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FAMILY, MARRIAGE AND SOCIAL CHANGE
IN SOME LIBYAN VILLAGES.

BY

JAMIL M. HILAL

Thesis submitted for the degree
of M.Litt. of the University of Durham

1969

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II

P R E F A C E

The following thesis is based on the result of field work undertaken in the Summer of 1965 and the Spring of 1966. This was followed by a short visit of two weeks in the late Summer of 1967. In all, a period of just over six months was spent in the area of study. I am fortunate in that no problem of learning the Arabic language arose, and a period of a few weeks was sufficient for making me familiar with the local dialect. The system used in transliterating Arabic words is given in the Appendix (table Ia).

As far as I know, no sociological studies have been published on rural life in Tripolitania. This was a principal motive in undertaking a study of some aspects of life in the area. Further, Libya is undergoing rapid economic changes as a consequence of the rising revenues of oil exports. The villages surveyed were - at the time of study - beginning to experience the impact of such changes. The author hopes that the information found in this study will prove useful as a record - at one moment in time - of certain aspects of social life in these communities.

An attempt was made, throughout the thesis, to put the present study in a wider cultural context. Thus comparable information about other Arab villages was referred to, and where possible utilized to add a wider depth to the study.

III

A detailed census of 171 households, comprising the total population of four villages and a third of another, was made. Whenever possible, I participated in village life, attended marriage and religious ceremonies, sat with men in their fields, joined their company in village shops, visited them in their homes, frequented administrative offices, and obtained genealogies related to all the households surveyed. This proved invaluable as an accurate source of information about marriage patterns and village emigration.

The research project was made possible by a grant from the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies of the University of Durham. To this centre I am very grateful. I am also grateful for the practical assistance and help given by the Libyan government, especially the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Statistical and Census Department in Tripoli, and the Quşbat Mutasarifia and Municipality.

My major debt must go, however, to the many villagers who showed kindness, patience and understanding. Many individuals, who prefer anonymity, gave a great deal of their time helping me to survey their villages. Some, as friends, provided me with lengthy written descriptions of features of life in their villages. Indeed this was maintained after my leaving the area.

IV

I should also like to thank Professor John Rex, of the Department of Sociology, University of Durham, for his cordial help and assistance.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTORY

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL SETTING.

1. The Arab Peasant: A Socio-historical Sketch.

Like many other developing countries, the majority of the population of the Arab World are, or can be called, peasants. Since the middle of the last century, the Arab peasantry has been subject to multiple changes that have directly or otherwise, affected some of the basic patterns of their social relations. Since Libya forms part of the Arab culture area, an attempt to put the present study of some Arab Libyan Villages into a wider historical and socio-economic perspective, seems desirable. What follows, in this section, is a very brief description and evaluation of some of the general changes that have occurred in most of the Arab World since mid 19th Century, and their impact on the peasant village society.

The most salient feature of the traditional Arab peasant communities is the collective nature of their social life. This can be shown from the following characteristics:-

(a) The compact nucleated structure surrounded by cultivated fields,

is the predominant type of settlement in the Middle East¹. Raids by Bedouins and rival villages (common in the 19th Century)², scarcity of water resources, and the demands of the kinship system, are some of the factors related to the emergence and maintenance of this type of settlement³.

(b) The physical and cultural isolation of the traditional Arab peasant communities: Up to the middle of the 19th Century in most Arab countries, and up to the beginning of that century in Egypt, land tenure took the form known as iltizam or muqata'a. The multazims or tenants-in-chief, who were mostly notables, tribal leaders, religious dignitaries and mamluk soldiers, were each granted the tax farming rights of one or more villages in return for payment of taxes to provincial and central treasuries. In theory the land belonged to the state, but in the 18th Century some of the taxfarmers, due to the ineffectiveness of central authority, came to be the effective owners of the land assigned to them. They, together with their appointed agents, exploited the peasant and tied him to the soil⁴. Under this system the village was treated as a collective entity, responsible as a whole for the payment of taxes and the performance of other duties, e.g. irrigation work. The peasant lacked the ~~usual~~ rights to

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1. As an example see Figure 3 in Chapter 2
 2. Gibb and Bowen; vol. 1 1950; pp. 266-268
 3. Tannous; Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution (1943), 1944. pp.527-530; Ayrout; 1963, pp.87-88; Baer; 1964, pp.162-163
 4. Gibb and Bowen; p. 260

individual land ownership, and his status was similar to that of the European feudal peasant. Although this system has some feudal characteristics and has been called feudal⁵, it lacked some of the basic characteristics of European feudalism. The Iltizam system was basically an administrative system, and the tax farmers were government officials, and not the Sultan's or ruler's lords or vassals. They had no relationship of personal fealty to their rulers. Their main duty was not to raise an army, but the collection of taxes, and if they failed to meet the financial demands made of them, they were evicted from their holdings. The Multazims were city or town dwellers and except in nomadic areas they had no attachment to their territory. No relationship of reciprocal obligations between peasants, taxfarmers and rulers could have merged, for the latter were regularly replaced. In Libya, for example, the number of governors (walis) who ruled the country between 1883-1880 was 23⁶. A state of landed or military feudalism existed only in areas where the central government was extremely weak (e.g. in the hilly regions of Lebanon and Kurdish hills in Iraq)⁷.

This system of taxfarming was abolished in the first half of the last century. The Ottoman State took over the ownership of land, and tax began to be collected directly by government officials.

5. Poliak, 1939, pp. 48-49

6. Cachia (Arabic translation), 1946, p.209

7. Harik, Autumn 1965, pp. 405-421

The State also began to transfer land ownership to private individuals. However, only usufruct (tassaruf) was transferred, and full ownership rights (raqaba) remained in the hands of the state. This distinction was abolished late last century in Egypt, and more recently in the rest of the Arab world⁸.

(c) Collective land ownership: The Musha'a system, where land was held in common by the village or sections of it and redistributed periodically among individual households, was common in most parts of the Arab World in the last century⁹. The system illustrates the economic collectivism of the Arab peasants' recent past. Its destruction was a necessary condition for some of the changes that followed, as we shall see shortly.

The Arab village, in Ottoman times, was not only treated, but also functioned as an economic unit in its relations with the government. It also acted to a large degree as an autonomous socio-political organisation¹⁰. The physical isolation of the village and the nature of the Ottoman administration allowed the larger kinship units to function as socio-political groups, and because of the Musha'a system, ^(which existed in some areas) these groups provided also the basis for the economic organisation of the peasant community. Defence against raids and

8. Baer, op. cit. p.140

9. Tannous, op. cit., p.532; Baer, op. cit., p.140; Poliak, op, cit. p .69; Warriner, 1948, p.19

10. Gibb and Bowen, op. cit., pp.262-263

the maintenance of internal law and order were carried out by the larger kinship units (called hamulat, luhmat, biyut, 'ailat, etc.) or by the whole village. Internal disputes were settled by the elders of the community. The village guest houses (mudif or madafa) functioned, until recently as the most important recreational and social centres for the peasantry. Since Islam is free from an ecclesiastical hierarchy, the running of the village mosque remained a local affair with the peasants choosing their own Imam to lead them in prayer. Folk religion was, and to a lesser degree remains, centred round the local shrine (wali, maqam, mazar etc.) This, together with intra-village preferential marriage, helped to maintain village autonomy and a sense of a separate identity¹¹.

The disintegration of the above features of village autonomy, collectiveness and self-sufficiency, began with the administrative changes introduced by the Ottomans in the last century¹². The most important of these changes were the abolition of iltizam, and later, the introduction of the Ottoman Land Code (1858). This code abolished collective ownership and the Turkish authorities began to register

-
11. This does not imply that village communities had no relationships with their larger societies, or that they could ignore, for a long period of time, these relationships. The village had mutual economic relations with the desert and the town. Further, the peasants had to support with their agricultural surplus the Ottoman rulers and administrators.
 12. Many of these changes were introduced by the Ottoman Authorities to strengthen the Ottoman system against the increasing European military and economic threat. (Wickwar, 1963, pp.185-188).

land on an individual basis¹³. The most important consequence of the application of this code was the emergence of a stratum of large landowners in most Arab countries. The suspicious relationship that existed between the peasant and Ottoman authorities led the latter to think that taxation and conscription were the motives behind the new regulations, and consequently they tended to register land in the names of city and village notables and dignitaries. The masha'a system made it easy for village leaders to register land in their own names. Further, the development of a debt relationship between traders and city merchants on the one hand, and the peasantry on the other enabled the former to seize land when the latter failed to pay their debts. Ruling families in parts of the Ottoman Empire tended to alienate public land to themselves and their officials. Uncultivated land was reclaimed by those with economic and political power, and state land that was offered for sale was bought mainly by the new wealthy stratum of town dwellers, village dignitaries, and sometimes by companies established for the purpose. Many tribal leaders took advantage of the new laws by registering tribal land in their own names¹⁴.

The emergence of this new stratum of large landowners led to a basic change in the economic relations and status of the peasant, from

13. In Tripolitania this led to the establishment of land registration departments together with special courts to solve land disputes. However effective application of the law did not commence outside Tripoli and the Coastal Zone till later in the century (Brehony, 1961, p.339)

14. Warriner, 1948, pp.15-20

that of a servile individual mainly farming for subsistence on the multazim's estate, to that of a tenant, a sharecropper or an agricultural worker farming for an absentee landlord. The peasant was forced to enter a capitalistic economic market (national and international). The land that tied the peasant to his village and kinship group became the property of large landowners and city dwellers. In mid-century Egypt, for example, 72% of all peasant proprietors did not own as much as an acre of land, while over $\frac{1}{2}$ of the cultivated area was owned by less than $\frac{1}{20}$ of the population.¹⁵ In Syria (before 1958) about 70% of the rural population were landless, and existed either as sharecroppers or labourers, and $\frac{2}{3}$ of the large landowners were absentee landlords¹⁶. In Iraq, the landless peasants constituted $\frac{2}{3}$ of the peasant population, while in Southern Iraq, large landowners owned virtually all the land¹⁷. In Algeria (1954), 4% of the population owned over 65% of the cultivated land¹⁸. Islamic inheritance laws and the rise in population (both leading to further land fragmentation) have made it extremely difficult for the small peasant to continue to subsist on the land.

The economic and political power of the above group of large landowners and merchants was strengthened during the period of mandatory and colonial rule. 'Indirect rule' and the weakness of the inherited

15. Warriner, 1962, p. 24

16. Garzouzi, 1963 pp 83-90

17. Warriner, 1948, p.15; Baer, op. cit. p.145

18. Chaliand, 1964, p. 100

Ottoman administration led the European power to rely on the above group, and on the traditional village and tribal leaders, to administer their territories¹⁹. In North Africa, the colonial administration used the traditional land tenure to further the aim of land colonisation, and the musha'a land was seized as state land²⁰. The majority of seats in parliament and influential administrative positions were occupied in most mid-century Arab countries by large landowners and big traders, who continually opposed any attempts for the institution of any land reform²¹. Not until the overthrow of the above regimes by the military, and the subsequent institution of land reform, did the peasant landlord relationship change. That this was so may be partly due to the fact that the army in these developing countries are the most highly organised section of the society. Further, the Arabisation of and establishment of national modern armies with mass enlistment, led to the recruitment of a large number of peasants into these²³. The main consequence of land reform has been the removal of the economic and political power of large landowners, and with it the exploitative relationship between landlord and peasant²⁴. It can also be said that these changes have increased the interest of the peasant in urban decisions, and have stimulated the establishment of

19. Warriner, *ibid.*, pp. 23-24

20. Dupree, 1957, p.51

21. Ayrout, *op. cit.* p.14; Baer, *op. cit.* p.151

22. Baer, *ibid.* pp. 152-153

23. All the five villages studied have individuals who have joined the army.

24. In Egypt maximum landownership was limited in 1961 to 40 hectares, in Syria a similar law in 1963 limited ownership to 40 hectares of irrigated land. In Iraq maximum land is limited to 250 hc., and in Algeria to 50 hc.

peasant organisations.²⁵

A number of writers have commented on the passivity and conservatism of the peasantry in the Middle East²⁶. It seems that political passivity has been a characteristic of the peasantry in the major traditional political systems²⁷. In the Arab World, this ~~before-mentioned attribute~~ is partly due to the patrimonial administrative system of the Ottoman Empire, where the peasant and orthodox religious opinion accepted the notion that authority confers privilege, permits extortions, and legitimates the arbitrary use of force and harshness²⁸. Physical and cultural isolation and the lack of a tradition of attachment to the land by the peasant²⁹ is also relevant. However, despite the developments in transport, communications, mass media, and the spread of political and ideological propaganda, the pattern of Arab peasant action, under a system of agrarian capitalism and a colonial or semi-colonial situation, has been that of rebellions, rather than of attempts to institute revolutionary change³⁰. In the major Arab countries changes affecting the peasant (e.g. land reform) were not the product of peasants' political action, but that of governments acting on behalf of the peasant.

25. Berger, 1964. pp.209-210

26. Halpern, 1965, pp. 88-89; Ayrout, *op. cit.* p.152; Nieuwenhuize, *Sum.* 1962, p.296

27. Eisenstadt, 1963. pp 207-210

28. Gibb & Bowen, *op. cit.* p. 205

29. Warriner, 1962, pp. 60-61; Baer, *op. cit.* p.137

30. Peasants political mobilization seems to have been successful, in the Arab World, in a situation of armed struggle for national liberation, as happened in Algeria (Fanon, 1967, pp 85-118), and more recently, in South Yemen.

It has been suggested ³¹ that 'middle peasants' played a crucial role in successful peasant revolutions (e.g. China and Russia). Ayrou^t reports that medium landholders in Egypt became, in the first half of this century, prominent in nationalistic movements ³². It is possible, therefore, that the absence of a significant stratum of middle peasants in most Arab countries has contributed to their political inactivity. Further, the failure of urban revolutionary movements to provide leadership and organisation for the peasantry is also - it has been suggested - relevant ³³. Large land holdings have been almost absent from Libya, in this respect the country is not typical of the Middle East and the Maghreb. In Tripolitania, for example, about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the landowners had - in 1960 - between 20 and 100 hectares and owned 37% of all private land. However, about $\frac{1}{2}$ of the landed peasantry had less than 5 hectares each ³⁴. The intermittent and unstable Ottoman administration over Tripolitania undermined the effectiveness of the Ottoman regulations. Thus the transition from communal to individual ownership did not start until the end of the 19th Century, and was carried out on an egalitarian basis, with the consequence that the area suffers from excessive fragmentation and dispersion of landholdings. The absence of extensive irrigation works (unlike Egypt and Iraq) and the economic

31. Alavi, 1965, pp. 241-275

32. Ayrou^t, 1945, p.43

33. Barrington Moore, 1967, p.479

34. Calculated from the 1960 Census of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Tripoli 1962.

and political weakness of urban centres (less than 6% of the population in Tripolitania lived in Tripoli in 1911³⁵) have probably discouraged investment in land. Under the Italian occupation, land reclamation and seizure was carried out by the Italians for the purposes of colonisation, and not by the native urban and political elite, as happened elsewhere.

The individualisation of land ownership which started in the last century, and which has led to the destruction of the basis of village relative economic collectiveness and self-sufficiency, was accompanied by other administrative-political changes, which led to the loss of village political autonomy. Since the Ottomans adopted, in the first half of the last century, the French system of central administration, the village became the lowest administrative unit in a system of centralized administration. This was maintained by the mandatory and colonial powers and intensified after Independence. The village head (referred to as Mukhtar, Umda or Shaikh) came to be appointed by the government and was mainly responsible to its officials. He took on some of the functions of the traditional village council of elders, and until later, remained responsible for tax collection, the policing and security of the village, and was sometimes responsible for the recruitment of peasants for forced labour, and in some cases acted as a magistrate. However, in the

35. Harrison, 1967, p.406

last 2 or 3 decades, his status and position has rapidly declined³⁶. Few village heads remain large landowners and thus very few can maintain the traditional guest-house or exercise the necessary hospitality. More important, however, is the penetration of government administration into rural areas, which has deprived the village head of some of his functions (e.g. village security, tax collection). Further, the spread of mass media, modern means of transport and modern education, have undermined his position as the sole source of information in the village.

The existing system of administration has been characterised as a 'split system of authority'³⁷, indicating on the one hand the conflict between the government official and those who informally are accepted as the village leaders, and on the other the lack of political integration of the village into the larger society. Moreover, (as we shall see in the following section) the position of the village head remains conflictual. He is appointed by the government and is required to perform a number of administrative duties which are likely to be in conflict with his personal relationships in the village community.

The destruction of village autonomy and self-sufficiency, and the emergence of other features and conflicts, must be related to

36. Ammar, 1954, pp. 79-80; Baer, op. cit. pp. 166-167

37. Nieuwenhuije, op. cit. pp. 295-308

and individualization of property seems to be accompanied by greater emphasis on the immediate family, and the position of larger kinship units and other features of traditional village life (e.g. guest-houses, the traditional system of stratification) have been greatly undermined⁴⁰. These factors and the fact of a colonial past have altered the villager's frame of reference for his membership. He is emerging as a nationally conscious citizen of a modern state⁴¹. Recent studies indicate new types of conflicts emerging at the village level: conflict between traditional values which emphasize the inherited norms and values of group loyalty and conformity to village standards, and the secular and individualistic ethics of the new economic occupations⁴². Apart from conflict in economic values, there seems to be conflict related to the basis of power legitimation; conflict between the traditional control of rural areas (based on age, kinship connections and wealth) and the younger generation (who are likely to be Lerner's 'moderns' or 'transitionals'), who seek to legitimate power on a more universalistic criteria (e.g. education and political awareness)⁴³.

Many of the changes outlined above seem to be general to most developing countries⁴⁴. However, the intensity and diffuseness of

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40. Ammar, op. cit. pp.82-84; Lutfiyya, 1966, p.22; Salim, 1962, p. 75; Ghaith, 1964, pp. 375-76 ; Cohen, 1965. p.2
41. Hirabayashi & el-Khatib, 1958, p.358; Brunner, 1953, pp.149-155 Sweet, 1954, p.192.
42. Salim, op. cit, pp.141-143; Sweet, ibid. p.234; Quint, 1958 pp.369-384, Lutfiyya, op. cit. pp. 182-3
43. Ghaith, op. cit. p.375; Moore, Aug. 1963, pp.527-540, Adams, 1957. pp.225-235; Lutfiyya, ibid. pp. 173-4
44. Halpern, 1967, pp.123-127

two basic processes of change:

- (a) the extension, over a wider area, of market relationships and the replacement of subsistence farming by production for a market;
- (b) the emergence of modern national states.

It is the combination of these two processes that makes the position of the rural population unique in the 20th Century, not only in the Arab world, but also in developing countries.³⁸

Related to the above two basic processes are the developments in modern means of transport, communications, the mass media, secular education, rise of national armies, rural-urban emigration and the general acceleration of the process of urbanization. All this is taking place (unlike what happened in Europe) before developments in large scale industrialization. The consequences for the peasantry, of the above, have been multiple. Daniel Lerner argues that some of the above factors are related to the emergence of a new type of personality (what he calls "transitional") in the rural areas of the Middle East. The 'transitionals', in contrast with the 'traditionals', tend to be media participant, emphatic or psychically mobile, desire social change and participation in it.³⁹ Economic differentiation

38. Wolf, 1966, p.1

39. Lerner, 1958, pp.69-79. This study did not include Libya. However the personality types described by Lerner can be seen in the villages studied. In these villages almost all the households had at least one transistor radio. When asked, a group of men, in one of the above villages, about the changes they wish to introduce to their village or to the area the following items were mentioned: Piped water, electricity, hospital, a youth club, the building of modern houses and demolition of old ones, a secondary school, modern barber shops, and a brothel. "Progress" is defined in terms of acquiring some of the characteristics of urbanism.

these are likely to vary from area to area and even from village to village. The following chapters will be an attempt to evaluate the significance of these changes in terms of their relevance to particular social relationships in 5 villages in Tripolitania (Libya).

2. Msellata: A Socio-historical Sketch.

The villages under study lie within the area generally known as Msellata, which forms part of Northern Tripolitania (see Fig. 1 opposite). Tripolitania was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire in mid 16th Century, and remained so until 1710, when Ahmed Al-Karamanli, a leading Cologhli,⁴⁵ deposed the Turkish governor, slaughtered the Janisseries, and established independent control of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. The Karamanli dynasty ruled Libya until 1835 when the Ottomans succeeded in re-establishing control over the country. In 1911 Italy invaded Libya, and between 1923 and 1939 Italian citizens and peasants were granted land concessions or settled on large "Demographic" estates by the Italian government⁴⁶. With the final occupation by the allied forces of Libya in 1943, Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were separately placed under British military administration, Fezzan under French military administration. After Independence in 1951, Libya became a federal monarchy under King Idris as-Sanusi, but in 1963 this federal

45. The Cologhli were trained Turkish Janisseries who had intermarried with the local population. They succeeded in occupying influential, administrative positions and tended to indentify themselves with the indigenous population.

46. In 1941 there were 110,000 Italians in Libya (or about a tenth of total population) (Sharabi, 1963. p.41).

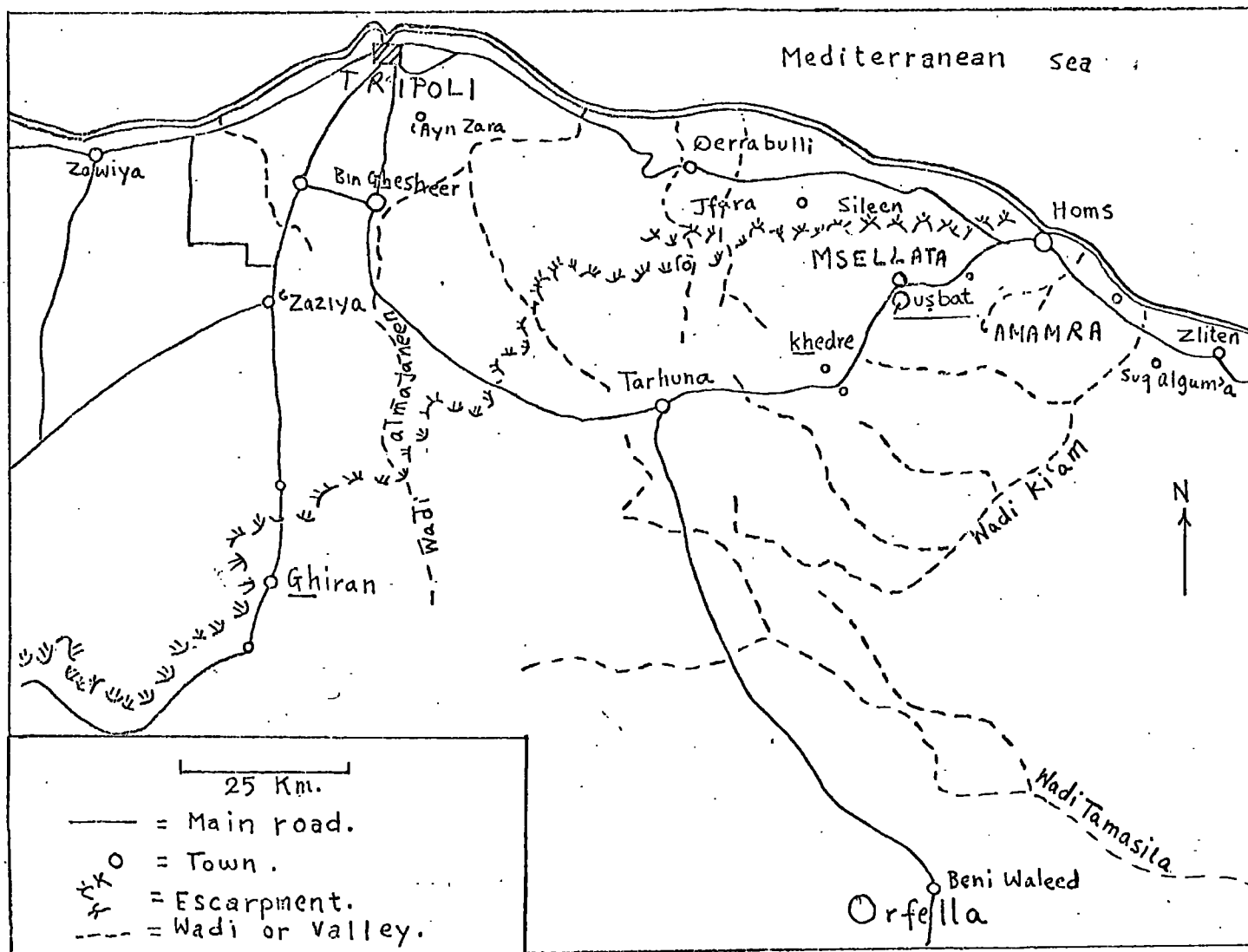


Fig. 1; Northwest Tripolitania.

system was abandoned in favour of a unitary system of government.

Libya (present population around 1.6 million) is divided into 10 districts (muqate'at) - 5 in Tripolitania - each headed by a commissioner (muhafidh). Each of the above districts are divided into a number of sub-districts (mutaserifiat) and these in turn are divided into quarters (Mudiriyat).

Msellata lies on the plateau known as Jebel Msellata, which forms part of the hill-range known as the Jebel, stretching from Nalut, near the Tunisian border in the West, to Homs town in the East. The administrative and commercial centre of the area is Qusbat (see fig.1). This town has six quarters or 'villages' (referred to locally as either villages or streets - "Shawari"). Each functions more or less as a village with its own Shaikh and Imam. The modern part of the town was built by the Italians and in it are to be found most of the administrative, governmental, municipal and other centres of the area. The nearest town to Qusbat is Homs, which is 25 km. away and has a population of about 4,000. The administrative dependence of Msellata on Homs goes back to the Ottoman period. Its economic influence on the area is likely to increase, since Homs is being rapidly industrialized and urbanized⁴⁷. Tripoli, the major city in Tripolitania (population in 1964 - 213,506) is approximately 145 km. away. Both Homs and

47. A new cement factory in Homs is to start production soon, and a number of buildings and public offices have been built recently. Homs' port is under reconstruction and it is planned to modernize the town as a holiday resort.

Tripoli are connected to Qusbat by a regular daily bus service and by taxi. Apart from Qusbat and the 'Amamra area, there are 24 villages of various sizes (ranging from just above 100 to 1,200 inhabitants) in Msellata. The road distance between these villages and Qusbat town range from $\frac{3}{4}$ km. to 20 km.; the majority however, are under 10 km. away. According to the 1964 population census Qusbat had 3,223 inhabitants and the whole area (excluding Al-'Amamra) numbered 14,488.⁴⁸

The basic occupation in the area is the cultivation of olives and cereals. Msellata is renowned as a centre of olive cultivation and has been so since Roman times. In 1911 the area had 125,000 olive trees (or $\frac{1}{4}$ of all olives in Tripolitania)⁴⁹. In 1788 Tully reports that olive oil was brought in 'immense quantities to Tripoli' or shipped from the coast of Msellata (i.e. from Homs) to Europe⁵⁰. The area could export, early this century, anything up to 1,500 tons of oil⁵¹. Because of the area's traditional position as an important centre of olive cultivation, the local inhabitants were conscious of the import of external economic and political events on the area⁵². In 1841 a report from the area's tax officer to the wali of Tripoli mentioned the existence of 80 oil presses in Msellata, 60 of which were operating that year, and that the 'ashr tax (1/10th) on olive oil amounted to

48. General Population Census, 1964, Tripoli, 1966.

49. Brehory, 1961, p.358. In 1964 there were 139,186 producing olive trees in Msellata (communication from Homs Dept. of Agriculture).

50. Tully, 1957, p.191

51. Fantoli, 1923, pp.241-243

52. An old local saying ran as follows: "in any dispute, even if totally foreign to the region, it is always Qusbat that pays".

3,655 qfeez (qfeez = 7 litres)⁵³.

The fact that Msellata has been, and to a lesser degree remains⁵⁴, an important centre of olive cultivation, does not imply that because of this, it enjoys economic security. Agriculture in the area is completely dependent on rain. Rainfall is low, irregular and confined to the winter months. The incalculability of the climate where the scorching sand-laden south wind (known as the qibli) may set in at any time causing damage to crops and olive blossoms, coupled with the irregularity of the rainfall, reduces the value of agriculture as a source of economic security. The full implications of this and a further description of the economic life of the area will be dealt with in Chapter 4.

Before 1965 Msellata was a Mudirya (the lowest local administrative unit) administered from Qusbat town. In that year, and in addition to the above mudirya and that of 'Amamra, a Mutasarifia was established. As such it remains part of the Homs muqata'a. A historical sketch of the area's administration may be desirable before discussing the implications for the area of the contemporary local administration.

