

correspondence. This difficulty no doubt helped to discourage the formation of any monolithic imperial administrative structure.

Documents, once stored, were of surprisingly little use. Governmental acts could not afford to depend on such an unreliable basis. The archives represented continuity and stability, and were not for regular use. The truth appears well from the story of the disastrous fire of A.D. 192 at Rome, when the central imperial archives of the Palatine were completely destroyed. . . . There is no hint that Roman government was disrupted; but the event was taken as a token that the authority of Rome, embodied in these documents, would weaken. The omen is not so far removed from the association of Rome's universal rule with a census registration at the beginning of the Gospel of St. Luke. . . .

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CICERO

Letter to His Brother Quintus, 60 B.C.E.

Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 B.C.E.) was the most renowned orator and statesman of the late Roman Republic. As a lawyer and champion of the Roman constitution, Cicero fought against tyranny and political corruption, yet he opposed the assassins of Julius Caesar, and in the subsequent civil war he supported Caesar's adopted son, Octavian, against Mark Antony, a move that ultimately cost him his life.

In this selection, Cicero advises his younger brother Quintus (102–43 B.C.E.) who had been re-appointed by the Roman Senate to be magistrate of the Province of Asia on what to expect and how to behave as a Roman official. What advice does he give his brother? What does this advice tell you about the life of a Roman official in the empire? What does it tell you about Roman administration of the empire?

THINKING HISTORICALLY

In what ways was the professional life of Quintus Cicero different from that of a Chinese official? What other comparisons or contrasts between the Roman and Chinese empires does this selection raise in your mind?

Source: *The Letters of Cicero*, Vol. 1, B.C. 68–52, trans. Evelyn Shuckburgh (London: George Bell and Sons, 1899).

I . . . I begin by entreating you not to let your soul shrink and be cast down, nor to allow yourself to be overpowered by the magnitude of the business as though by a wave; but, on the contrary, to stand upright and keep your footing, or even advance to meet the flood of affairs. For you are not administering a department of the state, in which fortune reigns supreme, but one in which a well-considered policy and an attention to business are the most important things. But if I had seen you receiving the prolongation of a command in a great and dangerous war, I should have trembled in spirit, because I should have known that the dominion of fortune over us had been at the same time prolonged. As it is, however, a department of the state has been entrusted to you in which fortune occupies no part, or, at any rate, an insignificant one, and which appears to me to depend entirely on your virtue and self-control. We have no reason to fear, as far as I know, any designs of our enemies, any actual fighting in the field, any revolts of allies, any default in the tribute or in the supply of corn, any mutiny in the army: things which have very often befallen the wisest of men in such a way, that they have been no more able to get the better of the assault of fortune than the best of pilots a violent tempest. You have been granted profound peace, a dead calm; yet if the pilot falls asleep, it may even so overwhelm him, though if he keeps awake it may give him positive pleasure. For your province consists, in the first place, of allies of a race which, of all the world, is the most civilized; and, in the second place, of Citizens, who, either as being publicani are very closely connected with me, or, as being traders who have made money, think that they owe the security of their property to my consulship.

II. But it may be said that among even such men as these there occur serious disputes, many wrongful acts are committed, and hotly contested litigation is the result. As though I ever thought that you had no trouble to contend with! I know that the trouble is exceedingly great, and such as demands the very greatest prudence; but remember that it is prudence much more than fortune on which, in my opinion, the result of your trouble depends. For what trouble is it to govern those over whom you are set, if you do but govern yourself? That may be a great and difficult task to others, and indeed it is most difficult: to you it has always been the easiest thing in the world, and indeed ought to be so, for your natural disposition is such that, even without discipline, it appears capable of self-control; whereas a discipline has, in fact, been applied that might educate the most faulty of characters. But while you resist, as you do, money, pleasure, and every kind of desire yourself, there will, I am to be told, be a risk of your not being able to suppress some fraudulent banker or some rather over-extortionate tax-collector! For as to the Greeks, they will think, as they behold the innocence of your life, that one of the heroes of their history, or a demigod from heaven, has come down into the province. And this I say, not to induce

you to act thus, but to make you glad that you are acting or have acted so. It is a splendid thing to have been three years in supreme power in Asia without allowing statue, picture, plate, nappery, slave, anyone's good looks, or any offer of money—all of which are plentiful in your province—to cause you to swerve from the most absolute honesty and purity of life. What can be imagined so striking or so desirable as that a virtue, a command over the passions, a self-control such as yours, are not remaining in darkness and obscurity, but have been set in the broad daylight of Asia, before the eyes of a famous province, and in the hearing of all nations and peoples? That the inhabitants are not being ruined by your progresses, drained by your charges, agitated by your approach? That there is the liveliest joy, public and private, wheresoever you come, the city regarding you as a protector and not a tyrant, the private house as a guest and not a plunderer?

