MARRIAGE

Although ancient Mediterranean marriages and gender roles were quite different from those in modern Western nations, they also varied among themselves. This article examines ancient Mediterranean views concerning marriage, childbearing, singleness, celibacy and monogamy; the beginning of marriage; and gender roles in marriages.

1. Marriage, Childbearing and Celibacy
2. Beginning Marriage
3. Gender Roles in Marriage
4. Summary

1. Marriage, Childbearing and Celibacy.

1.1. Marriage as a Norm in Greek and Roman Sources. Most people in the ancient Mediterranean world felt that marriage was the norm. Early Rome required Romans to marry and rear their children (Dionysius of Halicarnassus 9.22.2); the later republic continued to advocate marriage (Aulus Gellius *Noc. Att.* 1.6). In the early empire (*see* Roman Empire; Roman Emperors), propagandists for the policies of the Roman state advocated marriage, as did Augustus's laws, at least for the aristocracy (e.g., Dixon, 22, 24, 71–103). Most young women reportedly longed for marriage (Apuleius *Met.* 4.32), and tomb inscriptions underline the tragedy of dying unmarried (e.g., Lefkowitz and Fant, 11). It was also tragic for young men to die unmarried (Pseudo-Demosthenes *Against Leochares* 18).

1.2. Preference for Celibacy or Singleness in Greek and Roman Sources. Marriage remained the norm, but some people did refuse to marry because they feared broken trust (Plutarch *Dinner of Seven Wise Men* 21, *Mor.* 164B); others preferred exclusively homosexual practices (e.g., Clinias in Achilles Tatius *Leuc.* 1.8.1–2). Celibacy for religious reasons was considered praiseworthy, as evidenced specifically by Rome's vestal virgins (e.g., Livy *Hist.* 4.44.11–12; Appian *Rom.Hist.* 1.1.2; *Civ. W.* 1.6.54); the divine displeasure incurred by their voluntary defilement could be propitiated only by death (Dionysius of Halicarnassus 2.67; 9.40.3–4; Livy *Hist.* 8.15.7–8; 14; Plutarch *Quaest. Rom.* 83, 96, *Mor.* 284A-C, 286EF; Dio Cassius *Hist.* 67.3.3–4; Herodian *Hist.* 4.6.4). Some other cult priestesses were also virgins,

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Noc. Att. Noctes Atticae
Augustus (The Twelve Caesars)
e.g. *exempli gratia*, for example
Met. Metamorphoses
Mor. Moralia
Leuc. Leucippe and Cleitophon
Hist. History of the Peloponnesian War
Rom. Romulus (Vitae Parallelae)
Civ. W. Civil War (or *Pharsalia*)
Quaest. Rom. Quaestiones Romanae
C Codex Ephraemi Syri
Hist History of the Empire after Marcus

whether until puberty (Pausanias *Descr.* 2.33.2) or until death (Pausanias *Descr.* 9.27.6). Normally a man could not embrace a sacred figure executing her duties (Euripides *Iph. Taur.* 798–99), and worshipers of many deities had to abstain from sex during the rites (Propertius *Elegies* 2.33.1–6; Ovid *Met.* 10.431–35). The priests of Cybele, the Galli, were pledged to celibacy: their initiation rite included their castration (e.g., Lucian *Syrian Goddess* 51; Lucretius *Nat.* 2.614–15); but in contrast to the vestal virgins, the Galli usually elicited merely crude satire (e.g., Horace *Sat.* 1.2.120–21; Martial *Epigr.* 1.35.15; 3.24.13).

Some classical Greek philosophers had reservations about marriage (Diogenes Laertius *Vit.* 4.48; 6.1.3; 10.119; Aulus Gellius *Noc. Att.* 5.11.2); this was especially true of the Cynics, who complained that it involved distraction (Diogenes Laertius *Vit.* 6.2.54; Epictetus *Disc.* 3.22.69–76; Diogenes *Ep.* 47). Cynics had other ways of relieving their sexual appetites, sometimes even publicly, so their singleness does not represent a pledge to celibacy (Diogenes Laertius *Vit.* 6.2.46, 69). But it does indicate that not everyone shared the prevailing Greco-Roman emphasis on marriage. Even Cynics made at least one exception: despite the skepticism of her male colleagues, the woman Hipparchia proved able to embrace the Cynic lifestyle, and the head of the Cynic school married her (Diogenes Laertius *Vit.* 6.7.96–97). Some philosophers also discouraged intercourse, at least during much of the year (Diogenes Laertius *Vit.* 8.1.9). Others, especially Stoics, sometimes defend marriage or intercourse (Epictetus *Disc.* 3.7.19; Diogenes Laertius *Vit.* 7.1.121); like Paul, they felt that marriage was better for some, celibacy for others (1 Cor 7:7; see Balch 1983; on celibacy and marriage in antiquity, see Keener 1991, 68–78).

1.3. Marriage and Procreation in Mediterranean Antiquity. Although few people viewed marriage as purely for procreation, procreation provided one vital incentive for pursuing it. Hesiod had warned that avoiding marriage left one childless (Hesiod *Theog.* 602–6), although having a wife and children had its own disadvantages (Hesiod *Theog.* 607–12). Many philosophers, among them the Pythagoreans, emphasized the importance of begetting children to propagate society (*Pythagorean Sentences* 29; Thom, 109). Some of more conservative moral bent did limit the purpose of intercourse to procreation (Lucan *Civ. W.* 2.387–88). In the period of the early empire, Augustus enacted laws to encourage the aristocracy to marry and produce children (e.g., Dio Cassius *Hist.* 54.16.1, 7; Gaius *Inst.* 2.286a; Rawson, 9). Some scholars attribute the low birth rate in Rome in this period to the regular practice of hot baths, which can reportedly reduce male fertility (see Devine).

Sat. Satyricon
Epigr. Epigrams
Vit. Vita
Ep. Epistulae
Inst. Institutiones

Not everyone wanted more children; some resisted the new emphasis on childbearing (see Dixon, 22–23). Some resorted to magical contraceptives (*PGM* LXIII.24–28) or other contraceptive means they thought were medically sounder (e.g., *b. Nid.* 45a; contraception and abortion were not as widespread as some have argued [see Frier]). Child abandonment was frequent (e.g., Quintilian *Inst. Orat.* 8.1.14; Juvenal *Sat.* 6.602–9). Nevertheless, the debate over such practices appears to have been heated. Stoics (Malherbe, 99), Egyptians (Diodorus Siculus *Bib. Hist.* 1.80.3) and Jews (e.g., *Sib. Or.* 3.765–66) condemned child abandonment; Judaism also condemned abortions (e.g., Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 2.25 §202; *Pseud,-Phoc.* 184–85; in early Christianity, see Lindemann). Many philosophers (e.g., Heraclitus *Ep.* 7; Den Boer, 272), physicians (see Gorman 19–32), and others (e.g., Chariton *Chaer.* 2.8.6–9.11) disliked abortion; ancients debated whether the embryo was a person and therefore whether or not abortion should be legal (Theon *Progymn.* 2.96–99).

