

THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE
EXAMINATION FOR THE DEGREE OF B.A.

November 1995

9437/5830 Roman Imperial History

Time: Two and a half hours

In addition, candidates are allowed ten minutes, before the examination begins, to read the paper.

Answer Section A and TWO questions from Section B.

Section A

I. Answer the questions on TWO of the following passages:

- a) "He's just a slave." But perhaps in spirit he's a free man. "He's just a slave." Shall that damn him? Show me someone who isn't a slave. One man is a slave to lust, another to greed, another to ambition. And all of us are slaves to hope and fear. Let me present to you a man of consular rank who is a slave to his girlfriend, or a man of immense wealth who is a slave to a little serving maid. I could show you young men of the finest aristocratic families who are slaves to pantomime actresses. And there is no slavery more degrading than voluntary slavery. So there is no reason why these snobbish people should deter you from behaving with good humour toward your slave rather than appearing arrogantly superior. Let your slaves respect you rather than fear you.

Of course, now someone will say that I am encouraging slaves to don the freedman's cap and hurl their masters off the roofs of their houses, just because I said "respect rather than fear." ... Anyone who says this has forgotten that what is good enough for God cannot be too little for a master. He who is respected is also loved. And love cannot be mixed with fear. And therefore I think you are very right in not wishing to be feared by your slaves and in using words, not whips, for chastisement. Let whips chastise only dumb animals. ... For otherwise minor annoyances drive us into a fit of anger, and soon anything which fails to cater to our slightest whim causes anger. We even begin to assume the attitude and temperament of a tyrant. ...

But I won't keep you any longer. You certainly don't need my advice. Good character has, among other things, this quality: it is content with itself and it is abiding. Bad character, on the other hand, is fickle and constantly changing - not for the better but into other forms of evil behaviour.

Seneca, Letters 47

- i. What is the author's main point?
 - ii. What argument(s) does he use to support his case?
 - iii. What assumptions are being made?
 - iv. Why were slaves often treated badly?
- b) It is a good thing for a man to have nothing to do with women; but because there is so much immorality, let each man have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband must give the wife what is due to her, and the wife equally must give the husband his due. The wife cannot claim her body as her own; it is her husband's. Equally, the husband cannot claim his body as his own; it is his wife's. Do not deny yourselves to one another, except when you agree upon a temporary abstinence in order to devote yourselves to prayer; afterwards you may come together again; otherwise, for lack of self-control, you may be tempted by Satan.

All this I say by way of concession, not command. I should like you all to be as I am myself* ; but everyone has the gift God has granted him, one this gift and another that.

To the unmarried and to widows I say this: it is a good thing if they stay as I am myself; but if they cannot control themselves they should marry: Better be married than burn with vain desire.

i.e. celibate

To the married I give this ruling, which is not mine but the Lord's: a wife must not separate herself from her husband; if she does, she must either remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband; and the husband must not divorce his wife. ...

On the question of celibacy, I have no instructions from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by God's mercy is fit to be trusted.

It is my opinion, then, that in a time of stress like the present this is the best way for a man to live - it is best for a man to be as he is. Are you bound in marriage? Do not seek a dissolution. Has your marriage been dissolved? Do not seek a wife. If, however, you do marry, there is nothing wrong in it; and if a virgin marries, she has done no wrong. But those who marry will have pain and grief in this bodily life, and my aim is to spare you .
St. Paul, I Corinthians 7

- i. What view of marriage is presented here?
 - ii. What assumptions are being made, and what value priorities are evident?
 - iii. Does this view seriously challenge traditional Roman attitudes to marriage? If so, how?
- c) *The Latin word for insolence (contumelia) is derived from that for contempt (contemptus), since you cannot insult someone unless you hold him in contempt; and no one can hold a greater or better man in contempt, even if he behaves in the same way as those who do hold others in contempt. Thus the child will beat his parents about the head and a baby will tear and dishevel its mother's hair and spit at her, or they will show off their private parts to the other people in the household and show no restraint in using obscene words - but we cannot call any of this insolence. Why not? Because those who act in this way are in no position to hold anyone in contempt....*