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53. From a Turkish document in the Archives of the Historical Museum in Tripoli. Translations from Turkish were kindly provided by Mr. M. Al'sta.
54. Because of the large number of olive trees planted by the Italians in Tripolitania (there were 2,411,000 Italian olive trees in the region) Msellata lost its earlier renowned reputation for olive cultivation. However, a well-known saying in the region still claims that "olive trees and oil are to be found in Msellata, but beauty and elegance are housed in Iqmate (an area in Tripolitania)"

In late 19th Century Ottoman period Msellata was administered as a 'gada',⁵⁵ reflecting, perhaps, the area's economic importance to the Turkish Authorities. As a gada (headquarters in Qusbat), it was administratively part of Homs mutasarifiya, which in turn was responsible to the wali of Tripoli. The government official in the area was responsible for the maintenance of law and order, and the collection, through his officials and village heads, of taxes.⁵⁶ It is clear that heavy taxation and arbitrary local administration did create unrest and rebellion. Some of the 19th Century documents in the archives of the Historical Museum in Tripoli include a number of petitions sent to the wali of Tripoli, complaining about the corruption and the arbitrariness of local government officials in Msellata.⁵⁷ In 1888 the government agent in the area requested the wali of Tripoli to send him 2 divisions (between 250 & 300 soldiers each) to 'supress rebels and bandits in Msellata'.⁵⁷ The history of Tripolitania in the 19th Century is largely that of intrigues at the centre, and rebellions in the rural and tribal areas.

Administratively, the population of Msellata was divided into 4 sections according to status and territorial or ethnic origin. Each

55. At the time Tripolitania was divided into 3 Mutasarifiyat, 16 gada, and 23 nahiya. (Ziada, 1958, p.55)

56. The Turkish authorities levied a number of taxes, the most important of which were the following:- 1. personal tax (40 piastres on every adult male). 2. Animal tax (camels: 40 piastres, cattle: 20 piastres, sheep: 4 piastres, goats: 2 piastres). 3. Trees (olive and palm trees: 2½ piastres per annum) 4. Produce taxes on cereals (these ranged from 1/10 to 4/10 of the produce).

57. Cachica, 1946 pp 89-91

57. Turkish documents in the archives of the Historical Museum, Tripoli.

of these was headed by a shaikh who was appointed by the Turkish authorities⁵⁸. The Shaikh's main function was the collection of taxes from his area. The four sections were as follows:-⁵⁹

a) Al-Ashraf section: This comprised the following villages: Awlad Hamid, Wadna, Al J'areem, Swadniya, and other groups, who left these villages to settle in others in the area. Al-Ashraf is a title given to those who claim descent from the Prophet. As such they formed a status group, and until 1900 their status was acknowledged by the Turkish authorities, who exempted them from taxation and gave them access to judicial and political offices. Any privileges which they still had were lost under the Italian Occupation. Apart from having the nominal title of Ashraf - indicating no more than a claim to some religious respectability - they cannot be regarded, at present, as a status group. Their style of life conforms to that of the whole area. They are not endogamous, nor can they be distinguished from other groups by a differential relationship to land resources or certain occupations. Apart from al-Je'areem (who trace their territorial origin to Suk al-Hamra in Morocco) they claim to have immigrated (probably between 11th and 15th centuries) from Waddan in Fezzan⁶⁰.

58. To emphasise his official role the Turkish authorities gave the Shaikh special garments.

59. I had to rely on the memory of older people in the area regarding this information.

b) The Orfella section: This included the following, or part of the following, villages or areas: al-'Amamra - except Awlad shukr - , al Kararta, al Shaba'na, Beni Lait, al-Iqleel and al-Shafeen. The main inhabitants of these villages - as acknowledged locally - are decedents of immigrants from the region of Orfella.

c) Msellata section: This comprised Awlad Shukr⁶⁰ and the older villages in the area (originally Berber), Sindara, Mumin, Bu'Aish, Beni Mislim, Za'feran, Silma, Khelfun, Al Shurref, Qirreem, Alihdzarat, Luwata. The fact that these villages have been settled longer than other villages is shown by their relatively higher olive/man ratio. The Coroghlia formed a special group in this section. They were accorded special status by the Ottoman authorities who exempted them from taxation and gave them influential military and administrative posts. Because of this, some of the richest landlords in the area are still Coroghlia. Like other groups in Msellata they are completely Arabized and they are all Sunni Moslems⁶¹.

d) Alzw ie Section: This comprised Zawiyat Sidi Atiya, Zawiyat al 'Amareen, al-Ighrarat, Awlad al-Alem, al Fwateer. The main inhabitants of the first 4 villages are acknowledged to be decedents of immigrants from Tarhuna, while the last two are from the Zliten area.

Msellata was occupied, after a brief struggle, by the Italians in

60. According to Agostini they are related to Beni Hilal tribe who invaded Libya in the 11th Century.

61. The Jewish Community in the area left in 1948 following the Arab-Israeli war.

1912 but Italian control remained weak. In 1915 when the whole area of Tripolitania was in revolt, the local population of Msellata besieged the Italian garrison and forced it to withdraw. It was in the main mosque of Qusbat that Tripolitanian leaders met in 1918 to declare a Tripolitanian Republic. Further, many men from the area joined - between 1915 and 1923 - guerilla groups operating against the Italians. The resumption of fighting in 1922 resulted in what is known locally as 'hajjit Orfella', when the majority of the inhabitants of the area withdrew to the Southern area of Orfella. They returned later to their homes after Orfella and Msellata were securely re-occupied by the Italians in 1923. This was the end of active resistance against the Italian Colonisation in Tripolitania.

It is difficult to assess the consequences of the Italian Occupation on the socio-economic life of the area. Administratively and militarily the area remained under complete Italian control. In their attempts to minimize potential local resistance, the Italians created smaller administrative units in the area, and to each village they appointed a Shaikh. The Shaikh's responsibilities were limited basically to tax-collection and to communicating information about his village to the Italian authorities. He was paid no salary, but was allotted a portion (about 7%) of the taxes he collected⁶². Land colonisation in Msellata was negligible compared to other areas. In the adjacent area of Tarhuna, for example, the Italians expropriated 41,000 hectares of land with

62. Taxes were collected on animals, trees and agricultural produce.

noticable consequences on the local population⁶³.

The Italians did, however, build a network of roads which connected Qusbat town with other towns (especially with Tripoli), and they enlarged and modernized the Quşbat market. In general, the activities of the Italians enlarged the labour market, and encouraged the further and more rapid development of market relations in the area.

However, the Italian Fascist colonial ideology of racial superiority, and policy of segregation, seem to have intensified the attachment of the indigenous population to certain aspects of their traditional way of life. From the moment of their invasion of Libya, the Italians voiced their respect for Arab custom, culture and religion. They built mosques, restored tombs of well-known saints, and gave special facilities for the pilgrimage to Mecca. Their policy of parallel development meant that Arabs were to remain Arab in speech, religion, personal law, customs and manner. Only the tribal structure (where it existed) was to disappear⁶⁴. Like the Catholic Italian colonists, the colonised Muslim Arabs considered themselves as civilized people and were conscious of a long cultural history behind them. In such a situation it was improbable that any noticable degree of cultural assimilation could take place. It was highly improbable that Arabs would give up their religion. In Cyrenaica the religious order of the Sanusiya transformed itself, in its resistance against the Italian occupation, into a political and nationalist movement.⁶⁵

64. Evans-Pritchard, 1949, pp.202-209

65. Ibid, Chap. VIII.

In Tripolitania the Sanusiya order was too weak to act in such a way. Nevertheless Islam supplied some of the symbols of the anti-colonial struggle. Those who engaged in such a struggle were known as mugahideen or fighters for the faith. One of the most respected guerilla leaders in Tripolitania (i.e. Remdan Al-swaihli) was said to have arbitrated and took decisions on no authority but the Quran. The word 'rumi', which is ~~generally~~ used for Europeans in general and Italians in particular, still remains a term of denigration, and is sometimes applied to those who do not conform to customary and traditional behaviour (e.g. in dress).

Local Government and Administration since Independence.

The British administration of Tripolitania lasted only for eight years (1943-1951). The centralized system of administration was maintained with some changes at the local level. The position of the Shaikh and municipal councillors (as we shall see later) were made elective. In the latter case this was done on the basis of village sections, (called lubmat) where the head of each section voted on behalf of its adult males. This was discontinued shortly after Independence.

Since Independence in 1951, the involvement and participation of the local population in local government has remained nominal. All political parties were dissolved and banned in 1954. Before then, several political movements were active in the country. The most important of these, as far as Msellata and Tripolitania are concerned,

were the National Congress Party (Mu'temer Alweteni) and the Independence or Istiqlal party. The Congress Party was strongly disposed to Pan-Arab Nationalism and favoured closer affiliation with Egypt and the Arab League. It grudgingly accepted the Sanusi monarchy, but remained strongly opposed to the principle of federation between Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan. It wanted a unitary state to rule the above three provinces. The Istiqlal party on the other hand favoured a federal system and was less Pan-Arabist in its aspirations⁶⁶. It is generally assumed that this party was under British influence. In Msellata, ~~as~~ in other rural areas in Tripolitania, voting in the 1952 elections was carried out by registration, and not by secret ballot as in Tripoli city. It is said in Msellata that this enabled the British authorities to interfere with the results of the election in favour of the Istiqlal candidate.

It is generally held in Msellata that parliamentary elections are a source of trouble in the area⁶⁷. I was repeatedly told by villagers that these elections often resulted in fights and enmities, even at the household level (e.g. between brothers). The fact that elections are generally seen to be "disruptive" events can be explained, partly at least if voting is viewed as an extension and affirmation of certain social relationships between the voters. The abolition of political parties and movements meant that contesting parliamentary candidates

66. Lewis & Gorden, 1954, p.49

67. There have been 7 such elections since 1952.

can offer no ideological basis for their election. The candidates lack, therefore, any ideological differences that could provide the electorate with a basis for choice. Such choice tends, therefore, to remain determined by what may be called "particularistic" considerations. Promises of employment or money payments (what is known as "selling one's vote") accounted for a third of those whose votes became known to me.⁶⁸ The rest based their reason for choice on personal grounds. Kinship, affinity and friendship were one set of reasons for voting for a certain candidate. Most of these were not direct relationships with the candidate himself, but relationships with an affine, kinsman, neighbour or a friend of the candidate. In some cases such relationships were doubly removed from the candidate, who may only be, for example, a friend of a friend of an affine etc. Personal enmity, hostility and antagonism were another set of reasons given for not voting for a specific candidate. In most of these cases the individuals concerned were not personal enemies of the candidate in question (in fact they may have never met him), but of an individual who is a friend, kinsman, affine or just a known supporter of the candidate. It can be seen, therefore, that voting is not directed to the selection of a candidate, but is generally an expression and affirmation of existing social relations between individual voters. In other words, how and why an individual votes for a certain candidate cannot be

68. Information on voting in the 1965 election was gathered on 25 individuals from Za'feran village or on two-thirds of those who voted in that election.

discovered by examining the latter's ideology, but in the former's map of social relationships. Elections are, therefore, occasions on which old disputes and hates may be aroused again.

The Position of the Shaikh.

As indicated earlier, the administrative system in Libya, as in many other Arab countries, follows the centralized pattern - muqate'a, mutasarifia, mudiriya, village or tribe. The highest administrative unit (i.e. muqate'a) is controlled by a commissioner - muhafidh, who is appointed by the Cabinet and acts under the direction of the minister of the Interior. He is considered the head of all government offices and departments (except those of the judiciary and the police) in the muqate'a, and can employ sanctions (such as suspension of salary or removal) against public employees. He also acts as chairman of an advisory committee (appointed from among the notables of the region), which can forward recommendations concerning educational, economic, agricultural or health matters, to the Ministry of Interior and other ministries concerned.

The muqate'a comprises a number of subdistricts (mutasarifiat) each headed by a mutasarif who acts as the government representative of his sub-district, and works under the direction and supervision of the muhafidh, and has similar supervisory powers. It is from the mutasarifia that permission to hold marriage ceremonies and religious festivals are obtained and from which public financial relief and the salaries of Shaikhs and Imams are drawn. Directions to the latter

are issued by the mutasarif through the mudir, who is the lowest office-holding government official in the area. The mudir is the link between the mutasarif and the shaikhs⁶⁹ of the villages, and remains under the direct supervision of the former. Unlike the mutasarif, the mudir is invariably a native of the area which he administers and his position tends to be more static than that of the former. Geographical mobility and lack of personal ties with the area administered are characteristic of the mutasarif's position⁷⁰.

When the position of a Shaikh or Imam⁷¹ becomes vacant, the mudir advertizes them in the village concerned. No formal qualifications are required for the position of Shaikh - he is often illiterate. An interview is sometimes arranged but the main factors taken into consideration are:- the candidate's economic position, his knowledge of village affairs, and the amount of general respect accorded to him by the village.⁷² The selection is done by the mudir and the mutasarif, who communicates his recommendation to the muhafidh, who in turn advises the Minister of Interior, who ultimately makes the appointment. The Imam, however, is expected to be familiar with basic religious rules and regulations concerning marriage, divorce and inheritance. This is a traditional role, which, with the development of state machinery

69. This is an administrative title and should not be confused with the same referring to traditional tribal leaders.

70. Msellata had 3 different mutasarifs, all from outside the area, between 1965 and 1967.

71. This is different from the title given to a religious prayer leader.

72. Personal communication from the Secretary of the Qusbat Mutasarifia.

has become formalized; The Ministry of Justice sees to it, before the Imam's position is finalized, that the proper tests are passed and that an oath, to maintain the legal and religious standards as a local registrar, is taken.

Apart from the Shaikh, and the Imam, all the above positions are bureaucratic in the Weberian sense.⁷³ They are hierarchically organized and ordered by laws and administrative regulations. They are offices strictly segregated from their incumbents' households and managed on the basis of written documents or files. The Shaikh, on the other hand, has no office, in the physical sense, and keeps no files or regular hours of work, and is expected to rely on his informal relations with villagers. His relations with government officials are not regular and he visits their offices only when necessary. However, he must be considered a government official, for he is appointed and can be dismissed by higher authorities, is paid a salary, and has a set of official duties.

Towards the end of the 19th century the Ottoman authorities made the position of the Shaikh official, and allocated to him part of the taxes he was required to collect.⁷⁴ This system of payment continued, with minor modifications, until the Libyan government abolished, in 1961, all taxation on agriculture. Initially, the

73. Gerth & Mills, 1961, pp 196-198

74. The cereal tax was collected in kind, and that on animals and trees in cash.

government paid him £L5⁷⁵, but this was increased to £L10 and that of the Imam's to £L5. In 1966 the above monthly payment was increased again to £L25 (the Imam's to £L15), and last year a further increment raised the Shaikh's monthly stipend to £L40 and the Imam's to £L25. This rapid increase in the Shaikh's cash payments, together with the loss of his basic traditional function (i.e. tax collection), have accentuated the official and administrative nature of his job. As far as the Imam is concerned, the nature of his duties, despite his incorporation into the state, remain largely traditional and well defined. The Shaikh's functions, on the other hand, are numerous and diverse; he registers or notifies the Municipality of births and deaths, receives official announcements and passes them on to villagers, notifies the police of criminal offences, identifies individuals and signs or stamps their applications⁷⁶. He is also expected to see to it that government regulations (e.g. concerning the stipulated period of olive-gathering) are followed.

Despite the change in the Shaikh's authority relationships - with the village and government - and in his historical situation (for he is no longer a symbol of alien domination), his role remains conflictual; as a member of his village community he has multiple, personal and particularistic ties (based on kinship, friendship, affinity,

75. The Libyan pound = one pound sterling (before the 1967 devaluation).

76. This part of his duties has expanded with the increase in the number of government agencies and regulations. A recent law, for example, requires all Libyan males over the age of 16 to obtain and carry an identity card.

neighbourhood etc.), with the people of his village. At the same time he is required as a government official to enter into administrative relations with the same individuals. In other words the conflict lies in the contradictory demands made upon him by the community (Gemeinschaft type of demands) and by the government (bureaucratic demands). Although in the colonial period such conflicts were at their most intense,⁷⁷ the structural position of the Shaikh has not basically altered. Thus, for example, when one Shaikh recently informed the police about a member of his village, the same individual supported by his family, retaliated by suing the Shaikh for misappropriating government property, and was successful in having him removed from his position. The increasing emphasis by the government on the official duties of the Shaikh and the latter's increasing dependence (for cash income) on the government, seems to be minimizing his involvement in village life and undermining his position as a representative of his village. This is illustrated by a remark of one of the Shaikhs: "I know people say unpleasant things about me, but I have to carry out my official duties, and this means minding my own business and turning a deaf ear to gossip". However, this attempt by the above Shaikh to minimize his role conflict by withdrawal from active participation in the social life of his community, could not be maintained without creating strain and further conflict. Some individuals in the village complained that the Shaikh

77. This is indicated by the frequent replacements of Shaikhs during the Italian occupation and by the fear and hatred people felt towards him in that period.

did not represent the interests of the poorer members of the community.⁷⁸ Others felt dissatisfied with him because he did not take an active mediatory part in village disputes, and left the resolution of these to the judicial courts. Still others described him as a 'yes-man'. Since the village Shaikh tends to be old or middle-aged with little or no formal education, and relatively wealthy in terms of land, he is caught in other conflicts; for example, younger and more educated villagers feel antipathetic towards him because of his lack of education and his conservatism. It is not surprising therefore that his position is unenvied, and that of all the individuals asked to mention a desirable position, none mentioned that of Shaikh. (see Chapter 4). It is ultimately the internal role conflict inherent in his position that leads villagers to say, "nobody ever feels grateful to a shaikh".⁷⁹

The Qusbat Municipality.

The Qusbat municipality was probably established in the late 19th Century.⁸⁰ The Italians took over control of the municipality and most of the positions in the council were taken by Italians. During the British Administration Libyanization took place, but the municipality remained under the supervision of a British Officer. The British, as mentioned earlier, made the positions to the municipal council elective. After Independence, these positions were made through appointments by

78. Whether a family obtains public financial relief depends, to a large extent, on the evidence given by the Shaikh.

79. 'ma heddish memnun min shaikh.'

80. An Ottoman law stipulating the establishment of municipal councils in towns of the Ottoman area, was issued in 1871.

the Ministry of Interior acting on recommendation from the mutasarif and the muhafidh. Before the royal decree of 1964⁸¹ half the seats on the council were given to state officials in the area (i.e. mutasarif, government doctor, head of the agricultural department in the area and the headmaster of the Qusbat Preparatory School), the other half were appointed from the notables of the area. Since the enforcement of the above law in 1967 and the establishment of a Ministry of Municipal Affairs, all the eight council members are appointed by the above Ministry from the area's notables. Further, Council members are paid (since 1964) regular monthly salaries.⁸²

The municipality has a legal personality and its own budget. However, this does not mean that it is autonomous. The taxes and revenues it raises (e.g. registration fees, fines, profits and rents from its property, commercial and trade licences etc.) are not sufficient for it to be financially independent. To pay for its employees⁸³ and to carry out any major works, maintenances or constructions (roads, electricity, water etc.) it has to rely on government grants.⁸⁴ In practice the municipality remains to a large degree a government agency; the council members being appointed by the government (nominally for 2 years) and dismissible by the government. Decisions taken by the

81. Official Gazette (special issue), 31 August, 1964, Benghazi.

82. In 1966 the Municipal head was paid £L75 and council members £L50 per month. Since then increments in their salaries have occurred.

83. In 1966 the Municipality had 15 employees (7 administrators, and the rest were employed as guards, messengers and workers).

84. In 1966 the Municipality raised £L10,000 from internal revenues, and government grants to it amounted to £L20,000.

council have to be ratified by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (previously by the muhafidh and Minister of Interior) before they can be acted upon. As far as the peasant or villager is concerned, the Qusbat municipality provides no avenues for his participation in local affairs. He sees little difference between the municipality (Baledia) and the mutasarifia. However, unlike the mutasarif and other officials, a member of the municipal council can (unless this conflicts with government policy) initiate, formulate and modify policy concerning his area. Further, as a member (and usually a well-known member) of the community, he has multiple face-to-face type of relationships with the people of the area, and therefore remains open to influence and pressure.

Decolonisation, as we have seen has not significantly increased the peasant's participation in decision making and there remains a social gulf between the official and the people. However, the Libyanization of administration and the proliferation of government agencies has created and modified the types of relations that exist between the people and their officials. The Shaikh, the councillor, and the mutasarif are recruited and appointed by the central government and are therefore officials. Yet the structural situation of the three are significantly different; for it is only the mutasarif and his officials that approximate to Weber's definition of a 'bureaucrat'. The councillor, like the Shaikh, is part of the community he works in and is often recruited on the basis of informal criteria like prestige and personality.

Like the mutasarif the councillor's 'office' is segregated from that of his household.⁸⁵ Yet his 'office' is different from that of the mutasarif, for it is a place of official meetings of the council.

The above classification of types of officials is by no means exhaustive. Further differentiations can be made between the municipal head (Ameed) and other council members ('Odu), and between the mutasarif and his official staff, where formal qualifications form the basis of their recruitment, and where there is a strict functional specificity of occupation. The point I wish to emphasise here is that the relations between the individual and the government official are varied and depend largely on the structural situation of the latter.

Qusbat Town.

One cannot discuss adequately village life in Msellata without reference to Qusbat town. This is because of the following reasons:

1. Qusbat has been for a long time, the administrative centre of the area. The Qusbat fort (qal'a) remains as a reminder of this; it was built in the 16th Century by the invading Spaniards, used by the Turks, and later became occupied by the Italians. The administrative and government offices are located in the town.
2. More important, perhaps, is the town's position as the shopping and trade centre for the whole area. It is the market for the numerous surrounding villages and contains well over a hundred shops. The

85. For example, he is barred by law from using his office to further his, or his kin's economic interests.

local word that is normally used to refer to the town (i.e. al-Suk) means 'The Market'. Qusbat also acts as a link between the area and the outside world. It is from and through the town that the surplus of the area's olive oil is sold (i.e. to traders from Tripoli and others), and it is to Qusbat that imported foods and the various consumer goods arrive. On the weekly market day (Thursday) hundreds of individuals from the surrounding villages flock to the town to sell and buy (from transistor radios to camels). The building in 1966 of a modern large market in Qusbat has enhanced further the town's commercial importance.

3. Qusbat also houses an increasing number of public services. It contains the only Preparatory School and Health Clinic in the area. A secondary school and a new health centre (50 beds) are planned for the town in the near future. It has a magistrates court, a modern hotel, a Post Office (soon to be modernized and enlarged) and a cinema operating weekly. The cafes of the town provide a meeting place for friends and acquaintances outside their villages. As a transport centre it connects the whole area with the urban centres of Tripolitania (esp. with Tripoli).

Qusbat is expanding rapidly as an urban centre. A Public Library was opened in early 1967; a hundred housing units were near completion last year and are intended to provide living quarters for poorer families in the area.⁸⁶ Seven primary schools were under construction

86. This is in accordance with the Idris Housing Project where it is planned to build 100,000 housing units (costing £1400 million) by mid-seventies.

in the larger villages of the area last year; work to provide piped water and electricity to Qusbat town and to the outer villages is near completion; further, there are plans to build all-weather roads connecting the town with some of the outlying villages.

The general consequences of the type of changes outlined above have been the further extension of market relations in the area and its greater incorporation into the national state. We have examined briefly in the above section, the sociological implications of these changes for certain types of authority relations at the local level. The following chapter attempts an examination of the relevance of the above changes to kinship and household structures in some of the villages in the area. Data was gathered on 171 households with a total population of 913 individuals. These households contained the total population of four small villages and about a third of another larger village (i.e. Beni Mislim). The villages surveyed, and their resident population at the time, (April 1966) are as follows:

Za'feran; 256, Qumata; 106, Murad; 129, Luwata; 262, Beni Mislim; 750 approx. The distance between these villages and Qusbat varied from $\frac{1}{4}$ kilometre in the case of Za'feran, to $3\frac{1}{2}$ kilometres in the case of Luwata village (See 2, Figure 2 opposite). Only one of the villages (i.e. Za'feran) was connected - in 1967 - to Qusbat with an asphalted road. However all the above villages could be reached - in normal weather conditions - by car. Only Za'feran had electricity, and this is mainly because it houses a religious school. None of the five villages had piped water at the time of the study.

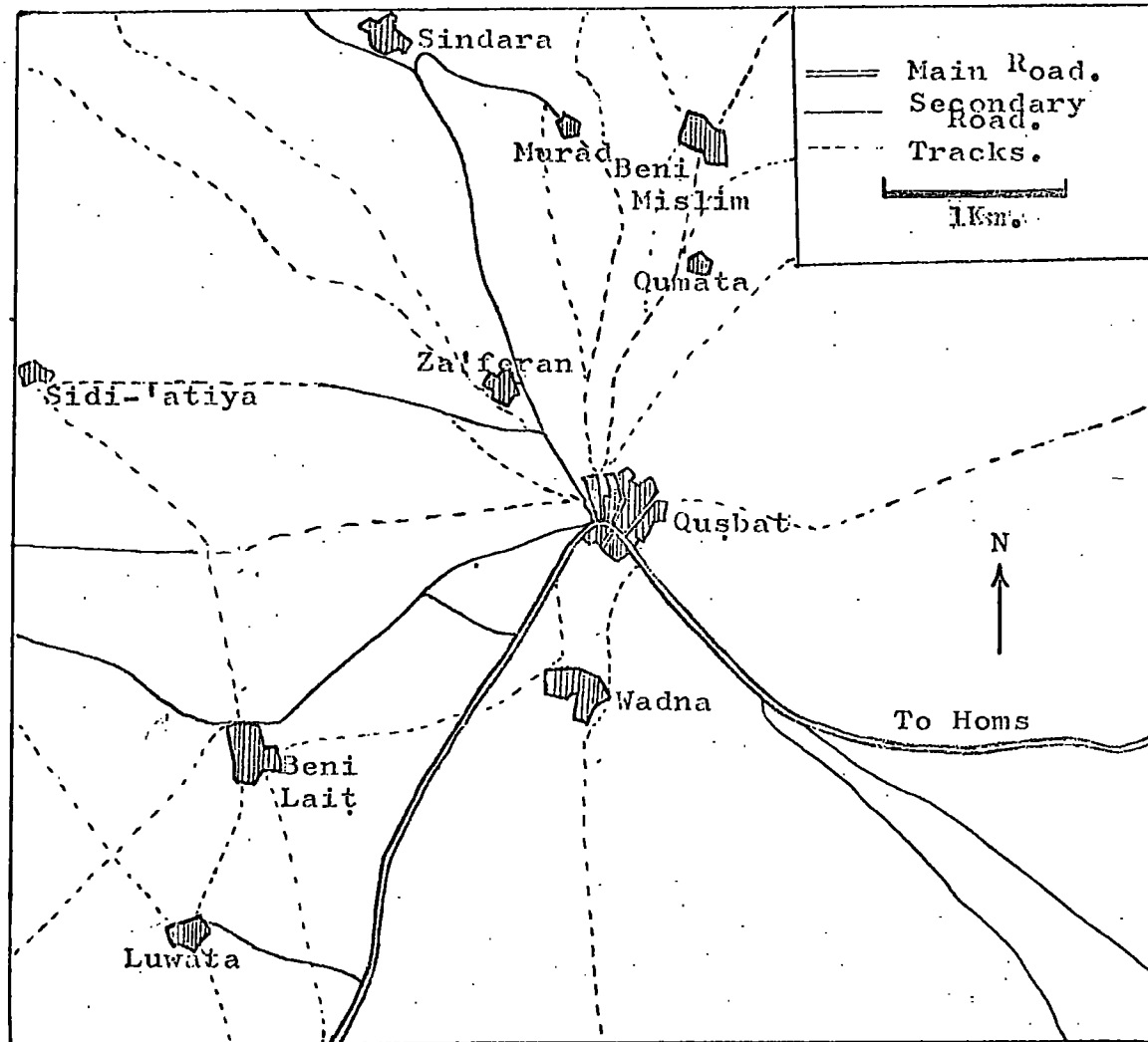


Fig.2. Central Msellata.

CHAPTER TWO

KINSHIP RELATIONS & HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE.