III. But in these matters I am sure that mere experience has by this time taught you that it is by no means sufficient to have these virtues yourself, but that you must keep your eyes open and vigilant, in order that in the guardianship of your province you may be considered to vouch to the allies, the citizens, and the state, not for yourself alone, but for all the subordinates of your government. However, you have in the persons of your legati men likely to have a regard for their own reputation. Of these in rank, position, and age Tubero is first; who, I think, particularly as he is a writer of history, could select from his own Annals many whom he would like and would be able to imitate. Allienus, again, is ours, as well in heart and affection, as in his conformity to our principles. I need not speak of Grattidius: I am sure that, while taking pains to preserve his own reputation, his fraternal affection for us makes him take pains for ours also. Your quaestor is not of your own selection, but the one assigned you by lot. He is bound both to act with propriety of his own accord, and to conform to the policy and principles which you lay down. But should any one of these adopt a lower standard of conduct, you should tolerate such behaviour, if it goes no farther than a breach, in his private capacity, of the rules by which he was bound, but not if it goes to the extent of employing for gain the authority which you granted him as a promotion. For I am far from thinking, especially since the moral sentiments of the day are so much inclined to excessive laxity and self-seeking, that you should investigate every case of petty misconduct, and thoroughly examine every one of these persons, but that you should regulate your confidence by the trustworthiness of its recipient. And among such persons you will have to vouch for those whom the Republic has itself given you as companions and assistants in public affairs, at least within the limits which I have before laid down.

IV. In the case, however, of those of your personal staff or official attendants whom you have yourself selected to be about you—who are

usually spoken of as a kind of praetor's cohort—we must vouch, not only for their acts, but even for their words. But those you have with you are the sort of men of whom you may easily be fond when they are acting rightly, and whom you may very easily check when they show insufficient regard for your reputation. By these, when you were raw to the work, your frank disposition might possibly have been deceived—for the better a man is the less easily does he suspect others of being bad—now, however, let this third year witness an integrity as perfect as the two former, but still more wary and vigilant. Listen to that only which you are supposed to listen to; don't let your ears be open to whispered falsehoods and interested suggestions. Don't let your signet ring be a mere implement, but, as it were, your second self: not the minister of another's will, but a witness of your own. Let your marshal hold the rank which our ancestors wished him to hold, who, looking upon this place as not one of profit, but of labour and duty, scarcely ever conferred it upon any but their freedmen, whom they indeed controlled almost as absolutely as their slaves. Let the licitor be the dispenser of your clemency, not his own; and let the fasces and axes which they carry before you constitute ensigns rather of rank than of power. Let it, in fact, be known to the whole province that the life, children, fame, and fortunes of all over whom you preside are exceedingly dear to you. Finally, let it be believed that you will, if you detect it, be hostile not only to those who have accepted a bribe, but to those also who have given it. And, indeed, no one will give anything, if it is made quite clear that nothing is usually obtained from you through those who pretend to be very influential with you. Not, however, that the object of this discourse is to make you over-harsh or suspicious towards your staff. For if any of them in the course of the last two years has never fallen under suspicion of rapacity, as I am told about Caesius and Chaerippus and Labeo—and think it true, because I know them—there is no authority, I think, which may not be entrusted to them, and no confidence which may not be placed in them with the utmost propriety, and in anyone else like them. But if there is anyone of whom you have already had reason to doubt, or concerning whom you have made some discovery, in such a man place no confidence, intrust him with no particle of your reputation....

And now, considering the caution and care that I would show in matters of this kind—in which I fear I may be somewhat over-severe—what do you suppose my sentiments are in regard to slaves? Upon these we ought to keep a hold in all places, but especially in the provinces. On this head many rules may be laid down, but this is at once the shortest and most easily maintained—that they should behave during your progresses in Asia as though you were travelling on the Appian way, and not suppose that it makes any difference whether they have arrived at

Tralles or Formiae. But if, again, any one of your slaves is conspicuously trustworthy, employ him in your domestic and private affairs; but in affairs pertaining to your office as governor, or in any department of the state, do not let him lay a finger. For many things which may, with perfect propriety, be in-trusted to slaves, must yet not be so entrusted, for the sake of avoiding talk and hostile remark. But my discourse, I know not how, has slipped into the didactic vein, though that is not what I proposed to myself originally. For what right have I to be laying down rules for one who, I am fully aware, in this subject especially, is not my inferior in wisdom, while in experience he is even my superior? Yet, after all, if your actions had the additional weight of my approval, I thought that they would seem more satisfactory to yourself. Wherefore, let these be the foundations on which your public character rests: first and foremost your own honesty and self-control, then the scrupulous conduct of all your staff, the exceedingly cautious and careful selection in regard to intimacies with provincials and Greeks, the strict and unbending government of your slaves. These are creditable even in the conduct of our private and everyday business: in such an important government, where morals are so debased and the province has such a corrupting influence, they must needs seem divine. Such principles and conduct on your part are sufficient to justify the strictness which you have displayed in some acts of administration, owing to which I have encountered certain personal disputes with great satisfaction, unless, indeed, you suppose me to be annoyed by the complaints of a fellow like Paconius—who is not even a Greek, but in reality a Mysian or Phrygian—or by the words of Tusenius, a madman and a knave, from whose abominable jaws you snatched the fruits of a most infamous piece of extortion with the most complete justice.

VII. These and similar instances of your strict administration in your province we shall find difficulty in justifying, unless they are accompanied by the most perfect integrity: wherefore let there be the greatest strictness in your administration of justice, provided only that it is never varied from favour, but is kept up with impartiality. But it is of little avail that justice is administered by yourself with impartiality and care, unless the same is done by those to whom you have entrusted any portion of this duty. And, indeed, in my view there is no very great variety of business in the government of Asia: the entire province mainly depends on the administration of justice. In it we have the whole theory of government, especially of provincial government, clearly displayed: all that a governor has to do is to show consistency and firmness enough, not only to resist favouritism, but even the suspicion of it. To this also must be added courtesy in listening to pleaders, consideration in pronouncing a decision, and painstaking efforts to convince suitors of its justice, and to answer their arguments.