whether he was condemned to drag his gilded chain in Rome and the senate, or to wear out a life of exile on the barren rock of Seriphus, or the frozen banks of the Danube, expected his fate in silent despair. To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly. On every side he was encompassed with a vast extent of sea and land, which he could never hope to traverse without being discovered, seized, and restored to his irritated master. Beyond the frontiers, his anxious view could discover nothing, except the ocean, inhospitable deserts, hostile tribes of barbarians, of fierce manners and unknown language, or dependent kings, who would gladly purchase the emperor's protection by the sacrifice of an obnoxious fugitive. "Wherever you are," said Cicero to the exiled Marcellus, "remember that you are equally within the power of the conqueror."

EDWARD GIBBON *Decline and Fall* 3 (*in fin.*)

(*cf.* CICERÓN *Ad Fam.* 4.7: sed tamen, si iam ita constituisses, ut abesse perpetuo malles quam ea, quae nolles, videre, tamen id cogitare deberes, ubicumque esses, te fore in eius ipsius, quem fugeres, potestate)

Texto 3

Duas res publicas animo complectamur, alteram magnam et vere publicam, qua dii atque homines continentur, in qua non ad hunc angulum respicimus aut ad illum,

sed terminos civitatis nostrae cum sole metimur; alteram, cui nos adscripsit condicio nascendi. Haec aut Atheniensium erit aut Carthaginensium, aut alterius alicuius urbis, quae non ad omnes pertineat homines sed ad certos. Quidam eodem tempore utriusque rei publicae dant operam, maiori minorique, quidam tantum minori, quidam tantum maiori. Huic maiori rei publicae et in otio deservire possumus, immo vero nescio an in otio melius, ut quaeramus quid sit virtus, una pluresne sint; natura an ars bonos viros faciat; unum sit hoc, quod maria terrasque et mari ac terris inserta complectitur, an multa eiusmodi corpora deus sparserit; continua sit omnis et plena materia, ex qua cuncta gignuntur, an diducta et solidis inane permixtum; qui sit deus; deses opus suum spectet an tractet; utrumne extrinsecus illi circumfusus sit an toti inditus; immortalis sit mundus an inter caduca et ad tempus nata numerandus. Haec qui contemplatur, quid deo praestat? Ne tanta eius opera sine teste sit.

Solemus dicere summum bonum esse secundum naturam vivere.

Abracemos en nuestro espíritu dos Estados: el uno grande y verdaderamente común a todos, en el que se incluyen dioses y hombres, en el que no dirigimos la vista a este o aquel ángulo, sino que medimos los límites de nuestra ciudad con los del sol; otro al que nos adscribió el hecho de nacer; este será el de los atenienses, el de los cartagineses o el de cualquier otra ciudad que no pertenezca a todos los hombres, sino a unos en concreto. Algunos se entregan al mismo tiempo a ambos Estados, al mayor y al menor, algunos solo al menor, otros solo al mayor. A este Estado mayor podemos servirlo también el ocio, aún diré más, no sé si mejor en el ocio: para plantearnos qué es la virtud, si es una o múltiple, si la naturaleza o la enseñanza hace buenos a los hombres; si es uno lo que abraza mares, tierras y está incluido en mares y tierras, o si dios ha esparcido muchos cuerpos similares; si es continua y plena toda materia de la que todas las cosas proceden, o rala, y el vacío está mezclado a lo sólido; cuál es la sede de dios, si contempla su obra o interviene, si la rodea exteriormente o está incluido en el todo; si el universo es inmortal o hay que contarle entre lo caduco, entre lo que nace con un fin. Quien contempla estas cosas, ¿qué ofrece a dios? Que tan gran obra suya no quede sin testigos.

Solemos decir que el mayor de los bienes es vivir según la naturaleza.

SÉNECA *Ot. Sap.* 8.4-5 (trad. C. Codoñer)