The Village Kinship Groups

Administratively, and to a small degree locally, the usual term of reference for a village is the 'qabila'. This usually means a tribe or tribal section. As such it is not sociologically descriptive, and its continued usage may be due to administrative convenience and conformity, and to the fact that a large proportion of the people of the area (i.e. Msellata) are immigrants or descendants of immigrants from the nomadic and semi-nomadic neighbouring areas of Tarhuna and Orfella. Villagers, as distinct from administrators, tend to use the word 'beled' or 'iblad' to refer to the village settlement. This word, like that of 'hadr', indicates a specific style of life, i.e. settled, in contrast to the pastoral tent-dwelling 'bedu' or ''arab' (bedouin). To refer to a village in the area as a 'qabila' seems to mislead city dwellers and administrators to assume the existence of a tribal or semi-tribal kinship organization. This is an opposite model to the one villagers use, since they contrast themselves not only with the semi-settled 'bedu', but also with the city dwellers ('ahl al mudun'). As indicated in the previous chapter the people of the area are either settled cultivators or village dwellers with urban type occupations, living in stone houses ('hūshan', sing. 'haush').

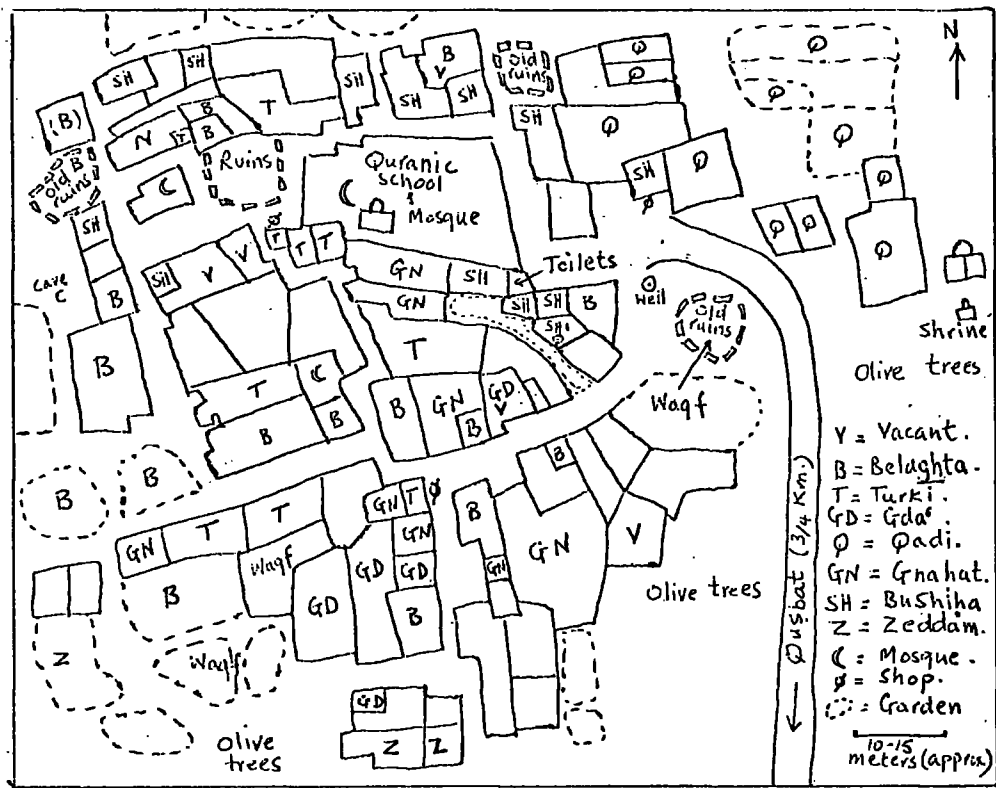


Fig. 3.

Settlement pattern & disposition of 'aila groups in Za'feran village.

(sketch by a villager.)

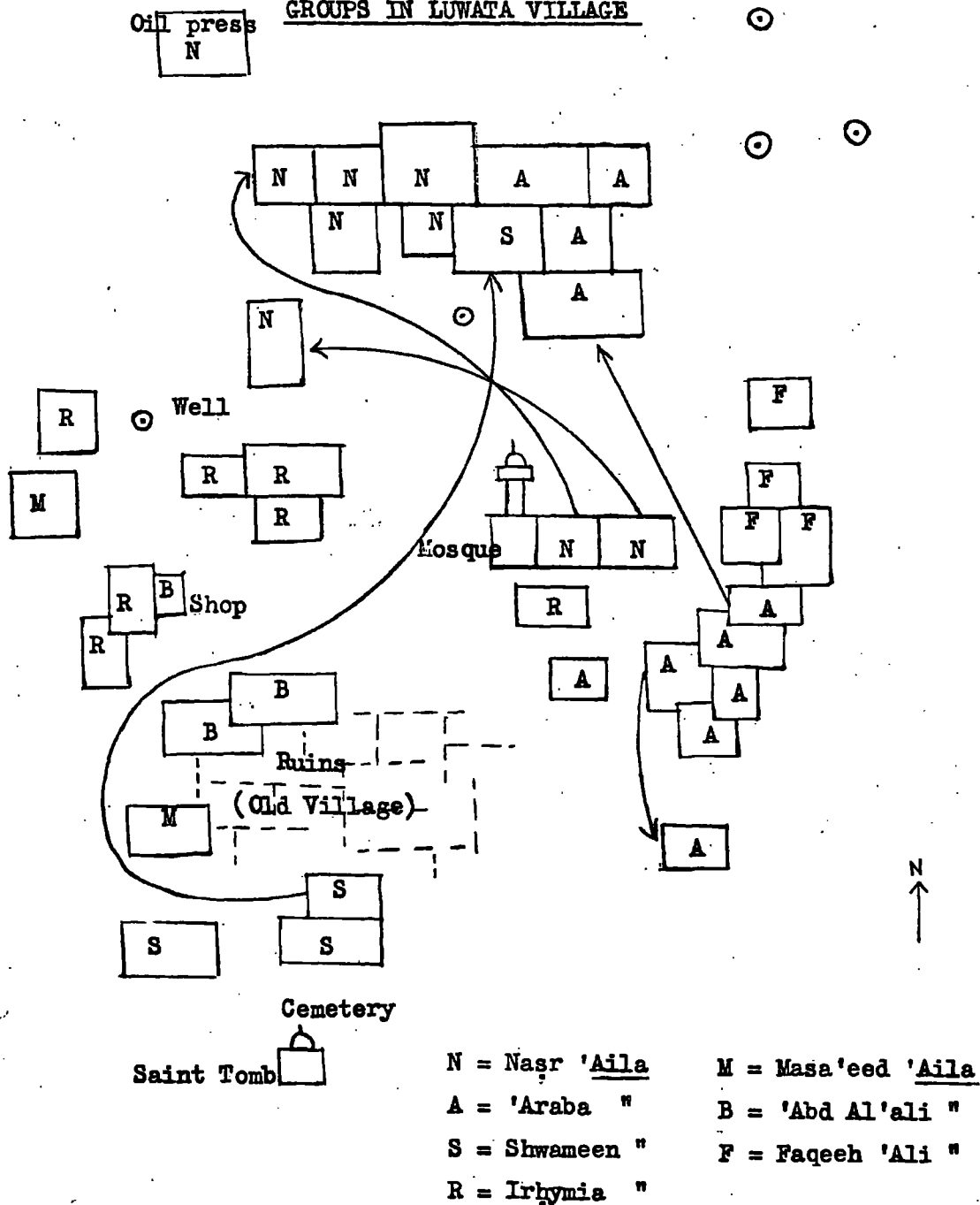
In the neighbouring area of Tarhuna (with semi-settled population) each unit ('gabila') is conceptualized in terms of two or more 'luḥmat', (sing. 'luḥma') each comprising a number of 'ailat' (sing. 'aila'), and these in turn divided into a number of 'hishan' or domestic groups. Villagers did at times divide their village into 'luḥmat' without implying any common village ancestry.¹ Indeed, the word 'luḥma' was frequently used to indicate something other than a kinship unit. When thus used it signifies either a group or a number of kinship groups, which are thought to be genealogically connected, but whose exact relationships are unknown. In short 'luḥma', as a kinship term, refers to a relatively large and loose kinship group. Thus, residentially, a 'luḥma' is often dispersed; for example al-Belaghta 'luḥma' were more residentially dispersed than the groups which considered themselves as 'ailat' (see Fig. 3). However, genealogical depth is not of necessary importance; the 'Araba' group in Luwata village were referred to as a 'luḥma' although they had a depth of four generations only. Yet they were considered as a 'luḥma' because of their relatively large number (9 village households) and relative residential dispersion in the village (see Fig. 4).

The term 'luḥma' was also used to conceptualize groupings with

1. The word 'luḥma' could mean flesh or a piece of meat, or it could be derived from the verb 'leHEME' which means to solder or join together. Thus originally a 'luḥma' could have been a group of patrilineally related groups (i.e. descended from the same flesh) who were collectively oriented, and who acted as a cohesive unit.

Fig. 4.

DISPOSITION OF KINSHIP
GROUPS IN LUWATA VILLAGE



Arrows indicate recent domiciliary movements.

no kinship basis: thus both the Shaikh and Imam of Beni Mislim village divided their village into 4 sections or parts which correspond to the 4 basic directions (i.e. Eastern-Imghatat, Western - Murad, Northern - Razagna, and Southern - Qumata). Each of these sections had a number of separate kinship groups ('ailat'). Both Murad and Qumata for example, were physically separate from other parts and from each other, and each had a number of separate kinship ('ailat') and domestic groups²; Razagna and Imghatat had 18 and 14 groups respectively. Not only was there no claim of common descent between the 4 'luhmat', but more importantly none of these 'luhmat' were conceived of as a kinship unit. Both Qumata and Murad, which are now considered as 'luhmat', were considered as separate villages each with its own Shaikh, until the Italians incorporated them administratively into one village with Beni Mislim proper. The 'luhmat' in the situation described above, conveyed basically nothing more than an idea of neighbourhood - each of the 4 sections forms a separate physical entity, each with its actual or incipient amenities (e.g. shop, mosque, school etc.)

Za'feran was also divided into 4 'luhmat':- 1) Awlad Al-Shaikh:

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2. Murad had 4 separate 'ailat' and a number of households (see Appendix, table XV). None of the 4 'ailat' were related agnetically, and each had a different geographic origin (one from an area west of Tripoli, another from Bezzan, a third from Homs Coastal area and the last from Orfella. Qumata (see Appendix, table XVIII) had 3 separate 'ailat'.

this has 5 separate kinship groups or domestic groups, two of which traced their origin to Tarhuna and another to Orfella. The other two were considered to be descendants of the oldest inhabitants of the village. There was no claim of common descent, nor did these groups form a neighbourhood or a village section. What apparently united these separate kinship units was a claim to be the oldest established groups in the village, who had maintained and served the religious shrine-cum-school and administered its 'waqf'³ - property belonging to the local Saint's Shrine ('Sidi al-Dukali'). The criterion used in giving the above group a claim to a special identity, is that of religious service. This became clear when arguments about who should be included in the 'luḥma' arose. Some objected to the village headman including his own group in the above 'luḥma', on the grounds that its members had not been living long enough in the village, and therefore the service rendered was insufficient to legitimate their claim to the title of 'awlād al-Shaikh', which literally means 'the descendants of the saint'.

2) Orfella luḥma: this included all the villagers who traced their geographical origin to Orfella. This 'luḥma' comprised one kinship group which had been in the village for 3-4 generations, together with a few households. Again there was no claim of common patrilineal

3. 'Waqf' is an Islamic institution: it is a form of endowment whose income is devoted to religious, cultural or charitable agencies.

descent - the criterion of classification was a common place of origin.

3) 'Ashraf luḥma': this included two large kinship groups and a number of domestic groups. Each of these had a different place of origin. What they did have in common was the hereditary title of 'Ashraf', which implies a claim to descent from the Prophet Muhammed (through his female descendants). As a group, 'al-Ashraf' were, until the beginning of this century, a status group with special privileges. The title, however, no longer indicates more than a vague sense of religious respectability.

4) Turki luḥma: here the words 'luḥma' and 'aila' were used interchangeably. Of the two, the term 'aila' was more frequently used. A tendency was shown to call this group a 'luḥma' only when the 'luḥma' classification was used, that is, when the whole village was under classification. Thus the basic aim seems to be to maintain some conceptual symmetry. The Turki luḥma consisted of one kinship unit comprising several households whose male heads traced their origin to one Turkish soldier, who married from the area and settled in the village some time in the last century.

Some villagers did use the 'luḥma' classification to refer to groups which were considered to have a similar ethnic origin. In Beni Mislim, for example, several genealogically separate groups (with no claim to

common descent) were named as the 'Cologlia luḡma'; the Cologlia are descendants of Janisseries who married native women and settled in the country.

The above was a brief survey of the ways in which villagers conceptualize 'luḡma' groupings. The 'luḡma' emerges as a 'sponge-term'; it may be that it was originally a kinship term, and sometimes it is used as such. It may be that it lost this meaning when the 'luḡma' lost its formal, political and economic functions. The Ottomans, the Italians and the British did, in varying degrees, use the 'luḡma' for the purposes of maintaining law and order, or to facilitate rural administration by imposing a uniformity of structure on villages. This is no longer the case. The 'luḡma', whether used as a loose kinship unit or in any other sense, has no formal or informal political or administrative function. It lost its economic function generations ago.

The fact that the 'luḡma' classification is of little importance in the present day schematization of social reality, is seen from the fact that the word 'luḡma' is very rarely used in common discourse among villagers. It was only at the beginning of the research (when my knowledge of the villages was minimal) that informants did classify their villages in terms of 'luḡmat'. Later the model became noticeably absent from their thinking and the way they articulated their basic village relations. So the 'luḡma' model is one that the local population seems to present only to people who are not acquainted with their villages,

and probably to government officials and administrators.

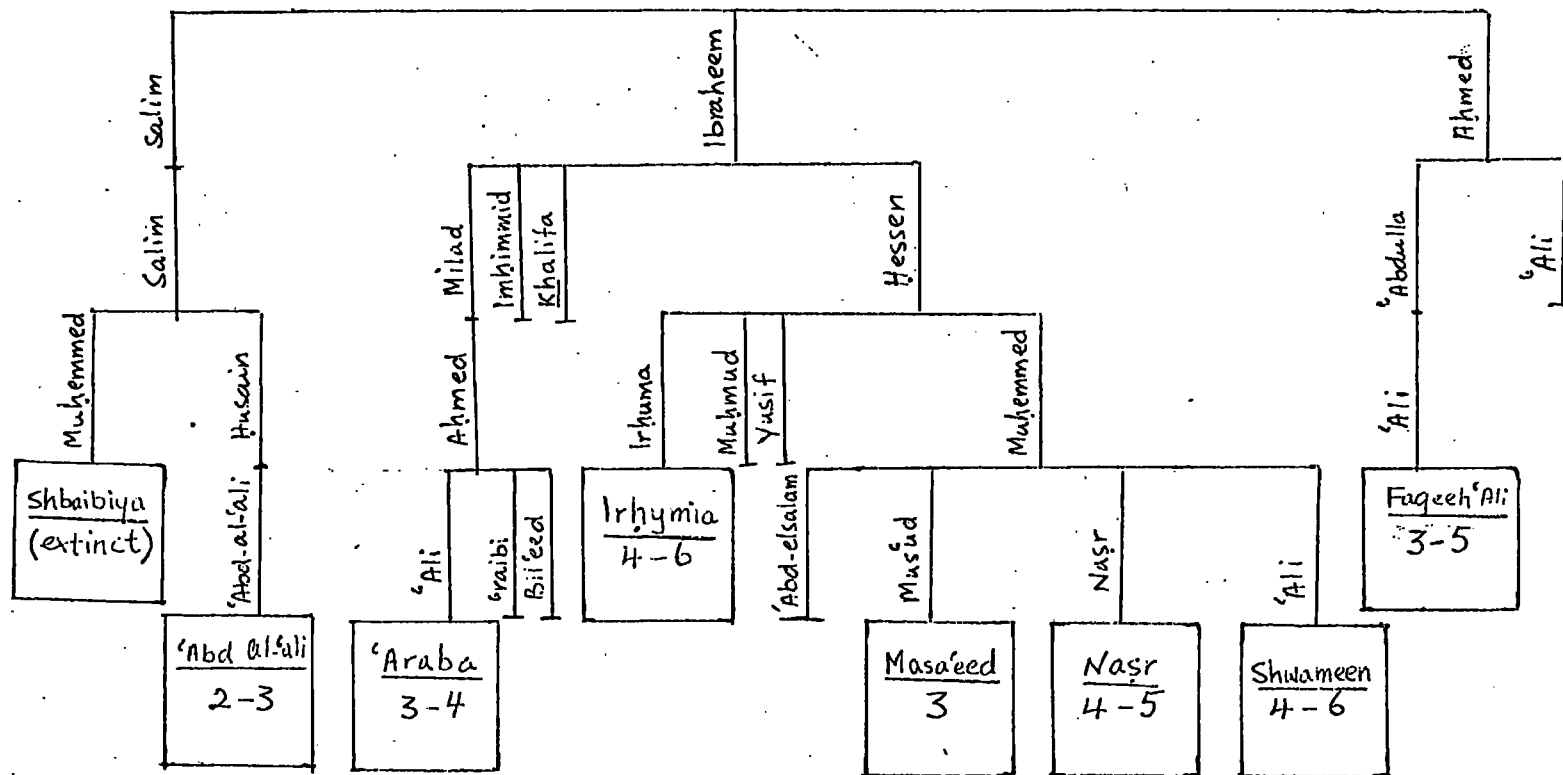
The 'luhma' model is basically - but not solely - an 'outsider' model whose function is, I suggest, mainly nomic. That is, it is a model that could use a number of classificatory schemes to give some order to an otherwise unclear or an unmapped social reality or situation. This may be necessary when a villager is confronted with an 'outsider', especially a government official coming from a different area or from the city.

The ambiguity of the term 'luhma' corresponds to the structural ambiguity of the term ''aila'⁴. The word, however, is consistently used as a kinship term but to indicate different levels of kinship relations or groups: firstly, it denotes a number of patrilineally related household heads; secondly, it is used to indicate an extended household or a family, and here it is interchangeable with 'haush'; thirdly the ''aila' is the usual way a married male refers to his wife, whether she has children or not. So here ''aila' is the same as the sociological concept of the immediate or conjugal family.

In the first sense the ''aila' is the largest clearly delineated patrilineal or agnatic group. The depth of these groups vary from three to six generations (See fig. 5). No special importance is

4. The word is probably derived from the Arabic verb ''ale', which means 'to support'.

Fig. 5.
Luwata Village.
 A genealogy.



Numbers indicate the genealogical depth of each of the village 'ailat.

attached by villagers to this number, although there is a likelihood to call a group of a depth of six generations 'luhma' rather than ''aila'.

Shallow patrilineal groups of this kind are found in many Arab and other peasant societies⁵. The term 'lineage', which is sometimes used to describe such groups, is likely to be misleading; the term tends to suggest a unilineal descent group which is corporate, exogamous, internally segmented, and forming a part of a complex large-scale segmentary system such as is found among the Bedouins and other tribal societies⁶.

The lineage among the Bedouins of Cyrenaica, for example, is a single distinct residential group with collective ownership of plough land, pastures, and water resources. It is also a vengeance group, in that any of its members can be killed in vengeance for a homicide committed by any person from the lineage. The obligation to exact vengeance falls on all members alike, regardless of the degree of relationship to the victim. Likewise its members pay blood money as a group, and the group has a corporate identity, which means that no political divisions occur within it⁷.

If the above account can be taken as a model of a lineage structure,

5. e.g. Grandquist, 1931, passim.; Peters, 1963 pp 159-200; Stirling, 1965, pp.158-162; Sweet, 1960, p.127; Cohen, 1965, pp 2-3; Salim, 1962, p.44; Gillick, 1955, p.108.

6. e.g. Peters, 1960; Evans-Pritchard, 1940; Cunnison, 1966.

7. Peters, 1960, pp.29-51.

then it is possible to contrast the situation in the villages studied with the model outlined above. The 'aila' in the area of study tended to be a residential group, that is, members of one 'aila' would, on the whole, live adjacent to one another. However, there has been a movement towards residential dispersal (see Fig. 4) within the village in recent times. If emigrants who live and work outside the area are considered, as sometimes they are, as members of the village 'ailat', then most of the 'aila' groups can no longer be considered as residential units. Many 'ailat' have lost, through emigration, so many members within the last generation, that in more than a quarter of them there are more members living outside the village, the overwhelming majority in cities, than inside it⁸.

As a unit the 'aila' lacks collective ownership of land, trees or animals. In a few cases, an 'aila' did own a cistern, a piece of land, or a few trees jointly; but in the majority of such cases the division of the property was impracticable because of the nature or size of the ownership. Usually property belongs to individual households and not to the 'aila'. There are, for example, no sheep brands to symbolize the corporate identity of the 'aila' group, as can be found among bedouin lineages⁹: Where necessary each household has its own brand.

8. This was true in the case of 6 'ailat' out of the total (23 'ailat' surveyed.

9. e.g. Cunnison 1966, p.99

The ''aila' is not a vengence group, and the feud as an institution does not exist in these villages; there is no system for payment of blood money. Sentiments generally demand that homicide must be avenged, but only by the direct heir or nearest male agnate (father, brother, son) of the person killed. Incidents of homicide are relatively rare in the area as a whole, and the only case of homicide since 1955, that informants could recall, occurred in one of the villages under study (i.e. Za'feran) in 1959. A young man from the Balaghta 'aila was ridiculed by a young man from 'Ailat Gnabat - a quarrel ensued as a result of which the first young man was fatally (but accidently, claimed the second) stabbed. The young man was imprisoned for several years (for manslaughter) and since his release from prison a few years ago, he has not returned to the village, it is said, for fear of vengeance. The elder brother of the killed man swore to abstain from sexual intercourse with his wife until his brother's death was avenged. However, he has been under pressure to normalize his relationship with his wife and to forget the incident. His father, the village Shaikh, takes the attitude that the best policy is to forgive and forget, and this has strained his relationship with his son. He is also under pressure from his wife's family (his wife is also his father's uncle's daughter), who want him to resume sexual cohabitation with her. His continued refusal to do so has been interpreted as being intended to oblige them to press for her divorce, which they believe is the real motive behind

his action. Pressure also came from people related to both parties.

It is important to emphasize the fact that 'aila' groups are not vengeance groups; however, the whole Balaghta group did withdraw from direct friendly interaction with the Gnahat 'aila after the incident, and only the minimum contact was maintained between them in 1966-67. Nevertheless, the brothers and cousins of the alledged murderer remain in the village, and therefore the two groups come into regular face-to-face contact.

Another case of homicide occurred in the same village in 1947, when one man from the 'Shiqa' group killed a man from the Zeddani group, after a quarrel sparked off when the animals of one group were found strayed onto the land of the other. In this case both the person responsible for the killing (he was charged with manslaughter and imprisoned for a few years by the British authorities), and the adult sons of the man who was killed, remain in the village. In neither of these two cases was blood-money demanded or paid - for such a system does not operate. The feeling remains that a murdered man is likely to be avenged by the direct heir or nearest agnate, because it is said 'blood never sleeps'¹⁰. However, informants stressed that revenge is less likely nowadays, 'because people are fearful of God and the government'.

The only political office in the village is that of the 'Shaikh';

10. 'aldum ma urqudsh'.

therefore, opportunities for factional struggles between members of the same 'aila' are few. Nevertheless, competition exists between them¹¹. Most of the friction between 'aila' members is related to land and property. Here, alignments and actions seem to be determined more by economic interest than by kinship solidarity. This can be illustrated by what happened, for example, in Za'feran village in 1966; the village had to decide whether to enforce a voluntary municipal regulation banning the pasturing of animals in the village olive groves. The village became divided between those who were in favour of such a law and those who were against it. Those who signed the pro-regulation petition, like those who signed the counter-petition, included individuals from all the village 'ailats'. The division was based on economic interest. Those who supported the regulation tended to be owners of olive groves, and those with sizeable flocks were against the regulation.

The possibility and the existence of splits and struggles within the 'aila' are coupled with the absence of formal leadership in the group. There is no accepted leader or representative. There is no need, in every day life, for such a person. This does not imply, however, the absence of individuals with influence or authority over others. Those who have influence usually have one or more of the following characteristics: seniority, learning (religious or secular), wealth, and a political or administrative office (i.e. government

11. e.g. the present 'Shaikh' of Beni Mislim had to compete for the position with his second paternal cousin in the 1940's when the position of 'Shaikh' was elective.

employees). Thus the person to be consulted depends on the individual's situational needs. For example, the individual seeking employment with the government is likely to look for help from a government official (e.g. a member of the municipal council or parliament). In the case of a personal dispute the individual is likely to consult the senior man of his 'aila' or village. Because of the nature of such leadership, it tends, in most cases, to transcend 'aila' affiliation. Disputes between agnates and villagers alike are increasingly being settled in courts of law. In Summer 1966 I came to know of 4 law-suits between villagers in Za'feran and Beni Mislim; two were disputes about land ownership and boundaries; in the third case the father of a divorced woman was claiming maintenance (she had a small daughter) from her husband; and in the fourth case a young man was accusing his paternal uncle of sexually molesting his wife.

Another feature of the 'aila' or the 'luhna' in this area, is the lack of one central guesthouse. Such an institution is characteristic of many similar kinship groupings in the Middle Eastern village¹². Almost every house has its own guest room, usually outside the living quarters. Acquiring and maintaining a guest room is considered a sign of economic improvement. A man whose home lacks a guest room will have one added to it as soon as he can afford it. This is an attempt to assert and advertise one's new status and economic position.

12. e.g. Ammar, 1954, p.45; Cohen, 1965, p.127; Stirling, 1965, p.155

The 'aila' is commonly known by a nickname of an epithet¹³.

Not only are one's predecessors known by nicknames, but frequently one's contemporaries also. It may be that such a practice is necessary for referential differentiation in a society where a system of fixed surnames or family names does not exist, and where only a very limited number of names is regularly in circulation; for example a fifth of the males in the village Luwata are, or were, called Muhammed or 'Ali. In the village Za'feran 5 names (i.e. Muhammed, 'Ali, Abd al Salam, Ahmed, Abdulla) accounted for one third of all the names circulating within the village in the last 3 or 4 generations.

A customary Arab practice¹⁴ found in the villages of Msellata is the naming of the sons after their paternal grandfather (see Fig.6). A new-born male can also be given the name of a deceased agnate in his 'aila', especially if the latter dies without male offspring (i.e. direct heirs). Thus the inheritance of personal names and of property are similar processes. Grandqvist has discussed in some depth the significance of the choice of names, so it is unnecessary, therefore, to dwell on these points here¹⁵. It may be mentioned here that the practice of naming one's son after one's father may have the effect

13. e.g. All the 'aila' names in Za'feran and Qumata (apart from 'Belaghta' which had anyway two sections each known by a nickname) were nicknames or epithets of ancestors. In Luwata 4 of the 7 'ailat' were known by nicknames. When the personal name of the ancestor is adopted it is usually pluralized, e.g. 'Muhsin' becomes 'Mabasina'.

14. Grandqvist, 1950, p.13; Peters, 1960, p.33; Ammar 1954, p.92

15. Grandqvist, 1950, p.1-50.

of modifying the strict authoritarian relationship between father and son; for a man may feel that his father-named son has acquired some of the characteristics of his father and therefore, like his father he should be treated respectfully, and in fact men seem to feel more inhibited towards such a son and less inclined to treat him harshly¹⁶. It is extremely rare, however, for a boy to be named after his father, unless the latter's death occurs before the former's birth. In such a case the newborn boy would almost certainly be named after his father.

The above process of using names within the 'aila', together with the limited number of names in circulation, makes nicknaming a useful tool for identity-transmission. The majority of these nicknames refer to occupational, behavioural or bodily peculiarities or mannerisms; e.g. 'the blacksmith', 'the physician', 'the one-armed man', 'the red-capped man', 'the official', and so on.

Some of the recently given names suggest that some people are going beyond the traditionally given stock of names (mostly religious). Some of these names (e.g. Jamal, Abd al Nasir, Fawzi, Arwour) are appearing for the first time in the village, reflecting, perhaps, the influence of the mass media and the increasing orientation of the village towards the city.

