

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

June 1997

# Roman Imperial History

9437/5830

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

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

- a) *To whomever is appointed manager, you must allocate a woman to live with him and keep him under control and also to help him in various things. The manager should also be warned against being on particularly good terms with any one of the slaves on the farm, let alone with anyone from outside. But occasionally he should confer a mark of distinction on any slave whom he sees working hard, and dedicated to the tasks assigned to him, by inviting him to dinner on a festival day. He must not make any religious sacrifices except if the master has told him to. He must not let fortune-tellers or sorceresses onto the farm; both these types of silly superstition make unsophisticated people spend money, and lead to wrong-doing. He should not spend his time in town or at markets except to buy or sell something which is his business. As Cato says, the manager should not go out a lot; he should not leave the boundaries of the estate except to find out about some agricultural technique, and even then he should only go to places from which he can get back (sc. on the same day). He must now allow any new tracks or paths to be made on the estate; and he should not receive anyone as a guest unless he is a friend or close relative of his master.*

*Those are the things he must be told to avoid; and he must be urged to make sure that twice as many metal tools and instruments are kept stored away in good condition as are required by the number of slaves, so that nothing will ever have to be borrowed from one of the neighbours; for the expense in terms of the slave's labour being lost outweighs the cost of providing such extra equipment ... He should not merely be skilled at agricultural work; he should also have such personal qualities - in so far as this is possible in a slave - that he will exercise his authority neither irresponsibly nor brutally, and should always be giving encouragement to some of the better slaves, and should not be too hard on those who are less good, so that he will be feared for being severe rather than hated for being cruel. He will achieve this if he keeps watch over those under his authority so that they do nothing wrong, instead of finding that he has to punish delinquents as a result of his own incompetence.*

Columella, *On Agriculture*, 1.8

- i. Briefly summarise the advice that is being given
  - ii. What value priorities are evident?
  - iii. What assumptions are being made?
  - iv. 'Slavery was based on fear and mistrust'. To what extent does the passage support this statement?
- b) *She made all her sons heirs in equal proportion, and gave her daughter a share as a legacy. Her maternal love was expressed by her concern for her children and the equal shares she gave each of them.*

*She left a specified sum of money to her husband so that the dowry, to which he was entitled, should be enhanced by her good opinion of him. Recalling the memory of my father (her first husband) and advised by that and by her own sense of what was right, she left me a legacy chargeable on the estate, not to show preference for me and slight my brothers, but because, mindful of my father's generosity, she thought she ought to return to me what she had, by her husband's wishes, received from my patrimony ..*

*This behaviour was typical of her. Her parents gave her in marriage to worthy men., Her obedience and honour preserved her marriages; as a wife, she endeared herself by her virtues, was beloved for her loyalty and was left the more honoured for her discretion. Her fellow citizens were unanimous in praising her after her death, since the provisions of her will proved both her gratitude and devotion towards her husbands, her impartiality towards her children and her sincere righteousness.*

*The praises awarded to all good women are usually simple, and identical; the natural good qualities they have at their command do not require much variety of expression. It is enough that all of them have shown the same behaviour, deserving good repute, and since it would be a toilsome undertaking to seek out new praises for a woman, since the course of her life has less variation, it is unavoidable to use commonplaces, lest any proper precept be omitted and discredit the rest.*

*My mother, dear above all else to me, deserved all the greater praise for being the match of all worthy women with respect to her modesty, her uprightness, her chastity, obedience, skill at wool-working, diligence and loyalty (pietas); she yielded to none when her virtue, industry and good judgement were put to the test.*

