

**MARRIAGE, HONOUR AND RESPONSIBILITY:
ISLAMIC AND LOCAL MODELS IN THE
MEDITERRANEAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST¹**

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Unlike in some other parts of the world, in the Islamic Middle East marriage is an indigenous concept and institution of great importance, whose organizational potential is often explicitly recognized by Muslims. Although it is based on the Islamic marriage contract formally concluded only between the bride and groom, many other people, men and women, are clearly involved in bringing it about and interested in the consequences. An examination of the nature of the contract reveals that marriage legitimates sexual relations and establishes the rights and duties of parents and children. If we go further, however, we are drawn into the wider issue of men's control of the sexual and reproductive capacities of women.

A central problem for any family is the divided and changing loyalties of a daughter, once she is married and raising sons for her husband's family. Here, an understanding not only of marital ties but also of romantic liaisons, illicit unions and illegitimacy, turns on the rights and responsibilities a woman's own closest agnatic kin have towards her, and the extent to which these are transferred to her husband at marriage. The issue of male control of women before and after marriage (relations of reproduction) leads directly to questions of economic and political organization (relations of production).

¹ This paper has undergone a number of transformations, and some of the ideas have been expressed in some of our earlier publications, noted below. The first version of the paper was presented at a seminar on close kin marriage at the London School of Economics in 1976, and the penultimate version at the Cambridge symposium in January 1988. We are grateful for helpful comments from many individuals, received on these and other occasions. In particular, we appreciate the comments on and use made of the 1988 version by Holy (1989); the authors had the opportunity to comment on an earlier draft of his book, and are substantially in agreement with his arguments.

The idiom in which these issues are discussed throughout the Middle East is that of honour and shame, whose primary and constant referents are gender and sexual differentiation. Honour and shame constitute an ideology of control that embraces relations of both production and reproduction: it applies to the control of all resources, including women.

As Pitt-Rivers has shown (1977: 1-17), the ideology of control is so structured that the outsider can distinguish two quite opposed modes of thought which meet and are merged in the actor's notions of prestige or honour. In one, 'honour' is constructed in a competitive sense: this mode of thought is relevant to this-worldly relations and is based on a recognition of inequality. In the other mode, altruism and generosity are central, and honour is constructed in a religious sense, where relations are based on an ideal of equality, seen ultimately as equality before God. In this system, no relationship is ever articulated exclusively in one mode or the other; the same linguistic idioms and conceptual framework are used for both aspects of every relationship. The ideology is effective and compelling because it appears to resolve the fundamental contradiction between ideals of social equality, rooted in absolute religious precepts, and strategic considerations which refer to, explain and contribute to the social inequality inherent in the control and exploitation of resources. Both passivity and competitiveness, equality and inequality, can be explained and justified. The fascinating sleight of mind this involves has been documented by a number of authors.²

Marriage, in one perspective, is an aspect of relations between men, and so it cannot be isolated from the ideology of honour which refers to those relations; and must be examined in the wider contexts of economic and political organization and of symbolism and ritual. Similarly, marriage as an aspect of male-female relations ramifies in the Middle East to affect a very wide range of social phenomena.

Such a breadth of focus has escaped much of the literature on marriage in the Middle East, particularly on patrilineal parallel cousin (FBS/FBD) marriage - a topic which was among the first to be addressed by anthropologists of the Middle East but which, because it was not amenable to explanation in terms of fashionable theories of alliance or descent, consistently met with a limited and partial

² Classic statements for the Mediterranean world include Campbell (1964) and Peristiany (1965); several studies of the Islamic Middle East in the last decade or so involve similar analyses of competing discourses, most recently for example Abu Lughod (1986); Gilmore (1987); and the Josephs (1987).

treatment.