16. Peter, 1960, pp.33-4

The 'aila', then, is not a formal kinship group of a segmentary nature. It is usually a small group of shallow depth reckoning common descent from the grandfather or great grandfather of the senior living male generation. In many cases younger members of the 'aila' did not know or care much about their exact agnetic relations with others in their 'aila'. None of the 23 'ailat' studied had a written genealogy, nor did any of these groups hold common land or work in common. In some of the 'aila' groups there were wide differences in the land ownership of their component households, and recent societal changes have greatly intensified occupational differences between relatives and agnates. Further, emigration to urban centres (esp. to Tripoli City) has reduced the effective size of these groups; for those who work and live in the cities of Tripoli and Benghazi cannot participate in the daily life of their respective 'ailat'. Many of these emigrants have been living away for a decade or two, and others for several years. They tended to be included as 'aila' members, although they have very little interaction with their group or village. This fragmentation of the 'aila', together with the increasing economic differences and the intensification of the division of labour in the society, seems to have enhanced the diffuseness and lack of specificity of kinship relationships outside the domestic group. Such relations carry a generalized duty of help, support and affection, especially in crisis situations. Ideally, however, such duties and expectations are not confined to agnates, but

apply to affines, villagers, Moslems, etc. There are no formal sanctions that can be used against unresponding agnates. What may still be important in the 'aila', is the negative duty or expectation that agnates should avoid among themselves, quarrels, open competition and aloofness.

Apart from the reciprocity of support among its members, the 'aila' can be used for two basic purposes: firstly, it can be used to define the maximum range of inheritance privileges, that is, it defines the limits of who can inherit and from whom. It is not uncommon for a man to die without direct heirs - here the 'aila' would automatically define who can be heir and who is to be excluded. It is possible that when such a group grows too large to provide a useful definition for inheritance purposes, the word 'luhma' comes to be used, and the smaller groups or 'ailat' within it come to provide the new working definitions; there is a definite lack of interest and knowledge of the genealogical connections between 'ailat' who are thought to be patrilineally related. However, it is usual for senior members of the 'aila' to know the exact genealogical connection between all adult males within it. Further, members of the same 'aila' are expected to give first priority to their agnate in the sale of their land, and to refrain from selling land or trees or outsiders. In practice, however, this is not adhered to, and land has for some time changed hands between 'aila' and non-'aila' individuals. Land is usually sold to the highest bidder, regardless, it seems, of the facts of kinship. Informants related

recent cases where an individual desiring the highest price for his land, offered it, secretly, for sale to outsiders, and then let the highest offer be known to his brothers, who (because of the usual position of land brothers have in relation to each other) had to match that offer. Secondly, the 'aila' - as we shall show in the following chapter - restricts the operation of an open 'market' in marriage, for the percentage of those who marry from the 'aila' remains high. Because of the high rate of such marriages the 'aila' groups are effectively bi-lateral kin groups. It is important, however, to remember that not everybody belongs to an 'aila' in the same sense we have been using. 29.1% of the adult males of the 3 villages of Za'feran, Qumata, and Murad had no 'aila' group in the village - either because of city emigration or because they were immigrants or descendants of village immigrants, or because of demographic factors. Despite the fact that in Luwata no such individuals did exist at the time of research, some preliminary and impressionistic evidence suggests that many villages (probably the great majority) in the area are in a similar position. A significant percentage of the rural population are, therefore, 'aila'-free.

The emergence of a permanent and extensive wage-labour in the last decade or so, transformed the kinship system more than anything else. Wage-labour provides the individual with a stake in the new economy, and enables him to rid himself of old restraints. The increased economic differentiation between agnates has intensified

the divergence of interests between them. The 'aila' remains to have an emotional value - many of the moral values of the community are expressed in kinship terms; e.g. the ideals of friendship are expressed in terms of brotherly sentiments, similarly, sentiments of loyalty, support, and affection, and so on are often expressed in kinship terms¹⁷. Sentiments, however, are often disregarded when they conflict with economic interest. It is these sentiments or ideals, rather than any concrete evidence, that have led some to consider the kinship system in contemporary rural Arab society of great importance, even though the area studied exhibits a high degree of economic differentiation and high involvement in the labour-market¹⁸.

This is not to argue that a class structure exists in such villages; as I shall argue in a later chapter, such a division within the village society could not arise because of the nature and the multiplicity of social ties operating in such a setting.

The Family Household.

It is common among writers on the Arab World to view the Arab family in evolutionary or comparative terms; some see it as moving towards a Western-type, either because of the impact of Western culture and ideas, or as a result of the internal changes, like urbanization and industrialization, that are taking place in these societies¹⁹.

17. It is usual to address a friend as 'brother'.

18. Gulick, 1955, pp.150-155.

19. See for example Daghestani, 1953, pp.681-691. Anshen (ed), 1959, Chap. XII

Since the majority of these writers are either European or Arab with Western education, it is likely that they subscribe to a certain Westernized model of family relations. Consequently, a specific process of selection can be seen at work, whereby certain aspects of the Arab family are emphasized, either because these seem 'unusual', or are seen as absent from the accepted model of the contemporary western family. In other words, a certain definition of the family is imposed on the existing social reality. Thus, certain perceived aspects of family relations are focused upon as main characteristics or features of the Arab 'family'. Baer, for example, considers the family in Arab society to have three main characteristics; it is extended, patriarchal, and preferentially endogamous²⁰. Others add polygyny, patrilineal descent, and patrilocal residence as further characteristics²¹. Thus a discussion of the Arab family usually amounts to no more than a description of the above 'traits' or 'characteristics'. Some, however, assert that the structure of the Arab family is basically the same as that of the Western family, but maintain that the strong code governing the relationship between the sexes is 'the most pervading feature of the Arab family'²². Others still emphasize the legal aspects of family relations and view it in terms of the Islamic legal code and the recent changes relating to marriage, divorce, and the position of women.²³

20. Baer, 1960, pp.59-69

21. e.g. Patai, 1962, p.84

22. Berger, 1964, pp.99-111

23. e.g. Anderson (ed) 1968, pp.221-234

The problem of providing a model or definition of the family is logically related to the problem of how to describe or perceive the reality of the family. This, explicitly or implicitly, is usually defined as a household forming an economic unit²⁴. To avoid many of the conceptual confusions regarding what the 'family' is, I shall examine the current usages, in the area under study, of the equivalent Arabic term for the family; that is, the way the actors and participators think about the phenomenon under discussion. I indicated earlier that the word 'aila', which literally means the social unit supporting its members, is sometimes used to refer to a shallow patrilineal descent group, whose genealogy ties senior living males to a grandfather or great grandfather. The 'aila' may also be used to refer to a married man, his wife or wives, their descendants, including their married sons, wives and children, regardless of whether such a group share a common dwelling or form an integrated economic unit. The word 'haush' is sometimes used interchangeably with 'aila'. Frequently it is used to denote a household under one single authority. Literarily a 'haush' is a compound with a courtyard (see Fig. 7). More often the term indicates a family household, i.e. a group related by kinship or marriage and forming a domestic unit. 'Haush'Ali' could either mean the 'haush' or compound where 'Ali' lives or lived (if deceased or left the village) or his household, or the domestic unit of which he is the head. It is possible, therefore, to have a 'haush'

24. e.g. Sweet, 1960, p.165; Fullar, 1961, pp.63-64; Barclay, 1964, pp.73-80; Salim, 1962, p.55

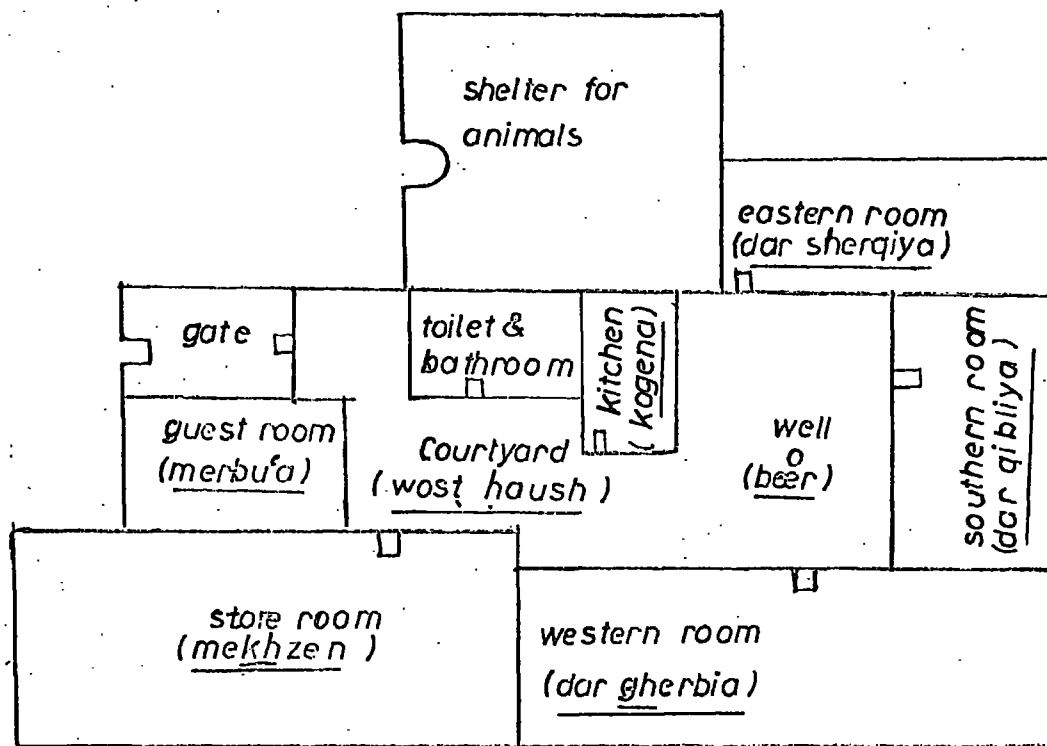


Fig. 7. A Haush.

which contains a number of domestic units or households. What distinguishes these units from each other is the fact that each acts as a separate economic unit. One 'haush' in Beni Mislim, for example, had 6 such units ('ailat'), each with its own separate room ('dar'), cooking facilities, and budgetary arrangements. All the male heads of these 6 units were agnates (i.e. members of the same 'aila' or patronymic group). Despite the facts of co-residence and agnation, each unit formed a separate household, because each was self-supporting and had its own individual budget ('muşroof waḥid'). This was symbolized by the fact of each having its own cooking and eating arrangements. Eating from a communal dish or pot has the expressive meaning in traditional Arab Culture of a unity and a bond among the participants. The above 'haush' lacked any central figure of authority. This is why it was not referred to as 'haush so-and-so' but impersonally as the 'big haush'. The majority of the families living in the compound were landless or poor with no alternative available accommodation.

The situation is further complicated by cases where two or more elementary family units, with separate residence and separate eating arrangements, see themselves as one household ('haush waḥid' or 'aila waḥda') simply because they have a common budget. This can be illustrated by the following example where two of three married brothers - all with unmarried children - considered themselves as one 'haush', while their paternal half-brother formed a separate household. The two full brothers

have not divided their land inheritance while their brother has been allotted his. Occupationally and educationally, the two full brothers differed; one man owned a flour mill in Qusbat and was seeking employment with the government because his present job was 'dirty' and did not allow him to use his literary ability (he was educated in a religious school). His brother managed an oil press in the village and had no education. The two brothers lived in separate dwellings but had a common budget and common ownership of land. However, not all of the brothers' income went into the household treasury. Some of the income of each remained his own; one of the brothers, for example, opened a shop in town, a commercial venture entirely his own.

Some of the significance of the many changes that have occurred in the country, especially in the last decade, lies in their intensifying the individual's ties and dependencies on labour and commodity markets, and in the result of this on the formation and generation of new definitions and ambiguities regarding the nature of the household. Many examples, of the type outlined above, indicate that the 'aila' and the 'haush' are not static, well-defined entities, one finds in them a kind of extraordinary flexibility and variability, and this is indicated in the contemporary use of terms like 'aila' and 'haush'. Because of the mutability of the situation such terms are required to describe, their usage tends to be amorphous. However, the ideal

arrangement remains 'one ''aila', one ''haush''; that is, a co-residential group with a budget and common ownership of resources and joint cooking facilities and commensality.

Ideally speaking, to have a family group ('aila wahda', haush wahid'), means to have a kinship group whose members share a common dwelling, property, income, and remain subject to the authority and management of a single head. In the case mentioned above, the fact of having separate dwellings and eating arrangements and some degree of self-management, was blamed on the wives 'who would not agree with each other'. We shall see later that ~~the~~ fission in the household is commonly seen by men as the result of the actions and attitudes of their women-folk.

All the males in a family household are expected to remain under the authority of their father as long as he is capable of managing the affairs and property of the household. Normally a father can only lose his effective position as head of the household if he becomes senile or incapable. In such a case the household may be referred to by the name of the eldest married son. This means that a household is usually called by the name of its male head, and if the son is the head then the household may be prefixed by his name²⁵.

A man who exercises no authority in his household must be either

-
25. In the few cases in which a household was named after the son, the latter was either an only son or the only married son. Lack of brothers or adult brothers delineates more clearly the distribution of authority within the household.

dead, or else treated as such. Fatherhood implies control, and without the necessary control the "biological" father loses the social significance of 'fatherhood'. This is important in the understanding of the emotional and conflictual nature of the father-son relationship. Usually the exercise of authority by the father is clear and tangible. He owns the household property and manages its affairs; the family income is pooled, and the head spends it on behalf of the others. As the head of the household, he undertakes all the economic relationships outside it. He buys its food, deals with shopkeepers and merchants, takes and pays loans etc., and so on. If the related adult males of the 'family' are dispersed (e.g. in separate dwellings) then the authority of the father is drastically altered. This is especially true in the cases where his married sons or some of them are emigrant workers in towns, and are living in towns with their wives and children. It is situations like this that make it necessary to differentiate between something like family and household. There is no one word that indicates a 'family' and a 'household' - the concepts are indicated in a number of ways. Both 'ahl' and ''aila'' are used to mean a kinship group or family. ''aila'' is also used to mean a household, and where it is important to emphasise this, ''aila waḥda'' (the unified family) is used. 'Haush' is also sometimes used to mean a kinship unit or family. Sometimes the two overlap, but increasingly they do not. The emigrant son remains part of his father's ''aila'' or 'family', but not necessarily part of his household; that is, he could have a household of his own. In other words, members of the same 'family' may be distributed over

two or more households or domestic groups.

A woman upon marriage joins her husband's household but remains a member of her father's family ('ahl'). Large families ('allat!')) may be split into a number of separate households or domestic groups. This may be partly due to accommodation difficulties, and to the managerial problems involved in running a large estate and the daily affairs of a large unit. In one such case (Bu Shiḥa in Za'feran), a man with a large estate, two wives, and nine adult sons, allotted some of his property and a 'haush', or compound, to each of his five married sons; each of these units functioned as a separate household with separate cooking facilities and more or less independent budgetary arrangements. There was no pooling of income, and each son, although ultimately dependent on his father (who is legal owner of the land), could accumulate property independently from his father or brothers. One of the above brothers for example, owned an olive press, another a shop, a third was a teacher, and the other 2 worked basically on the land leased to them by their father. The whole group was referred to, and referred to itself, as an 'aila', despite the fact that it had six separate households, and some of the above sons were working and living in Tripoli for some years. Because of its size and the relative economic independence of its households, the group in this case was also referred to as an 'aila' in the first sense of the term, i.e. as a patronymic group.

It is common practice among men to refer to their wives, for

reasons to be discussed later, not by name, but impersonally, by using the word 'aila'. It is in this sense that one can say that marriage creates a new family (or 'aila'), i.e. a precise network of sexual rights and prohibitions. The word usually used for 'to get married', i.e. 'yitzouz', also means to have sexual relations. Further a person who is married is also referred to as someone who has a home, i.e. 'mitbayit'. In this context the 'aila' is what is known as, sociologically, the 'family of procreation', or the conjugal unit. The 'aila' in this sense can be contrasted with the 'ahl', and the 'ahl' is useful and necessary in discussing the position of women in society. The married woman is usually a member of the above two groups. It is also in this sense of 'aila' that one can detect the existence of 'family' cells within the structure of the larger household; a married man living within the paternal household will have his immediate family ('aila') as part of his natal family ('ahl').

A household head may, in a specific situation, give, or be forced to give, substantive meaning to a reality already given a separate, linguistic legitimacy and identity; i.e. the reality of his son's wife and their children (i.e. to his son's 'aila'). In extreme cases, the father, as seen in a previous example, will divide land among his married sons and grant them separate dwelling places. In other cases the married son may act to significantly differentiate his immediate family from his father's household. This ~~is the~~ process

of household fission I shall discuss at length later in this chapter. In other cases, there seems to be a subtle, but situationally defined acknowledgement, or denial, of separate identity to structural units within large family households. What is meant by the above can be illustrated by the following example; an only married son left the village without eliciting the agreement of his father, to work with an oil company operating in Tripolitania. This led his wife's parents ('ahl') to complain to his parents - with whom she was living - that their daughter was being neglected, and they threatened legal action if their daughter and two young granddaughters were not adequately maintained and looked after²⁶. As the head of the household the father was considered responsible for all that went on within the household, including his son's behaviour, and the adequate maintenance of the latter's wife and daughters. The father disclaimed any responsibility for his son's behaviour and his (the son's) immediate family. Not only had he the means to support his son's wife and children (for this was well within his financial scope), but also would have done so, except for the independent behaviour of his son (amounting to the latter's rejection of the former's economic overlordship). The father retaliated to his son's asserting an independent identity by treating the latter's immediate family as a separate entity, at a time when his son had not the means (for his father owned all

26. I have heard the story from the father and the son, but not from the wife's parents. It may be that complaints from the wife to her parents were sparked off by disagreements between her and her mother-in-law.

the property) to maintain an independent household. With the son's return to the village, the father resumed his position as head of the household, while his son (about forty years old) resumed a dependent position in regard to major decisions concerning the management of the household and its property. One can see that with the death of the father, not only was the position of the son drastically altered (from that of a minor to owner and manager of the estate), but also the household as a whole was transformed from an extended structure to a basically conjugal one.

With the extension of the state and its functions and the rise of business and commercial, industrial firms, a new operative definition of what constitutes a family seems to have emerged; for official purposes the 'family' (referred to as 'alusra') consists of husband, wife and their dependent children. Other relatives are not normally considered part of such a unit, although in official surveys and censuses they may, if residing with the above unit, be considered part of that household. Effectively the 'family' is officially defined as a conjugal unit; married men, employed by the government, are given salary increments for wives and children, but nothing if they support any other relatives. The same principle applies in the allocation of houses for government employees. Here, accommodation space is not allocated according to the number of relatives one may be supporting, but according to other factors (e.g. status, influence). Similarly, free medical treatment is given to all government officials and members

of their conjugal family only. Further, no special consideration is normally given by government agencies to the individuals' parental place of residence, in considering his place of appointment or transfer. Since the state controls the mass media and education, and to a significant degree, the employment market, it can be expected that the official definition of what constitutes a family will increasingly become part of the accepted ~~perceptive~~ social reality for a larger section of the population. This official definition may be the reason behind statements describing the family as becoming rapidly Westernized.

I have outlined above some of the ways the people involved articulate and conceptualizē family situations - such conceptions are relative, diffuse, and highly flexible, for they have to cope with a reality which is not only complex, dynamic and variable, but also highly changeable. It is a structure and a process that is full of actual and latent tensions and conflicts.

It is clear that to avoid confusion it is necessary to differentiate between 'family' and 'household'. It is easier to delineate a household than a family. We have seen that the 'aila' is a diffuse concept and refers to a number of social structures, depending on the situational context. The family could be both wider and narrower than the household. I shall take a household - as indicated by local usage - to mean any group of people who share a common budget ('musroot wahid'), and usually, but not always, a common residence. It is

possible for a household to include individuals between whom no kinship or marriage ties exist. This is not the case in the villages studied. None of the 171 households surveyed included such individuals. Examples from the past were given, however, of strangers being incorporated into households - especially those of wealthy landlords - where an addition to the household meant additional labour.

As in traditional China, the ideal household unit in rural Arab Society is one containing the maximum number of generations of patrilineally related males, including all the males in each generation, together with their wives and children, all living in one compound under the authority of the eldest male. Because of this, one cannot discuss the household without discussing some of the kinship relationships that make up the family. The distinction between the two remains sociologically useful and necessary, especially to avoid making statements which may be true if confined to the one, but untrue if they refer to the other. Further, the distinction enables us to classify households into a number of types, which may be necessary for understanding fully the process of conflict and change in domestic units.

One needs to remember that the area under study, like the country at large, is experiencing the consequences of rapid economic change. This has direct consequences, not only on the structure, but also on the nature and function of the households. Therefore it was difficult

at times to determine whether a group of individuals did comprise a household or not. This was frequently so because such a group seemed to be undergoing a process of fission or reconstruction of relationships: a married son, for example, working in Tripoli, may find it necessary to keep moving his wife and children between the city and his father's household in the village;; each move means a change in household structure. Each household has one or more unique or specific elements, and in some cases such elements are of great importance for the people involved. Wealth, poverty, death, a divorce, marriage, or re-marriage, birth, emigration, or a change of job are some of the elements that combine to individualize the household. However, it is necessary to group households into certain categories. Households can be classified according to a large number of criteria (e.g. type or size of dwelling, property, number of resident members, age of spouses, sex-ratio etc.). For our purposes, especially for the study of social change, it is useful to classify households according to their internal structure and organization: these can be typified into three basic models; the conjugal, the extended, and the joint. A conjugal family household would consist of husband, wife (or wives) and their unmarried children; the extended or expanded household would consist basically of husband, wife (or wives) their unmarried children, together with their married sons, their wives and children, if any. I shall define a joint family household as consisting basically of two or more adult brothers of whom one, at

least, is married, together with wives and children.

It is common to refer to the last two classifications (i.e. extended and joint) as one type. A distinction, however, is useful, for there are significant and qualitative differences between the two, as will be made clear later. All the above household types are likely to include at some stage one or more relatives; divorced daughters or sisters of the male head are often present in some of the above three household types. Divorced ^{sisters and widowed} mothers are likely to be present in joint households, and a conjugal household may include a young sister or brother; one fifth of the conjugal households did include such a relative.

Households consisting of men or women living on their own, widows with young children, and households which are neither conjugal, extended or joint have been classified as 'denuded'. Numerically they form 12.2% of all the households surveyed, but the population in such households is small, comprising only 3.3% of the total population in the survey. Typically this household is the product of 'misfortune', poverty, death, divorce, city emigration; the majority of people involved are extremely poor, in many cases they are people who cannot afford to get married, or who are divorced or widowed but cannot afford to re-marry; in a few cases are those whose children have left to live and work outside the area. Because of their landlessness and poverty they are often obliged to live on village charity, and on doing menial and odd jobs. A widow, for example, earned her living as a charwoman

for the village women, doing seasonal agricultural work (olive gathering, etc.), and when this did not suffice, she relied on charity and occasional begging in Quşbat on market day. In 10 out of the 21 denuded households the head of the household was a woman, and in all those the woman was a widow; in seven such cases she had no male agnates in the village, and in three cases she had dependent sons (at school), and in another five cases the sons (the majority of them married) were working and living in Tripoli. Women in such a situation, especially if they have no male children living with them, occupy precarious positions in village society. Women who do not remarry, especially if they live on their own, tend to attract unsavoury gossip. In the above case, for example, it was rumoured - at the time of study - that the woman concerned was having illicit sexual relations with a certain man in the village, who eventually had to move to another village in order to put a stop to the gossip. In eleven cases the 'head' of the denuded household was a male, and in two cases middle-aged bachelors, who, being propertyless and with no regular occupation, could not afford the necessary expenses of marriage. In six cases the adult male head of the denuded household had no male relatives in the village, being either a village immigrant or a descendent thereof. The majority of those who had agnates in the village were either widowers or unmarried sons living with their widowed mothers, in the majority of all denuded households (16 out of 21) the individuals involved were either landless

or extremely poor. Such people depend on charity and help, occasional and seasonal employment, and recently on financial relief funds established by the government. The increasing dependency of the villager on the labour and commodity market, and the acceleration of urban emigration, has probably increased the number of such households, and it is likely that the number will increase as economic differences between individuals become wider, and as government departments firmly establish themselves as the proper agencies for helping the poor and unfortunate. Traditionally, such individuals were integrated into the village community in a number of ways. Religious duty demands that alms should be given to the poor, the disinherited and the needy. In a predominately agricultural community there were also things that such individuals could usefully do, so that food and lodging could easily be provided for them. Therefore, the decreasing dependence of such communities on agriculture, and the increasing dependence on a money-economy system, has had a marked effect, particularly on those who lack relatives and have no property or regular occupation. They can no longer automatically depend on the local community to provide them with the economic, social, and ritual links necessary for their livelihood. They increasingly orient themselves to the demands of the labour market and to the provisions of the government (i.e. through "vertical integration") to control their poverty. In other words the nature of the multiple ties between individuals, ~~regardless of their economic positions and relationships,~~ are being continually undermined. By decreasing the dependencies

of people on each other, both the state and the labour market are facilitating the differentiation of people into basically economic strata.

The Extended Family Household.

It is a common assumption that the extended family is the predominant family system in Arab Societies. This is taken to mean that 'one household unites the father of the family, his wife or wives, his unmarried daughters, his unmarried sons, and his married sons with their wives and children²⁷'. Because the distinction between 'family' and 'household' is often not maintained, statements about the one are not distinguished from statements about the other. Thus, for example, the statement 'the typical Arab family is extended' can be given two basic interpretations: firstly, it refers to kinship relations that are not organized round household activities. For a father, for example, his 'family' includes his married sons, their wives and children regardless of whether they have separate households or are part of his own household. In this sense the statement is true in so far as it refers to an accepted cultural expectation or norm. In other words this is how a father would normally define his 'family'. However, if the above statement is taken to mean that the typical Arab family household is extended, in the sense defined earlier, then all the available empirical evidence suggests a different view. The

27. Baer, op. cit., p.58. see also Patai, op. cit., p. 58; Tannous, 1944, p.537; Mubasib, 1955, p.144-145

view suggested by the second interpretation is false, not because recent changes in Arab Societies have made it so, but because the extended family household in the Arab world has very probably always been statistically not the predominant type. This is due, among other things, as I shall argue shortly, to its basic structure.

Apart from this conceptual confusion between household and family, there are a number of factors which are likely to lead to the numerical exaggeration of the extended family household. It is true that the ideal household is thought of as an extended household; therefore, those who describe the family household as extended, are not necessarily describing an existing social reality, but how participants would like to construct it. In other words the description is that of an ideal and not necessarily of a reality (that is an 'ought' statement and not an 'is' one).

It is likely that many of the participants have lived at some stage (either as children, married adults, or grandparents) in an extended household; therefore a description of a temporary and transitory phenomena may erroneously be thought of as permanent reality. More generally it can be added that the predominance of such household types may be postulated, because it fits the sociological models of some of those who concern themselves with socio-economic development or change.

Available data about the size of the family household in traditional

Arab societies tends to support the view that the extended household was, statistically speaking, far from being a typical phenomenon²⁸. Detailed studies of Arab villages in the 1950's point to the same conclusion; in one Egyptian village the average household had four members²⁹. In a Druze Arab village 62% of the families were considered conjugal and only 10.5% were considered extended³⁰. In a Palestinian Arab village 78.5% of the families were considered conjugal, 16.8% extended and 4.6% joint³¹. In a Syrian village 68% of the households were classified as conjugal and under 25% extended or joint³². Similar figures were obtained from a Sudanese village³³. Conjugal households formed 84.4% of all households in an Arab village in Israel³⁴; and in a Christian Arab Lebanese village only 2 out of 87 households were described as extended³⁵.

32 (18.7%) out of all 171 households in the villages surveyed, in Msellata, were extended, while 104 (60.8%) were of the conjugal type³⁶.

A number of factors help to tie the son to his father. In Islamic Societies the father remains the legal owner of land property

28. For a summary of such data see Goode, 1963, pp.123-129.

29. Ammar, 1954, p.42

30. cited by Goode, *ibid*, p. 126

31. Rosenfeld, 1958, p.1129

32. Sweet, 1960, p.165

33. Barclay, 1964, p.71

34. Cohen, 1965, p.51

35. Gulick, 1955, p.109

36. According to the official Libyan population census of 1964, the average household size for the whole country was 4.6. In Msellata Municipality the average household had 5.03 in 1964.

and its effective manager until death or senility. Therefore, a son with no prospects of employment remains dependent on his father for work. Generalized local attitudes expect a son to remain within his father's household. Many proverbs and sayings emphasize the traditional importance of kinship unity and cohesiveness. It is said, for example, 'you may leave your own friend but never leave your father's friend'³⁷, and 'to leave one's group (kinship group) is to perish'³⁸. Islam also teaches parental respect (Koran, XVII, 24). These are generalized ideals and individuals in specific situations may find themselves either working against these ideals or unable to enact or achieve an integrated family household.

Two types of reasons may be combined to explain why the extended household is not found more extensively: 1) Those related to demographic factors, and 2) those related to socio-economic factors.

