

Nuptiae

1. At what age did Romans marry?

Girls usually married at 13 or 14 while men were in their late teens or early twenties. If a man was getting married for the 2nd or 3rd time, the age difference could be considerable.

2. How was a husband chosen?

A husband was usually chosen by the father of the bride. The girl had to consent to the marriage but there was little chance that she would go against her fathers wishes.

3. What was a "dōs"?

The "dos" was the dowry paid by the bride's father to the intended husband.

4. What was a "spōnsālia"?

The "spōnsālia" was the formal bridal engagement in which the father of the bride signed a contract with the father of the groom or the groom himself if he was independent. Gift' were exchanged and the bride was given a ring which she placed on the third finger of the left hand.

5. What was the difference between the two types of marriage; "cum manū" and "sine manū"?

In a "cum manū" marriage the bride became a part of her husband's family, having no future ties with her own family and was not able to divorce her husband.

In a "sine manū" marriage the brride remained as part of her own family, could own property and divorce her husband if she wished. This was the most common type of marriage.

6. What was a "cōnfarreātīō"?

A "cōnfarreātīō" was an ancient ceremony used in a marriage "cum manū" in which the couple ate a sacred cake made of "far" (an ancient grain).

7. What did the bride sacrifice to the "larēs" (the household gods) before her marriage?

Her "bullā" (a protective amulet that she had worn from her infancy). Her husband would have already sacrificed his "bullā" when he officially became a man at the age of 17.

8. Identify the following words or phrases regarding their connection to a Roman marriage.

flammeum - flame colored bridal veil

haruspex - priests who made a sacrifice and took the omens prior to the wedding

iūctiō dextrārum - symbolic joining of the hands by the bride and groom

cēna nūptiālis - the wedding feast at the bride's house

ubi tu Gāius, ego Gāia - traditional words of the bride to her husband

9. Name some other traditions associated with a Roman marriage?

- signing of a marriage contract witnessed by wedding guests
- pretending to pull the bride away from her mother
- torch-lit procession to the bridegroom's house
- a wedding song
- the making of coarse jokes to the bridegroom
- anointing of the door posts with oil
- carrying the bride across the threshold
- arrangement of the bride's hair by parting it six times with the point of a spear
- presentation of fire and water to the bride by the bridegroom
- the undressing the bride by "mātōnae ūnivirae" (women who had only one husband)



10. What was the chief purpose of a Roman marriage?

Producing and raising children.

11. Who introduced laws penalizing people who remained unmarried?

The Emperor Augustus.

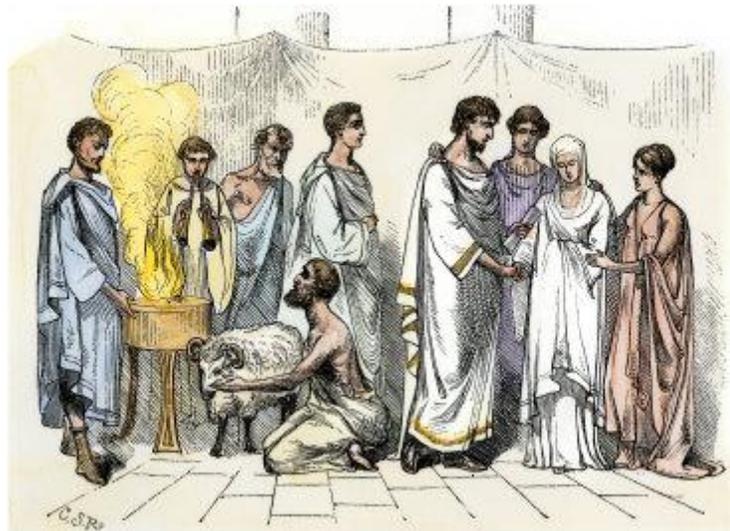


12. What were a married woman's rights in comparison with her husband?

A Roman wife was under the authority of either her husband or if she were married "sine manū" under her father. She could not vote, enter politics or plead in the courts. Her main responsibilities lie in managing the household which was considered of great importance. Although nowhere equal with her husband she had much more freedom and consequence than women in other societies of the Mediterranean of the time.

13. How much do we know about Roman married life.

Almost nothing about the marriages of the poor and only a little about the upper classes and that only from the viewpoint of men like Pliny the Younger and Cicero who wrote about their relationships with their wives.



*****This is not all you need to know. Re-read the reading.*****