

Of Vigilance and Virgins: Honor, Shame and Access to Resources in Mediterranean Societies¹

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Anthropologists who work in Mediterranean societies rarely discuss the cultural unity of the area. Most of them stress the gulf between the Northern and Southern littorals, between Christianity and Islam, between bilateral kinship and patrilineal descent, even if at the same time they deplore the inadequate exchange of ideas between students of the European and students of the North African sectors. Among the Europeanists, those who study the West traffic little with those of the East, maintaining about the same distance from each other as the Latin Church does from Eastern Orthodoxy. Of course there is widespread agreement that Mediterranean societies shared a lot of history, but history belongs to the past. Contemporary societies, or regions, seem less involved with each other than each is involved, on its own, with the industrial powers of the outside world.

There is one exception to the paucity of cross-cultural analysis in Mediterranean studies. It centers around the interdependent concepts, honor and shame, and around related practices governing family integrity and the virginity of young girls. These cultural codes are reported from both sides of the Mediterranean, and have been the subjects of symposia in which scholars of both sides have participated (see Peristany 1956a). Unfortunately, there has been no systematic attempt to explore the origin of these codes, or to distinguish them as a complex of rules and patterns of behavior from similar rules and patterns in other societies. Most discussions of the subject take the codes for granted, and concentrate mainly on the ways they are enforced. This leads to an overly normative interpretation, in which honor appears to depend upon rewards and sanctions characteristic of face-to-face communities. While not denying the importance of such rewards and sanctions, I suggest that they can hardly explain the phenomenon, since there are many face-to-face communities in which quite different values prevail. Moreover, where people compete for honor, a sense of community may be undeveloped. This, in fact, is a recurring theme in many Mediterranean ethnographies. A good example is Campbell's mountain people, the Sarakatsani, where relationships of reciprocal hostility and theft seem as important to the definition of community as agreement about and conformity to a particular set of norms. The community, he writes (Campbell 1964:9), "has no cohesion as a group," no structure of authority, because of the

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solidarity, exclusiveness, and mutual opposition of the families which form it. It is precisely through mutual competition in terms of strength, wealth and a reputation for honor, that the opposed families, and groups of related families, are associated with one another in a coherent and regular manner.

It seems to me that intra-community conflict is a tremendously important feature of the rural Mediterranean, on both sides. Sometimes this is simply because people are competing for honor, and quarrel with each other over insults, or challenges to honor. More often, and more fundamentally, conflict has focused on strategic resources: arable land, grazing rights, routes of access to land, rights to utilize water. Mediterranean people have quarreled over encroachments on boundaries, usurpations of water rights, abusive pasturing, animal theft, the destruction of crops, adultery, and murder. They consider such violations as challenges to the honor of the property holding group. Thus honor can be thought of as the ideology of a property holding group which struggles to define, enlarge, and protect its patrimony in a competitive arena (P. Schneider 1969).

As a political phenomenon, honor can attach to any human group from the nuclear family to the nation state. The problem of honor becomes salient when the group is threatened with competition from equivalent groups. It is especially salient when small, particularistic groups, such as families, clans, or gangs, are the principal units of power, sovereign or nearly so over the territories they control. Concern for honor also grows when contested resources are subject to redivision along changing lines, when there is no stable relationship between units of power and precisely delimited patrimonies, i.e., when the determination of boundary lines is subject to continual human intervention. Finally, concern with honor arises when the definition of the group is problematic; when social boundaries are difficult to maintain, and internal loyalties are questionable.

Shame, the reciprocal of honor, is especially important when one of the contested resources is women, and women's comportment defines the honor of social groups. Like all ideologies, honor and shame complement institutional arrangements for the distribution of power and the creation of order in society.

The thesis of this paper is that the Mediterranean does have cultural unity, and that this unity derives from a particular set of ecological forces which have interacted to produce the codes referred to above. The interaction of these forces also accounts for intra-community conflict. Regional differences in the intensity of conflict, and the salience of honor, depend upon divergent configurations of the forces in question. For the purpose of this paper, I shall consider as "Mediterranean" all regions surrounding the sea in which great emphasis is placed on the chastity and virginity of women. The reader may feel that my analysis is occasionally overgeneralized in terms of available ethnographic data on the Mediterranean area as defined above. However, my intent is to stimulate discussion on problems of comparison which studies of individual Mediterranean societies have raised.

To summarize the argument briefly, the comparative study of Mediterranean societies requires systematic consideration of a highly competitive

relationship between agricultural and pastoral economies, under pressure from urban centers and in the absence of effective state institutions. The Mediterranean is something of a paradox: a friendly sea surrounded by a hostile landscape (see Braudel 1966). Much of this landscape early became the locus of a pastoral or partially pastoral specialization, whether because of extreme aridity, as in the Arabian and Saharan deserts, or because of moderate aridity coupled with mountainous terrain. Unlike Central Asia, however, pastoralism in the Mediterranean was challenged by the continuous expansion of agriculture for centuries preceding the industrial revolution. Because transport by sea was easy, Iron Age technologies for the production of agricultural surpluses diffused into dry and mountainous zones which might otherwise have remained pastoral, broken only by scattered communities of marginal, autochthonous cultivators. Particularly on the less arid European side, landlords devoted vast regions to the production of wheat for export, simply because of the facility with which it could be transported by sea (Braudel 1966: 522-523). In Central Asia this was not possible prior to the construction of the railroad (Lattimore 1951).

Since cultivated land committed to surplus production expanded so early in the history of the Mediterranean, agricultural communities were not supported by the means of integration which have more recently become available to the modern state. If most regions were accessible by sea, this does not mean they were administered on a day-to-day basis by states. On the contrary, much of the Mediterranean was hostile to administrative control. Mountains were nearly insurmountable barriers, and the cities which claimed the surplus food turned seaward, away from the land. Nor were technologies available for transforming the pastoral economy altogether, replacing it with either ranching or intensive agriculture. In much of the Mediterranean, pastoralism and agriculture coexisted, competing for the same resources in a way which fragmented the social organization of each type of community and blurred the boundary between them. In the absence of the state, pastoral communities, and agricultural communities in their midst, developed their own means of social control—the codes of honor and shame—which were adapted to the intense conflict that external pressures had created within them, and between them.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PASTORAL SOCIETIES

There are important similarities among such widely separated pastoralists as reindeer herders in Lapland, horse herders in Central Asia, sheep and camel herders of the Mediterranean, and cattle herders of the Sudan and East Africa (Sahlins 1968: 33; Cohen 1968: 235-237). Analysis of these general similarities is useful because it brings into relief certain characteristics which are central to the Mediterranean problem of community organization. Of these characteristics, three are outstanding. First, all pastoral societies must find an organizational solution to a compelling ecological problem, namely, the difficulty of regulating access of men and animals to natural resources. These societies depend upon natural pastures, and hence

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migration, sometimes transhumant (back and forth between highlands and lowlands or forest and savannah), at other times nomadic (extensive and horizontal). Migratory groups cannot establish rights to land on a permanent basis, or fence it off against incursions. Typically, conflict arises over abusive pasturing, that is, the negligent or deliberate action of one group which permits its animals to stray over a boundary to graze on the grass of a neighboring group.