It has been argued that under pre-industrial conditions the size of households would be limited by early death of parents and high infant mortality rates³⁹. However, purely demographic constraints can be avoided, since family and kinship relations need not be based on biological relations, and since adoption and other culturally defined forms of kinship can be used to achieve the ideal of an extended family household⁴⁰. ~~However,~~ As far as the area under study is concerned,

37. 'Sahbek Seeba O Sahib bouk mat seeba.'

38. 'illi tali' min alfiriqa halik.'

39. Levy, 1965, pp.1-63.

40. ibid, article by Fellars, pp.70-82

there is no evidence to suggest that such procedures were extensively used in the past to maintain households in extended form.

Exigencies of demographic variables do have an effect upon household composition. The degree to which these have an effect can be seen from the following table:

Table 1.

Existing and Possible number of Household Structures in Five Villages in Msellata.

<u>Household type</u>	<u>Actual number of family Households</u>	<u>Possible number of family Households.</u>
Extended	32 (21.3%)	41 (32%)
Joint	14 (9.3%)	40 (31.2%)
Conjugal	104 (69.3%)	47 (36.7%)

Despite the obvious demographic constraints, the above table shows that a significant amount of fission operates in the extended and joint family household, and this can only be explained by structural and socio-economic factors.

Fission and the family household.

The dynamics of fission in the extended family household can be related to three factors 1) Landlessness and poverty 2) Changes in the labour market 3) Structural conflict within the Arab family household.

1. Landlessness and Poverty:

As an operating unit, the extended household is most suitable in

an agricultural economy with a simple technology and little specialization of skills⁴¹. A large family needs correspondingly a large labour force, and the labour of sons is the principal means of providing this. If the father is landless or poor, then his sons are forced to seek employment outside the household or village, and this is likely to undermine the effective authority of the father and strengthen his son's desire for independence. A landless or poor father is not only unable to provide employment for his sons, but also may not be able to fulfill one of his main traditional duties, that is, the provision of the necessary bride-wealth or dowry ('mehr') for the marriages of his sons. The father who cannot provide employment, economic support, or wives for his sons, cannot expect to maintain his full authority over them. Thus, it is proverbially said that 'flocks in times of drought tend to scatter'⁴², meaning that poverty and economic hardship loosens the ties between individuals and increases their self-orientation.

There is a correlation between the village economic resources and the percentages of its households which are extended or joint. It is clear from the evidence collected that if the number of producing olive trees per household and per head⁴³ is taken

41. Nimkoff and Middleton, 1960, pp.215-225

42. "alssé'i waqt aljedb ma iywafiqsh ba'ze"

43. Olive trees are more useful than land ownership as a measure of wealth for a number of reasons; e.g. fragmentation of land holdings and the unpredictability of the rainfall, variation in usefulness of land for cultivation.

as an indication of the economic resources owned by the village, then there is no doubt that the ownership of property is conducive to the formation of extended and joint households, as the following figures indicate:

Table 2.

Extended and Joint Households in Relation
to Village Property (Olive Trees)

<u>Village</u>	<u>No. of olives per household in village</u>	<u>% of extended and joint households in village</u>
<u>Euwata</u>	192	40.9%
<u>Qumata</u>	117	31.5%
<u>Za'feran</u>	79	28.5%
<u>Beni Mislum</u>	68	20.5%
<u>Murad</u>	50	9.9%

While 15 of the 32 extended households (46.8%) were well-to-do families in terms of agricultural property, and 8 (25%) were average or middle families, only 18 out of 104 conjugal households (17.3%) were well-to-do families and 69 (66.3%) were poor or landless.

There were 9 extended family households which were poor or landless; in two of these the married son was an only son and in both of these the authority of the father was 'loose'. In the first household the father was living in a separate dwelling from his son, and had little say in the running of the daily affairs of the latter. In the second case, the father was approaching senility and was dependent upon his son for economic support. In all the above 9 households

the married son or sons were economically independent of their parents; most of them were employed as wage labourers or in government offices. In three cases the married son was working outside the area in Tripoli city and another three married sons worked outside the village but within the area. The position of the father in such households differs significantly from that of the wealthy father, who can offer his sons economic support and can provide them with the necessary dowry for their brides. His authority has an economic reality even if his sons acquire occupational independence from him.

There were 17 households from which married sons separated themselves to set up independent households either in the village or outside it. In the majority of cases the split-off sons were living and working in Tripoli city. In 10 households the father was poor or landless. Only in four cases could it be said that he was wealthy or a large landowner, and in three of these four households the household remained extended (i.e. one or more married sons remained in the household). In five cases the married son who left the paternal household was an only son, and in three of these the father was very poor. Further, all the married sons (from 1-3) left their natal households in another eight households, and in six of these the father was very poor or landless.

The fact that extended households are largely found among the wealthy and the well-to-do stratum of the rural population, has been reported not only from other areas in the Arab World, but also from

elsewhere⁴⁴. Since landlessness and poverty is not a new phenomenon in the area under study (or indeed in the Arab World at large), one may assume from this fact alone that the extended family household could not have been the typical household in the past either. It was estimated that in 1910 there were in Msellata about 1,000 large landowners, 1,500 medium, and 1,000 small landowners; the rest of the population were labourers, many of whom owned small parcels of land⁴⁵.

It has been suggested that the traditional extended family household formation was a cyclical or a repetitive process; that is, a process by which the extended household develops, dissolves and develops again⁴⁶. A number of reasons make such a statement of very little descriptive value; land fragmentation and the fact that in Islamic societies all sons inherit equally from their father, together with the desire of parents to have as many sons as possible, ensured that the descendants of the wealthy and large landlords were not necessarily wealthy too.

Thus, for example, each of the three sons of a man owning 45 hectares of land divided into 5 plots, will inherit approximately 15 hectares of land divided into 5 plots. This example illustrates why the fact of inheritance for those who have brothers means the diminution and fragmentation of what could be entirely their property. Some individuals may accumulate enough wealth to be able to become large

44. See Ammar, op. cit., p.44; Sweet, Op. cit., pp.166-67; Cohen, op. cit., p.49; Wolf, 1966, pp.66-67.

45. quoted by Brehony, op. cit., p.340 (Bertolini, p.Tripolitania Settentionale. Vol. 1, Rome 1913)

46. See for example Goode, 1963, p.124

landowners, especially if they engage in trade and commerce. Years of drought not only decrease the value of land and trees, but also increase the debt of the peasant, so that it is easy for the above individuals to become large landowners if they so desire. Landowners in the area tend also to be shopkeepers, traders, jewelry dealers and so on, but not vice versa. In other words it seems that large land owners are attempting to consolidate their wealth by diversifying their source of income, made possible by the large increase in the salaried population in the area, and its dependence on the new commodity market. So, in so far as a cyclical and repetitive process in extended household formation is likely to take place, it is likely to do so as a contemporary, rather than as a traditional, phenomenon.

2. The Labour Market and the Extended Household.

A market economy and a labour market are both necessary factors in understanding household fission and the dynamics of the contemporary extended family household. The availability of jobs and employment outside the households and villages increases the likelihood of fission in such households, for they provide alternative sources of employment and income for those seeking independence from parental households. Similarly the emergence of a modern national state and the provision of state services in education, health and financial relief, contribute to the same process. Both the national (and International) economy, and the impersonal relationship of the state, establish new vertical ties between individuals, and their extension

and penetration of the village community is not likely to leave the village unaffected. State education, for example, is, among other things, a differentiating force; it is geared to the stepping-up of the division of labour, and hence it establishes differential relations between individuals and the labour market. Those who acquire some education may find it necessary to leave their village or area to find a desirable job or occupation.

The effects of these developments (which accelerated after the discovery of oil in 1959) cannot be exaggerated. It can be seen in the high rate of emigration from the villages to the towns: 129, (or 37%), of all the 348 adult males of the villages surveyed are now living and working outside the area (mostly in Tripoli city) (see Appendix table IV). Further 34, or 15.5%, of the 219 adult males who reside in these villages had (Spring 1966) their place of work outside their village area (mostly in Tripoli city). They were fully integrated in the labour market and mostly engaged in wage-labour, trade, or government employment.

Increased economic differentiation has reduced the dependence on agriculture as a main occupation for a large percentage of the adult male population in the above villages. Those whose basic occupation was farming or agricultural work comprised only 53% of the total adult males (see Appendix table VI), while those whose main job was non-agricultural comprised 39% of the total.

It can be seen that the developments of the labour market and state services have directly decreased the son's independence on his father and consequently increased the likelihood of sons breaking off from their parental households. Money has come to be seen as the basic force responsible for undermining the traditional unity of the extended domestic group. Many informants and acquaintances thought of 'money' as the cause of fission in extended and joint family households, and the reason behind the loosening of kinship ties. It is not difficult to see why: for money symbolizes a whole new order of economic relations, it symbolizes the new market economy and the increasing occupational differences. It also makes possible the existence of tangent and more autonomous relations between individuals in a market or an exchange relationship. In short, money is the symbol of the means by which the individual has come to achieve independence from his father, brothers and other relatives.

The traditional extended family household did typically act as the unit for the organization of agricultural production. The head of the household was responsible for the management and organization of labour. The household acted both as a unit of production and consumption operating independently, to a large extent, from outside influences. If we take this as a model of the typical, traditional, extended household, then the contemporary, extended household is no longer of this form: in fact only in five out of the 32 extended households surveyed do we find all the married or adult males in the

household engaged in farming and agriculture⁴⁷. In 25 households (or 78%) we find one or more married or adult sons engaged in non-agricultural jobs; in these cases the son was either a wage-labourer or a salaried employee, or, as in a few cases (3) self employed (shop-keeper, pedlar, or trader) or college or university students (another 3 cases). Further, 20 or 62.5% of these households were units in which all the married or adult sons were engaged occupationally in non-agricultural activities. In 6 of these the son or sons worked in the village or within the area, so that they commuted daily from home to work and back. Their basic activities took place outside the family household and their work conditions were outside their father's control. However in their other activities in the village or households they were available and accessible to their father's supervision. In four cases the father was a large landowner, and the sons could be expected therefore to help on the land when necessary.

What is special about this type of extended household is the occupational integration of the sons into a national labour market on the one hand, and their direct participation in the traditional village activities on the other.

Another sub-type can be seen in the four extended households,

47 Two of these were households with only sons, and another two each had one married son only (in one the unmarried son was a fellah, and in the other two such sons were college students). In all these four households the father was a 'middle' land-owner (enough land to employ his son (sons) to work on. In the 5th the father was a large landowner and had three married sons working on his land, while one married son had left the household.

where one or more of the married sons worked in the village or area, but one or more of them worked outside it (the majority in Tripoli city). As in the previous sub-type of extended family household, the sons here are occupationally independent of their father. What is interesting about this sub-type, however, is the fact that brothers are differentially related to their village community in general, and to their father in particular. That is, adult married sons in this household type are not equally available for work on the agricultural land, nor are they equally constrained by parental and local control. The son who works in Tripoli city, for example, is free more or less to do what he likes for most of the time, for he is not expected to travel home more than once a week at most. It is reasonable to expect that such a household is disposed or open to strains and conflicts more than others. Evidence exists to suggest that such households are less stable than others, but the sample of such households is too small to warrant wide generalizations; two of the above households have already experienced fission, in that in one case, two married sons, and in another case, one married son, have already left their parental households. In the remaining two cases the households were relatively large landowners, and in both cases they employed labourers to work their land, and thus limited the demands made on the sons living at home and working in the area. The apparent ability of wealthy extended households to cope with conflicts and resolve strains can be further illustrated by the fact that all the three extended households, which contained married sons working on the land, and others with regular wages or salaried occupations, were

wealthy households with more than average landed property.

All the married sons in ten of the extended households were working outside the area⁴⁸. All the married males - apart from their fathers - were working in urban areas far enough from their home village to make daily commuting to work practically difficult and expensive. These males working and residing in urban areas (mostly Tripoli) were separated not only from their immediate family (i.e. wife and children) but were also independent from the control and demands of their father and relatives; to a very large degree their daily life was autonomous and independent from many of the controls and constraints of their homes and village community. In these households the men commute once a week, a fortnight, or month to their homes. The daily affairs of their wives and children are managed by their parents. This type of household may be fully contrasted with the traditional extended family type. As a type it may be termed transitional, without implying that it is a transitory type. Some households of this type are transitory in that the immediate families of married sons join them after a period (varying in length) of separation, to establish an autonomous household unit. However, this mobile or transitional type seems to be suitable for both parents and their married sons. The father remains the head and manager of a large domestic group, thus realizing a traditional ideal and enhancing

48. In two cases the sons were college students. In six of the above households the group owned more land than average; two were about average, while the remaining two were poor or landless.

his status within the local community. As far as married sons are concerned, the arrangement suits them well; through it they can, so to speak, have their cake and eat it. Living away from their homes - basically free in most of their daily life from the constraints of parental authority - they can organize their life according to their personal wishes, and at the same time leave the problems of managing the affairs of their immediate families to their parents.

It is not surprising, therefore, that younger married men (some with a relatively high education) in such positions, expressed no strong desire to establish an independent household. Many other factors contribute towards making this type of extended family the most predominant; it is less expensive to maintain a group of people in the village than in the city, where accommodation is scarce and high rents are demanded. Further, the household produce, such as olive oil, wheat for bread making etc., is available for the domestic group. Similarly, vegetables can be grown and poultry raised in the village but not in the towns.

Given the climatic conditions and the inaccessibility of underground water for irrigation, and existing production techniques, crop yields are determined by factors outside the control of the producers. Further, the system of inheritance and continuous fragmentation means that land is under continuous threat of devaluation with every successive inheritance. Therefore, every large landowning household may find it

necessary to have to rely on non-agricultural projects or enterprises (e.g. commerce, trade, becoming landlords in the city), and/or occupations with regular wages or preferably salaries. This is, in fact what seems to happen; if we take the ten largest landowning extended families in the survey, we find that seven of these had either bought houses or villas outside the area (four in Tripoli city and one in Homs town) and/or owned shops, tractors (for domestic use and hire) mechanical olive presses, and in one case a petrol station. Further, only three out of the sixteen married sons in these family households worked in agriculture, while six were government employees, four students (two university, and the other two in secondary school) three were in business and one was a shopkeeper. As far as unmarried sons were concerned, two worked in agriculture, three worked in government offices, two were at secondary school, eight at elementary school, and one was under school age.

It is important, therefore, to emphasise that the extended family household has to control, limit, and manipulate its dependence on land to achieve economic security. Therefore it cannot but become more change-oriented and versatile; it may, for one thing, have to support some of its members while they acquire the education necessary for securing desirable employment. It also has to loosen its control on its adult male members, to allow for the necessary occupational and residential mobility. This increasing dependence of domestic groups, regardless of their landed property, on the money income of its members,

and the consequential effect of this on kinship relations, was articulated by one father (large landowner with two married sons) who complained that 'fathers have become colonized by their sons'.

The traditional extended family household, where land was the basic or only source of income, where all the members worked as an economic and residential unit, and where occupational mobility was very limited, is no longer the typical extended type found today. Instead, the predominant extended type tends to be occupationally differentiated and depends basically on money income. Such households, which are also large landowners, either employ seasonal workers to farm the land or rent it for part of the produce. As indicated previously, wealthy landowning households seem zealously committed to participating in the national labour market and occupational advancement. Given the specific land and inheritance situation, the extended family household has, without any apparent hesitation, used its traditional economic resources as a springboard for the occupational mobility of its members. What is interesting about this new mobile extended household is the fact that, despite its being rural-based (in residence, ownership, etc.), it is urban-oriented in that its income is not derived from co-operative activities of the household as a unit, but from the remuneration of occupational roles performed by individual (male) members working in the towns. Further, large landowning households employ labour (mostly seasonal) and machines (tractors) to work on their land, the produce

of which is sold for urban consumption; moreover, such households are frequently engaged in commerce and trade. It can be said, therefore, that far from being an obstacle to socio-economic change, an extended ~~structure~~ household may be more able to utilize and cope with such changes⁴⁹. Large scale economic changes have had direct but varied effects on household composition and internal relations. In place of the traditional extended household a number of specific types have emerged, each with special characteristics, and orientations. These types range from those approximating the traditional type to the largest group, which I called transitional or modulated households, because they are intentionally and eagerly oriented to integrating themselves into the larger society, especially its economic and occupational structure. It is individuals from this group who are likely to want to be doctors, lawyers, teachers, army officers, etc., and it is this group that has its roots in the face-to-face and intensely personal, diffuse rural community, with branches stretching into the urban, impersonal, occupational and specific life of the city.

3. Conflict and the Extended Family Household

Analysis of fission in the Arab family household must be related to its basic organisation. Thus, it can be said, it is characterised by structural conflict; that is, the internal social relations within

49. It is possible that in a different land situation (e.g. where crop yields are determined basically by factors under the control of the producer) and in a different inheritance situation (e.g. where only one son inherits land), the members of the domestic group would behave differently, e.g. become professional farmers.

the extended households are such that they predispose the domestic group to break up.

The father-son relationship is of basic importance in an extended structure. It is full of strain; the son retains a minor position through his father's lifetime; legally, he lacks control and ownership of the household's property while his father is alive. Further, the father also controls marriage; by withholding the bride-price, a father can withhold marriage from his son. If the father is poor or landless the son may be forced to seek employment outside his home area in order to raise the necessary capital for marriage. It is the father's duty to get his son married, and if the father fails to do this he is undermining further his authority. However, a father may find it difficult to get his son(s) married because his own father is still alive and is in control of property and capital. Thus, a man desiring the benefits of work for his own direct benefit, and that of his own elementary family, is under pressure to establish an independent household, even if this means his temporarily forfeiting benefits for the household property. Emigration to the city may become the first step towards household autonomy.

Conflict between father and son is, of course, a conflict between two social positions; from the age of 10 onwards the relationship between the two becomes formal and their attitudes acquire increasingly an 'avoidance' pattern. By simply living, the father not only withholds

wealth from his son but also may prevent him from attaining full status in the community. Imposed on this dependency of the son on his father is the formality of their relationship. The son, for example, should not (regardless of age or position) address his father by his personal name but by his role instead (i.e. 'father' - 'bouya')⁵⁰. Nor can the son mention marriage to his father, or indeed mention women at all. He is expected to be on his best behaviour in his father's presence, not to raise his voice, to stand up and offer his seat, and not to smoke or listen to songs (on the radio), etc. In this respect there is no difference between a married middle-aged son and an unmarried very much younger brother; both are expected to behave in a similar fashion towards their father.

Conflict in the household is not limited to the father-son relationship, but exists also between brothers. In ~~legal~~ Islamic law, as mention earlier, all brothers have equal inheritance from their father. This means, in effect, that the distribution of inherited property is not related to the labour power or size of the elementary family of each brother. Thus, a number of possibilities may exist to accentuate this relationship. The eldest son may work alone for many years until his brothers are adults. Such a situation is not uncommon because of rapid remarriage, frequent divorce and the existence of polygyny. Further, a son with ^{his own} grown up sons cannot use their labour for his own benefit. Childless men must work for the infant sons of their brothers and the problem becomes more acute in cases of half-

50. In face-to-face situations the son respectfully addressed his father as 'sidi' which literally means 'my master'.

brothers. Here the jealousy and conflict between wives or successive wives is acquired by their children.

Extended households with only sons are less conflictual than others, since they have no brothers to compete with for household resources or inheritance. It is expected that such households be more cohesive than others. Seven out of the 32 households are of this type, and in all of them the married son's place of work was within the area, four of them working in their village itself. In comparison, in 9 out of 10 households with one married son only (other brothers unmarried), the place of work of the married son was outside the area (mostly in Tripoli). In the latter households the son was much more isolated, because of distance, from the daily demands of his extended family household. However the cohesiveness of the only son extended household unit must not be exaggerated. The extraordinary increase in opportunities of work outside and inside the area has had great impact even upon this type of household; therefore we find that out of the 17 cases where a married son (or sons) has left the natal household, five were only sons. This can be contrasted with the study on an Arab Palestinian village (in Israel) in the 1950's where, in none of the households with only sons, did fission occur⁵¹.

Apart from the strains and friction that may arise between brothers, extended households with more than one married son are

51. Rosenfeld, 1958, pp.1127-1139

always under the threat of break up from any of the sons; and this is what one father was afraid of when one of three married sons wanted to move his wife and children to his place of work (Tripoli); i.e. to establish a new household. The father threatened to dismantle the entire extended household at once if his son were to carry out such a proposition; he feared that if one were to leave, the cohesiveness of the household would have been irretrievably undermined.

It may be pointed out here that the transitional or mobile extended family household is better able to cope with some of the problems arising from differences in the labour power between brothers and their immediate families. Agricultural work, as mentioned earlier, in such households, is done by hired labour, and not by the adult males of the group, and it is through this increasing separation of 'work' from the domestic group, and the relative insulation of married males from their immediate families and from each other, that conflicts and tensions in the extended domestic groups are managed.

It is not only relations between men that could generate fission in the extended household; relations between the women can also contribute to the same process. Quarrels and tensions between women was the most frequently mentioned source of division in the domestic group. This phenomenon of blaming women for the breaking up of extended and joint households is widespread in the Arab World, and has also been reported from India⁵².

52. B.B. Whiting, 1963, p.232; Rosenfeld, op. cit., p.1135

The breaking-up of an extended or joint household is seen by men as something of a 'crisis'; it announces the existence of fundamental conflict between related men (i.e. father-son, brother-brother). Women stand in ^{a contraposition} ~~oppositional relationship~~ to men; that is, a man is culturally defined as such because he has qualities and characteristics supposedly lacking in women. Women are, therefore, likely to be blamed for secession among agnates. This, however, need not mean that the accusation of women is simply the result of rationalisation. Women have less interest in maintaining the extended household of their husbands than the latter themselves might do. As wives in an extended or joint household, they contribute labour to individuals (e.g. brother-in-law, sister-in-law) towards whom they may feel little obligation. Further, a wife cannot feel the mistress of the home until she is independent of her mother-in-law, and quarrels between mother and daughter-in-law, and between the latter and her sister-in-law⁵³ are legion in the area, and in Arab societies generally. A wife who is related to her husband (especially if she is his ^{'bint al'amm'} ~~paternal cousin~~) is more likely to be interested in maintaining her husband's extended or joint household. This may explain why we find that in the current extended household the percentage of marriage to father's brother's daughter is twice as high as in the rest of the current marriages in other types of households.

53. For the equivalent of these terms in the local Arabic usage see Appendix, table Ib

The Joint Household

Following the death of the father it is generally expected that the household will continue under the authority of his eldest son, at least until all his brothers are married. It is considered desirable for all married brothers to maintain one household. In the past this was advisable as work on the land demanded the co-operative activities of many adults, and brothers and their wives could easily provide the necessary co-ordinated work activities. To remain in one household also meant that land was left undivided, and therefore more easily and profitably workable.

It can be said, therefore, that the demand for co-operative work relations and the prevention of land fragmentation, together with the ideal of the large household, have, traditionally, induced brothers to maintain a joint household. Land continues to be a very important cohesive force in joint households. The following table indicates that land ownership as a cohesive factor, is more important in the joint household than in the extended household.

Table 3.

Types of Households in Relation to Landed Property

Land ownership ⁵⁴		(a = per household; b = per head)			
<u>Type</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Above</u>	<u>Below</u>	
Joint	14	a.	4 (28.5%)	7 (50%)	3 (21.4%)
		b.	3 (21.4%)	5 (35.7%)	6 (42.8%)
Conjugal	104	a.	17 (16.3%)	18 (17.3%)	69 (66.3%)
		b.	21 (20.1%)	20 (19.2%)	63 (60.5%)
Extended	32	a.	8 (25%)	15 (46.8%)	9 (28.1%)
		b.	11 (34.3%)	7 (21.8%)	14 (43.7%)

54. Calculated in relation to the no. of producing olive trees owned. The classification is relative to the village norm.

In the contemporary situation land ownership is a cohesive force in maintaining joint households, as long as it can be a source of economic security or occupational mobility. In other words, land has no longer the same meaning it had for the traditional joint households, where brothers had to co-operate with each other in farming and agricultural production. Large landowners employ wage-labourers (seasonal) to work on their land. Today, land and household are increasingly maintained as separate enterprises or entities; land is no longer the entity around which a certain way of life revolves, instead it has become a means for providing a secondary and permanent source of money income. Land remains a cohesive force because it reduces or cushions the impact of the labour market on the individuals concerned. That is, the individual with land is not as desperately dependent on the market as the landless individual. Of the 17 adult males that compose the richest joint households surveyed only five engaged in farming as a basic occupation. The rest had 'urban' type occupations (commerce, trade, government employment etc.).

As a type, the joint household is the least common; only 14 households out of 171 were joint; five of these contained one married brother only, while seven of the remaining nine had two married brothers, and the last two contained three and four brothers each. The fact that the joint household is the least common type is related to the effectiveness of the forces leading to fission, rather than to the constraints of demographic factors. This can be shown simply by pointing out that

number of joint family households with two or more married brothers, could be increased from nine to 40 if the currently independent households of brothers were to fuse.

The same factors that lead to fission in extended households are also relevant in the case of joint families; the joint household, because of its structure, is a source of conflict and strain, despite the inherited ideal which depicts the joint household as the desirable household unifying brothers into a cohesive entity. However, Islamic law also acknowledges the right of brothers to divide their inheritance after the death of their father, and therefore an adult brother can seek independence without incurring the economic sanctions that a son might be subjected to in a similar situation.

In an extended family household there is no doubt as to the ownership of property and the authority of the father, who remains the acknowledged head until his death. However, in a joint family household, questions related to ownership and authority can easily be raised. All adult brothers are equal in relation to their father, and the elder son has no special position in Islamic law or in local tradition, in relation to inheritance or authority. The relationship between brothers is not only basically equalitarian, but is also formal, and elder brothers have the formal respect of their younger brothers. Competitiveness is also an important element in the relationship between brothers; every brother presents an economic threat, in that he reduces the amount of inheritance and increases the demands on household

resources. Further, a brother may reduce or delay marriage chances.

This competitive element in the brother-brother relationship is increased in the case of paternal half-brothers: the mother-son relationship is affectionate, close and informal, therefore brothers with different mothers are under differing and conflictual influences. Because divorce is frequent and remarriage is the accepted pattern of action, the chances of having a half-brother are relatively high. This is important for understanding fission in joint households. In none of the joint households in the survey do we find half-brothers in the same households. The mother is therefore an important cohesive force; she can reduce the tension between her adult sons by acting as an arbitrator and mediator. Ten of the fourteen joint households contained the mother. Being a cohesive ^{force} ~~ally~~ in the case of full-brothers she acts as a point of division between paternal half-brothers.

The problem of the relationship between labour and income contribution to the household on one hand, and that of allocation of resources on the other, also occurs in joint households. The labour power and income of brothers differs, and sometimes widely, yet in terms of land and division of property they all inherit equally. Apart from this, there is also the problem of household management. In an extended household it is the father and the mother who are responsible for the running and management of the household. In a joint household with adult brothers, a 'head' is not as clearly

delineated. The older brother is supposed to act as the household head, but he lacks the economic base that his father had; an elder brother cannot threaten his younger brother with economic sanctions, for he is his brother's legal equal. Thus, differences over how to administer and run the household affairs and property can easily lead to disagreements and thus to fission. Relationships between the brothers' wives ('selfat') are notoriously difficult, and few women seem prepared to accept direction and supervision from their sisters-in-law. This is why the mother in a joint household is so important for its stability and continuity.

Fission in the joint household may finally occur when the sons of one or more brothers reach marriageable age. Since the responsibility for their marriage is their father's, and his alone (as long as he is alive), he may find it necessary to split the household, so as to provide the wealth necessary for his son's marriage. The managerial problems that could arise in joint households which have married sons are so acute and varied, that only very few households of this type can develop. In fact, only two households out of the 171 were of this joint-extended type; both contained two married brothers; in one case, one of the brothers had two married sons (one a college student, the other a teacher in Tripoli) and the second brother had no married sons. In the second household each of the brothers had a recently married son (both were at secondary school); both households are of the wealthiest in the area. In all four cases the son married a relative, three married a father's brother's daughter, a

phenomenon which will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

MARRIAGE PATTERNS AND RELATED ASPECTS.

Marriage in Islam is not a sacrament or a religious tie. It is based on a legal contract. Furthermore, Islam permits a very wide choice in marriage. A man may not marry within closer range than first cousin; he cannot marry a foster sister or any two sisters at one time. (Subsequent marriage or marriages of two sisters to two brothers is, however, permitted.) Apart from the above restriction he is permitted to marry any Moslem woman, and some legal schools permit marriage to a Christian or Jewish (people of the Book) woman and to any other woman prepared to embrace Islam.

