

# Marriage and Family in Flavius Josephus's Contra Apionem (II, § 199–206) against its Hellenistic background\*

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## 1. Introduction

At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, certainly after the year 94 CE, the Jewish historiographer Flavius Josephus wrote his book *Contra Apionem* (= Ap.).<sup>1</sup> The main purpose of this work, especially of its first part,<sup>2</sup> was to defend the Jewish people against what Josephus calls 'slanders' (βλασφημίαι). By this he refers to the argument advanced by pagan authors that the Jewish people is of more recent origin than other peoples (Ap. I, 2). In the second part of his book, Josephus intends to refute (ἐλέγγειν, Ap. II, 2) the criticism directed against Judaism by Apion. This pagan author of Egyptian origin<sup>3</sup> is today quite unknown. In his previously published five volume work, the so-called *Αἰγυπτιακά*, he addresses, inter alia, Jewish history and religion. Except for the information Josephus gives about Apion's anti-jewish sentiments, only a few fragments of the *Αἰγυπτιακά* have been preserved.<sup>4</sup>

In the context of the second part of his *Contra Apionem*, Josephus gives a summary of Jewish law (189–217).<sup>5</sup> It is beyond doubt that he is far from presenting the law and the customs of his people *sine ira et studio*.<sup>6</sup> Rather, his intention is to court sympathies for a law that he qualifies as in accordance with God's will (κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ βούλησιν, Ap. II, 184). Needless to say, marriage and family are important issues that are also

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1 For a detailed survey of the criteria allowing an approximate dating see BARCLAY, Flavius Josephus, XXVI–XXVIII.

2 See, e.g., LABOW, Flavius Josephus, LXXXII.

3 Apion lived from the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE until the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. For further details concerning his life and his work, see MONTANARI, Apion; VAN DER HORST, Who was Apion?.

4 JACOBY, *Fragmente*, n. 616.

5 For an in-depth study of the choice of laws presented in this chapter, as well as of their rationale, see e.g. GERBER, *Ein Bild des Judentums*, § 11.

6 For Josephus's concept of law, see WEBER, *Das "Gesetz"*; BONS, *Das Gesetz als Maßstab*.

to be dealt with by law. Therefore, Josephus dedicates some paragraphs to this matter (Ap. II, 199-206). These paragraphs of his *Contra Apionem* deserve special attention. In fact, a close reading of Josephus's presentation of Jewish marital and family law reveals that he does not at all give a summary of details contained in the law codes of the Pentateuch (Lev 18:6-23; Deut 21:10-14; 22:13-29; 23:1; 24:1-4; 25:5-10).<sup>7</sup> Hence, a double question arises: 1. How does Josephus refer to the specific Jewish traditions of marriage and family? 2. How does he defend Jewish marital and family law before his pagan audience?

Apart from some rather brief remarks in the commentaries on *Contra Apionem*,<sup>8</sup> this topic has not been thoroughly investigated in secondary literature on Josephus. With the aim of filling this gap, the present article focuses on the manner in which Josephus presents the Jewish concepts of marriage and family to his pagan readers. Furthermore, in order to place Josephus's statements in a broader context, special attention is given to one of his pagan contemporaries, Plutarch. This famous historian, philosopher and essayist, who was a very prolific writer, died around the year 125 CE. Addressing questions of marriage and family in the various works of his *Moralia*, e.g. in his *Coniugalia praecepta* as well as in his dialogue *Amatorius*, Plutarch holds love and harmony between partners as well as parents' love of children in high esteem.

At the outset, it should be noted that research on this specific topic is still in its infancy. To be sure, the recent commentary on *Contra Apionem* by John M. G. Barclay offers valuable insights on points of contact between this work and hellenistic thought in general. However, very little information is given about Plutarch's treatment of marriage and family. It cannot, therefore, be the purpose of this paper to provide exhaustive details on Josephus's and Plutarch's view of marriage. My aim is rather to single out a couple of Josephus's statements on this topic in the order in which they occur in Ap., II, 199-202: the exclusiveness of marriage between a man and a woman (1), the necessity of procreation (2), the prohibition of marrying for a dowry (3), the commitment of bearing pregnancies to full term as well as of rearing all of the children born (4). These statements will be briefly explained against both the Jewish and the Greek background, especially Plutarch. This approach will enable us to

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7 The Old Testament marital law has been the object of numerous research studies in recent years, e.g. TOSATO, *Il matrimonio israelitico*; BIANCHI, *La donna del tuo popolo*.

