## Marriage in Ancient Rome

**Jana Lindsay, Daniel Esh, and Tony Yung**

**FYS 20 History 106, Professor Matthew Perry**

### Marriage

In Ancient Rome, people practiced a monogamous (one spouse) marriage. It was sacred between a man and woman and was acknowledged as a necessity by society. This necessity was the ideal role for many Roman men: to wed in order to produce legitimate offspring to carry on the family name.

“Marriage is like pi—natural, irrational and very important.”

“Don’t marry someone you can live with; marry the person who you cannot live without” – James Morwood

### Divorce

In Ancient Rome, couples can be divorced by the following:

- Death
- Loss of a citizenship
- Agreement to a separation

Death and loss of citizenship were commonly used, and not complicated, when utilizing divorce; but couples who agreed to separate became complicated.

- The man had more power than the woman dealing with divorce. He could dismiss his wife, or he could have less than reasonable reasons for divorce and it would be valid.

### Traditions of Weddings

The traditions that the Ancient Romans followed in terms of marriage included:

- Selective dresses and hair/head dressings for women
- Cleaning of new home for the newly wedded couple by women
- Carrying of the wife threw the door on wedding day

These traditions were believed by the Ancient Romans to drive away evil spirits and enhance the luck of the family and having a successful marriage.

### The Ceremony

Before the marriage, the couple to be wed had to pretend to be reluctant about marrying each other. It consisted of:

- The man calling his bride his wife
- The woman calling her groom her husband
- “Foedus lecti” which meant they were to have children during their wedding night
- Participate in a religious cult, to initiate that the woman was apart of a new family
- Dinner and a drinking party

### Bibliography