1.4. Marriage and Childbearing as a Norm in Early Judaism. Early Judaism emphasized childbearing even more than imperial propaganda did (see Ilan, 105–7). Josephus claimed that biblical law allowed intercourse only for procreation (Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 2.25 §199). Philo claims that a man who knowingly marries a woman who cannot bear children is an enemy of God and nature and acts like an impassioned animal (Philo *Spec. Leg.* 3.6 §36).

The later rabbis also remained emphatic about the importance of procreation. Rabbis attributed the necessity of procreation to God's command to be fruitful and multiply, because humans are made in God's image (e.g., *m. Yebam.* 6:6; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 22:2; cf. *m. Giṭ* 4:5); reportedly as early as the late first century, it was taught that one who refrained from seeking children was "as though he had diminished the image of God" (*Gen. Rab.* 34:14). Thus starting with Adam, begetting children was a divinely ordained duty (*Gen. Rab.* 23:4), and neglecting to beget children came to be viewed as nearly equivalent to killing them (*Ex. Rab.* 1:13; cf. Josephus *Ant.* 4.8.40 §290; *'Abot R. Nat.* 31A). One late rabbi said that God nearly let Hezekiah die young to punish him for not trying to have children sooner (*b. Ber.* 10a). Others claimed that one should remarry and continue siring children in old age (*b. Yebam.* 62b,

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PGM Papyri-Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri, G. Preisendanz et al (2 vols.; 1973–1974)

Nid. Niddah

Inst. Orat. Institutio Oratoria

Bib. Hist. Bibliotheca Historica

Sib. Or. Sibylline Oracles

Ag. Ap. Against Apion

Chaer. De Chaerea et Callirhoe

Spec. Leg. De Specialibus Legibus

Yebam. Yebamot

Pesiq. Pesiqta de Rab Kahana

cf. *confer*, compare

Ant. Antiquities of the Jews

possibly tannaitic tradition). P. E. Harrell cites one Jewish source as saying that procreation was more meritorious than building the temple had been (Harrell, 62). One should not marry on holy days when one could not procreate (*y. Giṭ* 4:5 §2).

Whereas Roman law permitted but did not require divorce for childlessness (Rawson, 32; Gardner, 81; Appian *Civ. W.* 2.14.99; Aulus Gellius *Noc. Att.* 4.3.2), rabbis required husbands to divorce their wives who proved unable to bear children, although they were to allow a trial period of ten years (*m. Yebam.* 6:6). Such divorce was sometimes viewed as a tragic necessity (*Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 22:2), but any form of wasting semen was a terrible sin (*b. Nid.* 13a; some argue that the practice was probably less stringent than this—Baskin). The basic custom of divorce for childlessness undoubtedly predates the rabbis: Pseudo-Philo claims that a wife in Judges 13:2 who could bear no children was on the verge of being divorced (Pseudo-Philo *Bib. Ant.* 42:1). Likewise, the only specific offense Josephus mentions when he notes that he divorced his wife for her behavior is that two of the three children she had borne him had died (Josephus *Life* 76 §426).

1.5. Celibacy in Early Judaism. Marriage was the norm for most Judean and Galilean Jews in the Roman period (*see* Jewish History: Roman Period), but exceptions existed. Under particular circumstances, even some rabbis sometimes allowed prolonged abstinence (cf. Ostmeyer, though they normally recommended divorce if the husband withheld intercourse more than two weeks—*m. Ketub.* 5:6). If they had the permission of their wives, married men sometimes left home to study with a rabbi (e.g., stories about second-century rabbis in *ARN* 6A; *Gen. Rab.* 95 MSV), as did Jesus' disciples in the first century (Mk 1:18–20; 10:28–29). One early second-century teacher reportedly agreed with the rabbinic consensus that procreation was a sacred duty yet personally abstained to allow himself more time to study Torah, much to his colleagues' disdain (*t. Yebam.* 8:7).

Rabbis also sometimes permitted temporary celibacy under extreme circumstances. Because women were often considered unreliable, one second-century rabbi hiding from the Romans allegedly kept his whereabouts a secret from his wife (*b. Šabb.* 33b); while in the ark, Noah had to abstain from intercourse (*y. Ta'an.* 1:6 §8; cf. *Num. Rab.* 14:12). Although they did not approve of the practice in their own time, some rabbis apparently thought biblical prophets might temporarily abstain to secure divine revelation (Vermes, 100–1; *ARN* 2A; 2 §10B).

Some first-century, prerabbinic traditions seem more open to celibacy than the rabbis were (McArthur). Some scholars have argued that circles as diverse as those represented in *1Enoch* and Philo promoted temporary abstinence to secure revelations (Marx), yet this was hardly widespread. Others find in Philo an apparent sexual asceticism, modeled especially by the Therapeutae and dependent on a spiritual marriage with Wisdom (R. A. Horsley). Some other Jewish traditions refer specifically to emergencies: because Pharaoh was killing their sons, the

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Bib. Ant. Biblical Antiquities *of Pseudo-Philo*

Ketub. Ketubbot

ARN (*see 'Abot R. Nat.*)

Israelites in Egypt began abstaining (Pseudo-Philo *Bib. Ant.* 9:2, but cf. 9:5). In one pre-Christian source, Jacob abstained from marriage until he was more than sixty years old so as to avoid marrying a Canaanite *(Jub.* 25:4; cf. *T. Iss.* 2:1–2). Probably mirroring some Greek conceptions, *2 Baruch* misinterprets Genesis so that parental passion and conceiving children resulted from the fall (*2 Bar.* 56:6), but the writer nowhere advocates celibacy.

Many of these exceptions are temporary and emergency concessions, and none of them seems to have been widespread or well-known. More well-known, though still exceptional, would have been the undoubted celibacy of wilderness prophets like Banus (Josephus *Life* 2 §11) and John the Baptist (Mk 1:4–6). In antiquity, however, the most widely cited example of Jewish celibacy was the Essenes (Josephus *Ant.* 18.1.5 §21; Philo *Hypoth.* 11.14–18; Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 5.15.73). Some scholars dispute whether the Essenes were celibate or at least were celibate in all periods (Marx; Hübner), yet various ancient sources converge to indicate that some Essenes were celibate. The evidence suggests both celibate and married Essenes, as Josephus also indicates (Josephus *J.W.* 2.8.2 §§120–21, 13); it is possible that many Essenes who lived in the cities were married (in the *Damascus Document* and *Temple Scroll)*, whereas most of those in the wilderness were celibate (the *Rule of the Community*). Even at Qumran in the wilderness, some women's skeletons indicate that in some period of the community's history, a few women lived there (perhaps a third of the tombs—Elder); some of the texts appear to agree (Baumgarten). But the skeletal evidence also suggests that women were the minority and probably exceptional (perhaps in one period some already married men were permitted to bring their wives). Some Greek thought may have influenced the ideal of celibacy among Qumran's Essenes, but elements of the Israelite prophetic tradition (Thiering) are also possible antecedents.

