

ARCHAEOLOGY

The Bride Wore White

But Ancient Styles Studied by Archaeologists Show Men Had Worse Clothes Problem Than Women

By EMILY C. DAVIS

THE FLURRIED June bride needn't sigh to be back in some less hectic age—getting married, for example, to an "old Roman." That is to say, of course, getting married to a young Roman in ancient Rome.

It wouldn't do her any good. Weddings 2,000 years ago were just as dizzy, just as full of white dresses and bridal veils and superstitions and headaches and the rest of it, as they are in the spring of '39.

Take a few Roman facts:

The wedding day had to be picked, oh, so carefully! Some days were unlucky. The whole first part of June was out. There were religious festivals then. May was out, for the same reason. In fact, a third of the days in the year were wrong.

Then, the things to be done, and checked off the list!

Wedding cake for guests to take home, not to mention feeding the guests at the usual reception.

The bride mustn't forget to gather flowers for her own wreath. The groom would get his own, if he decided to wear one.

Somebody must see that the groom had nuts to carry. Yes, nuts. The groom always scattered nuts when he and his blushing bride paraded to their new home after the festivities were over. Nowadays, the wedding guests do the throwing, arming themselves with confetti or rice.

Three Coins

The bride must have three coins in her hand, when she started for the new home. Not for emergency transportation. The Romans wouldn't have understood about "mad money." No; the three coins had to be distributed, one to the gods of the crossroad, one to the groom—to reassure him she was bringing a dowry—and one to the household gods in her new residence.

You get the idea, perhaps, that with minor differences the wedding atmosphere was about as usual.

And coming to the absorbing topic of what the bride wore—

But for that, and the latest news on Roman fashions, we can turn to a new publication on "The Clothing of the Ancient Romans," by Dr. Lillian M. Wilson, published by the Johns Hopkins Press.

Dr. Wilson, an archaeologist with a bit of the home economics expert in her system, has carefully studied what the Romans wore.

She has inspected tons of statuary and yards of wall paintings. She has read what ancient writers had to say about fashions. They didn't call fashion spinach, but some of them said plenty, with the same satiric expression.

Dr. Wilson has cut patterns of Roman togas, tunics, and cloaks. She has corraled young students and posed them in garments cut and draped just as the Romans used to wear them.

From all this historic dressmaking, you can now have a better idea of what clothes problems were like 2,000 years ago in fashionable Rome. Men had the worst of it, as you will see presently. A toga was something even a noble Roman couldn't enjoy wearing.

Soft White Wool

But the bride! The Roman bride wore white, Dr. Wilson explains. Her dress was simple, just a long tunic made of soft white wool, and the dressmaking was no great job. The important thing was to have the wedding dress "woven upwards by those standing." In other words, on an old fashioned loom. That was for luck.

But don't think for a minute that a Roman girl could throw her simple tunic over her head, letting the folds fall where they would. Far from it. Dr. Wilson stresses the fact that Roman and Greek clothing required care in arrangement. A man worried over the drape of his toga the way a modern male frowns over his tie. A woman would be no less particular.

The bride gathered in her tunic at the waist with a girdle and a Herculean knot, which doesn't mean that the knot was tied in any strong-man fashion. Rather, the knot was probably a symbol of Hercules, patron god of marriage. And it was one of the groom's first du-

ties as a married man to untie the bride's girdle for her.

So—the wedding dress was conventional white, artistically arranged. But the veil was yellow. So were the shoes. This yellow, Dr. Wilson explains, was actually a bright orange or flame tint. A glimpse of the color still remains on one fresco painting, showing a Roman bridal party. The veil can be distinctly seen as a saffron yellow.

Because Roman brides always wore veils when their pictures were taken in sculptured portraits, the way they wore their hair is a mystery. All we know is that the hair was plaited in six braids and bound round the head.

Parted by Sword

We are told, however, that in arranging the bride's hair it was supposed to be parted with a sword. Why a sword, on a jittery occasion like a wedding day, is hard to imagine. Especially when you think that combs were a very old invention. One authority on the private life of the Romans hazards a guess that the sword used in fixing the bride's hair must have been a spear or spear-shaped comb that symbolized the ancient practice of capturing a bride.

The groom wore a toga. He had no alternative. The toga was the dress suit of a Roman citizen; also his frock coat. His toga was also his dinner suit, until the first century A.D. when some advanced thinkers introduced to fashionable men-about-Rome an outfit for dining called a synthesis.

What a synthesis was in fashion history is not too well understood. But from descriptions, it was a colorful and rich costume. Roman wit Martial had a fling at a friend who rose—so Martial declared—eleven times during one dinner to put on a fresh synthesis. Showing off his wardrobe, said Martial derisively.

The toga was stately and beautiful, Dr. Wilson says, but it was about as inconvenient a costume as could have been devised. Romans apparently learned to keep on most kinds of togas—there were a number of types—without pins. However, Dr. Wilson doesn't advise actors or others who dress up as noble Romans to try wearing a pin-less toga.