A feature often reported of Arab rural communities is that a man has the right of first refusal in the marriage of his FBD, and the right to compensation if she is married at a distance; the right often becomes a *duty* if the girl is wanted by no other man. Put another way, the first claim on the hand of a marriageable girl is held by her nearest male agnate beyond the bounds prescribed by the incest rules. Whoever this man is in terms of genealogical distance, he falls in the Arabic category of *ibn 'amm*; the closest such agnate would be the eldest son of the father's eldest brother. More distant cousins have secondary rights, but the bounds up to which they are recognized vary.

This is not the place for a complete review of the now extensive literature on the FBD marriage 'problem' – although an examination of the kinds of explanation that have been offered for this 'form' of marriage reveals the character of the main approaches to marriage in the Middle East, as well as some basic empirical and theoretical weaknesses which derive from Orientalist biases. We shall confine ourselves to outlining some of the underlying issues which most often escape notice.

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One of the main problems with the literature on marriage in the Middle East is a confusion based on the unspoken assumption that the customs and culture of Arabs, particularly nomads or villagers in the Eastern Mediterranean area, are prototypical of all the Islamic Middle East. Among the misconceptions that have prevailed is a failure to note that FBD marriage and non-exogamous lineages are widespread throughout the non-Arab Islamic world: for example, among Berbers, Fulani, Hausa, Turks, Kurds, Iranians, Afghans, Pakistanis, collectively far outnumbering Arabs in terms of population. There is indeed a common confusion of 'Arab' with 'Islamic', and a presumption that the 'Arab model' is valid over at least the rest of the Islamic Middle East – which in many crucial respects (such as marriage, honour and responsibility) it is not.

Naturally the worst offenders are writers with no personal expertise in the area. Thus Lucy Mair, in her textbook on *Marriage*, would seem to have had difficulty in overcoming an Africa-centred view of lineages as essentially exogamous units, writing: 'an important exception to the rule of lineage exogamy is provided by a number of Arab tribes, and by some other nomadic herdsmen who are organized in a similar way' (1971: 24). She then briefly

summarizes material from Cohen's *Arab Border Villages* (1965), Cunnison's *Baggara Arabs* (1966) and Barth's *Nomads of South Persia* (1961). Later, in the section of her book on cross-cousin marriage, she reduces this range of exceptions to simply the Arabs: 'In a lineage system some cousins will be lineage mates and so debarred from marrying (unless they are Arabs, as the previous chapter indicated)' (Mair 1971: 36).³

Schneider (1971), Davis (1977), Pitt-Rivers (1977) and Gilmore (1987), while trying to show the similarities between Christian cultures of the northern Mediterranean (with which they are familiar) and Muslim cultures of North Africa and the Middle East, recognize certain differences on the lines of honour and shame, but fail to see the similarities in this respect between Southern Europe and Islamic cultures of the Northern Tier, both differing crucially from Arab and North African cultures, as we shall show.

These misconceptions are not, however, confined to writers unfamiliar with the Middle East. Certain Middle Eastern specialists have attempted to generalize about marriage, honour and responsibility without recognizing any differences between Arabs and non-Arabs.⁴ Some experts on Arab society have even committed the same solecism as Mair, seeming to class all Middle Easterners as Arabs.⁵

If FBD marriage is not merely a feature of Arab culture, there is also a tendency to forget that the geographical-cultural boundary within which it is permitted (though not necessarily prescribed or preferred), and where lineages are non-exogamous, does not coincide with the bounds of Islam: *exogamous* lineage organization is found among certain Muslim peoples of North Africa (some Somali), the Caucasus and Central Asia. Similarly, FBD marriage is preferred among numerous non-Muslim peoples, including Zoroastrians, Jews in Europe and the Middle East, Balinese in South East Asia, Tswana in Southern Africa. Moreover, there is no recommendation to FBD marriage in either the Koran or the Traditions.

This last point prompts a comment on the origins of the non-exogamous lineage. Many contributors to the debate have sought the

³ Other offenders include Pitt-Rivers (1977: 72, 162f.) and Goody (1976: 15). Patai (1969: 407-9) lists other examples of the neglect of non-exogamous lineage organization in anthropological textbooks.