Mirroring the rise of sexual asceticism in some circles in late antiquity, some early Christians regarded abstention from intercourse as pious (1 Cor 7:5–6; *Acts Jn.* 63; *Acts of Paul* 3.5–8, 12), although others clearly indicated that Christians could marry and bear children (1 Cor 7:27–28; 1 Tim 5:14; *Diogn.* 5), as well as be celibate (Mt 19:10–12; 1 Cor 7:25–40).

1.6. Monogamy. Some peoples on the periphery of the empire reportedly practiced polygamy, including Thracians, Numidians and Moors (Sallust *Iug.* 80.6; Sextus Empiricus *Pyr.* 3.213; cf. Diodorus Siculus *Bib. Hist..* 1.80.3 on Egypt); writers also alleged that some distant peoples merely held children in common (Diodorus Siculus *Bib. Hist..* 2.58.1). Although a few Greek philosophers supported group marriage (Diogenes Laertius *Vit.* 6.2.72; 7.1.131; 8.1.33), Greek culture as a

whole forbade it (e.g., Euripides *Androm.* 465–93, 909). Likewise, Roman law prohibited polygamy, which bore as its minimum penalty *infamia* (Gardner, 92–93; Gaius *Inst.* 1.63; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 11.28.4); Roman wives found the notion of polygamy abhorrent (Aulus Gellius *Noc. Att.* 1.23.8).

Although the practice was not common, early Palestinian Judaism allowed polygamy (*m. Sanh.* 2:4), and it was practiced at least by some wealthy kings (Josephus *J.W.* 1.28.4 §562). The early sage Hillel reportedly complained against polygamy, but mainly because he felt wives could be dangerous, especially in large numbers (*m. Abot* 2:7). Nevertheless, the vast majority of Jewish men and all Jewish women were monogamous, and some conservative sectarians forbade polygamy, including for rulers (CD 4:20–5:2; 11QTemple 56:18–19). More significantly, Jewish people outside Palestine followed the regular Greek practice of avoiding polygamous unions (cf. Frey, cxii).

Other kinds of multiple sexual arrangements were more common than polygamy, although they were not always legal. Greeks did not always approve of holding concubines, but they recognized the practice among other peoples (Athenaeus *Deipn.* 13.556b-57e). Roman law also forbade holding a concubine in addition to a wife (Gardner, 56–57), and early Romans regarded concubines as infamous (Aulus Gellius *Noc. Att.* 4.3.3). Jewish legal experts refer to concubinage in biblical times, but in their literature treat as a contemporary parallel only intercourse with female slaves, which they condemn (Safrai, 748–49).

Nevertheless, many men in this period, especially those of lower social status, acquired concubines (Gardner, 57–58). Their unions lacked legal standing, but custom elevated them above merely temporary affairs (O'Rourke, 182). Concubinage was especially common in the military (see, e.g., *OGIS* 674; Lewis, 141), since soldiers could not legally marry until they had completed their term of military service, a period that lasted more than twenty years. Two decades was a long time to wait, and romances were consequently more readily forgiven (Fabius Maximus 4, in Plutarch *Sayings of Romans, Mor.* 195E-F), though it was better to avoid them (cf. Scipio the Elder 2, in Plutarch *Sayings of Romans, Mor.* 196B). In some military discharge documents from the first century Roman officials grant soldiers the legalization of their prior unions as marriages, adding the stipulation that they have only one woman each (Sherk, 99–100, 154; Gaius *Inst.* 1.57). Similarly, *Pseudo-Phocylides* 181 warns against having intercourse with one's father's concubines (plural).

2. Beginning Marriage.

2.1. Age at Marriage. Greeks and Romans were familiar with other cultures that married women around age fifteen (*Ninus Romance* frag. A-3) and reportedly

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Hypoth. Hypothetica
Nat. Hist. Naturalis Historia
J.W. Jewish Wars
Acts Jn. Acts of John
Iug. Bellum Iugurthinum

Androm. Andromache
Sanh. Sanhedrin
CD Cairo (Genizah text of the) *Damascus Document*/*Rule*
Deipn. Deipnophistae
frag. Fragments

much earlier (Arrian *Ind.* 9.1). In classical Greek culture, Athenian girls usually married younger than did Spartan girls, often before fifteen (Den Boer, 39, 269); the average age, however, was probably late teens (Hesiod *Op.* 698). In the Roman period, a high percentage of Roman girls were married in or by their late teens (Shaw); thus, for example, Quintilian mourns that his wife died after bearing him two sons and before the age of nineteen (pref. 4). Augustus's laws permitted girls to be betrothed as young as the age of ten and married as young as twelve (Gardner, 38; Rawson, 21), and many girls were married by the age of fifteen (Pomeroy 1975, 14; cf. Ovid *Met.* 9.714). In samples with the higher figures (not all run this high), nearly 40 percent of women were married before age fifteen and nearly 75 percent before age nineteen; in one sample 8 percent were married in some sense before age twelve (Gardner, 39). Seventeen or eighteen was a common age of marriage for most upper-class women, though Augustus's legislation did not penalize them for singleness until the age of twenty (Rawson, 22).

Roman boys could not legally marry before fourteen or physical signs of puberty (Gardner, 38), but Roman males were usually older, often twenty-five or older (Saller). Although Greek men could marry by eighteen (*Mantitheus Against Boeotus* 2.12 in Demosthenes, LCL 4:488–89), thirty seems to have been most common (Hesiod *Op.* 695–97). Some scholars have proposed that Greek men tended to be at least a decade older than women because of a shortage of women due to the more frequent abandonment of female infants (see Lewis, 54–55).

Jewish writers and teachers advocated marrying early, partly to propagate one's family name (e.g., *Pseud.-Phoc.* 175–76; *b. Pesaḥ.* 113b) and partly to protect young men from sexual passion (Sir 7:23; *b. Qidd.* 29b; *b. Yebam.* 63ab). Eighteen to twenty was considered an appropriate age for a man's marriage (*m. Abot* 5:21; cf. 1QSa 1:10; *see* Rule of the Congregation). Though men sometimes married later than twenty (e.g., *CIJ* 1:409 §553), many later rabbis complained that men who were twenty or older and still not married were sinning against God (*b. Qidd.* 29b–30a, from the second-century school of Rabbi Ishmael). Women usually married in their teens, such as at thirteen or sixteen, but some were older than twenty (Ilan, 67–69).

2.2. *Potential Marriage Partners.* Many ancient male writers expressed a preference for virgins (Hesiod *Op.* 699). Jewish men usually seem to have preferred virgins (Josephus *Ant.* 4.8.23 §244); priests could marry only virgins or the widows of priests, and the high priest could marry only a virgin (Josephus *Ant.* 3.14.2 §277).