Father's Brother's Daughter Marriage.

One of the peculiar features of Arab Moslem marriage is the preference for marrying father's brother's daughter ("bint al-'amm"). Such a phenomenon is found all over the Arab World. This cannot be explained, as so often suggested, by reference to the Islamic religion. Islam exercises no specific preference for such a marriage. Indeed marriage to 'bint al'amm' was known before Islam¹. Such a preference is not a matter of sentiment either, for the rate of this type of marriage is high. Studies of marriage choice in Arab rural communities

1. Robertson-Smith, 1903, p.100

show that marriages to 'bint al-'amm' range from 9% to 14% of all marriages contracted, as can be seen from the following table.

TABLE 4

Marriage to 'bint al-'amm' in various
Moslem Arab rural communities

<u>Area</u>	<u>All marriages</u>	<u>'Bint al-'amm' marriages</u>	<u>As percentage</u>
Tripolitanian Villages	685	66	9.6%
Artas (Palestine) ²	264	35	13.3%
Kafr Qasem (Israel) ³	417	61	12.6%
Turān (Israel) ⁴ (Moslems)	578	78	13.1%
Druze Village (Syria) ⁵	254	23	9.1%
Shi'ite Village ⁶ (Lebanon)	229	32	14.0%
Negev Bedouin ⁷	214	25	11.7%
Iraqi Marsh dwellers ⁸ {Shi'ite) - <u>sample</u>	164	63	38.4%
Baggara Arabs (Sudan) ⁹	-	-	10%
Buuri Al Lamaab (Sudan) ¹⁰ 346		38	11%

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2. Granqvist, 1931-5, Vol. 1, p.81
 3. Cohen, 1965, p.111
 4. Rosenfeld, 1957, pp.35
 5. Ayoub, 1959, p.267
 6. Quoted in Marx, 1967, p.225
 7. Ibid, p.225
 8. Salim, 1962, P.49
 9. Cunnison, 1966, p.89
 10. Barclay, 1964, p.120

The table shows that this type of marriage varies only slightly from one place to another¹¹. It is likely that these figures are as high a rate as can be attained in a naturalistic setting, considering the constraints of demographic factors (e.g. need to match up ages) and other factors. An expanding population is likely to produce more cousins for such a marriage than a static or declining population. In Luwata village, which has experienced a steady population increase over the last two generations, 13.5% of marriages are to 'bint al-'amm', while Qumata, with a declining population (through emigration) has only 3.8% of such marriages.

Some scholars have seen patrilateral parallel cousin marriage as an expression, in Arab culture, of an overall preference for endogamy¹². It is true that the terms for male and female first patrilateral cousin ('ibn al'amm' and 'bint al'amm') are sometimes used to apply to other members of the same 'aila' who are generally of the speaker's own generation. This, however, cannot be used to support the above thesis of preferred endogamy in Arab culture.

One may affirm or indicate that an individual is of the same 'aila' by referring to him or her as 'ibn al'amm' or 'bint al'amm'. Similarly, a male of an older generation and from one's own 'aila' is usually addressed as paternal uncle ('amm') regardless of whether he is or

11. Salim's figures are probably unreliable as they are based on a small sample.

12. Ayoub, op, cit., p.266. Granqvist, op. cit. Vol. 1, p.78

was, a father's brother or a more distant relative. However these terms are also used in addressing non-kin as a way of expressing respect and other feelings. Further, patrilineal parallel cousins can be linguistically differentiated from other cousins. In Msellata a father's brother's son is referred to as 'ibn 'amm waqif' in contrast to other patrilineal cousins, who are not considered 'waqif' (which literally means 'standing up').

Endogamy, in the strict anthropological meaning of the term, is not a feature of Arab Moslem marriage. Indeed it can be argued that Islam, being a universalistic and egalitarian religion, is incompatible, ideologically, with a precept of endogamy. There is no rule enjoining marriage within a prescribed group, or out of it, beyond the limited incest regulations. Beyond this, the marriage market, or the range within which it is possible and permissible to marry, is extremely wide. The question, therefore, arises of why marriage to father's brother's daughter is preferred in Arab Moslem communities. A number of explanations have been given for this phenomenon. What follows is a discussion of these.

One explanation sees the reason for the preference of 'bint al 'amm' marriage to be Arab sentimentality towards their kinsmen. It is said, for example, that in Arab societies "when one marries, one chooses the best person one can find, and the best person is to be

found among one's kinsmen - the closer the better"¹³. Apart from the fact that such explanations beg the question, they tend to ignore the complex and generally ambivalent attitudes individuals have towards their agnates. As we have shown in the last chapter, conflict between agnates is not uncommon. Specific attitudes towards certain agnates are situationally determined and can thus vacillate from co-operation and affection to hostile avoidance. The same person who, in a certain situation, says that 'one drop of blood is better than a thousand friends'¹⁴, might say, in a different situation, that 'your blood is your poison'¹⁵, expressing therefore contradictory attitudes towards his agnates.

The most commonly given explanation for the phenomenon attempts to relate it to economic factors. It sees 'bint al 'amm' marriage as motivated by the desire to keep land property within the kinship group, and as an attempt to avoid the payment of the full bride-wealth ('mehr')¹⁶. Indeed, this type of explanation is often given by the participants themselves. They say, for example, that 'to marry a 'bint al 'amm' is like sacrificing from your own sheep'¹⁷ and so on. However the explanation remains unsatisfactory: for although Islamic law gives a daughter the right to inherit half of the inheritance

13. Gulick, 1955, p.127

14. "ruqtit dem wa la alf sahib"

15. "illi min demmek min semmek"

16. Granqvist, op. cit. Vol 1. p.78; Sahim, op, cit, p.49
Rosenfeld, 1958, p.37; Lutfiya, 1966, p. 130

17. "illi wakhid bint 'amma Ke'ru zeha min ghermu"

share of her brother, it is customary in many Arab rural communities for her to remain without land inheritance. It is not usual for women to ask for their inheritance as far as Msellata is concerned. By foregoing her inheritance for the benefit of her brothers, a woman ensures the permanent support of her father and brothers, especially in cases of ill treatment, husband's death or her divorce. In Msellata it is generally considered improper ('aib') for a husband to incite his wife to demand her inheritance. Where women inherit, economic motives can equally provide reasons for marriages with strangers as with 'aila' women. A stranger wife can, in such a situation, bring with her a desired inheritance. Furthermore a woman, regardless of whom she marries, retains full control of her property, and her husband has no right - legal or otherwise - to appropriate or control such a property. Considerations of property ownership seem, therefore, irrelevant to the phenomenon under examination. Economic factors become relevant only in a community where divisions among kinship groups correspond to divisions of property ownership (i.e. where a "class situation" exists), such as in the village studied by Peters¹⁸, or in the cases of brotherless women.

It is true that only a nominal sum or a reduced sum is paid in cases of a marriage to a father's brother's daughter. This also cannot be accepted as a satisfactory explanation for the preference for such a marriage. Economically such marriages can be profitable to men with sons only, or with more sons than daughters. A man with more

18. Peters, 1963 pp.159-200

daughters than sons, or with no sons should be motivated to marry his daughters to outsiders, and there is no evidence that this is in fact the case. Further, at least some of the bride-wealth given to the girl's father ('mehr') goes to the girl, or is spent on her, so that the 'profit' involved in the marriage is not significant.

Data collected from villages in Msellata does not suggest that wealth (in the form of tree and land ownership) significantly increased the marriage rate to 'bint al'amm'. The highest rate of such marriages occurred in the 'ailat' of Bu Ghila in Beni Mislim and in Nasr in Luwata. The former is relatively poor by village standards, while the latter is one of the richest in the region. However, it had used the 'waqf' system to confine property inheritance to its males, and therefore its women not only did not inherit, but also had no right to inheritance.

Property and economic factors can and do play a part in mate selection, but such a part is not confined to 'bint al'amm' or 'aila' marriages, but applies to all types of marriages. What is needed is an explanation of why a specific type of marriage is preferred in communities of greatly different economic and property structures all over the Arab world.

A second theory suggests - having made some of the criticisms outlined above - that the motive behind father's brother's daughter

marriage is political. It claims that a man foregoes his daughter's bride-wealth in order to gain the support of his brothers and his brother's son in any factional struggle¹⁹. It is also claimed that "a pattern of father's brother's daughter marriage plays a prominent role in solidifying the minimal lineage as a corporate group in factional struggle"²⁰. What Barth and others seem to be claiming, is that such a marriage pattern is not only used by men to obtain the political allegiance of their brothers and their sons, but also that such a practice helps to solidify the 'lineage'.

In segmentary and lineage Arab societies (e.g. Bedouin) the lineage or vengeance group does not allow any factional struggle within it. It is - as indicated in the previous chapter - a corporate group. Therefore 'bint al'amm' marriage is superfluous if it is intended to prevent 'factional struggles' between brothers or cousins. However, such marriages, together with marriages to other patrilineal parallel cousins, may have the consequence of increasing the solidarity of the minimal lineages in relation to other lineages, or possibly in their relation to the state. In Arab peasant communities with no lineages - as in Msellata - factional struggle between agnates is possible. However, the opportunities that could give rise to political struggle and competition are very limited. The village - as we pointed out in the first chapter - has no, or very few, political positions for

19. Patai, 1962, p.172; Goode, 1963, p.95

20. Barth, 1954, p.171

for which brothers or cousins can compete. Both the shaikh and Imam are appointed, and not elected, to their position. Disputes between men are frequent, but these are mainly concerned with land and farming.

In Arab society it is the male who usually can claim the right to marry his father's brother's daughter²¹. Although such a right is no longer fully acknowledged in Msellata, brothers are expected to discuss jointly the possibilities of marriage for their sons and daughters. It is also necessary to remember that men marry not only their 'bint al'amm' but other 'aila' women too. In the villages surveyed marriages to 'aila' women were as frequent as marriages to 'bint al'amm'. The overall percentages show that 9.6% of the marriages were to 'bint al'amm' and 9.3% to other 'aila' women.

Structural-Functional Explanations.

Such explanations tend to criticize the previous ideas for the way they explain a social phenomenon by reference to the motives and aims of the participating individuals. They insist that a satisfactory explanation must be given in terms of the social functions or consequences of such a marriage.

One such explanation²² claims that parallel cousin marriage in

21. Patai, op. cit., pp.175-6

22. Murphy & Kasdan; 1959, pp.17-29

Arab Society enables the larger kinship units to split into smaller sections. That is, the structural function of such a marriage is to promote fission or segmentation in the kinship structure. Such a marriage, it is said, deepens the gulf between collateral kinship branches by turning affinal bonds inwards. Since Bedouin society is based on kinship, each minimal-size agnate unit becomes virtually self-contained and encysted. In such a system where males are related through patrilineal descent, there is a need, it is claimed, for differentiation between kinship groups, and this is provided by parallel cousin marriage. Members of such a group become related to each other both patrilineally and matrilineally.

The above theory seems to assume that patrilateral parallel cousin marriage is a more prominent feature in the marriage pattern of bedouin society than in the non-segmentary peasant communities. There is no evidence to support such an idea; in fact the evidence available²³ suggests that the frequency of 'bint al'amm' marriage and other patrilateral parallel cousin marriage is no different from, if not lower than that found in peasant communities which lack the kinship structure of the Bedouins. Christian and Moslem Arab communities tend to have a similar kinship organization, yet 'bint al'amm' marriage is prohibited, or of significantly lower occurrence in the former²⁴. One consequence of this type of marriage may be

23. Cunnison, op. cit., p.89; Marx, op. cit. pp.225-227

24. Gulick, 1955, pp.104-131. Rosenfeld, op. cit. pp.44-5

the atomistic fission of kinship segments. But it has been suggested that such a marriage has other consequences too, and that it is necessary to view it in relation to the overall pattern of marriage²⁵.

It has been argued²⁶ that parallel cousin marriage makes the relationships between agnates tolerable: It is said that hostility is built into the Arab kinship system especially between juniors and their senior agnates. Since all parallel cousin marriages are marriages to daughters of agnates, and in view of the high agnatic concentration found among the Bedouins, such marriages create affinity between co-resident agnates. The frequency and persistency of parallel-cousin marriage makes an agnatic group a cognatic group as well. So a number of links are therefore created which alleviate some of the burdens of agnation.

What needs emphasising in the above theory is the empirical fact that the relationship between a man and his maternal uncle - among Arabs generally - is of the opposite type to that of his father or paternal uncle. Such a relationship is usually informal, compassionate and tender. Many sayings express this attitude. In Msellata, as elsewhere in Arab societies, it is said that "two-thirds of a man's character belong to his maternal uncle"²⁷. It is also said that "if hungry seek your maternal uncles, and if oppressed your paternal

25. Marx, op. cit., p.228 (footnote); Peters, 1960, p.44

26. Peters, 1965, p.131-34

27. "thultheen al-wild lil-ikhal"

ones"²⁸. It is by creating such types of relationships among agnates that parallel cousin marriage can be seen as having the consequence of reducing the tensions among agnates. By emphasising the significance of the multiple social relationships that parallel cousin marriage creates among agnates, the above theory provides a useful explanation of this type of marriage. However its frame of reference is that of a Bedouin society characterized by agnatic concentration and a segmentary form of organization. In peasant communities, like those in Msellata, its usefulness is limited. Such communities - as was shown in the previous chapter - lack lineage organization. Such marriages do, nevertheless, create informal relationship between agnates - especially agnates of adjacent generations. They do, therefore, increase the individual's scope for action and reduce some of the potential tensions that would otherwise exist between agnates in both peasant and Bedouin societies.

'Bint al'amm' marriage has little effect on the relationship between a mǧn and his father or his paternal uncle. Such a marriage, on the other hand, has obvious consequences for the wife ('bint 'alamm'). I believe that all the above theories suffer from the basic weakness of confining their attention to the effects of such a marriage on the relationships between males, and to the latter's overt aims and possible intentions. As in other societies marriage can be used to serve

28. "In gu't imshi likhwalek aw inzneet 'aleek bi'mamek"

economic, political and other interests. We have argued that the reasons suggesting that patrilateral parallel cousin marriage is better able to serve such interests are inadequate. A more adequate explanation of the phenomenon must, therefore, be sought in other directions.

I suggested, in the previous chapter, that marriage to 'bint al'amm' and to 'aila' women may be related to attempts to reduce the managerial difficulties inherent in the Arab extended family households. The following table shows that the frequency of such marriages is much higher in extended households than in the other types.

TABLE 5
Marriages of Current Households
(excluding emigrants)

<u>Type of Household</u>	<u>Type of Marriage</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>'bint 'amm'</u>	<u>'aila'</u>	<u>village outside</u>	
Extended	10 (18.5%)	9 (16.6%)	8 (14.8%)	27 (50%)
Other Households	17 (8.2%)	19 (9.2%)	64 (31.2%)	105 (51.2%)
Total	27 (10.4%)	28 (10.8%)	72 (27.8%)	132 (50.9%)

Since first marriages are more likely to be established or take place within an extended family household, they are likely to show a higher percentage of 'bint al'amm' marriages than in all contracted marriages. In Luwata, for example, of the total of 123 first

marriages, 22, or 17.8%, were to 'bint al'amm' and 36, or 29.1%, to all ''aila' women. On the other hand only 13.5% (23 out of 170) of all marriages were to 'bint al'amm' and 23.5% (40 out of 170) were to all ''aila' women.

Extended family households have a wide and complex network of relationships, i.e. between males, between females, and between males and females. A marriage to father's brother's daughter diversifies some of these relationships, and thus it may increase its versatility and resilience. A marriage of this type makes, for example, the paternal uncle of the wife (her husband's father) her father-in-law also, and her cousin becomes her brother-in-law also, and so on.

It is therefore necessary to examine the 'typical' male-female relationships that one finds in traditional Arab communities. I shall argue that it is these, and the general position of women in these societies, that make marriage to 'bint al'amm' and ''aila' marriages seem practically and morally desirable. These attitudes are not the manifestations of vague kinship sentimentality, but are structured by the existing basic relationships of men and women.

Men do think of the above preference as an instrumental directive (e.g. to keep property within the family). But they also think of it as a moral directive. If men are pressed for an explanation they tend to give a circular answer, i.e. a 'bint al'amm' or an ''aila' woman is preferred as a wife, because she is kin or from the same

'aila'. They say, for example, "'bint al'amm' has first priority"²⁹, or "the eye cannot rise above its brow"³⁰. In other words a man (or a woman) must not consider himself (or herself) above marrying a cousin.

It is this 'moralistic' attitude towards such a marriage that needs further explanation. An adequate explanation can be found, I believe, in the typical attitudes men have towards women, and in the type of relationships that two adult sexes can enter into. What follows is an attempt to provide a general model of such attitudes and relationships. Such a model can be applied not only to the village communities under study, but to other Arab rural communities of the type referred to here.

Men and Women: An Interpretive Model.

Men and women can be said to 'inhabit' two different and, in some sense, opposite social worlds. The sexual division cuts across all other divisions. Men dwell basically in the 'public' world of work, property, politics and religious practice. Women, on the other hand, dwell in the 'private' world of domesticity, child-rearing and the household. The divergent orientations of the two worlds are expressed and mediated both tangibly and symbolically, and their segregation is maintained and regulated in a number of ways:-

29. "bint al'amm aola"

30. "al'ain la ti'la 'ela Nagibha"

a) **Veiling:** A woman in the world of men is viewed as a trespasser. Her identity must, therefore, be hidden and her physical appearance veiled. That is, she is required to exist incognito. Woman is expected to remain veiled before strangers and relatives who fall within the permissive degree of marriage. The veil is seen as providing a protection against the covetous eyes of the male. Indeed, it has come to symbolise a specific social order³¹. The Libyan press and Friday sermons regularly attack what they regard as "the shameless mixing, particularly among the young, of the two sexes". They warn the public of the dangerous consequences of discarding the veil which is bound to lead, as one newspaper article put it, to "social disintegration and moral depravity".³²

b) Women's roles and major activities must be carried out, as far as possible, within the confines of the house ('haush'). The physical structure of the traditional Arab 'haush' is designed to make this possible. It incorporates features like a large court-yard, the absence of side windows and the inclusion of basic amenities (e.g. wells, kitchens etc) inside the outer wall of the 'haush' (see Figure 7). Interaction outside the 'haush' between men and women is guarded and characterised by avoidance; husbands and relatives, for example, tend to walk ahead of their womenfolk, and the rear seats in public transport are usually reserved for women passengers.

31. An articulate conservative view of the veil can be found in Rivlin & Szyliowicz (eds), 1965, pp.335-359

32. e.g. Tarablus al Gherb, 5th & 6th Sep. 1967

c) Referential Anonymity: For the world of women to remain "hidden", it is desirable that it should remain 'anonymous'. A man, therefore, does not refer to his wife or mother by name. If a reference is needed, it is put in a generalized and impersonal form. In Msellata the wife is referred to as the 'aila' or the 'haush' and the mother as 'the old woman' ('al 'aguz'). Further, adjacent generations (especially agnates) do not talk about or discuss marriage, sex, or women.

Women are sometimes compared to or contrasted (not always unfavourably) with domestic animals (e.g. ass, bitch, sheep etc.)³³. By such comparison men may be emphasising the qualitative difference between their world and that of women. At the same time ^{men} they assert their linkage with the woman's world, for domestic animals are an integral part of the traditional household economy.

The segregation of the sexes is also maintained at the level of the immediate family. Husband and wife usually dine separately, with the husband, together with his adult sons, eating first. This, however, is often discarded in old age, where husband and wife - if no male guests are present - may eat together, or from the same dish. Older women tend to have more freedom of movement, and to be less restricted in their contact with men, than younger women. It seems that by losing some of the characteristics of femininity (especially

33. See also Granqvist, op. cit., passim.

the ability to bear children), a woman gains some access to activities usually reserved for men.

Neither is a man expected to show publicly any tenderness towards his wife, or spend too much time with her, for he could be accused of weakness and of being 'under her spell'. Therefore, social pressure is put on the married male to confine his "private" activities to a minimum.

Women generally tend to be stereotyped by men as stupid, ignorant, obstinate and sensual. Men must, therefore, orient themselves to the world of men. In Msellata men say "do not trail behind an ass or ask an opinion from a woman".³⁴ In both, it is implied, you are likely to end up in a mess.

A man can become ritually unclean only through a woman, i.e. after sexual intercourse. A woman on the other hand is unclean from three causes; after sexual intercourse, during menstruation, and following child birth (for 40 days). This ritual uncleanliness limits a woman's interaction not only with her husband (i.e. she has to avoid her husband during menstruation and following childbirth) but more importantly it limits her public activities. An unclean woman cannot fully participate in the life of her community. She cannot, for example, fast, pray, visit the local saint-shrine,

34. "la tokhiq rai mera o la tebi' eliqmare min wera"

or even visit other women with new born infants³⁵.

Since women inhabit a "hidden" social world they are also viewed as possessing a certain charm and esoteric qualities. Thus women are not only seen as animal-like (e.g. stupid, lacking self control, glibble etc.) but also mysterious and charming. In such a context sexual experience acquires additional meanings. It becomes valued not only for its own sake, but because it symbolises the attainment of the ultimate intimacy that a man can have with the 'hidden' world of women.

The definition of manhood must ultimately be related to that of womanhood. Virility is an important component of the accepted definition of manhood. Thus a man who fails to consummate his marriage is considered to have failed to prove his manhood. In such a situation, it is said of the man 'he is like a woman'. Otherwise it is said he is 'bound or tied' ('merbout'). This means that someone has used charms or cast a spell on him so as to prevent his consummation of the marriage, or the continuation of sexual activity. This is often attributed to jealousy either from a wife (who believes that her husband is contemplating remarriage) or from another man who wanted to marry the girl in question. Sometimes the explanation is seen in terms of the intervention of supernatural beings³⁶. The failure to consummate

35. Fuller, 1961, p.55 Granqvist, op. cit. Vol.II, p.162

36. Such beings - the 'jinn' - are said to have no perceptible physical form but to have the psychological and social characteristics of humans. They inhabit an underworld and have stratified society, and can act against individual human beings if displeased.

one's marriage or to procreate are thus attributed to magical and supernatural forces. The situation is seen, therefore, to call for ritualistic action. Here, the local diviner (a 'fageeh') is consulted, and after diagnosing the cause of the conjugal difficulty usually writes an amulet and prescribes the performance of certain actions to go with it. Apart from illness, the overwhelming cases of such magico-religious practices ('tesbeeb') are related to marriage and conjugal difficulties. Marriage - as we shall see in more detail later - is an area where various tensions and strains can be found to operate. It is in the sphere of marriage that a man must prove his virility and manhood. Fatherhood is the ultimate proof of virility and manhood. This is why the incapacity to consummate marriage and temporary impotence represent a 'crisis' for the individual concerned. The existence of such a situation raises doubts about the basic component of his identity as a man.

The attitude that women are providers of pleasure and comfort³⁷ is religiously reinforced. Believers are asked to treat their wives like a field to be cultivated and enjoyed in whatever manner desirable (Quran; II, 223).

This generalised attitude towards women - which I shall term 'exploitative' - conflicts with a more specific attitude which I shall

37. As one informant put it, a woman is "an ass by day and a wife (or mistress) by night".

describe as 'protective'. A man remains the guardian and protector of his daughters, sisters and mother all his life. Generally speaking a man has these protective attitudes and obligations towards all women who fall within the incest taboo. He is expected to guard and remains responsible for their sexual purity before and after marriage. A woman who loses her sexual purity brings shame ('ar') on her father and brothers, and more diffusely to her 'aila'. Thus the sexual purity of women is a source of anxiety for men. Sayings like "the death of a daughter is the death of a (potential) shame"³⁸ give verbal documentation and expression to such anxiety. Similarly, the birth of a son is a cause for celebration, while the birth of a daughter is treated, if not as bad news, then as a non-event. Women are said to engage in elaborate magical practices - like trilling into a box and keeping it under lock until their daughter's wedding night so as to ensure that their daughter's virginity remains intact until the appointed wedding day. The virginity test practised in Msellata - as in many other Arab communities - can be seen as a verification of whether the protective obligations of the girl's immediate agnates have been exercised. In Msellata the girl's wedding chemise - showing the necessary blood stains - is carried to the bride's waiting female kin who receive it with the usual trills of joy.

Virginity in the female is therefore a serious subject. A

38. "men matet binte mat 'are"

denial that one's bride is a virgin is a grave accusation against her near agnates that could lead to homicide. It is not surprising therefore that such an occurrence is extremely rare. Hundreds of marriages are contracted in Msellata every year, yet informants could recall only one case of a 'non-virgin' claim since 1960. The bridegroom in this case insisted that his bride was not a virgin, and as expected sent her home (the bride was from another village). Her family immediately retaliated by taking her to a doctor who certified that she was a virgin. She remarried later with a low bride-wealth.

Every adult male is likely, therefore, to have two conflictual orientations towards women, i.e. exploitative and protective. Both of these are elements in the accepted definition of 'manhood' ('rujula'). Men therefore pose threats to one another. For other men's permissible exploitative orientations include women to whom one is expected to be protective. To use sociological jargon, alter's exploitative orientations threaten ego's protective responsibilities. Thus the ultimate insult to a man is the casting of doubt on the sexual purity of his sister or mother. Men, therefore, may come to see themselves, not only as sexual rivals, but also as antagonists ~~to~~.

If the above model of man-woman relationships is accepted, then it is possible, I believe, to see why patrilateral cousin marriage is preferred. Father's brother's son is the nearest male that a girl can marry. He is the nearest male agnate who can be a husband, i.e. who can

"exploit" her labour and sexuality, and, at the same time, a protector. From the girl's point of view he is structurally the best possible husband. There is no doubt that women do prefer to have such a husband³⁹.

In Msellata, I was told, women sing in praise of the cousin as being the best possible husband.⁴⁰

Men, on the other hand, sometimes show coolness to their marrying a cousin. They say, of a cousin, that 'she is like a sister'. Because the protective orientation is stronger at such a range, men are urged not to be bashful (sexually) of their cousins⁴¹. Men also say that a close cousin, as a wife, is disrespectful and a poor servant, while a stranger wife is usually on her best behaviour.

A woman marrying her 'ibn 'amm' is at her best bargaining position as a wife. She can always appeal to her husband or his father (i.e. her uncle) as a protector or guardian. This does not necessarily mean that such a marriage is more stable or lasting, for there is not empirical evidence to support such a claim. It does mean, however, that the wife in such a marriage, is more secure as a wife - and that

39. Fuller, op. cit., p.53. Granqvist, op. cit., p.67

40. The line usually sung can be translated as follows

"O my paternal cousin, you are from my flesh and blood, your marriage to me is much better than that of a stranger."

41. It is said, for example, that 'shyness with a cousin as wife means a short marriage' - "illi itpeshem min bint 'amu ma aqnash ma'aha."

she expects better treatment from her husband and his household than a stranger woman.

There is no doubt that men have precedence over women in matters of marriage, inheritance, divorce and in their participation in public life. Accepting this, one need not subscribe to the 'chattel status' theory of Arab Moslem women. There are a number of factors which enable women to manipulate, influence and sometimes control the behaviour of men. Firstly: although women may not own any land property (in the villages studied very few women owned more than 30 olive trees), they do own other forms of property (mostly jewellery in gold or silver). A woman's property is entirely her own and her husband has little or no control over it. Further, the wife is not required or expected to use any of her property to contribute to the household budget. Under Moslem law, and by custom, the husband is required to feed, clothe, accommodate his wife and his children, without the assistance of his wife.

Secondly, a wife maintains close ties with her parental household. Her father and brothers are her main protectors. If she feels ill-treated she can return to her father's or brother's household ('aḥilḥa') and remain there until the conditions for her return have been met. Such a course of action is a common and acceptable procedure through which a woman seeks to redress wrongs done to her by her husband or his family. Such a woman is called 'ḥarjane' which literally means

angry or offended⁴². It is customary in such a case for the husband to give a gift (clothes or jewellery) to his 'harjane' wife as an appeasement.

Thirdly; marriage in Islam is based on a legal contract. This means that the woman's guardians can make stipulations regarding her maintenance, treatment and divorce.

Fourthly; the strict sexual division of labour means a state of dependency exists between the two sexes. Women perform certain tasks (e.g. weaving, cooking, child-bearing etc.) which have become their domain. The performance of these tasks renders men dependent on their wives. It gives women coercive powers over their husbands.

Finally, some of the folk ideas can be manipulated by a wife intent on improving her domestic situation. For example, it is generally thought that if a woman is refused what she strongly desires or craves for ('Wahem') during her pregnancy, then the child may be born deformed. It is easy, therefore, for a woman to make what she really wants an object she craves for and thus oblige her husband and his family to try to fulfil her desires.