⁴ For example Antoun (1968); Schneider (1971); Pierce (1971: 50f.); Keyser (1974: 293-309); Black-Michaud (1975: 218-28); Patai (1969; 1965); Peters (1980: 158); Dorsky (1986: 112), retailing Bybee (1978: 65-65).

⁵ E.g. Peters (1976: 27); McCabe (1983: 65).

origins of FBD marriage in pre-Islamic Arabia, and in the early historic cultures of the Mediterranean area.⁶ The case has also been made, however, for a separate development, at least in the Iranian area, from Zoroastrianism, whose sacred texts have been interpreted as enjoining marriage with sister, mother or daughter. Present-day Parsees and various scholars of Zoroastrian religion and culture have denied this interpretation, but other experts are persuaded by the evidence that such close-kin unions were actually practised, at least by members of the upper strata of Zoroastrian society. In present-day Iran, there is a strong preference for marriage with cousins among both Muslims and Zoroastrians, but the four types of cousin are not noticeably distinguished; this, Spooner (1968) suggests, may be 'simply the cognatic society's adaptation of the practice of the socially and politically superior Arabs'. Islam, that is, made the Iranians *widen* their exogamous limits in order to meet Islamic incest prohibitions.⁷

Interestingly, the opposite process would seem to have affected the Turkic peoples, who were organized in exogamous lineages before contact with Islam. The Turks, passing early in the present millennium into Anatolia, the Iranian sphere and the Arab world, abandoned these exogamous limits; and so too, more recently, have the Türkmen and Uzbek peoples of southern Central Asia, and some of the Turkic peoples of the Caucasus. Other Central Asian Turkic peoples, such as Kazakh, Kirghiz, Kalmuk, retained their exogamous lineage organization long after the adoption of Islam, at least until the advent of the Russians. There is a problem, however, over the nature of Turkic exogamy. Sources in recent centuries, mostly Russian, tell of what must be classed as exogamous patrilineal kindreds (or 'sliding lineages', as Elizabeth Bacon called them) of varying depth: 7 and 10 generations are the most commonly quoted. In recent times, they have shrunk to 3-4 generations, or as far as a common ancestor is remembered, and this shrinkage is attributed to Islam. It could well be associated, however, with the advent of the Russians, who, unlike Muslims, had the Orthodox concept of an exogamous kindred. Possibly the Russians are responsible not only for narrowing the exogamous range, but also for slanting the ethnographic data to conform with their own models. A case could be made for the *local descent group* (with the figures of 7 or 10 generations depth simply as a 'guideline') as the exogamous unit in Central Asia. Similarly, it may be that Turks in Anatolia abandoned exogamous lineages (or

⁶ For example, Chelhod (1965: 113-173); Tillion (1983: 96); Pitt-Rivers (1977).

⁷ See also Luzbetak (1961); Fischer (1978: 211).

kindreds) not only as a result of conversion to Islam, but partly in response to contact with Mediterranean Christianity. Anatolian Turks, like Iranians, often express a preference for marriage with all types of cousins; in many cases, the FBD is the least favoured in practice (see below); in some cases, particularly among recent immigrants from the Caucasus, cousin marriage is disapproved – see for example Magnarella (1974).

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FBD marriage, then, is neither an 'Islamic', nor an 'Arab' institution. There is considerable debate, besides, on the degree to which it is an 'institution' at all in the Middle East. Thus, in normative terms, a *prescriptive right* (or duty) to marry the FBD is reported, as we have seen, among both Arab and non-Arab Middle Eastern peoples as diverse and distant as Berbers and Kurds,⁸ but in many communities in the area, only a *generalized preference* is expressed, while in many others no preference is expressed at all.