A Codex Alexandrinus
Ind. Adversus Indoctum
LCL Loeb Classical Library
Pseud.-Phoc. Pseudo-Phocylides
1QSa Appendix A, *Messianic Rule*, to 1QS
CIJ Corpus inscriptionum Judaicarum I-II, ed. J. B. Frey ((2 vols.; Rome, 1936–1952)

Contrary to what one might expect, not all men preferred marrying a wealthy woman. That Plutarch warns against wives relying on their dowry, or wealth brought into the marriage, suggests that some must have done so (*Bride* 22, *Mor.* 141AB). Josephus claims that the law forbids marrying a wife on account of money (Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 2.25 §200), though one wonders the degree to which he followed this advice (Josephus *Life* 76 §427). Some men considered a wealthy wife to be worse; if the marriage did not turn out well, her dowry could become a deterrent from being able to divorce her (*Pseud.-Phoc.* 199–200).

Greeks and Romans recognized some days as more auspicious for marriage than others (Apuleius *Met.* 2.12; cf. Plutarch *Quaest. Rom.* 86, *Mor.* 284F), and Roman widows married on a different day of the week than did virgins (Plutarch *Quaest. Rom.* 105, *Mor.* 289A). If later rabbinic passages may reflect more widespread Palestinian Jewish customs in the first century a.d. in this case, Palestinian Jewish virgins were married on the fourth day and widows on the fifth (*m. Ketub.* 1:1; *b. Ketub.* 2a; *y. Ketub.* 1:1 §1; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 26:2).

The ancient Mediterranean world knew nothing of the modern prejudice against interracial marriage, which presupposes a concept of race equally foreign to them (see Snowden, 94–97). But ancients often contemplated the complications of marriage across class lines. Thus a maxim warned against marrying a wife of higher status than oneself (Plutarch *Lib. Educ.* 19, *Mor.* 13F-14A). Likewise, legislators regularly addressed the status of the children of socially mixed marriages. In earlier days, patricians and plebeians could not intermarry (Dionysius of Halicarnassus 11.28.4), though this prohibition was no longer in effect. When both parents were Romans, the child adopted the father's legal status; when neither was Roman, the child adopted the mother's status (Ulpian *Rules* 5.8–9 in Lefkowitz and Fant, 192). Only Roman citizens normally contracted official Roman marriages, but Romans sometimes granted such marriages to Latins and foreigners marrying Romans, out of concern for the status of the children (Gardner, 32). Marriages between free Romans and slaves who had not yet been freed were not legal (Weaver, 149–51).

Jewish legal experts also discussed the suitability of intermarriage among classes, especially among lay Israelites, Levites and priests (*t. Sanh.* 4:7); a few questioned whether children of earlier competing Pharisaic schools should have intermarried (*y. Qidd.* 1:1 §8). Rabbis warned against marrying a daughter of an *am haaretz* (one who ignored the rabbinic understanding of the law) lest one die and one's children be reared badly (*b. Pesaḥ.* 49a, *Bar.*)

But the issue for Jewish interpreters became most serious when it involved intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles. For some teachers, the offspring of pagans would neither live nor be judged in the world to come (*t. Sanh.* 13:2), but marriage between Jews and Gentiles complicated the question. Some rabbis claimed that a child that an Israelite woman bore to a Gentile or a slave was illegitimate (*y. Giṭ.* 1:4 §2). A child conceived in the womb of a proselyte was himself a full Israelite,

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Bar. Baraita

but if his mother converted between his conception and his birth or if his father fulfilled only part of the conversion ritual, his Jewish status was incomplete (*b. Sanh.* 58a; *y. Qidd.* 3:12 §8); the son of Esther and Ahasuerus was thus only half pure (*Esther Rab.* 8:3). This is probably what Paul means in 1 Corinthians 7:14, where he probably implies that children with one believing parent remain within the sphere of the gospel's influence.

That some of the Corinthian Christians may have wished to divorce on the grounds of spiritual incompatibility (1 Cor 7:12–14) may reflect a tradition of Jewish interpretation: one text claims that it is God's will for Israelite men to divorce pagan wives they wrongly married (1 Esdr 9:9); a husband might also divorce his wife for behavior that he regarded as ungodly (Sir 26:1–3; *t. Dem.* 3:9). Under Roman law, children normally went to the father in the case of divorce (Pomeroy 1975, 158, 169).

2.3. Betrothals, Dowries and Other Arrangements. Tannaitic interpreters, probably reflecting broader social custom on family matters, recognized women as persons but in legal matters disposed of their sexuality as chattel (see Wegner, 40–70), as required by traditional Middle Eastern and Greco-Roman customs regarding bride price and dowry.

From the time of Augustus, who desired to replenish especially the aristocracy, Roman law required marriage within two years after betrothal (Dio Cassius *Hist.* 54.16.7). Jewish couples probably normally married a year after their betrothal (*m. Ketub.* 5:2; *m. Ned.* 10:5; Safrai, 757).

Greek custom required a family provide a daughter with a dowry at marriage (Diodorus Siculus *Bib. Hist..* 32.10.2); affluent families often showered her with wealth, but some poor families abandoned infant daughters on trash heaps because they would not be able to provide a dowry (Lewis, 55). The girl's dowry usually corresponded to the degree to which she was considered attractive (Pseudo-Demosthenes *Or.* 59, *Against Neaera* 113). Because of potential conflicts of interest, Roman spouses could not receive gifts from one another or from most in-laws (Plutarch *Quaest. Rom.* 7–8, *Mor.* 265E-266A).

Husbands controlled all the property (Plutarch *Bride* 20, *Mor.* 140–41), and a dowry was a gift from the in-laws—socially expected but not legally required—to help the new husband cover the expenses he was incurring by getting a wife (Gardner, 97). But if a husband divorced his wife, he would have to release her, paying her back her dowry (e.g., *CPJ* 1:236–38 §128), and some contracts required him to add half to it if he had mistreated her in violation of the contract (Lewis, 55). Because the dowry was usually spent by this point, it provided a monetary deterrent against frivolous divorce. Rabbinic law on dowries to a great extent reflects the larger Mediterranean and Middle Eastern legal milieu of which it was a part (Cohen, 348–76; Geller). By preparing to divorce Mary privately rather than

Dem. Demai
CPJ Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum, ed. V. Tcherikover, A. Fulks and M. Stern (3 vols.; Cambridge, MA (1957–1964)

taking her before judges, Joseph may have forfeited his legal right to impound an allegedly unfaithful fiancée's dowry (rabbis said she could lose it for as little as speaking with another man [*m. Ketub.* 7:6]) in order to avoid her humiliation (Mt 1:19).

In Hellenistic Egypt, men and women often contracted the marriage directly with each other (Verner, 36–37). Parents usually arranged Palestinian Jewish marriages through intermediaries (agents; *t. Yebam.* 4:4). Both Roman and Jewish law recognized the use of agents, or intermediary marriage brokers, in betrothals (Cohen, 295–96). Betrothal was legally binding and left the survivor of the man's death a widow (*m. Ketub.* 1:2; *m. Yebam.* 4:10; 6:4). Although a betrothed couple like Joseph and Mary did not live together or have intercourse, their union was as binding as marriage and could thus be dissolved only through death or divorce (*m. Git.* 6:2; *Ketub.* 1:2; *Yebam.* 2:6).