8 MÜLLER, *Des Flavius Josephus Schrift gegen den Apion*, 318-323; TROIANI, *Comento storico*, 188-190; BARCLAY, *Against Apion*, 282-289; SIEGERT (ed.), *Über die Ursprünglichkeit des Judentums (Contra Apionem)*, 119-120.

better understand the emphasis Josephus lays on some specific subjects. Nevertheless, we will see that a comparison between the two authors shows clearly to what extent their positions converge or diverge.

## 2. The principle of Jewish marital Law

Josephus introduces the paragraphs on marital law in the following terms (Ap. II, 199): μίξις μόνην οἶδεν ὁ νόμος τὴν κατὰ φύσιν τὴν πρὸς γυναῖκα “the only sexual intercourse recognized by the law is the natural intercourse with a woman” (translation by J. M. G. Barclay). I will explain this assertion in three steps:

a) In the given context, the noun μίξις obviously refers to sexual intercourse. This usage of μίξις is already attested in classical Greek literature.<sup>9</sup> Josephus employs the word once more in a passage of his *Antiquities* that is able to shed light on the quotation in question. In *Antiquities* 3, 275, he paraphrases various sexual prohibitions contained in the Holiness Code. Among them, Lev 20:13 imposes the death penalty for a man having a sexual relationship with another man: “If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death” (NIV). Josephus reproduces this prohibition while introducing a motive explaining sexual relationships between male partners: ἐκώλυσε δὲ τὴν πρὸς ἄρρενα μίξιν τιμᾶν διὰ τὴν ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς ὥραν ἡδονὴν θηρωμένους παράνομον ([Moses] “forbad a man [...] to approve of the lying with a male, which was to hunt after unlawful pleasures on account of beauty”).<sup>10</sup> It is beyond any doubt that Josephus alludes to homoerotic practices whose different forms were very popular especially in Greek society.<sup>11</sup> The two partners often were an adult man and a quite young boy whose physical beauty and moral virtues were exalted. In fact, beauty and virtue (ἀρετή) are not held to be two independent qualities of a young person but they are considered closely connected.<sup>12</sup> The stoic philosopher Chrysippus, e.g., quotes authors who say that “beauty is the flower

9 See, e.g., HERODOTUS, *Histories* IV, 104.172.180; ARISTOTLE, *Generation of Animals* 746 b 22.

10 The English translations of the passages of Josephus's *Antiquities* quoted in this article are from WHISTON, *The Works of Josephus*.

11 For a survey of the forms and the evolution of ancient homoerotic practices, see e.g. FEICHTINGER, *Soziologisches*, 237-251.

12 See the description of the physical and intellectual qualities of an ideal young man by the Stoic philosopher Zenon (SVF I, 246 = CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *Paedagogus* III, 11, 74, 3-4). The text is available in NICKEL (ed.), *Stoa und Stoiker*, I, n. 745.

of virtue" (εἶναι δὲ καὶ ὄραν ἄνθος ἀρετῆς).<sup>13</sup> Certainly, it must be taken for granted that pederasty in Greek society was subject to change in the course of time.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, its social and pedagogical value was not shared by everybody in Greek society.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, acceptance or prohibition of sexual relationships between men seems to be – at least in Josephus's view – the demarcation line between Jewish and pagan conceptions of sexuality and marriage. One of the Jewish hellenistic texts which explicitly underscores the difference between Jewish and pagan practices in this respect, is the Letter of Aristeas, 151. In his presentation of the Jewish law, the High Priest unmistakably emphasises: διότι παρὰ πάντας ἀνθρώπους διεστάλμεθα "for we have been distinctly separated from the rest of mankind." Then he explains the difference, certainly with a polemical undertone (§ 152): Οὐ μόνον γὰρ πρὸς ἄρσενας προσάγουσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ τεκούσας ἔτι δὲ καὶ θυγατέρες μολύνουσιν. Ἡμεῖς δὲ ἀπὸ τούτων διεστάλμεθα "for they not only have intercourse with men but they defile their own mothers and even their daughters. But we have been kept separate from such sins."<sup>16</sup> In the framework of this paper, there is no need to quote other Jewish hellenistic texts which condemn sexual relationships between male partners.<sup>17</sup> Let us come back again to Josephus's quotation in Ap. II, 199. To be precise, Josephus does not differentiate between various forms of homoerotic relationships. In contrast to his interpretation of Lev 20:13 in Ant. 3, 275 – where he seems to allude to such practices – he does not speak of real or alleged motifs that might have prompted men to adopt this behaviour. Is this silence to be explained by a certain respect for Josephus's pagan readership whose 'weak points' do not get mentioned? To be sure, this conclusion could be envisaged. However, it is difficult to express a clear statement on this issue. Be this as it may, Josephus does nothing else than introduce his summary of Jewish marital laws by an unambiguous statement: Jewish law accepts sexual intercourse only if it is between a man and a woman (γυνή),<sup>18</sup> intercourse between men being punished by death (Ap. II, 199).