The attitude we have towards children will be that which the wise man has towards those who remain childish even when they are past their youth and their hair has turned grey. Have such men improved in any way, if their sins are intellectual and their errors have become greater, who differ from children only as regards the shape and size of their bodies, while they are just as unstable and uncertain, chasing after pleasure without discrimination, fearful and silent not as a result of understanding, but of terror? We will not say that they are any different from children just because children want to collect knucklebones, nuts or small coins, while they prefer silver, gold or power, because children play among themselves at being magistrates, and pretend to have togas and rods of office and lawcourts, while these adults play at the same games in all seriousness on the hustings and in the forum and the Senate house; children erect make-believe sandcastles at the sea side, these men as if they were doing something great, spend their time piling up stones and walls and roofs. Instead of a protection for their bodies, they make something that endangers them. These adults are in error just as children are, but their error is different, and greater. The wise man will therefore indulge their insolence, as though they were just having fun, and sometimes he will admonish them with hurt and punishment as though they were children - not because he has been harmed, but because they have done harm, and so that they should cease from doing harm. That is the way in which we tame dumb beasts by beating them, and we are not angry with them when they refuse their riders, but we control them, so that the pain should overcome their rebelliousness. Now you know the answer to the objection made against Stoics, 'why should a wise man punish those who are guilty of injury or insult, when he himself cannot be harmed by them?'. It is not in order to avenge himself, but to improve them.
Seneca, The Constancy of the Wise Man, 12

- i. What is the author's main point?
 - ii. What argument(s) does he use to support his case?
 - iii. What assumptions does he make?
 - iv. Why did Romans have children?
 - v. What threats to their life and welfare might Roman children face?
- d) *As a young man he (Augustus) was betrothed to the daughter of Publius Servilius Isauricus, but on his reconciliation with Mark Antony, after their first disagreement, the troops insisted that they should become closely allied by marriage; so, although Antony's step-daughter Claudia - borne by his wife Fulvia to her ex-husband Publius Clodius -was only just nubile, Augustus married her; however, he quarrelled with Fulvia and divorced Claudia before the union had been consummated. Soon afterwards he married Scribonia, both of whose previous husbands had been ex-consuls, and by one of whom she had a child. Augustus divorced her, too, 'because', as he wrote 'I could not bear the way she nagged at me' - and immediately took Livia Drusilla away from her husband, Tiberius Nero, though she was pregnant at the time. Livia remained the one woman whom he truly loved until his death.*

Scribonia bore him a daughter, Julia; but to his great disappointment the marriage with Livia proved childless, apart from a premature birth. Julia was betrothed first to Mark Antony's son and then to Cotiso, King of the Getans, whose daughter Augustus himself proposed to marry in exchange; or so Antony writes. But Julia's first husband was Marcellus, his sister Octavia's son, then hardly more than a child; and, when he died, Augustus persuaded Octavia to let her become Marcus Agrippa's wife - though Agrippa was now married to one of Marcellus' two sisters, and had fathered children on her. At Agrippa's death, Augustus cast about for a new son-in-law, even if he were only a knight; eventually choosing Tiberius, his step-son; this meant, however, that Tiberius must divorce his wife, who had already given him an heir.

Julia bore Agrippa three sons - Gaius, Lucius, and Agrippa Postumus; and two daughters - Julia the Younger, and Agrippina the Elder. Augustus married this Julia to Lucius Paulus whose father, of the same name, was Censor; and Agrippina to Germanicus - the son of Octavia's daughter Antonia by Tiberius' younger brother Drusus. He then adopted Gaius and Lucius, and brought them up at the Palace; after buying them from Agrippa at a token sale- touching the scales three times with a bronze coin in the presence of the City praetor. He trained his new sons in the business of government while they were still young, sending them as commanders-in-chief to the provinces when only consuls-elect. The education of his daughter and grand-daughters included even spinning and weaving; they were forbidden to say or do anything, either publicly or in private, that could not decently figure in the imperial day-book. He took severe measures to prevent them forming friendships without his consent, and once wrote to Lucius Vinicius, a young man of good family and conduct: 'You were very ill-mannered to visit my daughter at Baiae.' Augustus gave Gaius and Lucius reading, swimming and other simple lessons, for the most part acting as their tutor himself; and was at pains to make them model their handwriting on his own.

Suetonius, *Augustus* 62-4

- i. What light does the above passage throw on values and practices within the Roman family?
- ii. Some people, including Romans, have believed that ease of divorce threatened the health of Roman society. How seriously should we take this concern?

Section B

"The senate and the emperor could not live harmoniously with each other, but they could not live without each other either". To what extent do you agree with this statement? (insofar as it applies to the period studied).

3. Was there much variety in the way Roman emperors sought to ensure their personal power and popularity? Or did most of them employ the same means and policies?
4. Why was it so difficult to raise living standards for the mass of the Roman population?
5. "A study of Roman autocracy shows that power corrupts not only the rulers but also the ruled" Discuss.
6. If you were a Roman writing the biography of a Roman emperor, what would you include and what would you leave out? How different would your treatment be from that of Suetonius? (You may focus on one particular emperor).
7. How were the Romans able to hold their large empire together?

University of Adelaide: Classics Department, November 1995