2.4. Weddings. Jewish weddings normally lasted seven days (cf. Tob 11:19; *Jos. and As.* 21:8 in *OTP,* 21:6 in Greek text; *Sipra Behuq. pq.* 5.266.1.7); the fourteen days of Tobit 8:19–20 was apparently exceptional, a celebration due to Sara's deliverance. Many of the closest associates of the bride and groom remained the full seven days (*t. Ber.* 2:10), but extant tradition suggests that blessings would be repeated for those who arrived later in the feast (Safrai, 760). The first night was presumably the most essential, however; if traditional Middle Eastern weddings provide a clue, feasting during the wedding night itself may have been the most important (Eickelman, 174; cf. Mt 25:10–12). Palestinian Jewish wedding parties included the *shoshbin,* apparently an esteemed friend (*m. Sanh.* 3:5; cf. Jn 3:29), though all one's friends would join in the joy of the wedding (1 Macc 9:39). A *shoshbin* of higher status than the groom seems to have been preferred (*b. Yebam.* 63a).

Well-to-do fathers and patrons were known to invite large numbers of people, sometimes whole villages, to celebrations, including a child's wedding (Chariton *Chaer.* 3.2.10; Diodorus Siculus *Bib. Hist..* 16.91.4; 16.92.1; Pliny *Ep.* 10.116); refusal to come, especially after responding positively to an invitation (cf. Mt 22:2–7), constituted an insult. If others thought as highly of the sages' profession as the sages themselves did, their writings testify that some considered it meritorious to show hospitality to sages and their disciples (*Sipre Deut.* 1.10.1); hence it would prove natural to invite a scholar to a wedding (*b. Ketub.* 17b; *Koh. Rab.* 1:3 §1; Jn 2:2). The rabbis assumed the importance of wine for festal celebrations, including in the blessing for sabbath meals (*t. Ber.* 3:8) and at weddings (Safrai, 747). It was customary to have food left over at weddings (*t. Sabb.* 17:4), and one who urged a neighbor to attend his wedding without showing proper hospitality is listed among

Jos. and As. Joseph and Asenath
OTP The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, ed. J. H. Charlesworth
Sipra Sipra (on Leviticus)
Sipre Sipre (on Numbers, on Deuteronomy)

thieves (*t. B. Qam.* 7:8); running out of wine at a wedding was thus a serious problem (Jn 2:3).

The rites of passage that inaugurated most Roman marriages were often less formal than we would expect (O'Rourke, 181). By contrast, Jewish people emphasized joyous celebration at wedding feasts; texts often use weddings to symbolize the greatest joy, in contrast to the epitome of sorrow, grief at a funeral (1 Macc 9:39–41; Josephus *J.W.* 6.5.3 §301). As one must mourn with the bereaved, one was also obligated to celebrate with the couple at a wedding (*y. Ketub.* 1:1 §6). Like funeral processions, bridal processions were so important that later rabbis even interrupted their schools on this account (*ARN* 4 A; 8 §22 B); God's patronage of Adam and Eve's wedding showed the importance of weddings (*ARN* 8 §23 B; *b. B. Bat.* 75a). Rabbis even exempted the wedding party from festal obligations (*b. Sukk.* 25b; *p. Sukk.* 2:5 §1) and many ritual obligations, though only the groom was exempt from the Shema (*m. Ber.* 2:5; *t. Ber.* 2:10).

2.5. Intercourse and Passion. It was customary to consummate one's marriage quickly. As in later Middle Eastern practice (Eickelman, 174), blood on the sheet probably proved the validity of the consummation (Deut 22:15; cf. *y. Ketub.* 1:1 §§7–8), though later rabbis always ruled in favor of women when they claimed exceptional reasons for a hymen not bleeding on the first night (Ilan, 98–99). Mary and Joseph chose to forgo this evidence for the honor of God's Messiah (Mt 1:25).

Musonius Rufus thought that sexual desire was inappropriate in marriage except for purposes of procreation (Ward, 284); some Jewish writers (*Pseud.-Phoc.* 193–94) and second-century Christians echoed the attitude (*Sentius Sextus* 231). Such views were not, however, the prevailing ones in the early empire. Love charms were widespread (Theocritus *The Spell),* especially in the magical papyri (*PGM* XIII.304; XXXVI.69–133, 187–210, 295–311). Such magical love spells were used to secure the attention of persons single (e.g., *PGM* XXXVI.69–160, 187–210, 295–311) or sometimes married (*PDM* LXI.197–216 = *PGM* LXI.39–71; Euripides *Hipp.* 513–16).

Still, even nonphilosophers recognized that the passion of love drowned reason (Publilius Syrus *Publii* 15, 22, 131, 314). Although many people based their desire for marriage on beauty (Babrius *Fables* 32.5–6; Judg 14:3), moralists warned that attraction on merely physical grounds was bound to fade after the beginning of a marriage (Plutarch *Bride* 4, *Mor.* 138F). Women could be said to rule or enslave men through men's passion for them (1 Esdr 4:14–33; Josephus *Ant.* 4.6.7 §133; Sir 47:19; Sophocles *Ant.* 756; cf. Sophocles *Trach.* 488–89; Appian *Civ. W.* 5.1.8–9), though many philosophers warned against such behavior (1 Cor 6:12; Diodorus Siculus *Bib. Hist..* 10.9.4; Philo *Op. Mund.* 59–60 §§165–67). Even a married man who failed to deny his wife anything was but a "slave" (insultingly, in Cicero *Parad.* 36; Diodorus Siculus *Bib. Hist..* 32.10.9; Philo *Hypoth.* 11.16–17).

Ancient literature regularly described the passion of love as burning (Apollonius of Rhodes *Arg.* 3.774; Virgil *Aen.* 4.2, 23, 54, 66, 68; *Ecl.* 8.83; Lucan *Civ. W.* 10.71; Plutarch *Dialogue on Love* 16, *Mor.* 759B), including in romance novels (Longus *Daphn. Chl.* 2.7; 3.10; Achilles Tatius *Leuc.* 1.5.5–6; 1.11.3; Chariton *Chaer.* 1.1.8; 2.3.8; Apuleius *Met.* 2.5, 7; 5.23; *Alexandrian Erotic Fragment* col. 1) and Jewish texts (Sir 9:8; *T. Jos.* 2:2); Paul adopts the same image for passion (1 Cor 7:9). Such texts sometimes describe romantic passion as wounds (Chariton *Chaer.* 1.1.7) or sickness (Longus *Daphn. Chl.* 1.32; Propertius *Eleg.* 2.1.57–58; Song 2:5; *b. Sanh.* 75a; *y. 'Abod. Zar.* 2:2 §3), sometimes from the arrows, often flaming arrows, of Cupid or Eros (Apollonius of Rhodes *Arg.* 3.287; Virgil *Aen.* 4.69; Ovid *Met.* 1.453–65; Propertius *Eleg.* 2.12.9; 2.13.1–2; Longus *Daphn. Chl.* 1.7; 2.6; Achilles Tatius *Leuc.* 1.17.1; 4.6.1). But such descriptions frequently apply to unmarried passions; some texts also apply them to homoerotic desire (Sextus Empiricus *Pyr.* 3.199). Some Gentiles also excused their passion as uncontrollable (e.g., Sophocles *Trach.* 441–48; Herodian *Hist.* 5.6.2) and believed people could die if their passions remained unfulfilled (Parthenius *L.R.* 16.1; 17.2; see other details in Keener 1999, 186–87, on Mt 5:28).