Raiding and animal theft are equally endemic. It is relatively easy to steal animals when they are kept in the open and not in enclosures or stalls; and once stolen it is easy to mask their identity by mixing them with another herd or selling them at market (Ekvall 1968: 39-41, 77). Most pastoralists brand their animals, and claim to recognize each one, but this betrays their concern over losing them rather than a secure sense of proprietorship. Raiding and animal theft, like abusive pasturing, are important devices for redistributing wealth and compensating for misfortune and variations in the quality of local pastures (see Sweet 1970: 265-290). In Sardinia, the shepherd boy of nine or ten who has not yet stolen an animal is called a *chisineri*, a sissy who clings to the ashes of the campfire (Anfossi 1966: 7). Bedouin boys first participate in raids around the age of twelve (Sweet 1970: 272).

In a pastoral society, patterns of access to grass and water by animals, and to animals by men, are largely determined by force or the credible threat of force. Might is right, in the sense that might secures resources. Actors (whether individuals or groups) are at once wary of each other and primed to take advantage of each other. They are both vulnerable and opportunistic, suspicious and pragmatic. Their fortunes may rise or fall in the continual reshuffling of claims to pastures and water. Since permanent physical boundaries do not exist, much time and energy go into staking and defending claims. As I will show, investments of energy in the vigilant defense of a patrimony can be ideological as well as military. Either way, the investment increases with increased pressure of men and animals on resources.

A second characteristic of pastoral societies is their remarkable flexibility in social organization. Those with patrilineal kin groups supplement them with relationships of contract. Those in which corporate kin groups are weak or nonexistent emphasize contractual affiliations almost exclusively. Chief among these affiliations are affinal ties, the host-guest relationship, the patron-client relationship, and herding partnerships. In societies where kin groups are weakest, friendship and ritual kinship are also important. All of these relationships are responsive to political and demographic fluctuations. In Central Asia, for example, powerful tribes and coalitions of tribes, called khanates, carve out whole cycles of migration, assigning areas to constituent lineages. Households have usufruct rights to pastures on the basis of lineage membership and rely on the tribe or khanate to defend these rights. When their chief is proven militarily inadequate, members of a household or lineage are free to change political affiliation, attaching themselves to a more effective chief. Similarly, when a chief is incapable of negotiating internal disputes, perhaps because his following has grown too

large, a segment may break away and seek hospitality elsewhere (Krader 1966: 153, 157; Lattimore 1951: 90).

Organizational flexibility also results from environmental constraints. Seasonal changes in the quality and quantity of grazing land, and in the availability of water, determine whether herding groups may concentrate, or must disperse. The size of the group which operates as a unit varies in a single year, sometimes dramatically. Cunnison (1966: 42) calls this "secondary nomadism," in which "no one has a fixed set of people with whom he continually and exclusively resides." Variation is possible because the segments which make up a group have considerable economic autonomy, which is particularly adaptive in times of crisis. Pastoralists are exposed to environmental hazards as few other peoples are, facing extremes of temperature and tempest, periodic drying out of pastures and water sources, treacherous migratory routes and predatory animals. Many of these hazards weaken the resistance of animals as well as men, and make them vulnerable to disease. So long as the segments of a herding group are capable of dispersing, each can take advantage of local windfalls. In so far as they are autonomous of one another, a calamity affecting one does not jeopardize the whole (Gulliver 1966: 164).

Barth develops this relationship further. He argues that pastoralists, unlike cultivators, are not subject to Malthusian checks on population growth. As it approaches overpopulation, the pastoral community begins to butcher its livestock, thus destroying the very basis of its existence. Instead, pastoralists achieve a demographic balance by making their minimal unit, the household, an autonomous actor in the economic arena, vesting it with the ownership of animals and equipment. Since disease and other misfortunes strike at random, households suffer differentially. Unlucky households either die out, join a rich man's household as dependents, or move to a sedentary community to take up agriculture. They do not become a liability to their kinsmen and subject them to economic decline (Barth 1961: 124-125). The community preserves the livestock of the many by rejecting the few who fail. The process, however, places heavy burdens on interpersonal relations. For everyone must think first of his immediate household's interests and resist undue claims for assistance from kinsmen and friends. Pastoralists, to survive, must be selfish (Sahlins 1968: 36); appropriately they make selfishness a virtue.

The third characteristic of a pastoral society is related to the first two. This way of life constantly requires all adults, and particularly heads of households, to make important economic and political decisions. Stenning (1957: 67), analyzing transhumance patterns among pastoral Fulani, notes that daily herding tasks "are left to boys and young men," while the herd owner

concerns himself with a wider scene, with the strategy of herd deployment. Whenever possible he visits markets where news is exchanged; he visits kinsmen; and before each move is made he attends a camp council, in which all this evidence is sifted by interminable discussion, before each herd owner decides which course he will follow . . . Pastoral Fulani transhumance does not consist of random wanderings. Rather

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the reverse; it consists of a known habitat involving continuous and careful appraisal of environmental and social demands which are not necessarily in harmony.

Constant decision making presupposes a constantly operating reconnaissance network through which the herd owner gathers intelligence on the condition of pastures and sources of water, on the markets and forage or stubble available in settled areas, on the movements and machinations of other pastoralists whose herds may be diseased or potential competitors for grass and water (Stenning 1957: 67). Furthermore, a successful pastoralist not only has an extensive network, but is also skilled at evaluating information which comes to him secondhand. As a decision maker, he is a politician, and something of a political sovereign.

The widespread distribution of decision-making powers makes a pastoral society appear anarchic and egalitarian. If every man is his own master, then all men must be equal. In fact, anarchy and equality are restricted by ascribed kinship rank which carries considerable weight in some societies, by the differential distribution of decision-making skills, and by the distribution of good and bad fortune. Some households are rich, and others poor; some are influential and prestigious, others not. This said, however, it is striking how frequently fortunes change, how roles of dominance and subordination move from household to household in a pastoral society. It is difficult and often impossible for a given family to maintain its status in the community over several generations. At any event, such societies vary considerably in the degree to which they are fragmented and competitive, in the degree to which they resemble a Hobbesian state of nature. Comparison shows Mediterranean pastoralists, particularly on the European side, to be unusually fragmented and competitive.

FRAGMENTATION IN PASTORAL SOCIETIES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

Limited surveys of pastoral societies made by Barth (1961: 123-135) and Krader (1955) indicate that the more difficult it is to find large extensions of suitable grazing land, to have regular access to adequate supplies of water and a predictable route of migration, the more extra-familial organization becomes not only difficult to achieve but an outright handicap in the management of herds. Gulliver's comparison of two East African cattle-herding tribes makes a similar point. One tribe, the Jie, occupies a beneficent environment and is capable of sustaining large extended family households as minimal units of economic organization. The nucleus of each household is a group of co-operating brothers under the leadership of the eldest. This group inherits, enhances, husbands, and bestows a common herd of livestock. In contrast, the Turkana, who are confined to a marginal environment, stress "the individual freedom of each [nuclear] family under its own head." Extended family households are no more than a "temporary stage between the individual ownership of a man and that of each of his sons." Local camps, or groupings of households, are "almost always impermanent" (Gulliver 1966: 159-160). In other words, the more vulnerable and pressured a pastoral society, the smaller and more independent of each other are its basic economic units.

