

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

**9437/5830 ROMAN IMPERIAL
HISTORY**

TIME: Two (2) hours

Answer Section A and TWO questions from Section B

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

Section A

(This question carries 14 marks)

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

(a)

I write this to you with a very heavy heart: the younger daughter of our friend Fundanus is dead. No young girl has ever been more charming than she, or more lovable, or, as I think, more worthy not just of a longer life, but even of immortality. She had not yet completed her thirteenth year, and yet she had the judgment of a mature woman and the dignity of a matron, but the sweetness of a little girl and the modesty of a young maiden. How lovingly she put her arms around her father's neck! How affectionately and respectfully she embraced us who were her father's friends! How she adored her nurses, her paedagogues, and her teachers, each for the special guidance that he or she had offered her! How diligently and how perceptively she used to read! How rarely and how demurely she played! With what composure, with what patience, indeed with what courage did she endure her final illness! She obeyed her doctors, she comforted her sister and father, and, even after the strength of her body failed her, she hung on by the strength of her mind. And this strength remained with her right to the very end; neither the length of her illness nor fear of death could weaken it. She has, therefore, because of her courageous attitude, left us even greater and graver reasons to feel loss and grief. O sad and quite untimely death! Indeed, I find the untimeliness of her death more cruel than the death itself. She had already been engaged to a fine young man, the day had now been set for the wedding, and we had just received our invitations. Now our joy has turned to sadness. I cannot express in words what great anguish I felt when I heard Fundanus himself making arrangements for the money he had intended to spend on his daughter's wedding clothes, pearls, and jewellery to be spent instead on funeral incense, ointments, and perfumes.*

Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 5.16.1-7

- i. What evidence does this passage provide for family life at Rome?
- ii. Comment on the attitudes of the writer and of the people he refers to.

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* slave-tutors

(b)

I would, therefore, have a father conceive the highest hopes of his son from the moment of his birth. If he does so, he will be more careful about the groundwork of his education. For there is absolutely no foundation for the complaint that but few men have the power to take in the knowledge that is imparted to them, and that the majority are so slow of understanding that education is a waste of time and labour. On the contrary you will find that most are quick to reason and ready to learn. Those who are dull and unteachable are as abnormal as prodigious births and monstrosities, and are but few in number.

Above all see that the child's nurse speaks correctly. The ideal, would be that she should be a philosopher: failing that he desired that the best should be chosen, as far as possible. No doubt the most important point is that they should be of good character: but they should speak correctly as well. It is the nurse that the child first hears, and her words that he will first attempt to imitate.

As regards parents, I should like to see them as highly educated as possible, and I do not restrict this remark to fathers alone. We are told that the eloquence of the Gracchi owed much to their mother Cornelia, whose letters even today testify to the cultivation of her style. Laelia, the daughter of Gaius Laelius, is said to have reproduced the elegance of her father's language in her own speech. And even those who have not had the fortune to receive a good education should not for that reason devote less care to their son's education; but should on the contrary show all the greater diligence in other matters where they can be of service to their children.

As regards the boys in whose company our budding orator is to be brought up, I would repeat what I have said about nurses. As regards his slave-tutors, I would urge that they should have had a thorough education, or if they have not, that they should be aware of the fact.

The question is not infrequently asked, as to whether, admitting that these things ought to be learned, it is possible for all of them to be taught and taken in simultaneously. There are some who say that this is impossible on the ground that the mind is confused and tired by application to so many studies of different tendencies. These critics show an insufficient appreciation of the capacities of the human mind, which is so swift and nimble and versatile, that it cannot be restricted to doing one thing only, but insists on devoting its attention to several different subjects not merely in one day, but actually at one and the same time. Do not harpists simultaneously exert the memory and pay attention to the tone and inflexions of the voice, while the right hand runs over certain strings and the left plucks, stops or releases others, and even the foot is employed in beating time, all these actions being performed at the same moment?

Quintilian, *The Elements of Oratory* 1.1.1-8, 12.1-3

- (i) What are the author's main points?
- (ii) What arguments does he use to support his case?
- (iii) What assumptions is Quintilian making and what values shape his attitude to the education of good public speakers?

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c)

For Nature unites us through the commingling of our bodies, in order that, by taking and blending together a portion derived from each member of a pair, the offspring which she produces may be common to both, so that neither can define or distinguish his own or the other's part therein. Such a copartnership in property as well is especially befitting married people, who should pour all their resources into a common fund, and combine them, and each should not regard one part as his own and another part as the other's, but all as his own and nothing as the other's. As we call a mixture "wine", although the larger of the component parts is water, so the property and the estate ought to be said to belong to the husband even though the wife contributes the larger share.

