

The Twelve Tables (The First Code of Roman Law – short version)

Table I: Civil Procedures.

- If someone is accused and called to go to court, he must go.
- If he does not go, he may send a witness to stand for him. If he does not come or send a witness, he may be captured and forced to come to court.

Table II: Civil Procedures.

- If a person needs evidence or a witness, he may go every third day to the doorway of the person and call for him.

Table III: Debt.

- If a person owes a debt and is brought to court, he shall have 30 days to pay the debt.
- After 30 days if the debt is not paid, the person owing the debt may be put in chains.
- After 60 days in custody the person owing the debt can be sold into slavery or be put to death if the debt is not settled.

Table IV: Parents and Children.

- If a child is born with a severe deformity, it shall be killed.
- Parents have the right to sell their children into slavery.

Table V: Inheritance.

- If a person goes insane, he shall not have power over his goods and they shall be given to his nearest male relative.
- If a person dies without a male heir, his nearest male relative shall inherit his goods.
- Women shall always be given a male guardian to accompany them

Table VI: Property.

- If a person makes a promise or contract verbally, it shall be considered binding and must be fulfilled.
- If a man and woman shall live together for a year, they shall be considered married.
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Table VII: Real Property.

- If a person builds a road and it becomes unusable because of decay or damage, travelers may travel across the property wherever they wish and are not bound to use the road.

- If a person's road or building shall cause damage to another's property, the owner of the road or building shall pay for the damage.

Table VIII: Crimes.

- If a person insults or gossips about another person publicly, the person who did the insulting or gossiping shall be clubbed to death.
- If a person injures another person physically, he will be injured in the same way unless he agrees to pay for damages.
- No one may hold meetings at night.
- If a person who is called to be a witness in court and lies, he shall be thrown from a cliff.
- If a person throws something without aiming and injures another person, he shall owe that a person one ram.

Table IX: Constitutional Principles.

- A man can not be put to death without first having been found guilty in court.
- A judge who is found guilty of taking a bribe shall be put to death.
- It is forbidden to pass laws in private.
- It is also forbidden to pass laws against a single person.

Table X: Funeral Rites.

- No man shall be buried or cremated within the city.
- Women are not allowed to mourn loudly or slap their own cheeks or tear their clothes during a funeral.

Table XI: Marriage Laws.

- Marriages are forbidden between plebians and patricians.
- Men in the army may not marry until their training is complete.

Table XII: Punishments.

- If a person accuses another but is lying, the liar must pay double the penalty of the crime or be put to death.
- The eight forms of punishment are: fines, placing in chains, whipping, inflicting the same injury as was committed, public humiliation, banishment from the city, slavery and death.