13 This quotation (= SVF III, 718) is handed down by DIOGENES LAËRTIUS, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* VII 130; see NICKEL (ed.), *Stoa und Stoiker*, I, n. 742.

14 See FEICHTINGER, *Soziologisches*, 240.

15 See e.g. ARISTOTLE, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1148 b 28ff.

16 The English translation of the two quotations is that of H. T. Andrews, in: CHARLES, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*.

17 E.g. PHILO, *Special Laws* II, 50, who explicitly mentions pederasty. A short compilation of Jewish hellenistic texts having a critical attitude to homosexuality can be found in VAN DER HORST, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, 238.

18 Concerning the translation of γυνή, BARCLAY, *Against Apion*, 282, pleads for 'woman': "Again, γυνή might be translated 'wife' [...], but the context suggests that the focus here is on gender, not marital status."

b) Josephus's clear-cut position about homoerotic relationships is, on the one hand, in conformity with Jewish law, namely Lev 18:22; 20:13.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, it contains one element which is completely unknown to Old Testament thought<sup>20</sup> albeit common in Greek reasoning: *κατὰ φύσιν*. It deserves attention that *φύσις*, which is a central concept in Greek philosophy, never occurs in the translated books of the Septuagint. The concept of 'nature' probably had no equivalent in Biblical Hebrew language, at least not in the eyes of the translators. Nevertheless, Josephus has recourse to the *κατὰ φύσιν topos* quite often in his extant writings: In a commonplace sense, the term refers to 'normal' qualities or processes determined by human nature, e.g. children born "normally" (Ant. 3, 88) or women's menses (Ant. 1, 323; 3, 275). However, in the latter quotations, *κατὰ φύσιν* is used rather in a descriptive manner, not for argumentative purposes. Putting forward the *κατὰ φύσιν* argument in the context of marital laws, Josephus appears to adopt an idea developed in Greek philosophy. Plato, e.g., argues several times that *φύσις* has a normative character, especially in the process of founding and governing a city. It is *φύσις* and acting *κατὰ φύσιν* that is essential at all stages of the history of a society. A *sine qua non* for a flourishing life together is that everybody at the right time carries out the one activity which is *κατὰ φύσιν* (Republic 370 c 4; 453 b 5). The question of whether an activity, e.g. gymnastics, is *κατὰ φύσιν* or *παρὰ φύσιν*, i.e. according to nature or against nature, plays an important role in the debate on the education to be provided for the wives of the guardians. In this context one assumption is of the utmost importance: Whatever is according to nature cannot be incompatible with legislation (Republic 456 b-c). Whether Josephus is familiar or not with this platonic argument, the association of law and nature is to be understood against the background of Greek ethics. In addition, we can go one step further by quoting another text of Plato which exactly deals with the question of sexual orientation. In Laws 636 c, one of the partners in the dialogue argues that sexual pleasure experienced by a man and a woman is "held to be due to nature [*κατὰ φύσιν*], but contrary to nature [*παρὰ φύσιν*] when male mates with male or female with female" (translation by R. G. Bury<sup>21</sup>). In conclusion, in his explanation of Jewish law Josephus not

19 For a more detailed study of these prohibitions and their rationale, see the commentaries on Leviticus, e.g. MARX, *Lévitique* 17-27, 69f., 107

20 See also VAN DER HORST, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, 238: "The motif *κατὰ / παρὰ φύσιν* does not derive from the O.T., but from Greek philosophy [...]." The apostle Paul, however, seems to be familiar with this idea: in Rom 1:25 he quotes the *παρὰ φύσιν* idea precisely in the context of what he considers sexual misconduct.