So too the wife, just because she avoids and deprecates everything extravagant, and ostentatious (and she does well to do so), ought all the more, to employ all artistry upon her husband, habituating him to what is honourable and at the same time pleasant. However, if a woman is naturally uncompromising, arbitrary, and unpleasant, the husband must be considerate, and do as Phocion did when Antipater prescribed for him a dishonourable and unbecoming course of action. Phocion said, "You cannot use me as a friend and flatterer both," and so the husband must reason about his virtuous and uncompromising wife, "I cannot have the society of the same woman both as wife and as mistress."

Philosophers say of bodies that some are composed of separate elements, as a fleet or an army, others of elements joined together, as a house or a ship, and still others form together an intimate union, as is the case with every living creature. In about the same way, the marriage of a couple in love with each other is an intimate union; that of those who marry for dowry or children is of persons joined together; and that of those who merely sleep in the same bed is of separate persons who may be regarded as cohabiting, but not really living together. As the mixing of liquids, according to what men of science say, extends throughout their entire content, so also in the case of married people there ought to be a mutual amalgamation of their bodies, property, friends, and relations. In fact, the purpose of the Roman law-giver who prohibited the giving and receiving of presents between man and wife was, not to prevent their sharing in anything, but that they should feel that they shared all things in common.

Let the woman who, on account of jealousy, is entering a writ of divorce, and is in an angry mood, say to herself, "Where else would my rival like better to see me, what would she rather have me do, than feel aggrieved with my husband and quarrel with him and abandon my own home."

Plutarch, *Advice to Bride and Groom*, 20, 29, 34, 41

- (i) Summarise Plutarch's advice in one short sentence.
- (ii) What arguments does he use to support his case?

What assumptions does he make about the mutual rights and responsibilities of both parties in a marriage?

Was Plutarch being too idealistic or was his advice well suited to/needed by the Rome of his day? (Plutarch was a contemporary of Pliny and Quintilian)

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d)

What a shocking story I have to tell you, and one worthy of more than just a simple letter! Larcus Macedo, a man of praetorian rank, suffered a terrible fate at the hands of his slaves. (Admittedly he was an arrogant and cruel master who remembered too little or perhaps too well, that his own father had once been a slave). He was bathing in his villa at Formiae. Suddenly his slaves surrounded him. One began to strangle him, another punched him in the face, yet another beat him on the chest, stomach and even (it makes me sick to report) the genital area. When they thought he was dead, they threw him onto the red-hot floor to see if he was still alive. He, whether unconscious or pretending to be, lay stretched out and still, confirming their opinion that death had come. Finally they carried him out of the bath as if he had been overcome by the heat. His more faithful slaves took his body, and his concubines ran up, wailing and shouting. But then, awakened by their voices and refreshed by the cool air, he raised his eyelids and moved his body to indicate that he was still alive (since it was now safe to do so). The treacherous slaves fled in all directions, but many were caught, although a few are still being sought. He himself, although barely kept alive for a few days, nonetheless did not die without the satisfaction of revenge since the slaves were punished while he was still alive in the same way that murderers are punished. Do you realize how many dangers, how many injuries, how many abuses we may be exposed to? And no one can feel safe, even if he is a lenient and kind master. Slaves are ruined by their own evil natures, not by a master's cruelty.

Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 3.14

- i. What is Pliny's main point?
- ii. What contradictions or paradoxes do you think are present?
- iii. What further information would you like to have about this incident?
- iv. What assumptions and value priorities are evident?
- v. All slaves owners may not have been as bad as Macedo, but if not, why not? What might restrain them? Briefly, what factors might humanise the slave-master relationship?

Section B

(These questions carry 13 marks each)

2. What did emperors and the senate have to fear from each other? What did they have to gain by cooperation and working together harmoniously? What tended to threaten or disrupt the relationship?
3. "Some emperors were careful to cultivate supporters and shore up their position. Other emperors seemed to be comparatively indifferent to how popular they were". Assess the validity of this generalisation, giving specific examples of how emperors did or did not worry about winning friends and approval.
4. "Romans valued wealth for the status and security it could bring, not for the opportunities to generate more wealth it might bring". To what extent do you think this is true? Is it an adequate explanation why, for most people in the Roman Empire life was nasty, brutish and short?

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5. "The Roman emperors of the 1st 2 Centuries A.D. discredit autocracy as a form of government".
Do you agree? Could the Roman empire have been governed in any other way? (Note: there are examples from both ancient and modern times of non-autocracies governing empires)

6. What are the main difficulties we face in determining just what happened in Roman imperial history?
To what extent does the content of Suetonius' biographies of emperors illustrate those difficulties? Does Suetonius' work illustrate a particular set of difficulties?

7. What were the main difficulties the Romans faced in holding a large empire together?
What were the key factors in their relative success at doing this?