Greek legend claimed that the seer Teiresias had been both male and female and that he testified that women enjoy intercourse ten times as much as men do (e.g., Hesiod *The Melampodia* 3). Nevertheless, one might recognize that a virgin might not find intercourse pleasurable at first, until she continued the practice with her husband for some time (Apuleius *Met.* 5.4); also, a wife should not make advances to her husband (Plutarch *Bride* 18, *Mor.* 140CD). Greek men preferred for their wives to submit to intercourse without signs of reluctance (Artemidorus *Oneir.* 1.78); arguments were known to occur in the bedchamber, though Plutarch advises both husbands and wives against this (Plutarch *Bride* 39, *Mor.* 143E).

Among the husband's duties demanded by Jewish legal scholars, the husband must provide his wife with intercourse (*Sipre Deut.* 231.2.1–2). Classical Athenian law urged husbands to provide intercourse with their wives three times a month, for procreation (Pomeroy 1975, 87). Jewish scholars were more emphatic, however: if a husband abstained from intercourse with his wife for more than one or two weeks, the Pharisees felt that he was obligated to grant her a divorce (*m. Ketub.* 5:6). Many believed that women were more susceptible to passion than were men (Euripides *Androm.* 218–21).

Ancient Mediterranean writers celebrated married love (Dixon, 2–3; Rawson, 26). Wives should love their husbands (e.g., *IG* 14 cited in G. H. R. Horsley 4:35 §10; Dio Chrysostom frag. in LCL, 5:348–49); in the late republic and early empire willingness to die with one's husband grew as an ideal (Dixon, 3; Petronius *Sat.* 111). Husbands should also love their wives (Homer *Il.* 9.341–42; Cato collection of

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B Codex Vaticanus
Trach. Trachiniae
Op. Mund. De Opificio Mundi

Daphn. Chl. Daphnis and Chloe
T. Jos. Testament of Joseph
Oneir. Oneirocriticon

distichs 20; *Pseud.-Phoc.* 195; *Grk. Anth.* 7.340), which involves more than merely sexual union (as in Athenaeus *Deipn.* 13.557E); the first and most critical family union is between husband and wife (Cicero *De Offic.* 1.17.54). Jewish epitaphs also emphasize married love (Frey, cxvi; *CIJ* 1:118 §166; 1:137 §195). One Diaspora Jewish source attributes domestic disturbances to demonic instigation (*T. Sol.* 18:15).

3. Gender Roles in Marriage.

3.1. Greco-Roman Household Codes. Aristotle established household codes to advise aristocratic men how to rule their wives, children and slaves (see Balch 1981, 1988). Although there were differences (e.g., Aristotle *Pol.* 1.1.2, 1252a), these codes concerning household management could be linked with the broader category of advice on city management, as in the context in Aristotle (Aristotle *Pol.* 1.2.1, 1253b) and some other works (Lührmann; Lycurgus 21 in Plutarch *Sayings of Spartans, Mor.* 228CD). Aristotle and others thought that order in the household would produce order in society.

Household codes probably also affected the formulation of some official laws in terms of relationships among children, wives and slaves (Gaius *Inst.* 1.48–51, 108–19). Josephus's apologetic included an emphasis on biblical law's great virtues (Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 2.291–96), and it is not surprising that Jewish writers with Greek or Hellenized audiences stressed such codes as a way of identifying Judaism with the prevailing values of the dominant culture (see Balch 1988, 28–31). Paul adapts the content of the codes but retains their structure (Eph 5:21–6:9; Col 3:18–4:1), possibly to help Christians witness within their culture (1 Cor 9:19–23; Tit 2:5, 8).

Even outside the context of such household codes, it was understood that wives should subject themselves to their husbands and husbands should tenderly rule their wives the way the soul rules the body (Plutarch *Bride* 33, *Mor.* 142E).

3.2. Relative Rank of Gentile Husbands and Wives. In classical Athens (Verner, 30–33) and traditional Roman families (Verner, 33–34), the husband had authority over the household. Under the traditional Roman *manus* marriage, marriage freed a bride from her father's authority (*patria potestas*) to bring her under her husband's authority (Verner, 33). One's dependents thus included both those "in marital submission" (*in manu*) and servants (*in mancipio,* Gaius *Inst.* 1.49). But by the period of the early empire most marriages abandoned this arrangement, officially leaving the bride under her father's household. Because she was living with her husband rather than her father, this arrangement increased the wife's freedom in practice; aristocratic wives could accumulate wealth and establish some independence from their husbands (Verner, 39). Some ideals, however, endured over time.

Many ancient writers attributed women's appropriate inferiority of rank in marriage and society to an inferiority inherent in nature (e.g., Aristotle *Eth. Nic.*

Grk. Anth. Greek Anthology
Pol. Politica
Eth. Nic. Ethica Nicomachea

8.12.7, 1162a; *Pol.* 1.2.12, 1254b; Aelian *De Nat. Anim.* 11.26). Many viewed women as weaker emotionally (Euripides *Med.* 928; Virgil *Aen.* 4.569–70) or as unfit for battle (Virgil *Aen.* 9.617; 11.734; Livy *Hist.* 25.36.9; Aulus Gellius *Noc. Att.* 17.21.33; Phaedrus *Fables* 4.17.6) or the law court (*P.Oxy.* 261). Writers did report the exploits of women, but generally as unusual. A few men viewed women as a curse to men (Hesiod *Theog.* 570–612; Euripides *Or.* 605–6); a woman might count her own life less valuable than those of male warriors (Euripides *Iph. Aul.* 1393–94). Women's moral weaknesses were also proverbial (e.g., Sir 42:12–14; Hesiod *Theog.* 601–2; *Op.* 375; Publilius Syrus *Publii* 20, 365, 376; Juvenal *Sat.* 6.242–43; Babrius *Fables* 22.13–15; Avianus *Fables* 15–16; in contemporary Middle Eastern culture, Delaney, 41; Eickelman, 205–6, 243), and one woman's behavior could be held to reflect badly on her gender (Homer *Odys.* 11.432–34). Thus Plutarch, a more progressive voice by the standards of his male aristocratic contemporaries, urges a young husband to attend to his bride's learning (*Bride* 48, *Mor.* 145C), for if left to themselves without a husband's input, women produce only base passions and folly (*Bride* 48, *Mor.* 145D-E).