21 PLATO, *Laws*.

only recurs to Greek concepts like φύσις and its alleged conformity with law. He also associates these concepts with his idea of marriage.

c) Is the categorical rejection of homosexual practices limited to Jewish texts and authors? This is obviously not the case. In this context, it might be worthwhile to recall some arguments of Josephus's contemporary Plutarch who probably composed his dialogue *Amatorius* around the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE.<sup>22</sup> Rejecting the arguments of fervent supporters of pederasty, Plutarch advocates marriage, but without reasoning in a manner as described above. In fact, Plutarch never makes the point that pederasty is contrary to nature whereas marriage is to be considered in conformity with it. Unlike his discussion partners who depreciate marriage denying women's ability to learn ἀρετή (*Amatorius* 769 B), Plutarch highlights the deep and mutual φιλία that can only arise in marriage (*Amatorius* 769 A). Nevertheless, the strongest argument in favour of marriage and against pederasty is of *a posteriori* nature, i.e. based on experience: marital fidelity can be permanent and come to an end only when one of the two partners dies. By contrast, pederasty tends to be subject to fluctuation (*Amatorius* 770 C). In a similar way, Plutarch portrays the ideal of a lifelong partnership in his *Coniugalia praecepta* ("Advice to Bride and Groom"), 138 C.<sup>23</sup> It is remarkable that Josephus neither refers to this ideal nor to the subject of mutual love.

### 3. The necessity of procreation

Following Josephus, Ap. II, 199, sexual intercourse is only in conformity with law εἰ μέλλοι τέκνων ἕνεκα γίνεσθαι "if it is with the intention of procreation" (translation of J. M. G. Barclay). As Barclay notes, "this requirement is not found in the biblical laws,"<sup>24</sup> but it is in line with Josephus's interpretation of Deut 21:18, a text which deals with measures parents ought to take in order to discipline rebellious children. Without following the biblical text, Josephus wants parents to explain to their children "that they cohabitated together, not for the sake of pleasure, nor for the augmentation of their riches, by joining both their stocks together, but that they might have children to take care of them in their old age, and might by them have what they then should want" (*Ant.* 4, 260,

22 See GÖRGEMANNS ET AL., *Plutarch, Dialog über die Liebe*, 6f.

23 The text is available in PLUTARCH, *Moralia*. Volume II, 297-343.

24 BARCLAY, *Against Apion*, 283.

translation of W. Whiston). However, in the *Contra Apionem* quotation, Josephus does not refer to this specific expectation of elderly parents depending on their children's care and assistance. So what is the motive for Josephus's linking of sexual intercourse with the intention of procreation? Unless Josephus has in mind the idea of destruction of seed<sup>25</sup> or the divine commandment of Gen 1:28 "Be fruitful and multiply,"<sup>26</sup> the *Contra Apionem* quotation εἰ μέλλοι τέκνων ἕνεκα γίνεσθαι is normally interpreted against a Stoic background:<sup>27</sup> As passions are to be rigorously controlled, sexual pleasure is only in conformity with natural law if it aims at the procreation of children. Among the authors of the Roman epoch, the Stoic philosopher Musonius Rufus defends such a position, allowing sexual intercourse only when it takes place in marriage and with the intention of procreation.<sup>28</sup> Once again, it may prove useful to compare Josephus with other contemporary writers who give their opinion on the same topic. Plutarch, e.g., seems to opt for a moderate position. On the one hand, he criticizes men who marry with the aim only of having children while neglecting love and respect of their wives (*Amatorius* 767 D). On the other hand, Plutarch argues passionately in favour of mutual love. His reflections on this issue culminate in the assertion: "to love in marriage is a good that is better than being loved" (τὸ γὰρ ἐρᾶν ἐν γάμῳ τοῦ ἐρᾶσθαι μείζων ἀγαθόν ἐστι, *Amatorius* 769 D) because love is able to heal the wounds that might damage marriage. It is for the same reason that Plutarch considers sexual union to be an expression of φιλοφροσύνη 'friendliness.' In so doing, partners renew their mutual affection, especially after having experienced disagreements or conflicts (*Amatorius* 769 B). In brief, according to Plutarch this kind of sexual union is first of all a "proof of love" whose primary object is not procreation.