But, although Romans did master the draping and holding of a toga, they avoided wearing one whenever they

could. A citizen was expected to wear his toga when he went to public affairs or anywhere else that called for him to look dignified and patriotic. But Romans evaded toga-wearing the way modern men find excuses for not donning evening clothes. Emperors had to prod Romans into wearing togas. They would fall into the comfortable habit of dressing informally, in the tunic that was put on over the head and stayed "put." Wearing a tunic without the toga over it, was about like wearing shirt sleeves today. The writer Juvenal sighed for country life, where only the dead wore togas.

For 800 Years

Romans put up with togas for 800 years, which is something of a record. Dr. Wilson explains that originally a toga must have been nothing more than a blanket. But then, it acquired a curved edge or other geometric outlines, and had to be draped certain ways for style. If you were a Roman senator you had a broad stripe of purple on your toga. Mostly, togas were white, and presumably they were generally wool.

Just to get an idea of what a Roman man went through with, in dressing of a morning, here is a formula for getting into a simpler, and older, type of toga:

You throw the long piece of material backward over your left shoulder, so that one end remains hanging down in front to the shin or lower. The long portion thrown over the left shoulder is now drawn around your back and under the right arm and again thrown over the left shoulder. The end trails down the back. This leaves your right arm free for gestures, while the left clutches the folds. The imperial toga was put on in similar routine, except that it was more voluminous and complicated.

"No toga or other drapery was ever arranged twice in precisely the same lines," Dr. Wilson has concluded from observing statues and paintings. Hence, no exact instructions can be given for getting just the right effect. Practice does it.

The toga is one clothes problem that women escaped. At least, the respectable Roman matron did not wear one, Dr. Wilson is convinced. Her ancestors in remote antiquity wore togas—men and women alike. But that was when togas were not much more than blankets. One type of Roman woman alone wore a toga, and that was the courtesan, who wore it as a badge of her profession.

Whether little daughters of Roman citizens wore the distinctly Roman gar-

ment, the toga, is something not yet settled. There are few portrayals of young girls in Roman art. But Dr. Wilson's view is that a toga would have been old-fashioned for girls in the Roman Empire. They may have revived the fashion in the Age of Augustus. He was, she explains, "something of a faddist in the matter of ancient dress."

But usually, girls, like the women, wore a tunic.

"The modern one-piece dress with kimono sleeves is its direct descendant," Dr. Wilson points out.

Girls also, however, wore a tunic with an upper portion falling to the knees. It is a style effect still revived now and then, and still called a peplum.

Barring details, small boys wore usually a tunic as their outer costume. They were small editions of their fathers in these tunics, sometimes topped by a schoolboy's type of toga.

No Record of Undies

Lacking the candid camera touch in their sculptures and paintings, the Romans neglected to leave the world a good idea of their more intimate garments. Dr. Wilson gains random bits of information from ancient writings. The great Augustus, for example, is reported to have worn four tunics, a toga, and a subcula in cold weather. The sub-

cula was a short shirt, which we might class with "heavies."

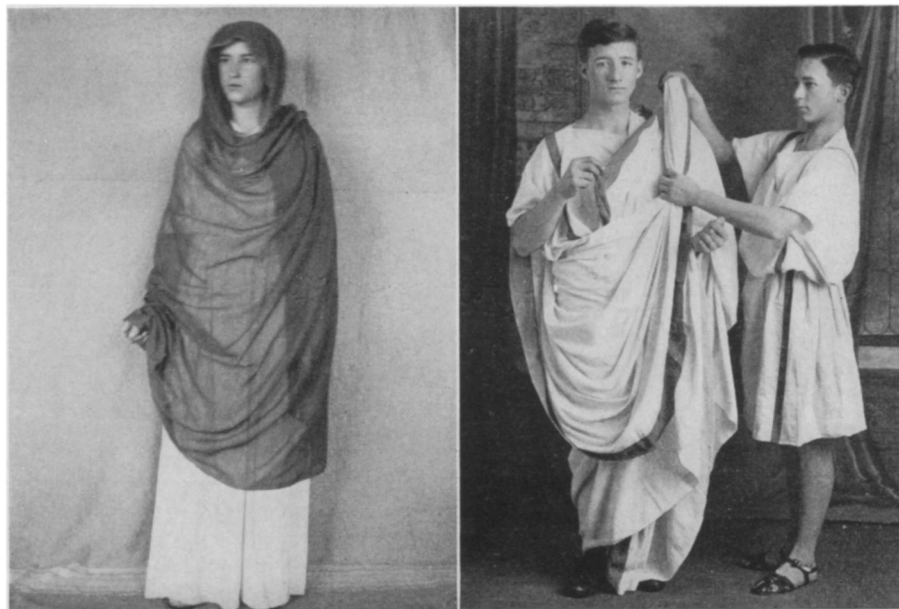
Romans had a variety of cloaks to top their costumes for cold or rainy weather. As many as eight or nine kinds can be counted in literary sources, if you care to try that kind of antiquarian arithmetic. Romans, you will find, had the equivalents of rain coats, overcoats, military cloaks. They had long and short cloaks, with and without hoods.

Early Christians adopted a Roman cloak called a pallium, which you can see wrapped around saints and converts in many a relic of early Christian art. A long tunic was worn usually beneath this oblong mantle.