Pressure from an agrarian society, particularly when its produce is claimed by urban centers, severely limits the resources available to pastoralists, whether by confining animals to marginal and arid zones, or to the interstices which separate cultivated fields. I have suggested that, for many centuries, this pressure was more intense in the Mediterranean than in Central Asia. Within the Mediterranean it was greater in Western Europe than in Eastern Europe, in Eastern Europe than in North Africa, and in North Africa than in the Middle East. In other words, one can imagine a gradient which goes from predominantly pastoral Central Asia through the Mediterranean to predominantly agricultural Western Europe—from the horse-raising, camel-riding nomads of Asia to the camel-raising, horse-riding nomads of the Middle East, to the transhumant sheep and goat herders of North Africa and Eastern Europe, and finally to the low-status shepherds and goatherds and the high-status “ranchers” of Spain and Italy, who are little more than specialists within agricultural communities. This gradient of pastoral-agrarian interaction is roughly paralleled by a graded complexity of social organization among pastoralists.

Nowhere in the pastoral Mediterranean, for example, is there a political system of the size and internal stratification of an Asian khanate, or a chief of the power and stature of an Asian khan. Furthermore, whereas the Central Asian economic structure (rather like that of the Jie) emphasizes the extended family of kinsmen and dependents, focused on a nucleus of co-operating brothers, throughout the Mediterranean the nuclear family is the primary economic unit (Krader 1966: 144ff; Patai 1951: 409). In North Africa and the Middle East, however, this nuclear family is embedded in a joint patrilocal and sometimes polygynous household.

The Middle East also exhibits strong lineages. Although each camel-herding nomad is the private owner of his herd, he contributes stock to the blood-money fund of his agnatic vengeance group. He is committed to share in the indemnities which accrue to members of this group, and to avenge any injuries they suffer. In addition, the elders of the group apply sanctions in settling internal disputes. Yet the strength of a lineage is often more ideological than real, and heavily dependent upon contractual as well as ascriptive relationships. The Northern Somali, culturally a part of the Mediterranean, must negotiate contracts to activate their vengeance groups, and to compensate for the frequent fission and fusing of these fundamental political structures. State authorities now penetrating this area have found that contractual relationships are more salient to tribal organization than are corporate kin groups. As one Somali proverb has it, a man must either be a mountain or attach himself to one (Lewis 1961: 161-196). Bedouin peoples respect the same ideal (Abou-Zeid 1965: 250-255; Patai 1951: 411).

In the European Mediterranean, fragmentation of political and economic structures is more extreme, and contractual relations more important to social organization. There, pastoralists do not control their own land; rather they must rent or purchase grazing rights in the small and scattered spaces that are left over by the agrarian regime. These include land at high

altitudes, not necessarily dominated by agriculture, but usually part of the commons of agrarian villages or the property of state and religious institutions. Since such land is barren during the winter, the pastoralists must negotiate for pastures in the agricultural lowlands and plains. Toward the western end of the Mediterranean, in the latifundist regions of Italy, Sicily, and Spain, agriculture dominates in the mountains as well as on the plains, and much of the pastoral economy is integrated into large estates (Evoli 1931).

On the historically isolated islands of Sardinia and Corsica, and to some extent in the Balkans, rudiments of lineage and clan remain. Elsewhere in Europe, however, kinship is decidedly bilateral, and the nuclear family is the most significant political as well as economic structure. It is linked to other families not by common membership in corporate communities or kin groups but by dyadic ties of kindred, patronage, partnership, friendship, and co-parenthood. Herding groups are strictly voluntary associations whose members enter and withdraw at will. Often they have an agnatic core of brothers and first cousins, but the limited availability of contiguous pasture greatly restricts their size and complexity. In some regions they are little more than *ad hoc* and temporary coalitions of business partners (Pitt-Rivers 1963: 38-39; Sonnino 1925: 18-23). The Greek *stani*, which at one time averaged 50 to 150 men, women, and children, appears to have been an exception. The core of the group included close agnates, and the leader (the *tslingas*) had considerable authority over the distribution of rented pastures and the marketing of cheese. Yet the *stani* was not a very cohesive group; its members enjoyed political as well as economic autonomy. It had no ideology of lineage, and was not organized for the collective defense of its members or its pastures. These functions were left to the heads of the families which constituted the *stani* and the courts (when effective) of the larger agricultural society (Campbell 1964: 16-17, 52, 90-94).

The fragmentation of political structures limits the capacity of Mediterranean pastoralists to organize violence. The Asian khanate is capable of mounting raids and waging war on other pastoral tribes and on sedentary populations. In the Mediterranean, however, only the North African and Middle Eastern nomads engage in organized raiding, and, even there, intermittent guerilla skirmishes are a more common expression of hostility. In parts of the Maghreb, clans stage mock battles which counter tendencies toward internal fission with ritual reminders of an external enemy (Bourdieu 1965: 201). On the European side, even this is not possible. Among the Greek Sarakatsani, for example, no one may expect a kinsman to offer economic aid without recompense, or to commit murder on his behalf. Neither are kinsmen interchangeable as victims of revenge. A man should take the side of a kinsman in quarrels, but he must not put his own life in jeopardy lest he risk depriving his family of its head. For this reason, only unmarried sons can afford to commit acts of violence (Campbell 1964: 194-195). As Campbell (1964: 196) explains,

clearly a community fragmented into family commonwealths, where the individual's categorical rights and obligations are contained almost exclusively in this small group,

where the help a man can claim from his collateral kin is severely limited, and where a family to exist in any real sense must have at least one adult male to support and lead it, is peculiarly ill contrived to prosecute blood vengeance.

But if there are limits on the exercise of organized violence, they are not the consequence of a reduction in conflict. If anything, the expansion of agriculture led at one and the same time to increased competition for resources and decreased the capacity for acquiring, defending, and sharing them. Where raiding is impossible, animal theft and banditry prevail, as in the European Mediterranean (Musio 1969: 69). Mediterranean bandits, especially their leaders, are often of pastoral background and appear when population and cultivated surfaces are rapidly expanding. Less cohesive and more tenuous than a war party of raiding nomads, though similar in purpose, the outlaw band is a loosely knit and constantly shifting patron-client set, which requires friends and protectors in the sedentary population and peasant recruits in order to survive (Hobsbawm 1959: 13-29; Molfese 1964).

As the capacity for organized violence declines, the definition of property lines becomes more complex. Anfossi (1966: 11), writing about Sardinian pastoralists, argues that in no other ambience is it so clearly the case that property is theft.

Property is for each the totality of things which protect him in space and time; the house which is a tangible symbol of a man and . . . his family; instruments of work and animals which directly serve him and his family's needs. This is inviolable property.

