



Women in Ancient Egypt

In ancient Egypt, women were not equal with men, but they had many rights, considerably more rights than did women in other ancient civilizations.

Marriage: One of their rights was the right to decide if they wished to marry or not. If a man asked a woman to marry him, she could say no. A woman in ancient Egypt could not be forced into marriage. Those who did marry usually married quite young, around age 12-14.

Once married, a woman's first duty was to be a good wife and mother. Children were very important to the ancient Egyptians.

Finances: Along with raising the children and running the household, women were free to get a paid job outside the home if they wanted one. They could run a business. They could own, buy, and sell property. They could make a will and leave their personal goods to whomever they chose, including their daughters.

Court: If any woman broke the law, she had to go to court and defend herself from the charge, just like everyone else.

Divorce: One of the biggest rights a woman had was the right of divorce. If a woman was unhappy with her marriage, she could get a divorce, and then remarry someone else or remain single.

To be granted a divorce, a woman needed to present a good reason in a court of law.

If her divorce was granted, she gained custody of the children, plus **all** of her original dowry if one was brought to the marriage - or its equivalent worth - plus one-third of her husband's wealth. This was done so that she could raise her children comfortably. She also took with her any property she personally owned, including property that had been willed to her during her marriage.

Men could also get a divorce, but, if granted, women still gained custody of her children, her original dowry, and a big chunk of his wealth