

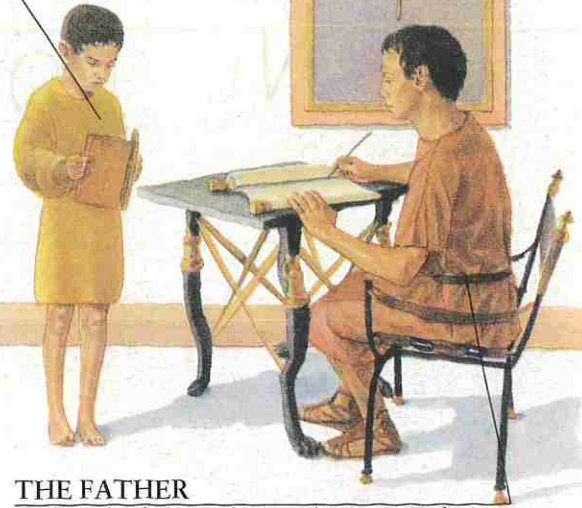
FAMILY LIFE

Roman families were small. Parents usually had three children or less. Children were expected to grow up quickly. Children in poor families had to start work as young as five or six. Richer children did little but play until they were seven. Boys then started school. Most left at 11 to learn the family business. Boys were considered to be adults at 14. Girls were educated at home. They were taught how to run a household by their mothers. Most girls were engaged by 12 and married by 14.

Parents were affectionate towards their children but they expected to be obeyed. Marriages often ended in divorce. If this happened, the children always stayed with the father. The Romans believed that age brought wisdom. Because of this, they respected aged relatives.

THE SON

Romans preferred sons to daughters because only sons could carry on the family name. If a couple was childless or only had daughters, they would adopt a son.

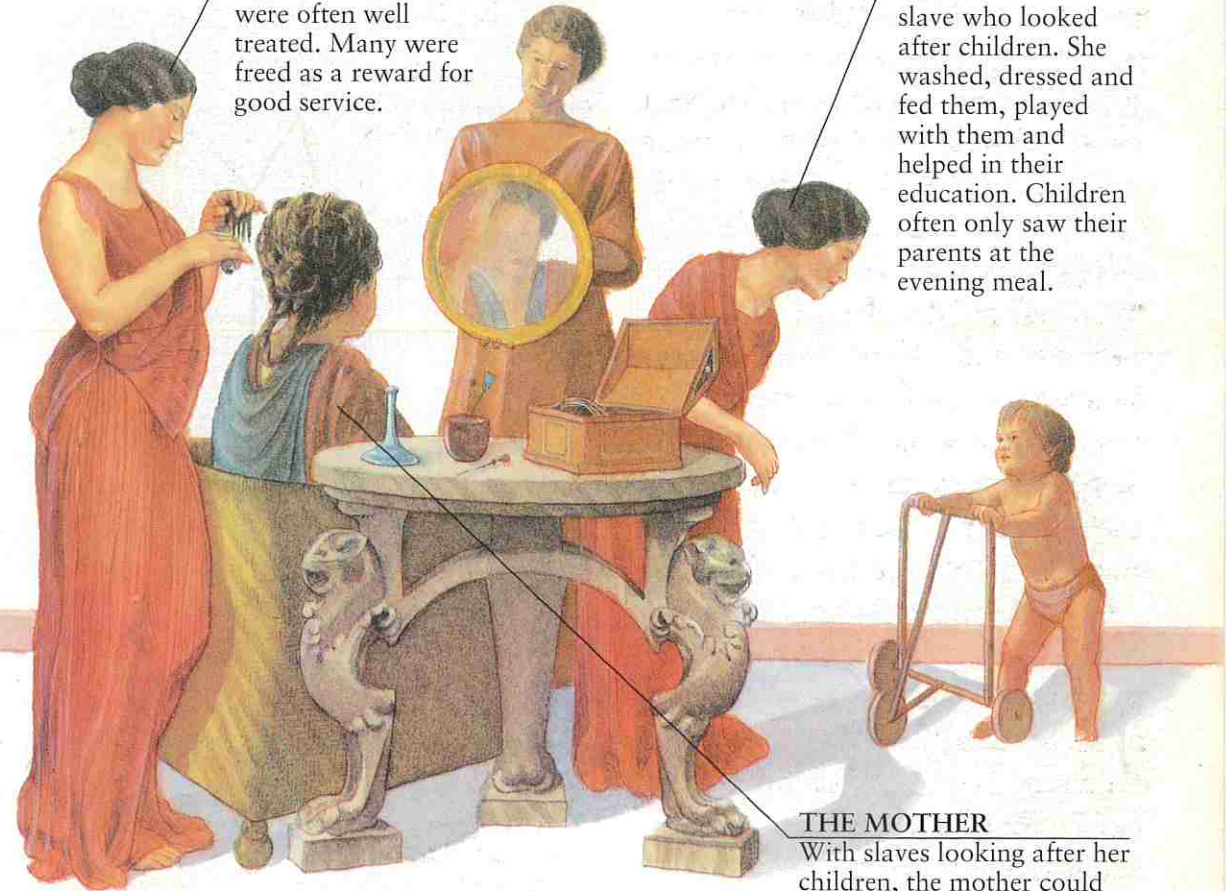


THE FATHER

Fathers had the right to whip or jail their sons. They could even sell them as slaves. Few fathers were that cruel but they were always strict.

SLAVES

Household slaves were often well treated. Many were freed as a reward for good service.



WET NURSE

The wet nurse was a slave who looked after children. She washed, dressed and fed them, played with them and helped in their education. Children often only saw their parents at the evening meal.

THE MOTHER

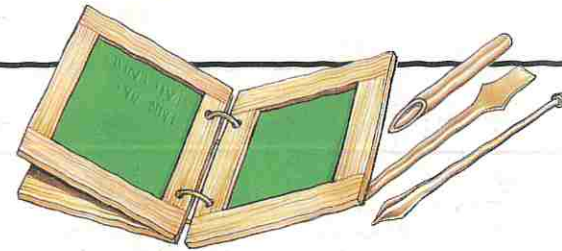
With slaves looking after her children, the mother could concentrate on managing the household.



LOOK OUT FOR THESE

MODEL OF A BABY

Soon after birth the baby was wrapped tightly in bands of linen swaddling clothes. A baby's chances of surviving to adulthood were poor. Around half would die before the age of five.



TABLET AND STYLUS

Children learned to write using wooden tablets covered with wax. The letters were formed in the wax using a metal stylus. The pointed end was used for writing. The blunt end was used to smooth the wax.

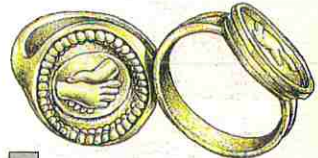
TOYS

Roman boys liked to play with marbles. Girls played with rag dolls. Before marrying, girls gave up their dolls to show they were now adults.



SLAVE'S COLLAR AND 'DOG TAG'

Slaves who were thought likely to run away were treated like dogs. They had to wear metal collars or name plates. These gave the name and address of the slave's owner. If they were caught, they were sent straight back home and punished.



RINGS

On becoming engaged a couple exchanged rings. Late June was a popular time for weddings. It was thought to be a lucky time of year.