*Eulogy of Murdia by a son from her first marriage*

- i. What light does this passage throw on Roman marriage and inheritance practices?
- ii. Comment on the qualities Murdia is praised for. What does the inscription say about Roman values?
- c) *It is extremely important that children should be brought up properly from the start, although training them is no easy matter. Although we should not restrict the development of their personality, they must not be allowed to have tantrums ... Freedom that is unrestricted results in a character that is unbearable; total restriction leads to a servile character. A child will be encouraged to gain self-confidence by being praised; on the other hand too much praise makes him over-confident and irascible. We should follow the mean in bringing up children: sometimes the child must be held back, sometimes encouraged. He should not be humiliated or subjected to servile treatment. He must not be allowed to cry and ask for rewards, nor should such behaviour gain him anything; rewards should be given only if he has been good, or promises to be good. When he is competing with others of the same age, he should neither be allowed to give up, nor lose his temper. ... If he wins a game or does something remarkable, he should be praised, but not to excess; for excessive pleasure leads to over-confidence, and over-confidence to pride. Children should be left some free time, but that should not be allowed to turn into idleness; a child must not be allowed to get used to living an inactive and easy life ... If a child has always been given everything he asked for, if his anxious mother always comforted him when he cried, if his childminder always let him do what he wanted, then he will never be able to cope with anything unpleasant in life.* Seneca, *On Anger*, 2.21.1-6
- 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 and what value priorities are evident?
- iv. How might the presence of slaves in the household affect the rearing of children?
- d) *We must remember this, and make up for the mortality of our human nature by means of the unending succession of future generations like so many torch-bearers, so that through one another we may make immortal the single respect in which we fall short of divine happiness. It was for this purpose above all that first and greatest of gods who fashioned us divided the human race into two, male and female, and implanted into us sexual passion and the need for intercourse, and made that intercourse fruitful; so that even mortality might become in a way immortal by the birth of new generations. Even the gods are thought of as male and female, and it is said that some fathered others, and some have been born of others. So marriage and the raising of children have been thought good even by those beings who have no need of such things.*
- Therefore you have done right in imitating the gods and emulating your fathers in bringing children into the world, and so that future generations may respect you and refer to you as their ancestors just as you think of them and call them your ancestors, and so that you may hand down to others the great and glorious achievements that have been left to you, and so that you yourselves may leave to others whom you have begotten the wealth which your ancestors created and left to you. What can be better than a wife who exercises personal self control, stays at home, can manage the house for you and bring up your children; give you joy when you are well, and comfort you when you are sick; share your successes and console you for your failures; hold back the reckless excesses of your youth, and dilute the harsh austerity of your old age. How can it be anything but a pleasure to raise up from the ground a child who has been born from the two of you and to feed and educate it, a physical and mental mirror of yourself, so that, as it grows up, another self is created? Is it anything but the greatest blessing to leave behind as our successor when we leave this life an heir both to our family and to our property; one who is our own, born of our own essence, so that only the mortal part of us passes away, while we live on in the child who succeeds us, so that you will not fall into the hands of strangers and suffer an extinction as total as warfare?* Cassius Dio 56.3  
reporting a speech by Augustus, supposedly praising Roman knights for marrying and rearing children
- i) What is Augustus' main point?
- ii) What arguments does he use to support his case?
- iii) What value priorities are evident?
- iv) Can you think of any other reasons Romans may have had for marrying, and not marrying?

## Section B

"It was inevitable that relations between senate and emperor would be difficult". Do you agree? How were some emperors able to enjoy apparently good relations with the senate?

'The secret of the emperor's power was that he had a wide base of support, involving numerous groups and sections of society'. Do you agree? Were there any problems involved in appealing to a variety of groups?

4. 'Ancient writers have different values and priorities from ours'. Do you think this is an adequate explanation for why it can be difficult to know and understand what was happening at Rome? (not just in the capital but throughout the empire).

"Concerning the way people lived, the real difference was not so much between rich and poor but between urban and rural". Comment.

6. 'Roman emperors were both the enemies of the truth and guardians of freedom'. Do you agree? Is such a paradox possible?

'The Romans make a desert and call it peace' (supposedly said by a First Century A.D. British resistance leader). Is this a fair assessment of the impact of Roman imperialism upon provincial subjects?

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