

**ENTRANCE EXAMINATION, 2012****M.A. HISTORY**

[ Field of Study Code—Ancient : ANCM (219)/  
Medieval : MEDM (218)/Modern : MODM (217) ]

*Time Allowed* : 3 hours

*Maximum Marks* : 100

**Note** : Questions from all Sections must be attempted. The passage in Section—I is compulsory and carries 30 marks. Answer any **one** question from Section—II (it carries 20 marks) and any **two** questions from Section—III (each of these questions carries 25 marks).

Candidates must indicate their preferred choice of admission, e.g., Ancient, Medieval or Modern India on their answer book's cover-sheet in bold letters.

**SECTION—I**

Read the passage carefully and answer the following questions in your own words in not more than 100 words each. Copying from the text will be penalized :

**Passage**

Nothing epitomizes this violence more in our contemporary society than mountaintop removal (when the summit of the mountain is removed to extract coal) and the devastation that occurs in its wake. In Stephen George's essay, 'Bringing Down The Mountain', he explains the way it all happens :

"Mountaintop-removal mining is a simple process, plow the trees (but don't bother to harvest them) and everything else living on the mountain, blast off the top (usually 800 to 1000 feet), take out the coal and leave a leveled area..." Much of this mining takes place in Appalachia yet it is still one of the materially poorer regions in our country. The wealth that is in our natural world when measured in dollars is not ever abundant yet it could be so if humans were not abusing and wasting this precious resource. As George explains, the amazing natural legacy of the Appalachians is endangered—"a splendorous spread of rolling hills and green mountains mirrored nowhere in the world—is being systematically destroyed so that an unsustainable way of life in our cities may continue."

Coal is one of the earth's great gifts. As a child in Kentucky our family lived in an old Victorian style house. Its modern heating system was not effective. To stay warm during the freezing cold months we burned coal in the small fire places that were given in this old style architecture. Watching the coal burn, feeling its hot heat, we were in our childhood filled wonder. Coal was awesome. Colored the deepest shade of black, it was both beautiful and functional. Yet it did not come into our homes and into our lives without tremendous sacrifice and risk.

In the early evenings when the neighbourhood men who mined coal came home from work with their bodies covered in ash, their hats with lights, their lunch boxes, we would follow them, not understanding that they were beat, bone weary, not in the mood to play. There is no child raised in the culture of coal mining who does not come to understand the risks involved in harvesting coal. In the world of coal mining without big machinery, coal mining has a human face. Man is limited in his physical capacity. He can only extract so much. Machines can take and keep taking.

The smallest child can look into the natural environment altered by conventional mining practice and see the difference between the process and mountaintop removal. Introducing the collection of essays in the book *Missing Mountains*, Silas House shares the way in which being raised in a coal mining family was for him a source of pride. He begins with the statement, "coal mining is a part of me" then recalls a long history of family members working in the mines. And while he speaks against mountaintop removal he shares this vital understanding : "We are not against the coal industry. Coal was mined for decades without completely devastating the entire region. My family is a part of that coal mining legacy. But mountaintop removal means that fewer and fewer people work in mining because it is so heavily mechanized. If mountaintop removal is banned, there might actually be more mining jobs for the hard-working people of Kentucky. And beyond that the proper respect might finally be returned to the spirit of the land and its people." Without a sustainable vision of coal usage, without education for creating consciousness that would enable our nation to break with unhealthy dependency on coal, we cannot restore the dignity both to the earth and to this rich resource.

Mountaintop removal robs the earth of that dignity. It robs the folk who live in the cultural wasteland it creates of their self-esteem and divine glory. Witnessing up close the way this assault on the natural environment ravages the human spirit, the anguish it causes folk who must face daily the trauma of mountaintop removal, we who live away from the process are called to an empathy and solidarity that requires we lend our resources, our spiritual strength, our progressive vision to challenge and change this suffering.

A beacon light to us all, elder Daymon Morgan embodies the unbridled spirit of a true Kentucky revolutionary. He acts a conservationist, a steward of the land, and as one who is committed to the struggle to stop mountaintop removal. Returning from World War II, Morgan bought land on Lower Bad Creek in Leslie County, Kentucky. Raising a family, growing herbs on his land, he had allowed the earth to teach him, to be his witness. He is special because he is in many ways representative of the ordinary citizen who is called to political action because of their love of the land and community...

Both by his presentation and in my short dialogue with Mr. Morgan, I saw his visage and heard in his own words the extent to which fighting mountaintop removal wears on his spirit, wears him down especially when that resistance must take the form of challenging relatives who would surrender the land, their legacy, to big business. Before meeting Daymon Morgan, I had learned from his writing about the tens of thousands of years it takes for the organic matter of the forest to biodegrade and make rich. When this earth is attacked, he mourns : "It is very disturbing for me to see the things that I love being destroyed. I got my medicine and my food from these mountains, and I still do..."