The classical Greek ideal was that women should be shy and retiring, easily injured by hearing foul language (Demosthenes *Meid.* 79) or being insulted (*hubridzōn,* Demosthenes *Aristoc.* 141). In common classical Athenian opinion, a woman's virtue includes being an obedient and dutiful housewife (Meno in Plato *Meno* 71). Well-to-do men slept with high-class prostitutes for pleasure, concubines for bodily health and wives to bear children and rule domestic matters (Pseudo-Demosthenes *Orat.* 59, *Neaer.* 122). A virtuous wife sought to perform whatever her husband wished (Pseudo-Melissa, *Letter to Kleareta* in Malherbe, 83). Traditional Roman ideals also presented women as being submissive and subservient (Hallett, 241–42). Wives should obey their husbands (e.g., Marcus Aurelius *Med.* 1.17.7; Artemidorus *Oneir.* 1.24; Apuleius *Met.* 5.5), including submission in all social and religious matters (Plutarch *Bride* 19, *Mor.* 140D). Good wives prefer such submission to the freedom created by widowhood (Livy *Hist.* 34.7.12).

Thus when women acted boldly, they could be said to be acting like men (Apuleius *Met.* 5.22); some male writers condemned this behavior as a lack of modesty (e.g., Homer *Odys.* 19.91; Valerius Maximus *Fact. ac Dict.* 8.3; Aulus Gellius *Noc. Att.* 10.6). Various first-century writers satirized women who exercised too much power, especially over their husbands (Petronius *Sat.* 37; frag. 6; Juvenal *Sat.* 4.30–37; 6.219–24, 246–305, 474–85). Such writers, committed to the traditional task of preserving the social order (in earlier times, e.g., Isocrates *Ad Nic.* 55, *Or.* 3.38) and perhaps their own role in it, were resisting changes taking

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Nat. De Rerum Natura
Med. Meditations
P.Oxy. The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt, et al. (London, 1898-)
Odys. Odyssey
Orat. Orations
Neaer. In Neaeram

place in women's roles in their society (see Reekmans). In so doing, they apparently perpetuated earlier complaints that Roman women were not submissive enough (Cato the Elder 3 in Plutarch *Sayings of Romans, Mor.* 198D). Socialization undoubtedly reaffirmed such gender roles even as it does in the same region today, rewarding quiet and submissive behavior on the part of women (Giovannini, 67).

Daily practice was never quite what the ideals may have prescribed. Thus the emperor Augustus, promoting traditional Roman values, told men to command their wives as they wished, especially with regard to modest dress and behavior. But it was widely known that Augustus did not admonish the empress Livia in this manner (Dio Cassius *Hist.* 54.16.4–5). Livia was an exception in some respects; after Augustus's death she shared with the new emperor Tiberius in honoring her deceased husband as if she shared in power (*autarchousa,* Dio Cassius *Hist.* 56.47.1); she also controlled a massive estate (Treggiari). Even Philo exempted Livia from his usual standards for gender, albeit by noting that she had become virtually masculine in her wisdom (Philo *Leg. Gai.* 320). Yet there were limits to her power; even Livia's intercession did not always persuade Augustus to act against tradition (Sherk, 7). Augustus used Livia for propaganda while maintaining a conservative social policy (Flory).

Britons might have women authority figures like Boudicca (Tacitus *Ann.* 14.31–37); pre-Roman Alexandria hosted Macedonian women authority figures of the Ptolemaic dynasty, including the most famous Cleopatra. To a lesser extent, Roman women also held higher positions than did classical Greek women (e.g., Lefkowitz and Fant, 244–47), and the Roman aristocracy produced powerful women like Livia, Messalina and both first-century Agrippinas (Balsdon). But the degree to which the authority of such public figures affected average marriages remains unclear.

Nevertheless, other indications further render doubtful the assumption that classical ideals always represented social reality. Even the Homeric portrait of Penelope's relationship with Odysseus suggests some degree of mutual respect (Arthur, 15); likewise, some suggest that men in classical Athens felt less secure in their dominance than some texts would suggest (Gould, 52–57). In the first-century Roman world, women had advanced considerably both economically and socially, although a conservative backlash apparently reversed this in early second century a.d. (see Boatwright). The old *manus* marriage largely faded from use, and husbands' authority over their wives was roughly the same as their authority over male children; further, not all husbands would have abused their authority in the ways the laws could have permitted (Gardner, 5). In the period of the early empire some writers also introduced ideals of greater feminine freedom (Hallett, 244); some writers, such as Pliny, proved more favorable toward women than did others (Dobson).

Nevertheless, funerary inscriptions of the imperial period largely commemorate women in their roles as wives, mothers and daughters, the primary roles through

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Tiberius (The Twelve Caesars)
Leg. Gai. Legatio ad Gaium

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which the predominantly male elite of society related to them (Kleiner; cf., e.g., *CIL* 6.10230). Even when Plutarch, a relatively progressive writer, advocated harmonious consent and mutual agreement in marriage, he expected the husband to lead (Plutarch *Bride* 11, *Mor.* 139CD); even writers like Plutarch and Roman Stoics who advocated theoretical equality of the sexes usually encouraged wifely subordination in practice (Balch 1981, 143–49). Women were not always dramatically subordinate; this does not, however, imply that Greco-Roman antiquity shared modern Western egalitarian ideals.

Ancient writers were also aware of geographical variations in marital gender roles. ==Women exercised more freedom in the western than the eastern Mediterranean (see, e.g., Salles), and Greeks recognized that historically Roman women were more influential than were Greek women (Appian *Rom.Hist.* 3.11.1).== Even in Sparta women ran the city while the men were away, much to Aristotle's disdain (Aristotle *Pol.* 2.6.7, 1269b; though cf. Gorgo 5 and anonymous 22 in Plutarch *Sayings of Spartan Women, Mor.* 240E, 242B). Sparta's long-term cultural influence was limited; the Greek cultural ideals most recited in the Hellenistic eastern Mediterranean stemmed especially from Athens. Yet Greeks were aware of other customs elsewhere; some they considered savagely repressive toward women, such as bride burning in India (Diodorus Siculus *Bib. Hist..* 17.91.3). But other cases struck the Greeks as odd or inappropriate because they permitted wives undue freedom.