So although women are legally and ideologically dominated by men, they are, nevertheless, able in their everyday life to influence the

42. This is the same as the 'hardane' and the 'za'lane' women referred to by Granqvist (op. cit., pp.218-220) and Rosenfeld (1960, p.67)

behaviour of men by manipulating some of the relationships between them, utilizing the strict conjugal role differentiation, and by making use of commonly held beliefs.

The Structure of the Marriage Market.

Generally speaking the process of mate selection can be said to function like a market system⁴³. As suggested earlier, such a system in Islam is formally and legally free - almost any woman can be taken as a wife. The idea that mate selection can be seen as a market system is not strange to the thinking of the people involved. The language of economic transactions, bargaining and competition forms a part of their articulations about marriage.

The way individuals think about marriage involves thinking about what is usually termed 'bride-price' or 'bride-wealth' ('mehr'). Men complain of the 'expensiveness' of marriage. A general saying warns men that "the marriage market is treacherous; so be careful when you enter it, for women (as wives) can either be the cause of your wealth or your ruin"⁴⁴.

Marriage in Islam is based on a contract which has very little religious character. Such a contract ('nikah') usually includes the following aspects: the names of the bride, the groom, the witnesses,

43. Goode, 1964. Chap. 4.

44. 'Suk alnisa suk gheddar, ya khashe rud balek, yighruk min almal quntar, o ikhesruq fi ras malek."

the amount of the 'bride-price' payable in advance, and the 'sedag' i.e. the amount paid to the wife in event of divorce or death of the husband. The contract is not considered valid without the presence of the groom or his guardian and the guardian of the bride.

Since puberty for a girl means seclusion, and since wealth is controlled by the young man's father, there is little possibility of a system of personal choice of spouse acquiring any significance. It is the father who conducts the usually lengthy marriage negotiations, and not his son. Indeed the son could not take an active part in this for it is considered shameful to approach his father directly about marriage. If this is necessary then it is usually done through the mother. He can, however, object to marrying a certain girl, and his consent is necessary for the validation of the marriage contract. But since he neither controls the necessary wealth nor is in a position to make a meaningful choice (for he has no access to the world of eligible women apart from his near cousins) he rarely objects. The daughter is not, on the other hand, consulted about the choice of her husband if she is a virgin ('bikr') or has not married before. Her opinions are, however, taken into consideration in subsequent marriages.

There are two ways in traditional Arab communities, by which marriages are arranged; by exchange ('bedal'), or through the payment of a bride-price ('mehr'). Exchange marriages are marriages where no

bride-price is given to the father of the girl, but instead men agree to exchange their sisters or daughters or give their daughters in exchange for other men's sisters. Such marriages are relatively rare in the area under study, although studies of other Arab communities show such marriage to be frequent and approximating to a quarter of all marriages in some cases⁴⁵. The overall figures for the five villages in Msellata show that such marriages are about 4% of the total current marriages. The strict equalitarianism (in expenditure and treatment) makes such a system demanding and generally undesirable to the people in the area.

The majority of marriages are arranged through the payment of a bride-price. This consists of payment of money to the father of the girl. The amount given varies according to a number of criteria. In 1966 the amount paid varied from about £100 to about £300 for a young (virgin) woman and the delayed bride-wealth ('al-sedag') varied from £50 to £100. Ideally all the bride-price should go to the bride (in silver, gold, clothes etc.) and forms a part of her personal property (Quran, IV, 4). It is difficult to estimate how much of the 'mehr' does in fact reach the bride. Informants insisted that it varies according to the status and wealth of her father. Wealthy and respected families give all the bride-wealth to their daughters and some spend on them more than they receive. Poorer families give

45. Granqvist, op. cit., Vol I, p.111. Rosenfeld, op. cit, p.50

them at least part of the 'mehr'⁴⁶.

This, I believe, throws doubt on the idea that the bride-wealth is to be considered as compensation to the father and his household for the loss of the labour power of the daughter⁴⁷ and for her ability to bear sons for a stranger⁴⁸. Ideas which see the 'mehr' in terms of an 'exchange value' cannot provide a full explanation of the practice. For apart from the above mentioned fact that at least part of the 'mehr' goes to the daughter, the amount demanded does not correspond to the actual or potential labour a woman does or is expected to do. Women usually do more work (especially agricultural work) in poorer than in wealthy households yet the bride-price given by the latter is usually much higher than by the former. Similarly a lower bride-price (usually half) is given for a non-virgin (e.g. a divorced woman) than to a virgin of a similar age, regardless of the fact that they may be equal in their work and child-bearing capabilities.

The fact that part of the bride-price may be used by the father for the purpose of obtaining a wife for his son (or himself) does not explain why such a system is maintained. It can be argued from such a fact that the system is superfluous, since the only man who is likely to benefit from it is a man with more daughters than sons. However

46. This is also true in other Arab communities. See Rosenfeld, op. cit., p.47, Lutfiyya, 1966, p.133, Salim, op. cit., p.60

47. Rosenfeld, op. cit., p.47

48. Granqvist, op. cit., Vol.I, pp.133-4

such a man would almost certainly prefer to have more sons than daughters.

I suggest that the 'mehr', or bride-price, in Arab communities, is more related to status considerations than to the girl's labour and child-bearing abilities. The giving of one's daughter or sister for a low 'mehr' is something that is looked down on. The bride-price of a girl is seen as an indication of the status of her family. This is probably why in marriages where little or no bride-price is actually paid (as in marriages to 'bint al'amm' or to other ''aila' women) a nominal bride-price is declared and written into the marriage contract. The amount indicated tends to conform to the current 'mehr' paid to households or families in a similar socio-economic position in the village or area.

The bride-price system can be seen, therefore, as generally related to the maintenance, assertion and manipulation of status claims and positions by the households concerned. Consequently "the poor tend to marry the poor" as one informant put it. The girl's father can refuse a prospective son-in-law by asking a high bride-price. Such a procedure where one individual puts obstacles in the face of an agreement with another is proverbially known as 'the condition of an unwilling father-in-law'⁴⁹.

Another consequence of the 'mehr' system is the strengthening

49. "Shert alnseeb alkarih"

of the precarious position of a stranger wife. I argued earlier that the position of a 'bint al'amm' or an ''aila' woman is stronger as a wife than others because of the nature of the social relations she enters into by such a marriage. In such a case the husband and father-in-law can also be considered as her "protectors". Further in such a marriage, as in a marriage to a village woman, the woman's father or brother is immediately available to see that she is not ill-treated by her husband and his household. A stranger wife (one from a different village) lacks such advantages. In a society where divorce is easy and the prerogative of the male only, such a woman needs, therefore, extra protection, and this is afforded - to a certain degree - by the system of the bride-price and the 'sedag'. Divorce in such a case would mean the loss of perhaps many years' savings (i.e. the 'mehr') by the husband or/and his father. Further, the fact that the wife acquires some of the 'mehr' as her own private property, means that she remains potentially a financially valuable source especially at times of need.

The bride-price is not however solely determined by the socio-economic status of the families concerned. Various qualities of the girl are given a "market" value: A non-virgin obtains usually about half the bride-price of a virgin of a similar age. The older a woman is the less 'mehr' she is likely to obtain. Further, beauty, good reputation and character are all positively evaluated. Such evaluations are not confined to the girl but include the prospective husband.

Increasing education has become important as a desirable quality in prospective husbands. Being a government employee or having a salaried job improves significantly the position of the male in the marriage market. The rising of the numbers of educated young men in the area has increased the demand on girls with some education. This will probably prove to be a more important incentive for women's education than legislative action (for compulsory education at the elementary level) at national level.

Men occupy, therefore, different positions in the marriage market. The wealthy, the salaried and the educated are in a better position than the poor, the agricultural or unskilled manual worker, and the illiterate. Among the poor, young men without sisters find it more difficult to marry than those with sisters. Scarcity of women in a polygynous society increases the competition for wives⁵⁰. Indeed polygyny and the practice of remarriage make a father and his sons competitors in the marriage market. A father (because he controls the household's wealth) can delay the marriage of his son if he so desires. ^{Marriage to} ~~The preference for 'bint al'amm' and other cousin marriages~~ ^{is} ~~are~~ open to ^{her cousin} ~~the son~~ but not to his father.

Not all marriages operate within a fully developed market situation. 'Aila' marriages generally, and 'bint al'amm' marriages especially, are marriages where considerations other than those of the market type operate. Here not only is the bride-price nominal and negligible,

50. In the 5 villages surveyed only 46.5% of the population were females and in the Qusbat area as a whole only 47.9% of the population - according to the 1964 General Population Census - were females.

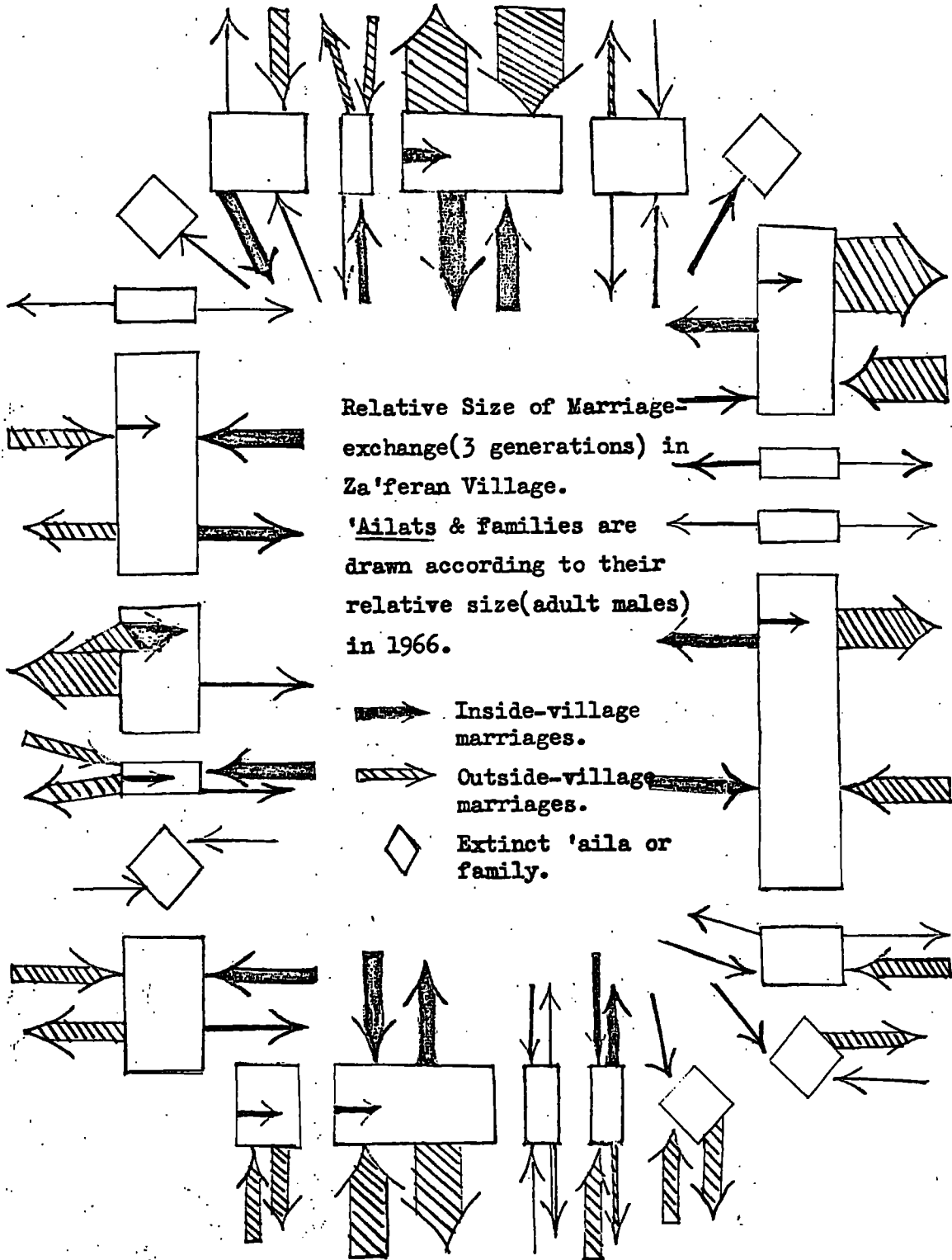
but kinship and moral pressures are fully operative. A man who gives his daughter in marriage to an outsider, regardless of the opinions and claims of his 'aila' members, is likely to cause strains in his relationships with these. A young man has better chances of marriage within his 'aila' than outside it. Here, the 'objective' considerations of wealth, character, occupation etc., are over-shadowed by the 'subjective' considerations of the informal kinship ties and the 'moral' duties attached to these.

Marriage rates do show that the opportunities for 'aila' marriages are highly utilised. The larger the size of the 'aila', the larger the ratio of marriages within it. Size determines the possibilities of such a marriage. This can be illustrated if the ratio of 'aila' marriages in the four largest 'ailat' in the five villages studied is compared with that of the remaining village marriages⁵¹. Of the total 209 marriages contracted by the men of the largest four 'ailat' 62 or 29.6% were to 'aila' women. Of the remaining 476 marriages only 68 or 14.3% were 'aila' marriages.

For demographic and other reasons, not all men can marry 'aila' women. Some men must, therefore, seek wives from outside their 'aila' i.e. from their village or outside it. The sociological over-emphasis on 'bint al'amm' and other 'aila' marriages tends to undermine the

51. These are Bu Ghalia and Tabeeb in Beni Mislum village, 'Araba in Luwata village and Imhameed in Murad village. None of these 'ailat' can be considered wealthy or prosperous. However, only the last 'aila' can be considered poor.

Fig. 8.



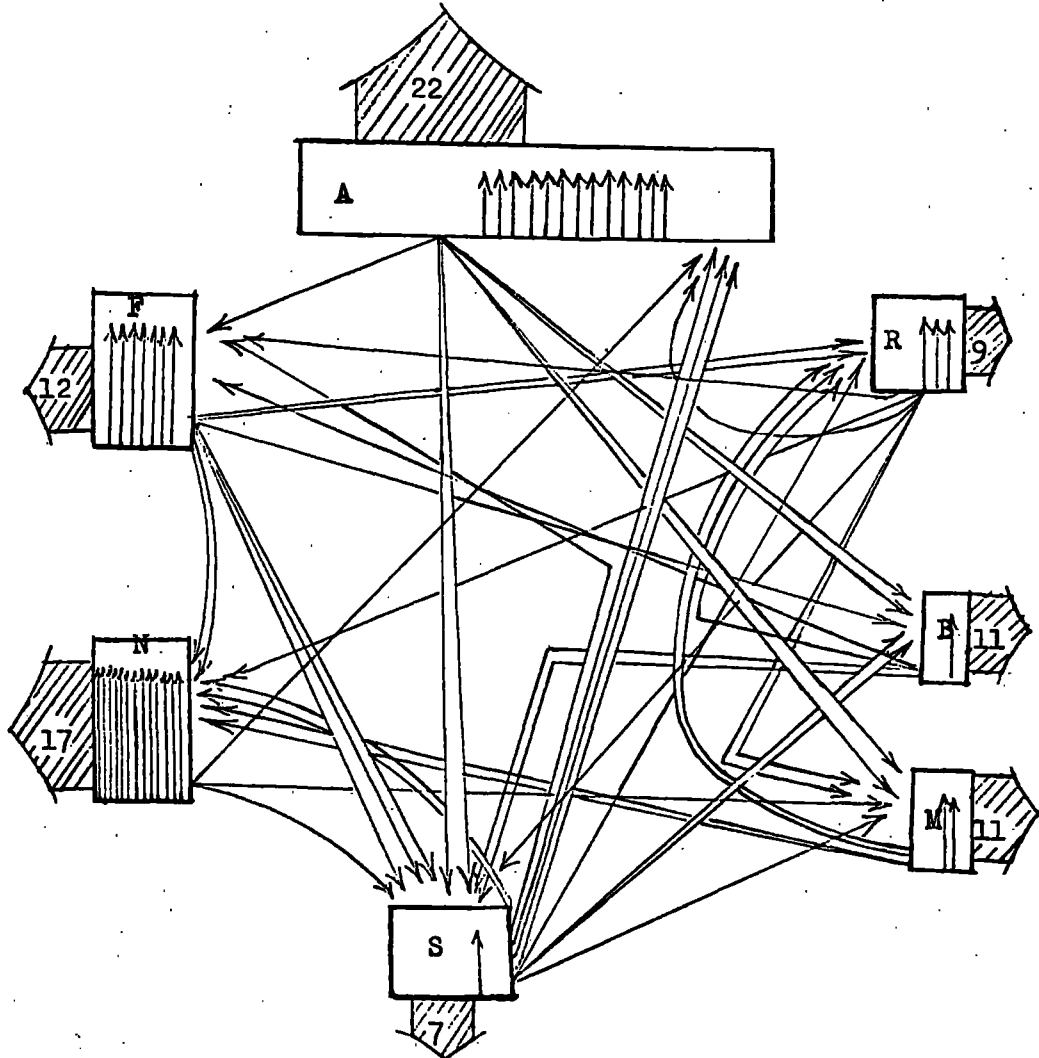
overall marriage pattern. Such a pattern forms a complex network of exchange (see Fig. 8). Numerically 'aila' marriages are the smallest. Overall marriage statistics show that more males in these villages marry from their villages than from their 'ailat' (see Appendix, table II). These show that while 18.9% of all marriages were to 'aila' women, 26.8% were to non-'aila' village women.

The actual rate of village marriage varied from village to village according to size and rate of emigration. A large village with stable or expanding population increases the possibilities of intra-village marriages. In 'Beni-Mislim' village - the largest village studied - the intra-village marriages other than 'aila' marriages comprised 43.7% of the total marriages contracted⁵². In Qumata village, the smallest village in the survey, only 17.7% of the marriages were non-'aila' intra-village marriages.

One important consequence of intra-village marriages is the creation of a complex web of affinal connections (see Fig. 9). Such marriages create diverse and multiple connections between villagers. Any definition of the village community in the area must, therefore, take into account this phenomenon. Such marriages enhance the sense of community in the village. This is of importance, since the

52. The survey concerned about a third of the resident village households. The resident village population in 1966 was 750 approx.

Fig. 9.



MATE SELECTION (3 GENERATIONS) IN LUWATA VILLAGE.

N = Nasr 'Aila

M = Masa'eed 'Aila

A = 'Araba "

B = 'Abd Al'ali "

S = Shwameen "

F = Faqeeh 'Ali "

R = Irhymia "

'ailats are drawn according to their relative size (adult males) in 1966.



Outside-village marriages.

predominant village type in the area is composed of a number of small 'ailat' with different origins, together with a significant number of non-'aila' households.

Ideally we can assume that spouses (especially in first marriages) are initially sought from within the 'aila', then from the village, and then, if such resources are exhausted, from outside the village. In practice, however, the search for a spouse may take place simultaneously in a number of directions and need not follow the above sequence.

The overall figures for the five villages show that outer-village marriages compose the largest category. Over half or 54.1% are such marriages. Not all of these are, however, marriages to stranger women. About 7% of these are marriages between cross-cousins (marriages to 'bint al khal'). The smaller the size of the village the more likely that it has to rely on other villages for acquiring wives. However, this does not mean that larger villages, which can be 'self-sufficient' in terms of women available for marriage, do not marry from other villages, for they do.

Inter-village marriage increases the possibilities and opportunities for other such marriages. 7.2% of all such marriages were between matrilineal cross-cousins. "Stranger" marriages can be used, therefore, for the continuation of affinal links between households of different villages.

Marriage links, therefore, not only villagers but also villages. Such links are not formed between random villages. The pattern of inter-village marriages forms a definite structure. Such a structure seems to be determined by two basic factors or "market" conditions; i.e. availability of women and the accessibility to such availability. In other words, most inter-village spouses are selected from the largest and nearest village (see Fig. 10). For example, the largest number of inter-village spouses in 'Za'feran' village are from Quşbat town (the Suk) which is the largest and nearest place to the village. Similarly Murad's inter-village spouses are chosen mainly from Beni Mislim, which is the largest and nearest village to Murad.

Marriage and the Younger Generation.

If we compare the marriages of the last generation with those of their grandparents, the following facts emerge (see table 6 opposite):-

- a) Marriages within the 'aila' have significantly decreased in Murad village. Such marriages comprised 26% of all the marriages in the grandparent generation, but only 17.1% of the youngest generation. In Luwata, on the other hand, the percentage of such marriages has significantly increased from 9.5% in the grandparent generation to 35.6% in their grandchildren generation. For Qumata no significant change is discernible.
- b) Intra-village marriages (other than 'aila' marriages) have decreased in Luwata and Qumata villages. In the former the percentage

Fig. 10.

OUTSIDE-VILLAGE MARRIAGES (MALES) IN THREE
VILLAGES IN MSELLATA

L = LUWATA (2-3 generations)

M = MURAD (2-3 generations)

Z = ZA'FERAN (3-4 generations)

O.A. = Outside Area.

Q = Qusbat Town.

B = Beni Mislim.

Villages are drawn according to their relative size (1966).

Arrowed numbers indicate actual number of marriages.

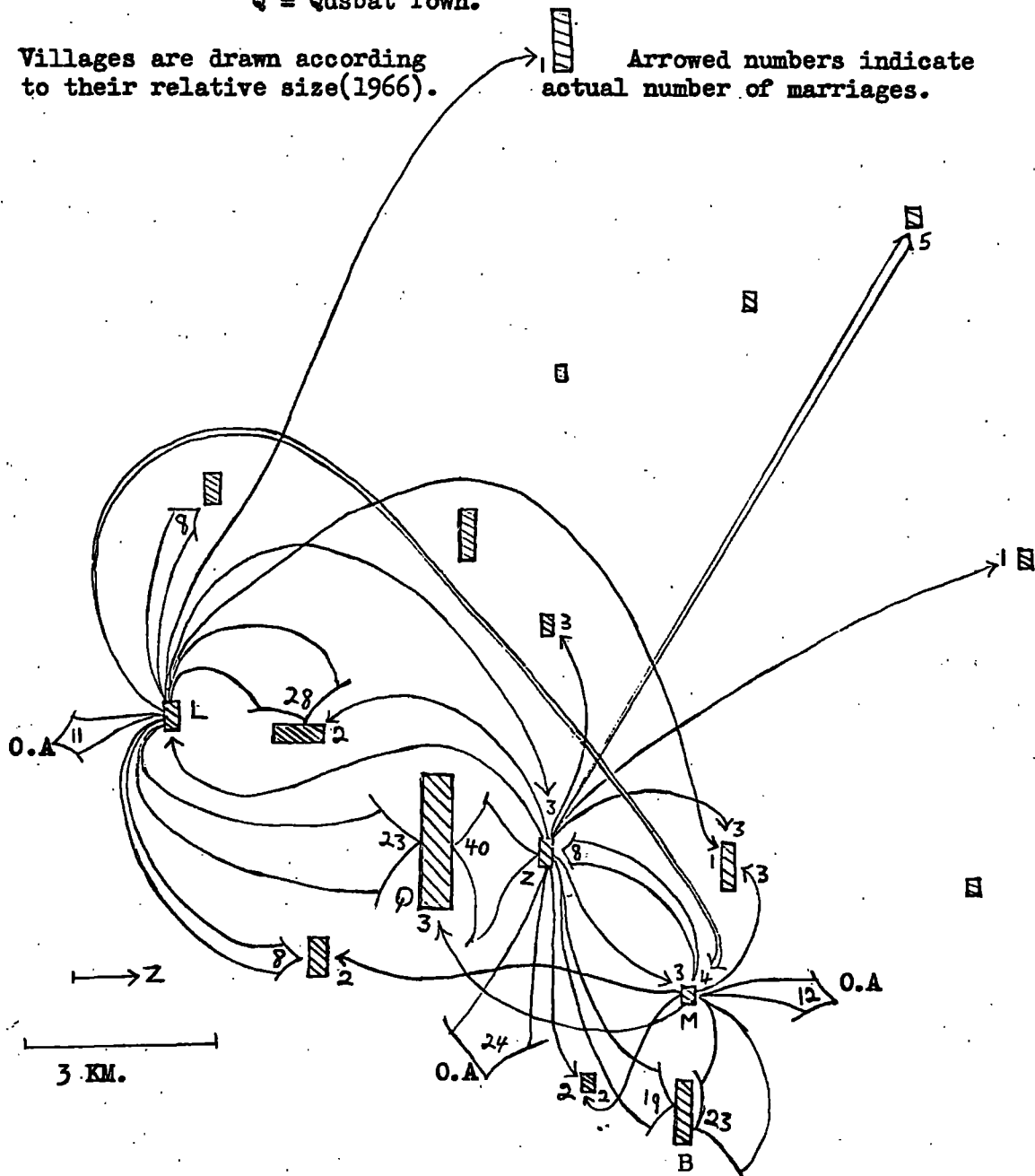


TABLE 6

Marriage Choice (first marriages only) by
generation in three villages

<u>Generation</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>bint 'amm</u>	<u>'aila</u>	<u>village</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>outside area</u>	<u>Total</u>
First (Grand- fathers)	Luwata	2 (9.5%)	-	9 (42.8%)	9 (42.8%)	1 (4.7%)	21
	Qumata	1 (7.6%)	-	4 (30.7%)	7 (53.7%)	1 (7.6%)	13
	Murad	5 (21.7%)	1 (4.3%)	3 (13%)	12 (52.1%)	2 (8.6%)	28
Second (Fathers)	Luwata	9 (20.4%)	3 (6.8%)	16 (36.3%)	16 (36.6%)	-	44
	Qumata	1 (4.7%)	2 (9.5%)	3 (14.2%)	13 (61.9%)	2 (9.5%)	21
	Murad	3 (10%)	6 (20%)	9 (30%)	9 (30%)	3 (10%)	30
Third (Sons)	Luwata	10 (17.8%)	10 (17.8%)	7 (12.5%)	26 (46.4%)	3 (5.3%)	56
	Qumata	1 (3.4%)	2 (6.8%)	5 (17.5%)	15 (51.6%)	6 (20.6%)	29
	Murad	4 (11.4%)	2 (5.7%)	9 (25.7%)	8 (22.8%)	12 (34.2%)	35

of such marriages declined from 42.8% in the first generation, to 12.5% in the third generation. In Qumata it declined from 30.7% to 17.5%. On the other hand, the frequency of such marriages has increased from 13% (1st generation) to 25.7% (3rd generation) in Murad.

c) Marriages to females from outside the area (i.e. outside Msellata) have significantly increased in Qumata (from 7.6% for the 1st generation to 20.6% from the 3rd adult generation), and in Murad (from 8.6% to 34.2%). No significant change occurred in Luwata.

All the above phenomena can, I believe, be explained by reference to a) demographic factors and to b) the increased occupational and residential mobility of the population of the above villages. The possibilities of marriage within the 'aila' should increase as its population expands. Such a population will produce more cousins than a static or declining population. Assuming that the preference for 'aila' marriages remains operative, we should expect an increasing rate of such marriages. It is not necessary to provide a sociological explanation for such a phenomenon as some scholars have attempted to⁵³. An increase in the rate of marriages within the 'aila' may be due, as it has been pointed out⁵⁴ to changes in the demographic structure of the population. The evidence from the villages under study tends to

53 Rosenfeld, op. cit., p.40; Cohen, op. cit., p.121

54 Marx, op. cit., p.226

confirm such a view. One can assume that there has been an improvement in the standard of living, nutrition and medical care among the Libyan peasantry since the Second World War. Such an improvement means lower child mortality rates and subsequently as increased availability of cousins.

Luwata village has enjoyed a steady and expanding population with relatively little emigration from the village. Murad, on the other hand, has suffered the highest rate of emigration since the Second World War. Over half of the adult males of the village have emigrated from the village to other areas (see Appendix, table XVI). From Qumata the rate of emigration has been higher than in Luwata, but lower than in Murad (see Appendix, table XIX). It is this factor that is, at least partly, responsible for the increase in marriages within the 'aila' in Luwata and their decline in Murad.

The decline in the rate of village marriages in Luwata is related to its increase in 'aila' marriages. That is, the fact that more cousins are available for marriage decreases the need to look elsewhere for wives. Similarly the increase in the rate of intra-village marriages in Murad is related to the fact that fewer cousins (because of the village's declining population) are available for marriage. It is also probable that in such a situation new links between village households are needed to replace those which are no longer effective, i.e. those of emigrants.

The increase in the rate of outer-village marriages (as shown in

Murad and Qumata must be related to the facts of emigration and increased physical and occupational mobility. Emigrants who establish homes in new areas are likely to choose spouses from that area. Further, physical and occupational mobility among the younger generation and their economic independence from their parents widens their area and freedom of choice.