In dominator culture the will to power stands as a direct challenge to the cultural belief that humans survive soulfully because of a will to meaning. When the will to meaning is paramount, human life retains dignity. The capacity of humans to create community, to make connections, to love, is nurtured and sustained. For those of us who believe in divine spirit, in higher powers, the issue of mountaintop removal and all practices wherein the earth is plundered and the environment wasted is as much a spiritual issue as it is a political issue. In order to justify the dehumanizing coal mining practices, the imperial capitalist world of big business has to make it appear that the plant and human life that is under attack has no value.

Questions :

- (a) Why does the author regard mountaintop mining as 'violence'?
- (b) What does the author mean when she says 'coal mining has a human face'?
- (c) In what ways is the traditional method of coal mining better?
- (d) What does the author ask those who do not reside in the area to do for those who are affected and why?
- (e) Why is Daymon Morgan 'special'?
- (f) Why does the author say the fight against mountaintop mining is both a spiritual and a political issue?

## SECTION—II

Answer *any one* question

1. Do you think that cities are reflective of wider socio-economic processes?
2. To what extent does history have a role to play in nation-building?
3. "The division of history into three distinct periods captures the nature of historical change." Discuss.
4. Would you agree that visual sources primarily supplement or illustrate documentary evidence? Give reasons for your answer.
5. "The history of trade and commerce cuts across political boundaries." Comment.

### SECTION—III

Answer *any two* questions

1. With reference to *either* the Maurya *or* the Gupta State, discuss the extent to which it can be regarded as a centralized polity.
2. Do you think that trade and commerce were significant processes in shaping developments in early Indian history? Illustrate your argument with examples.
3. Discuss the ways in which studies of architecture can enrich our understanding of early medieval history.
4. To what extent do architectural remains and literary sources provide us with a glimpse of urban life in Delhi during the Sultanate period?
5. Were the Bhakti Movements during the medieval period primarily religious or social?
6. To what extent did institutional and personal factors contribute to the decline of the Mughal Empire?
7. What were the ways in which issues of gender and caste were addressed by the social reform movements in the 19th century?
8. Discuss the key economic trends in India during the second half of the 19th century.
9. What was the impact of community mobilization on political processes in India during the first half of the 20th century?
10. What led England to forge ahead of other continental powers in the industrial sphere up to the mid-19th century?
11. Discuss the changing perceptions regarding the union of European States from 1945 to 1995.
12. "China's long history of peasant revolution culminated in the Revolution of 1949." Discuss.

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## SECTION—I

Read the passage carefully and answer the following questions in your own words in not more than 100 words each. Copying from the text will be penalized :

**Passage**

Archaeology's ultimate goal—if it is to have any meaning or justification—must be to convey its findings not only to students and colleagues, but above all to the public which generally footed the bill for the work and paid the salaries. Yet one still finds examples of archaeologists who are too busy to do this, or who, amazingly, do not even feel any necessity to waste their time on it. Quite recently, one of the Austrian professors who, not through any expertise but simply by being in the right place at the right time, by chance became responsible for studying the prehistoric Alpine 'iceman' found in 1991 (one of the few archaeological finds that really interests the man in the street!) wrote that 'informing the public about his results is not really his job'—an astounding and outrageous statement for any publicly funded academic to make.

Of course, the presentation of the past to the world at large is a big responsibility, especially as it cannot be done objectively. We used to think that it could, that it was simply a matter of laying out our finds with some explanatory texts in glass cases or in books for the public's delectation. However, in recent years, as archaeologists have indulged in intense self-examination thanks to the interest in theory and thanks to being attacked from all sides, they have come to realize that, through their choice of artefacts, themes, and approaches, they are constantly projecting messages that reflect their own prejudices and beliefs, or those of their society, religion, politics, or of a general world view—all under the influence of the archaeologists' own backgrounds, upbringing, and education, their social status, their interests, teachers, and friends, their political and religious beliefs, and their alliances and enmities—all these things colour their version of the past, while the actual evidence often takes a back seat.

To take just one example of how an individual's beliefs can have major ramifications, consider the story of Gabriel de Mortillet, one of the greatest French prehistorians. Born in 1821 to an old established family of Catholic monarchists, he was placed at the age of 9 in a Jesuit college. This experience greatly affected the development of his faculties, increased his already great nervous tension, and aroused in him a lifelong hatred of clerics and religion—the cane and whip were still in vigorous and enthusiastic use! As a young adult, his socialist, republican activities led to his being pursued by clericalists and monarchists alike, and he had to take refuge outside France. Eventually he became a prehistorian, and, back in Paris in 1864, founded the *Matériaux* (the world's first journal devoted to the subject)—at a time when research into the antiquity of humanity was still frowned upon by the Church. He was fighting for a fine and just cause. Unfortunately, he also had an appalling personality; he was aggressive and ill-tempered, and often academically dishonest, with a taste for personal vendettas, petty revenge, and violent language, and was unable to tolerate the slightest contradiction. The various journals he created later, usually aimed at destroying rival publications, were shockingly partial, publishing and overpraising the work of his pupils and allies, and ignoring or denigrating other scholars. He was indifferent to all new theories because he believed that if they did not fit his own they were wrong. Eventually, his argumentative and tyrannical nature caused a vacuum around him, since he had closed his mind and thought himself infallible.