In conclusion, whereas Plutarch highlights the importance of conjugal love, this topic is completely passed over in silence by Josephus. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the few lines on marriage in his *Contra Apionem* should not be confused with a treatise on marriage. On the contrary, they represent nothing more than a very short summary of Jewish legal regulations. Nevertheless, the fact is striking that Josephus neither

25 For this prohibition, see e.g. PHILO, *Special Laws*, 3, 34-36.

26 VERMES, *A Summary*, 296.

27 See e.g. BARCLAY, *Against Apion*, 283.

28 *Dissertationum a Lucio digestarum reliquiae*, fragment 12 (= C. Musonii Rufi Reliquiae, ed. O. HENSE, 63f): χρῆ δὲ μόνα μὲν ἀφροδίσια νομίζειν δίκαια τὰ ἐν γάμῳ καὶ ἐπὶ γενέσει παίδων συντελούμεα ὅτι καὶ νόμιμά ἐστιν· τὰ δὲ γε ἡδονῆν θηράμεα ψιλῆν ἄδικα καὶ παράνομα κἄν ἐν γάμῳ ᾗ. See also ΕΠΙΚΤΕΤ – ΤΕΛΕΣ – ΜΥΣΟΝΙΟΥΣ, *Ausgewählte Schriften Griechisch-Deutsch*, 478.



addresses the issue of marriage failure nor the possibility of repudiation provided for by the Jewish law (e.g. Deut 24:1-5).<sup>29</sup>

#### 4. Dowry as a motive for marriage?

According to Josephus, Jewish law prohibits men from marrying their wives because expecting an important dowry: γαμῆν δὲ κελεύει μὴ προικὶ προσέχοντας “it gives instruction to marry not paying heed to the dowry” (translation by J. M. G. Barclay). This quotation gives rise to two observations. Firstly, it is not clear which legal stipulation Josephus has in mind, the Pentateuch law codes not dealing with this question. Secondly, Josephus does not justify this prohibition, e.g. in referring to economic, social or psychological motivations. Except for 2 Macc 1:14, the Bible and cognate writings do not mention cases of dowry-hunting. Once again, Josephus’s assertion can be explained against a specific Greek background, namely relevant sections in the Greek Περὶ γάμου literature<sup>30</sup> and in philosophical texts. In his *Laws*, 773 e, Plato argues that “by means of reproaches [one has] to divert from his object him who has set his heart on marrying for money” (translation by R. G. Bury<sup>31</sup>). Of course, some ancient authors, e.g. Kleoboulos, one of the so called “Seven Wise Men,” warns against marriage with a wealthy partner because he or she might dominate the husband or wife.<sup>32</sup> Without excluding such motives, we should also take into account a very simple reason: Is the young man who wishes to marry a wealthy girl aware of the other character qualities or weaknesses of his beloved? Once more, it could prove helpful to have a quick glance at Plutarch’s works. In his *Coniugalia praecepta* he comments ironically on the man who is interested in his future wife’s property without having any idea of what daily life would be like with her (141 C). The fact that Josephus does not give reasons for this warning is probably best explained on the assumption that it did not need any

29 For this question in general, see INSTONE-BREWER, *Divorce and Remarriage*.

30 The relevant texts are quoted in GÖRGEMANN ET AL., *Plutarch, Dialog über die Liebe*, 141 note 76, 178 note 370.

31 See footnote 21.

32 See ALTHOFF – ZELLER, *Die Worte der Sieben Weisen*, 28.137: γαμῆν ἐκ τῶν ὁμοίων· ἐὰν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν κρείττωνων δεσπότας οὐ συγγειεῖς κτήσῃ, “marry among those who are of the same rank. If you [marry anybody] who is of a better rank, you will acquire masters, not relatives.” A slightly different text is quoted by DIOGENES LAËRTIUS, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* I, 92.



justification. Anyway, in including this warning in his summary of the Jewish marital laws, Josephus makes his readers believe that Jewish law shares this idea with Greek and Roman customs.