The *rate* at which FBD marriage is practised varies considerably, both within and between communities, and these variations have been analysed and related to factors such as demography, economic class, property, size of descent group, religious status, and so on.⁹ But given the variation in the normative expression of the preference, statistical tabulations and comparisons of rates of FBD marriage seem bound to mislead. Many of the statistical comparisons are vague, however, about what is counted as a marriage choice. Some count 'marriages' made by members of a population, both male and female, but fail to double-count those involving both a man and a woman of the population. Some fail to distinguish first from subsequent marriages: the obligation for FBD marriage usually applies only to men's first marriages. Some fail to allow for polygyny, counting all marriages of the men, where a man may be obliged to marry only

⁸ Tuareg Muslims in the Sahara are reported to accord the same right to the closest matrilineal cousin.

⁹ For example, Barth (1954) contrasts rates of FBD marriage as between tribal (high) and feudal (low) Kurdish villages. Marx (1967) contrasts Bedouin and peasant marriages in the Negev, but shows how, if demography is taken into account, the rates are the same. Peters (1963), contrasts the Learned Families and the rest in a Shi'a village in Lebanon, showing the marriage patterns of each class to be related to different property interests. Barclay (1964), Cuisenier (1962), Rosenfeld (1976), and others have shown how larger established lineages have higher rates of FBD marriage and marriage within the lineage, while new and up-and-coming lineages favour exogamous links for their potential as political alliances.

one FBD, or indeed may be prohibited from marrying two where they are sisters. Some studies attempt to show change, or lack of change, in the rate of cousin marriage by comparing marriages of different generations, but fail to note that recent generations are likely to have contracted only first marriages, and hence a higher proportion of cousins than earlier generations, whose total marital histories will be recorded.

Thus, it would seem futile to compare rates in those communities where there is a *prescriptive right* to marry the FBD, with those where only a *generalized preference* is expressed but such marriages occur either with considerable frequency, as among Marri Baluch, or rarely, as among most Turkic groups.¹⁰ Further, some writers maintain (and others assume) that the right or preference applies only to first cousins, but this seems rarely if ever the case, so tabulation of only first FBD marriages is meaningless culturally.¹¹ Equally, the category of 'FBD marriage' becomes artificial in cases where no preference for it is expressed at all, whether it is in fact statistically fairly frequent, as among Durrani Pathans of northern Afghanistan, or extremely rare, as among Swat Pathans.¹²

Some students of FBD marriage, ignoring the frequency with which it is practised, have focused simply on 'Arab' ideologies of kinship and marriage, namely the core features of patrilineal descent, permitted polygyny, and preferential close kin marriage. Thus Murphy and Kasdan (1959; 1967) attempted to show the logical implications of a 'system' of parallel cousin marriage. They ignored the fact that patrilineal descent *groups* and actual marriage patterns are in no way explicable simply by reference to these norms, and they did not consider the possibility that other rules and norms, not to mention a wide range of external variables, may also be involved.¹³

Other authors, however, criticizing the narrow perspective of much of the discussion, argue that actual statistical patterns of marriage choices are only partly determined by 'rules' and ideals. A

¹⁰ Pehrson (1966); Cuisenier (1964: 73-89); Stirling (1965); Keyser (1974); R. Tapper (1979a); but cf. Bates (1974).

¹¹ The Rwala (and perhaps others) explicitly prefer second cousins, recognizing the problems that result from first cousin marriages; Lancaster (1981).

¹² N. Tapper (1991: 194); Barth (1959: 40); Lindholm (1982: 142f.).

¹³ Cf. R. Tapper (1979b). Some of the implications of Murphy and Kasdan's articles, on the involutorial, bilateral character of an in-married lineage, are valid in spite of their lack of empirical base, and are borne out by the analyses of other writers, for example Peters (1960; 1965; 1967); Antoun (1972).

preference for marriage among close agnates is often expressed in the Middle East, but nowhere does this constitute a 'marriage system' which can be explained as such in terms of motives, social functions and structural implications, without consideration of all the other marriage choices both valued and practised. For many of these scholars, the interest of Middle Eastern marriage as a 'complex system' lies in the analysis of mainly political and economic strategies. With reference to FBD marriage, it is noted that on different occasions it may serve different strategies – such as political solidarity, conservation of property, non-disruption of role-relationships; while the same aims may be achieved by various other choices such as marriage to strangers, direct exchange, or matrilineal alliance.¹⁴