Imported Styles

With Romans, the pallium was a topic of controversy. They had borrowed the style from Greeks. In fact, a pallium was nothing more than the classic drapery worn by Greek gods in their sculptured appearances, and by Greek mortals in everyday life. Romans saw no objection to including a pallium in a man's outfit, but when some citizens dared to say it was a substitute for a toga, and more comfortable—that was cause for criticism.

A modern bride can get some comfort from ancient Rome, after all. She can find good arguments there for any



MODERNS IN ANCIENT DRESS

The Roman bride wore white, with a golden yellow veil. Her shoes were yellow. Her hair was arranged in six braids bound around her head. Roman weddings were just as full of traditions and proprieties as ours are. At right, two American boys drape an imperial toga, according to Dr. Wilson's directions. Less voluminous togas were worn sometimes. But here you see the toga worn during the Empire, by senators and high officials as the national dress suit. The boy assisting is wearing a tunic, equivalent of modern shirt sleeves.

male criticisms on women's clothes. In Roman days, it was the men who put up with very inconvenient and hampering styles, and they went on wearing those togas for 800 years!

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PUBLIC HEALTH

Infantile Paralysis In South Carolina

THE INFANTILE paralysis outbreak in South Carolina continues unabated while the rest of the nation is remarkably free from the dreaded childhood plague, latest reports to the U. S. Public Health Service indicate. The federal health service has had three officers investigating the outbreak and expects to send experts on infantile paralysis after-care to South Carolina as soon as possible.

During the week ended May 20 there were 28 cases of the ailment in South Carolina, most of them in and around Charleston. In the rest of the nation there were 15 cases scattered throughout nine states. The South Carolina outbreak has been building up since before Christmas, with a sudden increase during the first week in May. Normally health officials would expect about 19 cases of the disease in the entire country at this time of year.

No major outbreak of infantile paralysis has occurred since the summer of 1937. Health officials are unable to predict whether the South Carolina epidemic will remain local or will spread throughout the rest of the country this summer.

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Food products on the market are put up in 257 sizes of cans, but the U. S. Department of Agriculture has recommended reducing to 14 sizes.

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Greek Actor Could Escape Through Space of Single Tile

WHEN Greek playwright Aristophanes had a comic actor in his play "Wasps" try to climb through a roof where a single tile was out, he was not asking the impossible, Dr. David M. Robinson, Johns Hopkins University archaeologist, has discovered.

Excavating the Greek city of Olynthos, he has found flat-pan roof tiles as big as 22 by 18 inches. Experimenting for himself, he reports that a thin man could "make it" escaping through the gap of one tile, allowing for the setting of the tile in roof construction.

Another puzzle in stage directions of ancient classic drama is also cleared up by finding that in one Olynthos mansion a character could hide in a storeroom, unnoticed by a woman coming downstairs into the front of the room, as required in a comedy plot by Menander. The storeroom in this house is below the level of the entrance.

The ten-room house shedding light on Greek stage settings is named the "Villa of Many Colors" by its discoverers, because the walls were gay with blue, white, yellow, red, and burnt orange surface and molded stucco designs.

The home of a Greek fighter and wild

game hunter is another discovery of the latest expedition to Olynthos, which Dr. Robinson directed in association with Dr. George E. Mylonas of the Washington University of St. Louis. The excavations were under auspices of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. The hunter's nine-room house contained an arsenal of big knives, a sword blade, shield, twelve slingstones of lead, and spear and arrow heads. Bones of wild animals were in the house when it was burned in the wild conflagration that swept the city when Philip of Macedon destroyed Olynthos in 348 B. C.

Olynthians were a hybrid group. This is the verdict of the expedition anthropologist, John L. Angel. The men were fairly tall, women almost short. Burials excavated show that the "average Olynthian probably had a medium head, not very high, with a low wide face and wide unimpressive nose and a strong jaw." Mr. Angel adds that this average man's teeth were good and he lived to no great age.

The complete skeleton of a small ancient horse like those immortalized in the Parthenon frieze at Athens is another discovery from the Olynthos cemetery.

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PHYSICS

Super Cyclotron Planned As Largest Is Finished

WHILE final touches are being applied to the most powerful atom smasher in the world at the University of California, Prof. E. O. Lawrence, inventor of the cyclotron, is already at work planning for a super machine that will create atomic particles having energies of 100,000,000 electron volts.

The new giant cyclotron weighs 225 tons and will create 21,000,000 electron volt particles. The one in Prof. Lawrence's mind would weigh about 2,000 tons. In size this cyclotron would be 35 feet long, 25 feet high and 15 feet wide. While designed for 100,000,000 electron volt alpha particles (nuclei of helium atoms) it is conceivable that consider-

ably higher energy particles could be obtained from it.

The record size of the 225-ton Berkeley cyclotron will last only for a short time for it is being duplicated now in Japan and an even larger one, weighing 300 tons, is under construction at Manchester, England.

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A committee of women who are teachers or students of Hebrew plan to replace the "random vocabulary" now taught in study of this language with a vocabulary dealing with the daily life and religious interests of Jewish people.