In contrast to the Greeks, Ligurian women worked the fields alongside their husbands because their soil was poor (Diodorus Siculus *Bib. Hist.* 4.20). Making a living at distaff and loom was difficult (Terence *And.* 73–74), but women often worked in rural areas (Longus *Daphn. Chl.* 3.25; *P. Fay.* 91; Scheidel). A writer could criticize the king of old Persia for ruling all his subjects except the one he ought to have ruled most of all, his wife (Plutarch *Uneducated Ruler* 2, *Mor.* 780C). ==Greeks were so amazed by the greater relative freedom among Egyptian women that they portrayed Egyptian women as ruling *(kyrieuein)* their husbands and Egyptian marriage contracts as stipulating that men obey their wives in all things (*peitharchēsein … hapanta,* Diodorus Siculus *Bib. Hist..* 1.27.2). This was an exaggeration but underlines the greater freedom of Egyptian women in contrast to that of Greek women.==

But long before the Roman period, Greek culture had pervaded the eastern Mediterranean, including urban Egypt (i.e., Alexandria and the Hellenistic elite in Egypt's nomes). Thus although women in general in Roman Egypt wielded considerably greater economic power than they did in classical Athens (Pomeroy 1981), first- and second-century b.c. marriage contracts from Egypt list among requirements for wives submission to their husbands, not leaving the home without their permission, and so forth (Verner, 38, 64–65; Lewis, 55). Although more such documents were preserved in Egypt, however, the wives' promise to obey their husbands was hardly limited to Egypt.

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i.e. *id est*, that is

3.3. Gender Roles in Palestinian and Geographically Related Jewish Traditions. Views on gender roles varied significantly in early Jewish sources (see van der Horst 1993). Philo and Josephus provide examples of Jewish people writing for Hellenistic-Roman or Hellenized audiences. Philo believes that Moses' law enjoins wives to serve and obey their husbands (Philo *Hypoth.* 7.3); child rearing necessarily also subordinates wives to their husbands (Philo *Op. Mund.* 167). That such subservience would, he believed, be good for women undoubtedly stems from his conviction that women are less rational than men (Philo *Omn. Prob. Lib.* 18 §117); his use of feminine imagery connotes women's inferiority by nature (see most extensively Baer), which reflects a broader pattern of Greco-Roman thought. The difficulties of bearing and rearing children also necessarily subject the wife in obedience to her husband (Philo *Op. Mund.* 60 §167). Essenes do not marry, he noted, because women are selfish and devote all their energy to leading their husbands into error (Philo *Hypoth.* 11.14–17).

Josephus also views women as inferior in moral character to men (Josephus *Ant.* 4.8.15 §219). Because women are inferior in all things, the law prescribes the husband's authority and wife's submission for the wife's own good (Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 2.25 §§200–201); thus Josephus believed that God punished both Adam and Herod Antipas for being so weak as to have heeded their wives (Josephus *Ant.* 1.1.4 §49; 18.7.2 §255; cf. *Adam and Eve* 26:2). Josephus may have felt personal existential reasons for his opinions; although he later found a wealthy Jewish woman he believed to be of nobler character than most other women (Josephus *Life* 76 §427), he divorced another wife, displeased with her behavior (Josephus *Life* 76 §426). Yet he was hardly alone in his opinions; negative views of women predominate in Sirach (e.g., Sir 42:13) and probably the *Testament of Job* (Garrett; but cf. van der Horst 1986), though positive pictures appear in Tobit (Sara; Edna; Anna) and Pseudo-Philo (van der Horst 1989). Samaritan marriage contracts require full obedience from the wife (Bowman, 311).

The rabbis also assume that husbands rule their wives (*Sipra Qed.* par. 1.195.2.2; cf. Graetz; 4Q416 frag. 2 iv 2) and complain that a man ruled by his wife has no life (*b. Beṣa* 32b, *Bar.)* But these sources easily appear more nuanced than Josephus or Philo. The husband had to respect his wife (Safrai, 763–64, citing *b. Yebam.* 62b, *Bar.;* cf. Montefiore and Loewe, 507–15). Second-century rabbis were concerned for women's legal, especially property, rights (see Langer). Likewise, nonliterary evidence suggests the participation of Diaspora Jewish women in community life (Kraemer).

Some sources may reflect broader ancient Mediterranean mistrust of women's moral character. A rash or impudent *(thrasus)* woman shamed her father and husband and invited their loathing (Sir 22:5), and various sources warn about the talkative wife (*Syr. Men. Sent.* 118–21; *Gen. Rab.* 45:5; 80:5). Such women will falsely accuse their husbands (*Sent. Syr. Men.* 336–39). But a husband should appreciate a good wife (Sir 7:19; 26:1–4).

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par. De Parasito

3.4. Respective Duties of Husband and Wife. Classical Athenian culture idealized women's seclusion to the domestic sphere, though it was never fully realized in practice; probably partly to retain the wife's exclusive allegiance to her husband, much of the Greek-speaking eastern Mediterranean of the early empire, however, was less restrictive (Keener 1992, 22–24). Nevertheless, most married women outside the urban elite covered their heads to prevent the lust of males other than their husbands (Keener 1992, 28–30).

The Stoic Hierocles also expects the husband to rule external affairs while the matron rules domestic affairs, but in contrast to many others, he refuses to observe this distinction rigidly (Hierocles *On Duties* Household Management, in Malherbe, 97–98).

Early Palestinian Judaism did not restrict women's movement the way classical Greek culture did (see *m. Ketub.* 1:10; 9:4); it also provided women some rights not common in broader Mediterranean culture (see Verner, 45). Nevertheless, the wife's standard duties are largely domestic: grinding wheat, cooking, washing, nursing and sewing (*m. Ketub.* 5:5; late first-century adaptations of these duties suggest that the original list was accepted among first-century Pharisees).

But Jewish law also required husbands to provide their wives with expected comforts (Goodman, 36; cf. *Adam and Eve* 2:1). This custom contrasts starkly with Roman law, which provided the wife no claim to maintenance (Gardner, 68). Some divisions of labor may also have been less strict in Galilean village life, especially around harvest time. In southern Lebanon, even today peasant men and women often share interchangeable roles (see Eickelman, 194).

4. Summary.

Betrothal and marriage were commercial and legal as well as romantic matters. Some Gentiles advocated singleness, and a few advocated celibacy; some Jews also advocated celibate singleness. But the Roman world emphasized marriage and the bearing of children, and many Jewish teachers took this emphasis further. Roman laws expected sensitivity to class and citizenship issues in marriage. Greeks, Romans and the vast majority of Jews were officially monogamous. Husbands were expected to rule their homes, though wives could exercise considerable control over domestic matters. Although Palestinian Jewish customs differed in many respects from those of Greece and Rome, they also share much in common with their broader Mediterranean milieu, and Diaspora Jewish customs reflected that milieu even more closely.

See also Adultery, Divorce; Family and Household; Women in Greco-Roman World and Judaism.

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ALGHJ Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
SBLSBS SBL Sources for Biblical Study
SBLMS SBL Monograph Series
AAA American Anthropological Association
MBCB Mnemosyne: Bibliotheca Classica Batava

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C. S. Keener[1]

CRINT Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad novum testamentum

TDGR Translated Documents of Greece and Rome, ed. R. K. Sherk

SBLDS SBL Dissertation Series

[1]Porter, S. E., & Evans, C. A. (2000). *Dictionary of New Testament background : A compendium of contemporary biblical scholarship* (electronic ed.). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.