Everything outside of this circumscribed arena (a harem of sorts) becomes property by luck, skill, and prepotency, and can be challenged by others who are more lucky, clever, and strong. It is, like the air and the sun, up for grabs. Its possession by the strongest is legitimate, but vulnerable. "Owning property is not a right but a continual conquest" (Anfossi 1966: 11).

In such a society, each encroachment on one's property or status must be analyzed and interpreted with respect to the intention of the aggressor. Theft motivated by necessity must be distinguished from theft with intent to harm. When someone steals an animal which has been designated for dowry, or an animal whose milk is consumed directly by the owner's family, it is assumed that he wanted to harm the owner. If he steals an animal from the herd, he does so because he wants an animal, this being a less serious crime (Musio 1969: 85-88). Yet it is often difficult to judge the intentions of an aggressor, especially when the act itself is not culturally coded for motivation (dowry cow = an attack on the person, herd cow = an impersonal theft). Minor trespass, for example, might have been deliberate and provocative; or it might have been intended as a retaliatory measure or warning; or it might simply have been the accidental consequence of demographic pressure. The injured party, weighing the best available intelligence and his own power in the situation, must decide on an interpretation.

Riddles of interpretation complicate the decision-making process for Mediterranean pastoralists, reflecting the extent to which the distribution of power is fluid, competitive, and ultimately egalitarian.² In attempting to resolve them, most men hope to ward off future aggression by convincing

others of their capacity to protect their own interests. They also, however, want to avoid an unnecessary escalation of reprisals, a protracted vendetta which might jeopardize the sphere of inviolable interests. One possible compromise is to break off relations altogether, refusing to acknowledge or speak to an enemy and exhorting one's kinsmen to do the same. Such ritual avoidances are common, I think, especially on the European side (see P. Schneider 1969).

Thus fragmented political and economic structure creates many problems for the head of a family. He must constantly make decisions relative to the deployment of his economic interests and the protection of his family. He is uncertain of the loyalty of others, including sometimes his kinsmen, and he must show them that he is able and willing to act. Sometimes he suspects them of envy, unconsciously transmitted by an evil eye. In responding, however, he must not be too offensive, for kinsmen and nonkinsmen alike are potential allies, partners, and, above all, sources of information without which neither economic nor political life is possible. This may be why, as Barth (1961: 145) suggests, many Mediterranean peoples celebrate happy occasions by giving sweets to friends and relatives, the custom having originated as a way to neutralize envy.

There is another, more complicated, problem: the nuclear family, to the extent that it is autonomous as an economic unit, is subject to internal fragmentation. This, I think, is a little-appreciated aspect of Mediterranean familism (see Banfield 1958), one which partially explains why Mediterranean societies are ideological about the family. Might is right, and strength lies in numbers. Lineages and clans, when they exist, seek to grow. Expanding past the point at which internal harmony breaks down, they split into segments which in turn seek to grow. Whether or not lineages and clans exist, nuclear families also seek to grow. Every family requires sons, for they constitute an essential political and military force, necessary for the protection and enhancement of the patrimony. Without them one can neither retaliate for violations to person and property nor enlarge one's own interests at the expense of others. When sons marry they leave the household, but the marriage also adds to the father's network of kinsmen from whom he can claim political allegiance. Finally, sons are manpower, in the absence of which the family must resort to costly contractual arrangements for the care of its herds. Ideally, herd size grows with family size; the larger the family, the larger the herd and the more prestigious and powerful its owner. In much of Africa, where pastoralism is less encumbered by pressure, and to some extent in the Middle East, family and herd expand through the polygynous addition of wives who bear additional children.

But, given that ownership of herds is vested in the heads of families, a family, whatever its size, has to divide. As soon as the sons marry and surely as soon as they have children, they begin to establish an independent existence. At the same time, their "selfishness," operating on behalf of new families, begins to grate on others in the household. Institutions such as anticipatory (partible) inheritance and dowry, plus some private ownership of animals by young boys, allow for the creation of new households, even

prior to the father's death, and are found in patrilineal as well as bilateral societies (Barth 1961: 19ff, 34, 39). These institutions create tension and competition between the father and sons, among the sons, and eventually among their sons, who are patrilateral first cousins. In other words, the establishment of new households challenges the viability of old ones, and the power which their respective "sovereign" leaders once wielded. In a polygynous family, the transition is particularly difficult, for the son who is about to marry may well resent his father's wish to take another wife for himself and have more sons.

It is typical of the Mediterranean that the father-son relationship is somewhat strained and potentially competitive; that brothers are not emotionally close after they marry; that the most enduring and solidary bonds are those uniting a mother and her children and, in lesser degree, those between cross-cousins and between a mother's brother and his sister's children (Barth 1961: 32ff; Campbell 1964: 103-104; Lewis 1961: 78; Peters 1963: 184). In other words, the conditions which have fragmented the economic and political structure into its minimal, nuclear family components, have also fragmented the family. Familism is in some ways a mask for individualism.

FRAGMENTATION IN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES

My purpose in proposing a continuum of pastoral societies has been to challenge the notion of opposed traditions in the Mediterranean. North African and Middle Eastern societies, in spite of lineage organization, are more fragmented than it appears; European societies are more influenced by pastoralism. I think that the same continuum illuminates social organization in agricultural communities. On the surface, agriculture appears the antithesis of pastoralism; in reality, agricultural communities in pastoral areas are fundamentally shaped by the pastoral specialization. In the Mediterranean, the two economies are inseparable, partly because they were never very thoroughly differentiated, partly because of the continuous expansion of agriculture over centuries. Indeed, the Mediterranean offers an incredible and continually changing variety of agricultural and pastoral combinations, sometimes within a single region and certainly across the board (Chiva 1963). Islam and Christianity alike both reflect and contradict the pastoral way of life; both religions impinged on pastoral lands and peoples, and promoted the transition to agrarian regimes. The transition was more thoroughgoing in Christian than in Moslem territories, yet almost nowhere in the Mediterranean did agriculture eclipse pastoralism altogether, enclosing animals in meadows and stalls, and feeding them on cultivated fodder. Everywhere the new society had to adapt to the old.

I propose that agricultural communities of the Mediterranean can also be arranged on a continuum, at one end of which they are dominated by pastoralism and at the other end by the administrative hierarchies of states. The communities that I wish to discuss fall closer to the pastoral pole of the continuum. They are not representative of all Mediterranean agriculture; in fact, they are quite unrepresentative of agriculture in the lowlands and plains, particularly in the immediate hinterlands of large urban centers.

Rather, they are characteristic of arid and mountainous zones only recently brought under state control.

These zones cover broad areas on both sides of the sea. Their agricultural communities are plagued with organizational problems quite similar to those of the pastoralists. I will show how some of these problems stem from the antagonistic relationship between pastoralism and agriculture, for while the two are interdependent, they compete for the same resources with varying degrees of intensity. I will also find a relationship between the organizational problems of communities and the economic autonomy of nuclear families. I am not convinced that this autonomy is as adaptive in the agricultural setting as it is among pastoralists. Undoubtedly pressures emanating from urban centers undercut the corporate kin groups of ancient cultivators, isolating the nuclear family from its protective shield. But I also suspect that many agricultural communities were originally settled by pastoralists or "peasant-shepherds"—pastoralists in transition to a sedentary existence—and that these people brought their radical familism and individualism to the agricultural way of life; thus agriculture was organized in terms of it. Whatever the origins of nuclear family autonomy, its consequences have been momentous for the cultivator.