## 5. The prohibition of abortion and infanticide

The sense of the first sentence of Ap. 202 is evident: the Law gave orders to nurture all children, prohibiting women from aborting or destroying them, i.e. by exposure<sup>33</sup> (τέκνα τρέφειν ἅπαντα προσέταξεν καὶ γυναιξὶν ἀπέειπεν μήτ' ἀμβλοῦν τὸ σπαρὲν μήτε διαφθείρειν). If a woman transgresses this law she is considered as an infanticide (τεκνόκτονος). It appears to be difficult to find a similar prescription in biblical writings,<sup>34</sup> perhaps in a somewhat free interpretation of Exod 21:22-23 (cf. Ant. 4, 278). However, we should bear in mind that in Antiquity abortion as well as child exposure<sup>35</sup> obviously were widespread practices. Another work of Jewish origin, the Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides, 184f., warns as well against both of these practices.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, the question is dealt with by Aristotle whose statements about birth control read as follows: "but on the ground of number of children, if the regular customs hinder any of those born being exposed, there must be a limit fixed to the procreation of offspring, and if any people have a child as a result of intercourse in contravention of these regulations, abortion must be practised on it before it has developed sensation and life" (Politics 1335 b 20ff., translation by H. Rackham<sup>37</sup>). Of course, Josephus is not the first ancient author to disapprove of abortion and exposure and to equate these practices with infanticide. Some decades before him, Philo addresses the question of the exposure of new-born children in the context of laws concerning murder (Special Laws 3, 110-119).<sup>38</sup> He harshly condemns this practice accusing parents of annulling the laws of nature by such an act (νόμους φύσεως καταλύοντες) which for him is nothing other than infanticide (τεκνόκτονία, Special Laws 3, 112). As for abortion, Pliny the Elder (Natural History X, 82) also intro-

33 For this interpretation of the verb διαφθείρειν, see TUOR-KURTH, *Kindesaussetzung*, 180.

34 See also MÜLLER, *Des Flavius Josephus Schrift gegen den Apion*, 320: "Gegen das Abtreiben giebt es im Pentateuch kein Gesetz."

35 See WIESEHÖFER, *Kindesaussetzung*, 468-470.

36 For further details, see VAN DER HORST, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, 232-234; TUOR-KURTH, *Kindesaussetzung*, 156-159.

37 ARISTOTLE, *The Politics*, 1335 b 20ff.

38 For the interpretation of this passage, see TUOR-KURTH, *Kindesaussetzung*, 162-168.

duces the argument of conformity or inconformity with nature. He argues that abortion has been devised as a means of not controlling excessive and unnatural human passions. Comparing humans with animals in this respect, Pliny observes that the latter are able to moderate their behaviour – quite different from what he remarks in the human race which he considers more blameworthy than the animals in this respect (*quantum in hac parte multo nocentiores quam ferae sumus*). Once again, we can therefore conclude that Josephus, when presenting the Jewish law to his pagan readers, stresses moral values that are not completely unknown to Roman writers.<sup>39</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

As a summary of the results obtained in this short analysis, we can say that Josephus's synthesis of Jewish marital law is subject to the influence of two traditions: on the one hand, Josephus betrays a Jewish origin when he defends marriage against homoerotic practices. This Jewish influence might also be recognized in his negative stance towards abortion and exposure of children which he equates with murder, although the Pentateuch law codes do not quote such prohibitions. On the other hand, Josephus appears to be familiar with specific issues of the pagan *Περὶ γάμου* literature, e.g. when he warns against marrying for a dowry. Moreover, he shares some convictions with Greek authors, e.g. when considering marriage from the point of view of conformity with nature. In conclusion, it can be argued that Josephus presents Jewish marital law to his pagan readers, using their vocabulary as well as their philosophical concepts. Concretely, he makes them believe that Jewish positions on this topic are different but not completely incompatible with pagan perspectives.

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39 See also GERBER, *Ein Bild des Judentums*, 364: “[...] Josephus (konnte) großer Hoffnung sein [...], mit diesen Gesetzen nichtjüdischen Lesern zu imponieren, denn die Regeln vertreten ein Ethos, das auch außerhalb des Judentums Anklang fand [...]”

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