If we seek to interpret normative prescriptions or preferences for FBD marriage, the most persuasive general 'theory' sees them as metaphorical statements about the formal ideals of agnatic kinship. Such an interpretation conforms closely to actors' statements of their motivations, typically in the form: 'people marry paternal cousins because that is the best way of ensuring that family honour is preserved'.¹⁵ FBD marriage is one possible resolution of the central problem of the changing loyalties of married daughters of the family or lineage. Here, however, we confront a major difficulty, already mentioned: that marriage preferences, concepts of kinship, understandings of honour, and responsibilities for married women, do vary considerably in the Islamic Middle East.

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Almost all comparative discussions of marriage in the Middle East have both assumed an Arab model as prototype and failed to note any significant differences between Arabs and non-Arabs. As regards the nature of rights and duties transferred at marriage, and the associated ideology of honour and shame, too, there has been an assumption that the pattern found among Arabs is found throughout Islam, an assumption that has vitiated comparative studies of the relation between this ideology and marriage. The 'Arab' prototype of

¹⁴ Cuisenier (1962); Barth (1953; 1973); Rosenfeld (1957); Patai (1962); Cohen (1965; 1970); Peters (various); Marx (1967); Khuri (1970); Antoun (1972; 1976: 166f.); Das (1973); Keyser (1974); Seddon (1976); Meeker (1976); Davis (1977: 206f.); Bourdieu (1977); Eickelman (1989: 175–8); N. Tapper (1981); Bradburd (1984; 1990); Cole (1975; 1984); Donnan (1985).

¹⁵ See especially Holy (1980); also Keyser (1974); Eickelman (1989); Abu-Lughod (1986: 56, 145); Deianey (1987).

the rights and duties transferred at marriage has pervaded the literature on the Middle East, and deviations from it – where noticed – have required explanation as such.

We suggest that the 'Arab model' should be replaced by two contrasting models, with implications for a wide variety of differences of behaviour and social organization among the peoples depicted.¹⁶ There is a certain geographical look in the applicability of the two models: but this may be regarded as largely fortuitous, and each model applies to a number of peoples with diverse culture and historical traditions, so we shall avoid giving the models the obvious geographical labels, calling them instead A and B. Model A applies to Muslim peoples in much of North Africa, the Arab World, and as far east as Kurdistan; model B applies mainly to peoples within states of the 'Northern Tier', namely Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and at least parts of Pakistan.

The basic difference between the two models is that in A the rights and responsibilities transferred to the husband at marriage are fewer than in B. In model A, a woman remains the responsibility of her male agnates (brothers and father) after marriage, at least until she has grown-up sons. If she misbehaves, it is up to them to punish her. As a corollary, she may return to her natal home and receive protection and maintenance during the course of her marriage. Men's honour depends on the behaviour of their female agnates, and is formally unaffected by that of wives from outside the group. '*Ard'irz*', an Arabic term referring to a woman's sexual modesty and a man's honour as it resides in the women for whom he is responsible, is a quality which is determined by agnation, and is not transferable.

Norms corresponding to model A are reported among Baggara Arabs, Rwala Bedouin and Bedouin groups in Kuwait, Egypt and Israel; and Arab villagers in Turkey, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Sudan, Libya, Tunisia and Morocco. According to Robertson Smith's

¹⁶ See Meeker (1976); R. Tapper (1979a: 291); N. Tapper (1981; 1991: 16f.); Abu-Lughod (1986: 159); Holy (1989: esp. 121–8). While agreeing generally with Holy's discussion, we feel that he gives undue weight to the 'Arab' model as the 'normal' prototype of Islamic and Middle Eastern culture.