At the "pastoral" end of the continuum, e.g., among the Somali, agricultural communities are few and far between, confined to irrigated oases. They consist of settled segments of nomadic tribes. During the dry season, the pastoral kinsmen of the cultivators congregate near the edge of the village to share its water. Landholding is private and individual, crop-rotation systems are individually determined. Originally, lineages staked claims to land, the largest and strongest group gaining control over the most land. However, land was then apportioned among individual heads of families who assumed hereditary title. Each family also owns a few sheep and goats. The needs of these animals, plus the seasonal proximity of camel herding nomads, make it impossible to fence land, and boundary disputes occur frequently among cultivators (Lewis 1961: 233-237). Sheep and goats no doubt intensify conflict through trespass and abusive grazing, and cultivators often quarrel over water.

Yet the oasis village is a more stable organization than the pastoral society from which it springs. Inasmuch as these villages are organized into lineages, sedentarization limits the freedom of families to change their political affiliations. Furthermore, the ecology of village life supports the rise of a local "central authority" which transcends the local lineages and is capable of mediating conflict. Agriculture requires that villagers dig and maintain irrigation canals and a common deep well. Occasionally it requires communal labor to stem a tide of locusts or to thresh wheat. Thus, even though families are autonomous as units of production, they are compelled by more than military expediency to work together. At this end of the continuum it is possible for village leaders to represent the community as a whole in dealing with the pastoral world, negotiating provisions of water and fodder to nomad chiefs and buying protection against potential raids. Pastoral and agricultural communities may trade with each other

through partnerships established by their respective members—a pattern consistent with the private ownership of land and animals. But other relationships, including hostile ones of raid and plunder, are corporate in form, with lineages or whole communities taking sides (see Abou-Zeid 1963: 42-45).

The oasis community represents an extreme form of Mediterranean agriculture, just as camel herding nomadism is an extreme form of animal husbandry. More common is the village further along our continuum, whose territory covers a range of altitudes and whose arable land is watered, if inadequately, by little springs. The residents of such a community are subsistence cultivators who depend for their livelihood on a variety of crops. In the foothill zones, they grow citrus fruits and vegetables, tapping subterranean streams and springs for irrigation. Further up the mountain, nut, fruit, and olive trees take over, to be superseded by cereals and vineyards, and finally by pastures. Communities of this sort do not give rise to a coordinated division of labor, in which families specialize in the production of a given crop at a given altitude and then exchange products. Rather, each nuclear family holds bits of land at several different altitudes, and hedges its bets by cultivating as many different crops as possible. Most families also keep a few sheep and goats, whose care is vested in a village specialist, a member of a pastoral community, or a young son.

Crops ripen in succession, from lowlands to highlands. As Peters (1963: 163) explains in his study of a Lebanese village, this obviates the need for collectively organized labor. Indeed, plots are so small that most families are self-sufficient in labor. Families with larger plots portion out some of their land on the basis of short-term contracts with sharecroppers. Finally, numerous small springs and subterranean streams replace the publicly maintained artesian well and irrigation canals characteristic of the oasis village. Water sources and rights of access to water usually attach to landholdings and are considered private property; naturally, water is an object of fierce competition. The authority to regulate water rights is vested in village mayors and officials, but regulation is rarely successful. Accusations of abuse are common: in the summer months one peasant accuses another of diverting water from his canal, and in the winter he accuses him of inundating his field (Peristany 1956b: 180; see also Pitt-Rivers 1963: 40-41, 90, 141ff).

Virtually the only collectively held village lands are mountain pastures, which the village may rent to associations of pastoralists, or permit free use to a semi-resident pastoral community. The villagers also have free access to the pastures to graze their animals, collect wood, stones, wild fruits and vegetables, or plant wheat if it will grow. Mediterranean peasants have fought hard against the abrogation of these "use rights," as they have against perpetual encroachments on village commons. In no sense, however, have communal pastures provided a foundation for collective identity among peasants or shepherds. They are not to be confused with the Russian *mir*.

In the mountainous regions of the Mediterranean, communal solidarity is inhibited by the pastoral-agrarian relationship, particularly on the more

pressured European side. In North Africa, agricultural and pastoral communities are tremendously varied; almost the entire spectrum of our continuum is contained within the region. In the mountainous zones, agriculture and pastoralism have reached a kind of stand-off in which the communities of each preserve an ideology of lineage (although not of the same organizational significance that one finds in the Middle East). In Europe, by contrast, the relationship between the two regimes has confused their separation. Where pastoralism is still practiced, mountain villagers adapt to it through dyadic ties rather than in collectivities. For example, private landholdings and water rights are qualified by servitudes of various kinds which allow shepherds access to one's property for passage, watering flocks, and grazing and gleanings on the stubble after the harvest (see Chiva 1963: 104-105). In addition, annual contracts between individual cultivators and shepherds permit the latter to graze their animals on fallow land. In order to assure themselves access to village resources, the shepherds studied by Campbell sought patrons and co-parents in the agricultural community to which they were attached for a part of the year. Even though many of them were clients of the mayor, who allocated rights to the use of communal pastures, the nature of the relationship in each case was individual and private (Campbell 1964: 224-238).

The same might be said of hostilities. Between villagers and shepherds there are constant conflicts of interest over abusive grazing, trespass, and the allocation of water. Yet these do not elicit from the village a corporate response, in part because they cannot be attributed to a foreign and corporately organized community. Rather, the animals of small *ad hoc* associations and single individuals pass through unfenced holdings to exploit grazing opportunities offered by individual peasants, whose rotation cycles are individually determined. The injured parties must confront the trespassers themselves, defending their rights of property in village courts or buying protection privately. Conflicts of interest sustain a plethora of arbitrators, estimators, and popular justices in every village, but they do not galvanize the village as a whole (see Chiva 1963: 111). Even the notorious bandits of the mountainous regions do not swoop down on villages as in a raid: they are fed, clothed, and protected by particular villagers with whom they have one or another form of dyadic relationship. These same bands also incorporate fugitives of peasant background. In other words, the separation of the two communities is blurred, and the internal cohesion of each is correspondingly weakened (Campbell 1964: 237-238).

Another familiar kind of Mediterranean community, closer to the urban-dominated pole of our continuum, but still not effectively administered by states, is the agrotown, found in association with the latifundium in Southern Italy, Western Sicily, and Southern Spain. These regions are mountainous, but not to the extent that altitude is a barrier to agriculture. They are seasonally arid and have poor soils, factors which discourage intensive cultivation but not the cultivation of wheat. The penetration of states stopped short of such places, but they were by no means economically isolated. From the time of the Roman Empire, lords and adventurers represent-

ing the interests of external cities and markets reduced them to colonies. Indeed, their accessibility by sea and the very lack of urbanization made them ideal locations for the extraction of agricultural surpluses.