Although many of de Mortillet's personality defects are still to be found among leading archaeologists today, it is his antagonism to the Church which is most relevant here because of its profound and lasting effects. Although a champion of evolution, he never considered that religion might have evolved like stone tools, or that it might be a natural product of the human mind—instead he obstinately stuck to the belief that it was a deceit, a swindle invented and propagated by priests in the Neolithic period. Since burial was generally associated with the existence of religious ideas, he decreed, against all the evidence, that there were no inhumations before the Neolithic, and every single Palaeolithic burial encountered was systematically rejected as being intrusive from later periods. Until his death his best-selling books on prehistory maintained the bizarre notion that for hundreds of thousands of years before the Neolithic, people were entirely bereft of the slightest trace of religion.

Even more serious was his reaction to Ice Age cave art—perhaps it was too reminiscent of frescoes in temples or churches! He immediately cast doubt on its very existence, and, when the first claims for the painted ceiling in the Spanish cave of Altamira were put forward in 1880, it was de Mortillet who warned colleagues that this was a devious plot by anti-evolutionist Jesuits to discredit prehistory. This not only led to the cave's contemptuous rejection and a twenty-year delay in the acceptance of cave art, but also was a major cause in the premature death of Sanz de Sautuola, the Spanish landowner who made the claims for Altamira and who, to his horror, was dismissed as naïve or a fraud.

A second major error that arose from de Mortillet's anti-clericalism occurred ten years after his death in 1898. In 1908 the famous Neanderthal skeleton of La Chapelle-aux-Saints was found in France by three priests. Rather than send it for study to the anticlerical Ecole d' Anthropologie, founded by de Mortillet, they entrusted it to the laboratory of Marcellin Boule, a decision which had the gravest consequences for our view of Neanderthals. Boule was greatly influenced by the views of Albert Gaudry, his own teacher, patron, and friend, who did not

believe that Neanderthals could be ancestral to modern humans; and so, although aware that the La Chapelle skeleton was an old man whose spine displayed evidence of osteoarthritis, Boule nevertheless claimed that the remains proved Neanderthals could not walk fully erect but were shambling, stooping creatures. Thanks to his overwhelming dominance in the field, the skeleton was not re-examined in detail until the 1950s, and his reconstruction was thought to be so definitive that many other Neanderthal remains were not even reconstructed or reported in any detail, an illustration of the dangers of excessive reliance on the opinions of influential individuals—an understandable but irritating tendency in all aspects of the subject, even today.

Questions :

- (a) Why does the author consider it necessary for archaeologists to publish their findings? What is his opinion about those who do not do so?
- (b) What are the considerations that often influence the presentation of archaeological evidence?
- (c) How does the author suggest that the personality and upbringing of de Mortillet shaped his approach to archaeology?
- (d) Why did de Mortillet suppress the evidence of Palaeolithic burials?
- (e) How was the history of cave art influenced by the tussle between de Mortillet and the Church?
- (f) How does the author substantiate his argument that our understanding of issues is often shaped by an 'excessive reliance on the opinions of influential individuals'?

## SECTION—II

Answer any **one** question

1. What would you consider to be the most critical social problem for India at present? Discuss why you regard it as significant.
2. How is relevant the statistical approach for understanding social realities?
3. Can literature be of use to us for an understanding of history? Substantiate your answer with examples.
4. "The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there." Comment.
5. Do you think museums serve to disseminate knowledge to a wider public?

### SECTION—III

Answer *any two* questions

1. Assess the significance of trade during the early historic period. To what extent is it possible to suggest that trade declined during the early medieval phase?
2. "Buddhism was a transformative force in early Indian history." Discuss.
3. In what ways can archaeology inform us about aspects of everyday lives and practices?
4. Highlight the main features of the Mansab-Jagir system and the inherent contradictions, if any, in its practice.
5. Discuss how far one can view Bhakti Movements as expressions of dissent and protest.
6. Vijayanagara was traditionally perceived as a Hindu defence against Muslim expansion. Discuss.
7. Why do you think issues of gender were central to the concerns of social reformers in nineteenth century India?
8. Do you think the focus on marginal groups has altered our understanding of modern Indian history?
9. Did Gandhi express the ideals of the Moderates?
10. What was the long-term significance of the French Revolution of 1789 for world history?
11. Do you think World War II marked a watershed in the twentieth century?
12. In what ways has your reading of histories of countries other than India helped your understanding of Indian history? Discuss with examples.