account, they would have been characteristic of ancient Arab society.¹⁷

Following the Leach/Fallers/Lewis hypothesis concerning the determinants of marriage stability, one expects marriage ties among peoples conforming to model A to be unstable, since agnatic ties of men and women are comparable in strength. In practice, there is a sorry lack of data on marriage stability, whether the incidence of divorce or of separation; but it is frequently reported that there is no particular stigma attached to divorce, which often follows simple domestic quarrels, personality clashes between spouses or co-wives, while more serious offences such as adultery by the wife may lead to divorce or to her death at the hands of agnates.¹⁸

In model B, a married woman's behaviour is primarily the concern of her husband and his agnates. A man's honour is affected by the behaviour of his unmarried sisters and daughters, his mother and his wife. *Namus*, a term used widely among such peoples, refers to a man's ability to guard his honour by controlling these women, and also to the women's own reputation; it seems to be a quality attached to the woman herself, vested in her sex and not her agnation, and can be and usually is transferred along with her person at marriage. Responsibility for a daughter or sister is almost entirely transferred to the husband and his agnates at marriage, and the expectation is of more stable bonds. In such cases, ethnographers usually contrast a married woman's continuing emotional ties with her agnates and the jural transfer of rights in her. The main difference with model A is the overriding responsibility of the husband for controlling his wife's behaviour, though this may to some extent be shared with her agnates.

¹⁷ Cunnison (1966: 93); Musil (1928: 235, 494-5); Lancaster (1981: 58f.); Dickson (1949: 55, 115, 144); Abou-Zeid (1965: 253, 257); Abu-Lughod (1986: 54f., 158-9); Marx (1967: 104-5); Chelhod (1965: 135-7, 153); Aswad (1971); Cohen (1965: 122); Rosenfeld (1958: 1128; 1976: 276); Ginat (1987: 158-9); Antoun (1972: 162); Fuller (1961: 62); Salim (1962: 46f., 61); Barclay (1962: 51-4, 108, 115); Hilal (1970); Abu Zahra (1982: 86f.); Robertson Smith (1903: 77, 122, 125). Peters (various) gives no specific information for the Cyrenaican Bedouin, and Cuisenier (1962: 88), is ambiguous; as is the material on tribal groups in the Maghreb. Khuri (1970: 605-6), on the basis of his studies in urban Lebanon, claims that the husband is responsible for his wife's behaviour - but this appears exceptional for the area.

¹⁸ High rates of divorce are recorded by Barclay (1962: 124-5), Cunnison (1966: 70), Dickson (1949: 144), Maher (1974). Aswad (1971: 54, 60) notes that divorce is rare in a community of settled Arabs which otherwise conforms to model A. Marx (1977) denies that divorce is frequent among Bedouin, but Cole (1975: 75) reports a high frequency for the Al-Murrah Bedouin, as does Abu-Lughod (1986: 149) for the Awlad 'Ali.

There is some variation among peoples conforming to model B, from the extreme case of the Swat Pathans, to the ambiguities of the Basseri, the Yamut Türkmén, the Saçkara Yörük and the Baluch. Closer to model B are the Hazaras, Tajiks, and Pashtuns of Afghanistan, Anatolian villagers and the Shahsevan Turks of Iran. It is worth noting, too, that Christian peoples north of the Mediterranean conform closely with model B.¹⁹

Among these peoples, divorce is rare, shameful, and only most occasionally arises from domestic disputes, incompatibility of spouses, or even from the inability of a woman to bear children. A wife who misbehaves or is accused of adultery should ideally be killed rather than divorced, and the responsibility for such action rests with her husband before her agnates. The most extreme statement again comes from the Swat Pathans, of whom Barth reports that divorce is regarded as shameful and is almost unknown:

Since the husband has absolute authority over his wife, to divorce her is to admit defeat and no advantage is gained other than the simple economic saving from discontinuing her support – at the cost of her labour. There is thus, in a sense, no reason for divorce among the Pathan, and very good reasons against it.²⁰

A similar strong abhorrence or disapproval of divorce is found among the Durrani and other groups of northern Afghanistan, as well as other tribal and village communities of the Northern Tier.²¹

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Insofar as marriage and divorce practices are linked to the ideology of honour and shame, then, we find the links taking rather different forms among peoples conforming to either model A or model B. For example, a concern with the control and defence of productive and reproductive resources, articulated in the language of honour and shame, certainly generates a preference for close-kin marriage in both models, but in different ways and with different emphases.