Because colonization occurred well before the industrial revolution, it did not transform, but only contained, pastoralism. During the Renaissance, foreign lords partially converted the pastoral economy into ranching in order to supply expanding markets for wool. In the process many villages were abandoned, peasants fleeing to hilltop towns as sheep invaded village arable land and commons. The sheep, however, retained their transhumance pattern, since the "ranches" were never irrigated and supplied no fodder. Beginning in the fifteenth century, the "ranch" or *latifundium* was increasingly cultivated in wheat. The number of sheep declined, and cattle were added to livestock. Animal husbandry played an important role in the rotation cycle of these large estates since, wandering over fallow to graze, animals provided the only source of fertilizer. Yet transhumance persisted, fodder crops were rarely sown, and even cattle were kept in the open without stalls. Nor did the settlement pattern change. The undercapitalization characteristic of a preindustrial colony led to both large estates (the *latifundium* in the Mediterranean, the *hacienda* in Latin America), and the concentration of peasants in fewer settlements where they could be more easily controlled (Morse 1964: 474-477).

Agrotowns, located on hilltops, are generally surrounded by the poorest soils. A belt of small properties, planted in olive trees and vineyards, rings the settlement, only because of the proximity of labor. Rarely is irrigation practiced, and hence few fruits and vegetables are grown. On the contrary, much of the land is periodically utilized by goatherds (town dwellers not associated with the *latifundium*) who care for their own animals and those of the agricultural population. Except for this grazing, the holdings near town are not fertilized—further indication of their closer relationship to pastoralism than to intensive agriculture (Sonnino 1925: 58-60, 76). The intimacy of this relationship is, of course, a source of much tension. Trespass and abusive grazing are frequent and lead peasants to deny goatherds access to stubble after the harvest. In response, the goatherds damage trees and vines or set fire to fields. In the agrotown of Western Sicily in which the author lived, one could account for a series of murders, occurring in the first two decades of the twentieth century when population pressure was high, in terms of this conflict of interests between small holders and goatherds in the zone surrounding the town.

Meanwhile, basins of reasonably good and potentially irrigable land were so far removed from the agrotowns, hence from human labor, that they too were extensively cultivated and frequently utilized for grazing. Such basins were often the centers of *latifundia*, administered and guarded by rentier capitalists and their henchmen, who were mostly of pastoral background. These types, in collusion with pastoralists-cum-bandits, perpetrated acts of violence which frightened cultivators away from the good land in the open countryside—a factor which in Sicily inhibited efforts at land reform as recently as the period immediately following World War II (Blok 1966).

In the agrotown, as in the mountain village, endemic conflict is greatly exacerbated by the economic autonomy of nuclear families. The latifundium, although it expropriated much peasant land, did not threaten this autonomy. The portion of a large estate to be cultivated was always divided into small plots for lease to heads of families. Indeed, the administrators of estates, responding to population growth, divided the land into ever smaller tenures. By the nineteenth century, if not before, the typical peasant in a latifundist region sharecropped two or more widely separated parcels in different ecological zones, did occasional day labor on other parcels, and worked, sublet, or rented out for grazing still other parcels which he owned (Sonnino 1925). Notwithstanding the existence of large estates, the land was fragmented. Moreover, because of the rotation system with its frequent cycles of fallow, sharecropping contracts were of short duration, usually lasting a year. Since contracts also varied from place to place, depending upon distance from town, condition of the soil, accessibility by road, etc., successful sharecroppers were hardly less master-strategists than Fulani cattle herders, although they had less power.

As among pastoralists, the economic autonomy of nuclear families in mountain villages and agrotowns presupposes partible inheritance. Indeed, in the bilateral societies of the European Mediterranean, daughters inherit equally with sons. When the inheritance is in animals the division is fairly straightforward, but the division of land becomes a complicated affair, for partible inheritance requires that each plot of land be divided equally among all of the heirs (unless all of the father's holdings are of equal value, which is rarely the case). Disputes over inheritance in Mediterranean towns and villages often lead to protracted litigation and the estrangement of siblings. Succession is also likely to be a source of friction between a father and his sons: they press him to donate the property before he dies; he is reluctant to do this since he fears that once he gives up the land, they will no longer care for him in his old age. As a Sicilian proverb puts it, "One father can take care of ten sons, but 100 sons are not sufficient to care for one father" (see Peters 1963; P. Schneider 1969).

Partible inheritance also contributes to an incredible fragmentation of land holdings. In the case of an inheritance in animals, the consequences of partition are not so serious, since individual heirs can gradually build their flocks, while the wife's dowry in livestock becomes an integral part of the new family's patrimony. Inherited plots of land, located in different places and producing different crops, cannot be integrated by the use of selective breeding. The heir must develop a strategy for reintegrating his patrimony, whether by making a good marriage or by renting, borrowing, or buying missing assets, deploying his existing assets through a variety of short-term contractual arrangements (J. Schneider 1969). The fragmentation of land multiplies the boundaries which a family must defend; it complicates the allocation of water rights and routes of access to land which does not border on public roads or paths; it broadens the range of activities to which the head of a family must be committed in order to survive; and it provides more work for mediators, surveyors, and estimators. Above all, fragmenta-

tion increases the potential for conflict over encroachments by one man on another's patrimony. It is no wonder that many of the concerns and suspicions which we have described as characteristic of pastoralists also flourish among peasants, and with them the demand for constant reconnaissance and decision-making, both economic and political.

I do not mean to imply that the Mediterranean is unique in these respects. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries peasant societies all over the world experienced the partition of landholdings as a consequence of population growth, and with this the rise of conflict over water, boundaries, access, etc. In the Mediterranean, however, these problems have a longer history, a greater continuity into the present, and they are much more severe. In Ireland, overpopulation was met by a shift from partible to impartible inheritance, migrating sons and daughters renouncing their claims to the family patrimony, and by a significant shift towards marriage at a later age (Arensberg 1968: 95-101). In Asia the same crisis appears to have intensified prior patterns of sharing among kinsmen in the local community (Keyfitz 1965: 289-290). The Mediterranean response emphasized conflict between individuals and between nuclear families, with migrants from the area clinging to patrimonial claims or losing them by default. The differences ultimately reflect the much more complicated and conflict-laden relationship between animal husbandry and agriculture in the Mediterranean.

THE RESOLUTION: HONOR AND SHAME

Against great odds, and in spite of the centrifugal forces described above, the Mediterranean societies do generate nuclear family solidarity and, in some places, lineage solidarity. They also generate a social order based on networks of dyadic relations, which link nuclear family and lineage to external economic and political centers in the absence of effective state bureaucracies. Central to this social order are codes of honor and shame.

Honor as ideology helps shore up the identity of a group (a family or a lineage) and commit to it the loyalties of otherwise doubtful members. Honor defines the group's social boundaries, contributing to its defense against the claims of equivalent competing groups. Honor is also important as a substitute for physical violence in the defense of economic interests. The head of a family challenges the rest of the world with the idea of his family's honor. His "hypersensitive, punctilious" posture (in the words of Caro Baroja 1965) convinces others to exercise restraint, not so much to avoid physical retaliation as to avoid the consequences of continuing rancor. Paradoxically, the idea of honor can also serve to legitimate limited aggression, making acts of imposition, encroachment, and usurpation morally valid in the eyes of nearly everyone except the victim. Especially in bilateral societies, where the exercise of collective force and violence is vastly curtailed, but family patrimonies are extremely vulnerable, honor regulates affairs among men.