¹⁹ Barth (1959: 39); Lindholm (1982: esp. 142–7); Barth (1961: 34); Irons (1975); Bates (1973: 39); Pehrson (1966: 42–3, 53); Pastner (1972: 251, 256); Canfield (1973: 38); Singh Uberoi (1969: 402); Olesen (1982: 120); Anderson (1982: 8); N. Tapper (1991); Stirling (1965: 116–7, 161, 211); Delaney (1987: 42); R. Tapper (1979a); Pitt-Rivers (1977: 23, 29); Peristiany (1965: 182). Tillion (1983: 96) represents Christian cultures north of the Mediterranean as conforming to model A, but her own evidence is against her.

²⁰ Barth (1959: 40); Lindholm (1982: 111).

²¹ N. Tapper (1991; 1978: 378); Stirling (1965: 214f.); Barth (1961: 32).

In model A, the family or the lineage are concerned with the honour of their sisters and daughters both before and after marriage, hence they wish to control their marriages, the best way being to ensure that these women are married into families that can be influenced *in the future*. Given these considerations, the optimum marriage choice for the guardian of a girl is within the family or lineage and preferably as close as possible. This reasoning, as motivation, is reported in a number of ethnographic accounts.²² The husband's family is not so concerned where the wife comes from, as her behaviour does not concern them so much.

In model B, on the other hand, the family or lineage is concerned with the honour of wives who come in as well as with unmarried daughters; so they wish to make sure that the wives come from families they know and trust on the basis of *past* performance. This implies that the groom's guardian will prefer marriage with any category of relative, not only within the lineage but also cousins of other kinds – though again as close as possible. The bride's side have no jural concern with their kinswoman – the problem of her changing loyalties is clearly resolved on marriage; but they clearly retain emotional ties with her and an interest in her welfare, and their preferences are likely to coincide with those of the groom's side. Generally, peoples conforming to model B are less concerned to ban 'hypogamy' than in model A, with some notable exceptions whose explanation lies with other factors.²³

The distinction between preference for agnatic cousins in model A and for bilateral cousins in model B is borne out in the literature.²⁴ Several studies of Arab peoples find the position of the mother's brother ambiguous and claim that marriage with the MBD is disfavoured on various grounds.²⁵ In model B societies, on the other hand, there are very often contrasting attitudes and marriage patterns. In several studies of Turkey and Iran, cousins of all kinds are said to

²² For example Cohen (1965: 122); Chel'had (1965: 153); Antoun (1968: 693); Stevenson (1985: 132); Khuri (1970: 604–6, 610 and references there). This conforms too with the sharia prescription of *kefu'u*, that a woman should be married into a family of equal or higher status than her own.

²³ For example Tapper and Tapper (1982).

²⁴ This was noted by Cuisenier (1964: 83), but curiously not by Meeker (1976), in their comparisons of Arabs and Anatolian villagers; the contrast was also noted by Fischer (1978: 197) writing on Iran.

²⁵ See especially Khuri (1970) on the incompatibility of the roles of MB and WF. Actually the argument is reversed in some studies, for example Peters notes that there is a secondary preference for MBD among Cyrenaican Bedouin.

be preferred: it is good to marry close kin, with no special preference for FBD or MBD. Actual choices show marriage with MBD to be as frequent as FBD if not more so, with other first cousins not far behind – this applies only to first cousins, but the general high rate of marriage of kin means that more distant cousins are related in more than one way, of which the most agnatic is commonly invoked, at least among male informants.²⁶

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It is important, finally, to consider how far model A, which applies primarily to Arab cultures, can be considered the Islamic prototype, and how far model B is a deviation from it, as implied by much of the literature on Islamic societies.