But if the family or lineage is inherently unstable, or at least has no long-term, indivisible economic interests in common, what besides family

name provides a focus for honor? The repository of family and lineage honor, the focus of common interest among the men of the family or lineage, is its women. A woman's status defines the status of all the men who are related to her in determinate ways. These men share the consequences of what happens to her, and share therefore the commitment to protect her virtue. She is part of their patrimony. This resolution of the problem of fragmentation is found among Mediterranean cultivators, particularly among those whose communities are most fragmented. It is found among certain middle class elements, such as *mafiosi* and urban Moslems, for reasons that I will suggest in the conclusion. But above all, it is among Mediterranean pastoralists that women play this role; and I think the role emerged spontaneously from the pastoral way of life.³

Pastoral societies place a premium on large families, and this focuses attention on women. They bear the sons who make the family economically and politically viable. In a sense, they are contested resources much like pastures and water, so much so that kidnappings, abductions, elopements, and the capture of concubines appear to have been frequent occurrences, at least in the past. Most ethnographies also reveal a consistent concern that a woman exercise her childbearing capacities on behalf of her spouse and his lineage if there is one. Among nomadic tribes where the principle of lineality is strongly developed, bride wealth demonstrates this concern. It is a payment by the lineage receiving a woman, to her lineage, in compensation for her progeny. If she bears no son, divorce occurs and the payment is returned. If she commits adultery and there is a divorce, her children remain with the husband and his group (Krader 1966: 144). Should the husband die, his lineage attempts to remarry the widow to one of his close agnates, to settle questions of inheritance among his children, and to assign guardians to any orphaned minors. In each of these practices, the lineage seeks to retain control of the offspring.

In many African societies, divorce and polygyny regulate family size. (In Central Asia, polygyny is unusual, although not unknown; the greater complexity of social organization probably accounts for this difference as it would, according to my hypothesis, account for the more relaxed relationship between the sexes in that part of the world.) Among the pastoral Fulani, for example, the head of a household takes an additional wife when this is warranted by increases in the size of his herd, and divorces a wife who bears an insufficient number of children. Sometimes women allow themselves to be kidnapped, or run away to join another domestic group. Most divorces and separations reflect demographic fluctuation within the household, although they may be triggered by incompatibility between husband and wife, or between co-wives (Stenning 1959: 181-185).

Divorce and polygyny are to the household what patron-client contracts are to the lineage; they increase the flexibility and responsiveness of corporate groups. Women are reduced to currency in the process. Among the Fulani, husband and wife hardly constitute a pair except when they are copulating. A bride bears her first child in her father's house, and is not visited by her husband during her seclusion there. Her brothers set up the

marriage bed in the husband's household. It occupies women's space, which is physically and ritually separated from men's space. Men and women do not eat together, nor do they have much occasion for interaction, except when the women must represent their own interests in the decision-making process. Men spend the day under a tree, or in circulation, gathering information for the strategic decisions they must make. They consider it a source of contamination or embarrassment to be involved with women (Stenning 1959: 104-111; see also Cunnison 1966: 116).

Polygynous households are most prevalent in regions of the Mediterranean where pastoralism is least pressured; as agriculture impinges on the resources of a pastoral economy, household size dwindles. The agrarian society also forces its moral code upon the pastoralists, limiting in varying degrees their capacity to regulate family size through polygyny and divorce and their tendency to exploit the reproductive capacities of women. The Islamic religion, although it began among pastoralists, represents the hegemony of agriculture in pastoral regions (Aswad 1970). It limits the number of wives to a husband, sets conditions for divorce, and gives women partial rights to inherit. Its courts and taxes restrict the autonomy of lineages. Middle Eastern nomads observe these proscriptions more closely than do the Fulani. In the Maghreb there is less need for them, for here lineages are weaker and fewer families can afford to have more than one wife.

The nuclear family of the European Mediterranean is usually contrasted with its North African counterpart. It is bilateral rather than patrilineal; divorce and polygyny are outlawed; there is no bridewealth, only dowry, no cousin marriage; and women have equal inheritance rights with men. Yet Barth (1961: 33-36; see also Cunnison 1966: 96) suggests that parallel cousin marriage, common on the North African side, does not reflect strong agnatic bonds so much as it helps to create them. Marrying father's brother's daughter is a way of creating solidarity with father's brother, and with this brother's sons. The practice of levirate also binds patrilateral kinsmen through their joint interest in a woman. In the bilateral societies of the European side, cousin marriage of all kinds is proscribed by the Church, and the levirate is not practiced; but here these forms would serve no purpose since lineality is not a principle of organization. There is, however, a strong emphasis on affinal ties. Among the Sarakatsani, for example, a man's relationship with his brothers is often not so close as is his relationship with his in-laws, for they maintain an interest in his wife. His children are closer to their mother's brothers than to their father's brothers. Relations are more intimate with cross-cousins than with parallel cousins, even though the latter may live for a brief interval under the same roof (Campbell 1964: 103-104). Conversely, if dowry, as opposed to bridewealth, is pronounced on the European side, we should note that in many patrilineal societies bride-wealth is channeled into dowry, the bride's family maintaining a strong link to her at the expense of her husband's lineage (Barth 1961: 18-19, 33, 140).

Christianity, the source of so many of the rules governing domestic life on the European side, is also not "opposite to" Islam. It simply went further

to advance the hegemony of agriculture, and did so in regions in which agriculture had the best chance. Where Islam offers partial inheritance rights to women and protects them from arbitrary divorce, Christianity offers them full rights and prohibits divorce altogether. Where Islam dignifies women by shrouding them in veils, Christianity removes the veil and offers the Virgin Mary as a model of feminine virtue. According to the long-haired radical, Saint Paul, Christian society should have been neither male nor female, but egalitarian (Douglas 1966: 157-158). It is no wonder that women are more religious than men in the European Mediterranean, or that traditionalist South Italian women shudder at the prospect of legalized divorce in Italy.

The hegemony of agriculture and religion, particularly on the European side, did more than limit the practices of polygyny and divorce; it restricted the capacity of families and kin groups to maintain spatial arrangements and organize force in order to protect and control their women. Yet the competition among men for women remained intense. In less pressured Fulani society, control and protection are a function of the almost complete separation of men from women, and of the latter's constant childbearing. Ideally, a girl is betrothed by her father at the onset of her first menses, pregnant within sixteen months, and either lactating or gestating until she is no longer fertile (Stenning 1959). But these alternatives are compromised in the Mediterranean. In their place, women present a defensive front to the world, on the European side, especially, warding off aggression through posture alone. Their message, couched in the ideology of shame, and in the behavior of lowered eyes and conservative clothing, if not of total seclusion, is this: "I would not conceive of violating the sanctity of this household, or defying the honor of its head, and you had better not either."

In other words, although women are contested resources, much like sheep, and, given a competitive society, subject to usurpation, they can be socialized to bear part of the defensive burden themselves. Mediterranean pastoralists (and cultivators) do not ritually avoid their wives, but they find many occasions to express a lack of trust in them. Indeed, there is a widespread assumption that women—especially in the role of wife—are victims of their sexuality and potential traitors to the household—"cows of Satan" or "devil's nets" as the Arabs so nicely put it (Bourdieu 1965: 227). The Sarakatsani men identify themselves with sheep, which are descended from God, while women are identified with goats, descended from the devil. Men are careful to specify the conditions under which women, especially married women involved in sexual intercourse, may handle sheep (Campbell 1964: 31-32).

Growing up in a Mediterranean society, women are taught to regard themselves and their sexuality in these terms. Their sense of shame and their ignorance of the facts of life are, at least in theory, among the most extreme in the world. Over and over they hear that any message of sexual interest to an outsider, unless he be the closest of cousins, will be construed as an act of defiance and sabotage against the family enclave. Yet I do not think that the resulting social controls are the only function of this particular form of

male dominance. As with honor, the idea of shame serves both to defend or enhance the patrimonies of families and to define the family as a corporate group.

Recall that the economic autonomy of nuclear families demands an inheritance system that undermines the position of the father in relation to his sons, and militates against a cooperating association of sons. Father and sons lose their joint stake in a patrimony and could become unmerciful competitors at great cost to social order, were it not for their abiding interest in the comportment of the daughters of the family. More particularly, families associate their honor with the virginity of unmarried daughters, and with the chastity of these women after marriage. Pastoral Somali and neighboring peoples of Abyssinia and the Sudan practice infibulation on eight and nine year old girls (Levy 1965; Lewis 1961: 44), but this is only an extreme manifestation of the virginity tests or public defloration demanded of brides on their wedding night by many traditional Mediterranean societies. An unmarried girl's loss of virginity brings unbearable shame to her family or lineage who, if they are to recover their honor, must first kill the girl and then her lover or seducer (this is the norm, although the form may deviate from it considerably). In patrilineal societies, responsibility for purification resides in brothers and first cousins, who remain the protectors of the women of the family even after these women marry. In cases of adultery, the husband (unless he is a parallel cousin) merely initiates divorce proceedings and tries to recover payments of bridewealth, while brothers and cousins go about avenging the honor of their family. In a bilateral society the brothers cannot afford to kill for honor once they are married and have children of their own. However, they are very concerned with their sister's comportment (before and after she marries), and do not, as a rule, themselves marry until all of their sisters have husbands to protect them and to guard their sexual modesty (Peristiany 1965b; 179).

There is a contradiction here. If common interest in a woman holds men together, and if brothers have a stake in the status of their sister and her children even after she marries, what are the consequences for the relationship between this woman and her husband? Although she is drawn toward the new family for which she will bear children, she does not sever her attachment to her father and brothers. They are still the guardians of her honor, and she of theirs. The continuance of this relationship is symbolized by bride-capture and rivalry at the time of the wedding.

In a sense there is a division of labor between virginity and shame. The first is central to the solidarity of the family of origin, and to the honor of the patrilineal group (and it is perhaps more pronounced on the North African side). The second shores up the family of procreation and the honor of its head—a form more appropriate to European organization. The two concepts, however, are by no means mutually exclusive, for the virgin feels shame and the married woman feels chaste. (In the Christian utopia, she becomes a mother through immaculate conception.) More than this, the concepts are ideologically interdependent. Men not only want to control the sexuality of women; women are for them a convenient focus, the most

likely symbol around which to organize solidary groups, in spite of powerful tendencies towards fragmentation. If female sexuality is evil and treacherous, then virgins are not only special; they are sacred—and their sanctity stands for much more than their mere utility as reproductive organisms. I suggest that the sanctity of virgins plays a critical role in holding together the few corporate groups of males which occur in many traditional Mediterranean societies.⁴

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have been concerned with three themes: cultural continuity in the Mediterranean; the problem of organizing men in groups which is pronounced in this area; and the origin of the cultural codes of honor and shame. I have suggested a correlation between the intensity of feelings about honor and shame and the severity of organizational problems in pastoral, and in some agricultural, communities. I have not compared the way these codes operate in various communities for to do this would require much more comparative ethnography than is now available. Moreover, it may be too late. Mediterranean families are no longer so totally preoccupied as they once were with the virginity of their daughters and the shame of their wives, and they are becoming less so all the time. Many of the customs associated with such preoccupations cannot possibly survive the diffusion of an international youth culture, let alone the impact of women's liberation when it eventually reaches this area. Moreover, the expansion of state institutions undermines the need for them. Of greater interest, I think, is the fate of the organizational premises which underwrote the evolution of honor and shame. For nuclear family autonomy and fragmented economic and political structures are enormously relevant to the processes of economic development. How they are incorporated, changed, or broken down is a problem which ought to be tackled in a comparative framework.

For the recent past, honor and shame are not, however, peripheral. The nineteenth century pressures—demographic, political, and economic—which led to changes in land tenure and the emergence of entrepreneurial classes also, in some cases, gave these codes a new lease on life. Where entrepreneurs emerged without much protection or legal backing from states, they advanced their own positions in society, consolidated their wealth, and monopolized resources by flaunting their honor and protecting their women to the hilt, and by exploiting the ideas of honor and shame as political ideologies which governed relations of power among men. This, I think, is part of the story of mafia in Western Sicily, and it may also apply to entrepreneurial classes in the Middle East. Right or wrong, one cannot explore the possibility without a political and ecological understanding of honor and shame.

NOTES

1. This analysis grows out of observations of interpersonal conflict made by myself and Peter Schneider during a field study of a West Sicilian town in 1965-67. I gratefully acknowledge financial assistance from the Ford Foundation's Foreign Area Fellowship Program and from the Mediterranean Studies Project of the University of Michigan. I wish also to thank Mervyn Meggitt and Basil Sansom for bibliographical

suggestions, and Ed Hansen, Professor Meggitt, Peter Schneider, and Nina Swidler for careful reading of an earlier version of the paper.

2. See Paine (1970) for a description of the same problem among bilateral reindeer herders in Lapland. I am indebted to Paine's insight on the importance to decision makers of an intelligence network.

3. A lesser focus of family and lineage honor is the guest. The code of hospitality in Mediterranean societies serves more than the people who are hosted. For a family or lineage, it is a point of honor that no harm befall a guest, that he be protected and respected throughout the community. Among Middle Eastern nomads, the murder of a guest must be avenged by the agnatic vengeance group of the host. In other words, the guest is a joint patrimony of the group, and the protection of his integrity elicits a common sense of purpose among all its members (Abou-Zeid 1965: 254).

4. Prostitutes are in some ways as important as virgins in a Mediterranean society, for obvious practical reasons. In addition to the practicalities, their existence, like that of adulteresses and "cows of Satan," inflates the virginity ideal. Note that pollution ideas about women focus on sexuality rather than on menstruating and childbearing. This suggests a basis for comparison with other societies in which male-female relationships are a cornerstone of social organization (see Douglas 1966; Meggitt 1964).

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