Sharia family law seems ambiguous on the question of the responsibility of and for a married woman. In all schools of law the woman's marriage guardian, before she reaches puberty, is one of her male agnates, and priority is given to her father, her father's father, and then her father's brother, and so on, following the principles of closeness established by the rules of inheritance. Failing the guardianship of a male agnate, her mother or by extension one of her maternal relations can become her marriage guardian. After puberty, the Hanafi and Ithna 'Ashariya schools accord the woman a right to contract her own marriage, while in the other schools the same rules of marriage guardianship apply as before. Once a marriage contract is finalized, all children conceived by the woman during the course of the marriage, whether the husband be genitor or not, can be his legitimate heirs. Moreover, he has the right to 'obedience' from his wife: what constitutes obedience is fairly closely defined. In return, a man is obliged to provide for the maintenance of his wife and children. Each spouse has the right to inherit from the other if the marriage is terminated by death. Finally, a widow or divorcee has the right to maintenance from her father who again is empowered to act as her marriage guardian if she remarries.²⁷

Thus, according to sharia law, a woman while married is jurally unattached to her own kin in any way; rights in her as a sexual

²⁶ Stirling (1965: 202–3); Cuisenier (1966: 229–30); Keyser (1974); Bates (1974: 272); Paleczek (1990); R. Tapper (1979a: 140f.); Shahrani (1979: 158–9); Fischer (1978: 211); Pastner (1981: 305–318); Bradburd (1984).

²⁷ This summary of sharia regulations is inevitably an oversimplification of a complex, changing and imprecise reality; and takes no account of legal systems reformed in recent decades, such as those of Turkey, Iran and Tunisia. See also Holy's discussion (1989: 119–120); and several papers in the present collection, notably that by Mir-Hosseini.

partner, a procreator, and a worker, are absolutely transferred to her husband; yet her relations with her natal family are never completely severed, for she has both the right to inherit from them and the right to maintenance from them after the termination of her marriage. During the course of a marriage, a woman as an adult is legally responsible for her own actions, owing her husband only obedience. Legally, a woman has the right to control and dispose of all personal property, and she herself is responsible for any criminal offence she may commit, while any compensation which would be made if she were killed would be received by her heirs, including her husband.²⁸

In other words, in stressing a woman's legal responsibility for her own behaviour, the sharia is silent about where her jural ties should lie, how far her agnates continue to be responsible for her, how far this responsibility passes to her husband, how far she is incorporated into her husband's group – issues which arise in practice almost everywhere, given that women's independence is rarely recognized in custom. It is on these very issues that models A and B differ, in such a way that neither can be regarded as following formal Islamic prescriptions any closer than the other.

We have seen how differences on these issues emerge in different conceptions of honour and shame, patterns of marriage choices, and divorce practices. There are of course many other implications of the differences between the two models – for the character of affinal and matrilineal relations, the amounts of brideprice and other marriage payments, the symbolism and complexity of wedding and other marriage ceremonies, and for other areas of social organization – but there is no space here to consider them.²⁹

²⁸ This is contradicted by Joan Lewis, who states that 'in Islam it is the woman's own paternal kin, rather than the husband and his relatives, who are legally involved in all serious torts concerning or committed by her'; these patrikin pay and receive blood-wealth on behalf of their married daughter (1966: 57); but he appears to be unwisely generalizing from the Somali, who clearly follow model A. Antoun (1968) considers the legal and customary position on these points in some detail, referring particularly to a Jordanian village; but he fails to note the differences in customary practice which we have summarized here as model A and model B, and refers to Pitt-Rivers' discussions of the northern Mediterranean without noticing how irrelevant they are to his own (model A) conception of Islamic law and practice.

²⁹ A third model would be necessary to account for some Islamic cultures of South East Asia, where very different concepts of kinship, gender, inheritance and marriage prevail.

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