It has become necessary for an increasing number of young men to seek jobs in the cities and towns of Libya. In Za'feran village alone there were 12 unmarried young men (belonging to 9 of the 49 village households) who were working outside the area - mostly in Tripoli city. One important implication of such a phenomenon is - as we have seen in the previous chapter - related to the structure of family household: for regardless of the place from which their wives are chosen, such men are under constant pressure to establish neo-local residence. Residence after marriage remains to a large degree patrilocal, but the demands of occupational mobility, especially on the younger and more educated generation, make a new pattern of residence (i.e. neo-local) more suitable and desirable.

The above discussion indicates that changes in the pattern of mate selection are basically due to changes in the relationship of the younger generation to the marriage market. Such changes seem to be basically a consequence of the economic and political changes

that have affected the rural areas in Libya following the Italian colonisation, the subsequent British occupation, the Libyanisation of administration following Independence, and more recently as a result of the 'oil boom'. The relative improvements in the standard of living and the availability of some facilities for medical care in the rural areas, have increased the possibilities of certain types of marriages (i.e. marriages within the 'aila') by making more female cousins available for such marriages. Simultaneously, by increasing rural-to-urban emigration and the opportunities for jobs in the cities and towns of the country, the above changes have also made it possible for men to marry outside their areas of origin.

There is no quantitative data available on the attitudes of the young to marriage to relatives. Some young men indicated disapproval of such marriages on genetic grounds - i.e. they thought that such marriages increased the likelihood of physical deformities in the offspring. Such a view has been expressed in the mass media. For example, in a newspaper article a religious teacher ('alim') argued - quoting a 'hedeeth' (i.e. a statement reported to have been made by the Prophet) - that Islam does not favour marriage to a relative and that such marriages are medically inadvisable⁵⁵. Increasing participation in the mass media will probably increase the circulation of such views. It can be suggested, however, that such views may merely be sanctioning

55. 'Tarabulus al'gherb'. April, 20th (?), 1966

the emerging patterns of marital choice, especially in the rapidly growing cities and towns. On the other hand, such views may be interpreted as manipulative attempts by a 'modernising' state to weaken the traditional ties of kinship.

Divorce

Divorce is formally very easy in Islamic law. A husband can divorce his wife by repeating - in the presence of witnesses - the simple pronouncement 'I divorce you'. If the pronouncement is repeated three times, then the divorce is irrevocable, otherwise the divorce can be retracted. Further, the husband is under no legal obligation to provide a reason for divorce. Women, on the other hand, cannot divorce their husbands except in exceptional circumstances, and then they must resort to the legal courts. After divorce a woman returns to her parents' or guardian's home.

Divorce rates on the national level are relatively high in most Arab countries⁵⁶. Available divorce figures indicate that this is true in Libya. Divorce ratios per hundred marriages in the country amounted to 25.8 and 25 in 1963 and 1964 respectively. In Homs muqate'a of which Msellata forms a part - the above ratios for the same two years were 28.7 and 20.8⁵⁷. The reliability of such figures can be questioned, since they depend on the fact of registration by

56. Goode, 1963, p. 158

57. These figures are calculated from statistics given in the ¹⁹⁶⁴ Statistical Abstract, Libya, Ministry of National Economy, Tripoli. Table 8 p.9

the individuals concerned. They tend, however, to indicate that divorce is far from being a rare phenomenon. The following table shows divorce figures for two of the villages studied⁵⁸.

TABLE 7

Frequency of Divorce in Za'feran & Luwata

	<u>Za'feran</u>	<u>Luwata</u>
Living males who experienced marriage	54	62
Total marriages experienced	77	84
Marriages that ended in divorce	15	13
Marriages that ended in death	9	9
Married divorcees	8	9
Unmarried divorcees	1	2
Separated from wife	1	1
Widower	1	-

The above table shows that 19.4% and 15.4% of all the marriages contracted by living men have ended in divorce in Za'feran and Luwata respectively. Similarly the table shows that about one in six of the men in the two villages (16.6% in Za'feran and 17.7% in Luwata) have experienced a divorce.⁵⁹

58. High rates of emigration from the other 3 villages have reduced the usefulness of divorce figures for these villages. However at least 3 men (out of 25) have experienced divorce in Qumata. Another 3 (out of 30) villagers have also experienced a divorce in Murad.

59. These figures refer to final divorces only. Figures for revocable divorces would be higher.

Divorce ratios are likely to show variations from village to village and from area to area. Factors like physical isolation, mortality rates, and general availability of women, could influence the frequency of divorce. It is also likely that the presence of polygyny may have an effect on divorce ratios. Only 5.4% of 112 living males in Granqvist's village experienced divorce, while 10.7% of them were polygynous⁶⁰. In Za'feran and Luwata the percentage of those who experienced divorce is about three times higher than in Granqvist's village. At the same time only 4 males, or 3.4%, were polygynous in the above two villages, that is about one third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of the figure mentioned by Granqvist. A man need not divorce his first wife if he finds it possible to maintain a polygynous marriage. If such a marriage is generally unacceptable in the village community, a man desiring a second marriage may find it necessary to divorce his first wife, either before his second marriage or shortly afterwards, because of the difficulties (mainly from his first wife and her family) he finds in maintaining such a marriage.

It is not necessary, however, for ratios of divorce and polygynous marriages to be high. Both of these can be relatively infrequent⁶¹, and both can be relatively frequent⁶². This is so, because as will

60. Granqvist, op. cit., Vol. II p. 271

61. Rosenfeld, op. cit., pp. 53-55. In this Arab village in Israel only 2.7% of the 294 males experiences a divorce and only 5.49% of them were polygynous.

62. Barclay, 1964, pp. 121-124. In this Sudanese village about 7% of the married males are polygynous and 17.5% of the marriages contracted by living males ended in divorce.

be discussed shortly - a number of factors are related to the above two phenomena.

The available evidence does not support the idea that marriages to 'bint al'amm' are less likely to end in divorce. Nor does it support the idea that such marriages are more prone to divorce than other types of marriages, as the following table indicates:

TABLE 8

Relation of Divorced Wife to Husband

<u>Village</u>	<u>'Bint Al'amm'</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Outside Village</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Za'feran</u>	3	3	9	15
<u>Luwata</u>	-	5	8	13
Total	3 (10.7%)	8 (28.5%)	17 (60.7%)	28

The above divorce figures for 'bint al'amm' are not significantly different from those of marriage ratios⁶³. A similar conclusion was reported from a study of a Sudanese community⁶⁴. Numerically most divorces occur with stranger women. However, the figures are too small to permit any definite conclusion.

Factors Related to Marital Dissolution

Divorce is an index of permanent marital dissolution, and in a

63. The marriage pattern for living males in Luwata and Za'feran is as follows: 'bint al'amm' = 13%, Intra-Village = 29.8%, outer-village = 57.1%

64. Barclay, op. cit., p.125

situation (as Libya) where legal impediments to divorce are a minimum, it is a useful index. However, other forms of temporary dissolution can be found. Men may pronounce the divorce legal formula once (instead of the final three times) as a warning to the wife to amend her attitudes or behaviour. It is commonly said, for example, that 'if a wife does not improve after one divorce pronouncement, she never will'⁶⁵. Another important form of temporary marital dissolution can be seen in the 'ħarjane' situation mentioned earlier. Here the wife rejoins her parental household and refuses to act as a wife until the cause of her concern has been tackled. Many situations can act as immediate reasons for divorce or temporary marital dissolution. What concerns us here, however, are the ^{social}~~sociological~~ factors in the marriage situation that can lead to a breakdown or a cessation of the marital relationship.

Marriage remains the concern of family households over and above those of the husband and wife. It takes place once the marriage contract has been signed by the guardians of the two spouses. For a woman, marriage means her leaving her father's household to live and work in a new household which may be in a different village. Thus, in a large number of cases, the people she has to interact with (mother-in-law, sister-in-law, father-in-law etc.) are strangers to her. At the same time she retains her ties with her family of origin,

65. "'almra be'd ħelqe wilferes be'd 'elge."

and her father and brothers remain her protectors for life. In other words marriage does not mean the complete incorporation of the woman into a new household or family set up. The wife remains - in varying degrees - something of a 'stranger' in her new household.

The existence of female relatives in the same household increases the likelihood of the wife's incorporation into her husband's household. Cases of brothers of one family marrying sisters of another, or father and son of one family marrying sisters of another, accounted for about 9% of all the marriages of living males in Za'feran, Luwata and Murad.⁶⁶ Such a ratio is high, considering the various demographic constraints attached to such marriages. Such marriages produce highly complex networks of relationships within the household. For example, where brothers marry sisters, their children will be 'awlad 'amm' (sons of brothers), and 'awlad khale' (sons of sisters), while the sisters will also be sisters-in-law ('selfat'), and so on. Where father and son marry sisters, the issuing social relationships are even more complex to decode. Such varied and complex relationships help to incorporate the wife into her husband's household - for they increase her possibilities and scope for action in such a household.

For a large number of women, however, their allegiance remains divided between their natal and marital household. It is said, for

66. In seven cases brothers married sisters and in two other cases the father and his son married sisters.

example, "do not beneighbour your in-laws, or trust a long-standing enemy".⁶⁷ This may be so because the physical contiguity of the two households is likely to increase the opportunities for conflict between the wife's allegiances.

The woman's role as a mother is highly emphasised. Motherhood and fatherhood are the desired goals of marriage. From the start, great interest is shown, by both households, in the fertility of the marriage. A marriage which remains childless is considered a failure. Barrenness was given as one of the main reasons for divorce. Similarly the woman's family can insist on divorce if it appears to them that her husband is impotent or sexually inadequate. About two-thirds of the divorced women in my sample were childless at the time of divorce.

Children do, therefore, increase the stability of the conjugal unit. They increase the woman's commitment to such a unit. Through her children (especially sons) she is better able to improve her position via her husband and his household. As we mentioned earlier, the mother-son relationship is usually warm and affectionate. Children increase the interest of the two families of the woman in the stability of her marriage. Motherhood is, therefore, an important fact for reducing marital dissolution. The woman, by becoming a mother, strengthens her position in her husband's household. A woman with

67. "la itgawir Inseebek ola tamen letleebek".

children (especially sons) is more likely to experience a levirate marriage than a woman without children⁶⁸. The responsibility of rearing children remains that of the husband's household, and such a marriage retains the woman and her children within the same household.

The above considerations show that divorce and marital dissolution are related to the structure of social relationships that marriage creates. Divorce is more likely in the first year or two of marriage and in an extended or joint family household. Such a household is interested in the new-comer (i.e. the bride) as a source of labour and as a potential mother. If she fails in these two respects, then her husband is under pressure to divorce her. On the other hand, the bride's natal household is basically interested in her as a daughter or sister. It is the responsibility of this household to see that her rights and welfare are not threatened in her new household. The husband, on the other hand, remains under a different set of pressures. The fact that he forms a part of an extended or joint household, means that he is under pressure to maintain the unity and cohesiveness of such a household. We have seen - in the previous chapter - that women are often blamed for the occurrence of fission in the family household. So that if members of his family household feel that a wife is a divisive force then her husband may feel obliged

68. Numerically, such marriages are few. However the possibilities of such a marriage are very limited.

to divorce her. Quarrels and constant disagreements between a woman and her mother-in-law was given as one of the reasons for divorce. It is often in the interest of the husband to establish a separate household, as we have seen in some detail in the previous chapter. The husband is, therefore, subject - like his wife - to conflicting demands and pressures.

Whether a marriage ends in divorce or becomes subject to marital instability, is not, therefore, dependent on the whimsical desires of the husband. It is within his legal and customary rights to divorce his wife when he likes, and without any reasons. For this reason alone, divorce in such a setting cannot be compared with that in some other societies (e.g. in Europe) where a number of legal constraints are operative. Despite this formal freedom, the majority of men go through life without experiencing a divorce. Economically, divorce is a demanding enterprise. The divorcing husband ~~does~~ not only loses all his financial investment ('mehr') in the marriage, but also, however temporarily, his wife's domestic labour. Further, he has to raise the necessary capital for a new wife. However, economic considerations are not necessarily the main obstacle to divorce. There is no evidence to suggest that wealthy individuals are more liable to experience divorce than poorer ones. Both marital stability and divorce depend on the balance of social pressures and cross-pressures (economic and otherwise) that act on both husband and wife.

Polygyny

As indicated earlier, polygyny, in the villages surveyed, was a much less common phenomenon than divorce. In Homs mugata'a only 2.9% of the married males were polygynous in 1964 and in Tripoli city the figure was less than 2% in the same year⁶⁹.

Legally a man can have up to four wives. It is not difficult to see why such a right is rarely exercised. The husband is required (legally and customarily) to treat his wives equally, and to set up separate dwellings for each. The first wife may interpret her husband's attempts to have another wife as a dissatisfaction with her as a wife or mother or both. She is likely therefore to refuse to be a co-wife ('zerra') by returning to her father's or brother's household and creating other difficulties so that her husband either divorces her or refrains from marrying another.

Rivalry between co-wives is notorious, and the management of the strict equalitarianism demanded in their treatment is beyond the means and patience of most men. Moreover, since only one adult woman is available, generally speaking, for each adult male, most men cannot have more than one wife. Acquiring a second wife is more difficult than having the first. For in such a situation one is likely to be competing with younger men who do not have the 'handicap' of a first wife. This is probably why the overwhelming majority of second wives

69. Calculated from the General Population Census, Tripoli, 1966, p.29

tend to be from outside their husbands' villages. That is, men have to widen their 'shopping' area so as to increase the likelihood of finding a second wife. Further, polygynous men tend to be both old or middle aged, and wealthy.

Cultural values emphasise the desirability of having male children. A man without offspring is thought of as 'incomplete'. Manhood and fatherhood imply each other. Continuity of descent demands the having of sons, and this demands marriage. If, therefore, a first marriage does not produce the desired males, then a second marriage may become necessary. However, even if the first marriage has produced males, a second marriage remains desirable since the aim is to have as many male children as possible.

Wealth is necessary for the maintenance of a polygynous household, and sudden wealth is likely to lead to a second marriage. This is verbally documented in the saying "sudden wealth makes men see their houses as very small and their wives as very ugly"⁷⁰.

Polygyny is also a matter of status. Men may not only express their new wealth in polygyny but also affirm their claim to a new status too. This becomes clear if we examine the polygynous marriages found in Homs mugata'a in 1964. The percentage of married males, who had more than one wife, was 6% among those whose occupation was classified as technical, administrative, cultural and

70. "illli ukthur male izyeg h ashe otishyan i'yale."

executive. For merchants the percentage was 6.2. Peasants and agricultural workers, on the other hand, had a percentage of 2.9. The manual workers group had a percentage of only 1.8⁷¹. In other words, polygyny is related to general status and economic position.

Polygyny is a limited phenomenon. However a large number of men (and women) experience a second marriage - mostly after the death or the divorce of their first wives (or husbands). In both Za'feran and Luwata, about one third of all males who have experienced marriage, experienced it at least twice. Remarriage - for both sexes - is an accepted cultural norm. The desirability of remarriage is illustrated by the saying (exchanged by men) which interprets "the death of one's wife is a divine wish for a new bed partner."⁷²

Marriage Rituals

Rituals in Arab rural communities are few. The passage of life is ceremonially marked only by four events; birth, circumcision, marriage and burial. Of these four events, marriage ceremonies are by far the most lengthy and elaborate. In marriage, the two sexual worlds formally meet for the first time. This is partly why we find little ceremony and the minimum of rituals involved in remarriages. In such cases, the individual can be said to have already been acquainted with the opposite sexual world - in his previous marriage.

71. Calculated from the 1964 General Population Census, Homs Mugate'a - Census and Statistical Dept., Tripoli, 1966. p.16

72. "Men matet zuzte jeddede allah ifrashe"

Given the strict sexual segregation and the existing kinship relations and household structure, marriage acquires a rich and complex significance. It is desirable, therefore, to outline some aspects of the rituals and ceremonies that are associated with marriage in the villages of Msellata. We are mainly interested in the meaning and relatedness of these to the general aspects of social life in these villages.

Women are the main agents who carry out the search for a suitable wife for their sons or brothers. This is demanded by the enforced sexual segregation which puts women in a better structural position to know and survey the marriage market. Where the prospective wife is a non-relative, it is women who have to evaluate the various qualities of the girl (or girls) concerned, and the general conditions of marriage. This stage is usually finalised in an engagement ('khuṭbe') when the guardians of the prospective bride and groom formally agree on the specific terms of the marriage. The engagement is usually of short duration, and it is customary during this period to give gifts to the girl on religious occasions.

The Wedding Festivities ('al 'urs')

Wedding festivities - where women sing and dance in the houses of the groom and his bride - usually start five, or seven days, prior to the wedding day ('yum aldakhle'). During this period the bride is prepared for her wedding day. Such preparations include the tattooing

of her chin which results in a permanent blue mark. Although the majority of brides are still tattooed, there is a growing opposition to such a custom. This is articulated in religious terms. It is said that Islam does not favour such a practice and a 'hedeeth' by the Prophet is quoted as saying that both the tattooing and tattooed women are cursed. Some young men do stipulate that their brides should not be tattooed. They believe that such a practice disfigures the face. This is probably due to urban influences rather than to new religious insights or considerations of facial beauty. For the greatest majority of married women, however, the tattoo ('wisham') remains a permanent visible record of their marriage.

It is also customary to dye the hands and feet of the bride with henna ('hinna'). This usually takes place at a special ceremony two days prior to the wedding day. This night - known as the night of the henna ('Leelit-al-hinna') - is followed by what is known as the night of the torch ('Leelit-al-gindeel'). This starts with a procession - with women singing, clapping and trilling - through the village. The men carry a torch (made with a long sickle round which a rope, soaked in oil, is wrapped). They lead the procession seven times round the bride's house before it is entered. Here the bride is found, seated on a high platform and unveiled, her hair flowing down her face. The bridegroom is made to stand facing his bride who starts to move one of her hands repeatedly towards her chest. Sometimes⁷³

73. Informants disagreed on the frequency of such an occurrence. Some thought the bride always carried a stick while others thought that only some brides did so.

she carries a stick in the other hand. Without entering into a detailed discussion of all the possible meanings of such gestures, it is possible to interpret the welcoming gestures ('terheeb') of the bride, together with her elated position, as an expression of her acquisition of a new status (i.e. marriage). Similarly, the carrying of the stick and the fact that the ceremony takes place in the bride's parental household, can be interpreted as symbolising the protection - given to her by her family - that the bride enjoys and will continue to enjoy. It may be that no stick is carried by the bride when the bridegroom is a cousin or from the same 'aila'.

After the above ceremony, the men and women of the procession return to the house of the bridegroom to continue the festivities. It is common at these occasions - I was told - for some women to dress, dance and behave like men. I also observed men - on wedding festivities - dressed in women's clothes and dancing in a "feminine" manner. Such practices have been observed elsewhere and are generally explained as a ceremonial recognition of the different statuses of men and women, and as a ritualized expression of conflict between the two sexes⁷⁴. Such behaviour is only allowed in marriage festivities, and can be seen as expressing the existing reciprocal dependency of the two sexual worlds. Such role-taking may be a symbolic expression of the fact that neither of the two worlds is self-sufficient, and that each pre-supposes the other. It is a dramatization - without the actual

74. Cunnison, 1963, pp.24-34

violation of the strict segregation of sexes - of what happens in every marriage, i.e. the meeting of the two sexual worlds in the persons of the bride and groom.

The Wedding Day ('Yum Aldukhala')

This is the last day of public festivities and the last day for preparing the bride and her groom for their wedding night. The groom, dressed in his wedding outfit, is led, in a procession, through the village. Horse riding displays ('leheed') may occur in the afternoon. Young men may partake in games such as a race to catch the groom's shoes.

It is customary, on such a day, for the groom's family to prepare a feast for the village men and the groom's friends. Afterwards, guests are expected to give some money. The name of the donor and the sum given are recorded, as it is considered a debt to be repaid when the occasion arises. Such a custom (known as 'alremi') is found elsewhere in Arab village communities⁷⁵ and it illustrates - like many other customs - the reciprocal nature of the social relationships in the village community. The amount collected varies according to economic status, prestige etc., and in Za'feran village it varied from £18 to £25 in 1967.

Marriage festivities are finalised with the leading of the bride

75. Ammar; 1954 p.118. Cohen, op. cit., p.87. Barclay; op. cit. p.250
Lutfiyya, op. cit., p.135

to her nuptial chamber in her groom's household. Traditionally the bride used to be carried on a camel, but it is usual now to use a car for such a purpose. On her arrival the bride is hustled into the 'haush' by a number of female relatives who show great care in keeping her entirely hidden. The bride is usually given an egg or two to break on the threshold of the house and the nuptial chamber. Such an action is supposed to bring good luck to the household. The custom could, however, be seen as a fertility rite or as a symbolic gesture of the girl's breaking away from her parental household and her establishment of new social relationships. From this night onwards the bride ceases to be a girl ('bint') and becomes a woman ('mera').

Soon afterwards the bridegroom is led to the bridal room. Outside, some of the bride's female relatives await the result of the virginity test which is greeted with much jubilation. A failure on the part of the bridegroom to deflower his bride is a cause for shame⁷⁶. His persistent failure is usually interpreted as due to the practice of magic (tesbeeb). As mentioned earlier, such a failure - which in most cases is probably due to the strain created situationally by the sudden confrontation with the opposite sex - calls in question the bridegroom's manhood. In a culture where virility is an important component of masculinity, such an accusation or an implication is so grave to bear that the shifting of the responsibility for such a

76. The bridegroom must deflower his bride by sexual intercourse, any other way would bring disgrace and ridicule to him.

condition to anonymous and sometimes supernatural forces becomes situationally necessary and desirable.

The wedding day marks the end of the wedding festivities ('urs') and the beginning of the seven-day period of formal avoidance between the bridegroom and his father, and, to a lesser degree, other senior agnates (especially the uncle). To avoid being seen by his father the groom must leave his bride early each morning and sneak to a room (in a friend's house) especially reserved for him. It is said that the groom feels sexually ashamed and has to avoid, therefore, seeing his father. Such formal avoidance can be seen however as an expression of the change that marriage initiates in the father-son relationship. For marriage, among other things, means the acquisition by the son of rights and roles previously denied to him. It does not necessarily mean the immediate creation of a new household. Since the father remains the owner of the household property and as such his son may remain dependent on him. The son continues to accept his father's authority, and this is symbolically expressed by the son's having to put an end to his avoidance of his father. He does this, on the seventh day following the wedding, by approaching his father, kissing his hands and asking his forgiveness. After this event, he resumes eating with his father and returns to the previous pattern of interaction. Despite this, marriage initiates a number of significant changes that the static formality of the father-son relationship does not show. It means that the son has become a man, and in the eyes of

the community he has acquired a new status. He now has a domain of his own; a room reserved for him and his wife. Through marriage a man establishes new relationships which can be used to decrease his dependence on his father. Thus a man can turn to his father-in-law for help. We have seen in some detail in the last chapter the various ways in which marriage increases the likelihood and possibilities of fission in extended family households. Rituals of the type mentioned above, can be seen therefore, as dramatization of some of the drastic changes (especially on household structure) that marriage inevitably brings about.

On the day following the wedding the groom's family invites the young men of the village to eat with the groom. Those who come are expected to join a group known as the 'arasa' or 'the group of the turn' ('gama'it addur'). Each member of the group takes it in turn to provide a meal for the groom and his group. The actual number of such groups varies and could range from 15 up to 35 or so. In the two cases of which I have records, half of each of the two groups (one 18 and the other 35) were bachelors and the rest were married. Their ages ranged from 15 to 30 years. Such a group makes it possible, at least as far as eating arrangements are concerned, for the groom to be independent of his father's household and enables him, therefore, to maintain the expected avoidance of his father.

The groom has a chief-assistant (known as 'alshawish') who is

usually a married man, a relative and from his own peer group. Initially, his main function is to give advice and help to the groom and to act as a link between the groom and his household. After the wedding night, the role of the 'shawish' becomes oriented to the less serious concerns of seeing that the groom is kept entertained by the 'arasa' group. The group is dedicated to the idea of having fun and to such ends they sing, play games, tell jokes and engage in horseplay. The group is structured so that the bridegroom is the centre of attention. In short the bridegroom's role is 'glorified'. During the first week of marriage he is called a sultan (the highest political office in Ottoman times). As such he has the "right" to special treatment by members of the group. He must, for example, have the biggest piece of meat, he is the first to eat, to wash his hands, and so on. The 'shawish' is responsible for maintaining this "privileged" position of the Sultan. Any member of the group who breaks any of the many 'rules' issued by the 'shawish' is punished. The punishment - which nobody must object to - involves usually the buying of drinks, cigarettes etc. for the group. To maintain a constant supply of these things, the group engages in various games, such as using the groom's shoes as dice so that individuals other than the groom (the 'Sultan') acquire certain titles like that of 'shaikh', 'Wazeer' (minister), thief and so on⁷⁷.

77. It is noticeable that such titles as Sultan, Wazeer, Shaikh, Shawish refer to political offices, especially to those in existence during the Ottoman period. It is possible, therefore, that such games appealed to such groups as ways of ridiculing political authority.

Prior to the wedding night it is impressed upon the individual that to consummate his marriage is a duty that he must not fail to fulfill in the shortest possible time. Now, among his peer group, the emphasis shifts to sex as a source of pleasure. Among the 'arasa' group sex is a central topic of conversation. Long poems describing, in very intimate details, the female body are read out, sexual anecdotes are told, and the bridegroom is questioned about the details of his sexual relations with his bride. I was told that previously the 'arasa' group never left the groom alone as long as the group lasted. However, because most members of the group have non-agricultural occupations with regular hours they can, nowadays, entertain the groom only during the evenings.

The informal, relaxed and fun-oriented relationships of the peer group can be contrasted with the formal, avoidance-oriented relationship of the groom to his father and other senior agnates generally. In this sense, it is possible to say that some of the marriage rituals dramatize the conflict between generations.

The contrast between the bridegroom's position and that of his wife is also interesting. For while the former's outer-relationships (i.e. those with individuals outside his household) are emphasized and intensified, those of his bride are contracted to a minimum. She is confined to her new 'haush'. She may not meet her father-in-law or brothers-in-law for a period which may extend to six months

following the marriage. This is so, it is said, because the bride is fully adorned ('mitzaina') during this period and she must not be seen by other men while she remains so. Further, the bride may not visit her father's household or meet her father or adult brothers during her first year of marriage except in exceptional circumstances (marriage, birth or death). This avoidance between the girl and her father (but not mother) is formally ended by the visit she makes to his house. With her she takes a gift of meat, sugar, tea etc. (known as 'ges'it alzuwara') and after a stay of two weeks or so she returns to her husband's household with a similar gift. Gift exchange marks therefore the resumption of normal relationships between the two households. After this, visits between the woman and her father and brothers are exchanged without formality.

It is generally acknowledged that the first year of marriage is full of difficulties for the woman - and divorce during this period is more likely than later⁷⁸. The confinement of the bride to her husband's 'haush' and her avoidance of her 'protectors' (i.e. father and brother) can be seen, therefore, as an attempt to reduce the conflict between the two sets of roles and obligations that emerge with marriage; that is, by the temporary severing of the relationships with her father's household, her new relationships with members of her husband's household are emphasised. It is likely, moreover, that during this period

78. Goode, 1963, p.160

of avoidance, the woman will conceive or give birth and this, - as we have seen earlier - strengthens her position in her husband's household.

For the groom the formal avoidance of his father is ended differently, and in a much shorter period, than that of his wife and her father. By kissing his father's hand, the groom reaffirms his acceptance of his father's authority. On that same day he also replaces his wedding outfit with everyday clothes. On this day it is said that the 'Sultan' has abdicated his throne.⁷⁹ This also may be marked by having the bridegroom chased from the house by members of the 'arasa' group, who attempt to hit him with shoes.⁸⁰

What has been discussed above does not exhaust all the rituals related to marriage. It is sufficient, however, to show the complexities of marriage rituals and their symbolic richness. Marriage is the point at which the two sexual worlds formally meet. The above chapter has been an attempt to show that the meaning and consequences of such a meeting stretch beyond the establishment of a new conjugal unit.

79. "alsultan itnazel 'en 'ershu"

80. The frequent use of the shoe in wedding ceremonies is not entirely arbitrary. The shoe in Arab culture is an object that signifies disrespect and low status. Rituals of "role glorification" and "debunking" do, therefore, make use of the shoe.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY: STABILITY AND CHANGE

In the previous chapters, kinship relations, Household structure, and marriage patterns have been examined. The administrative relationship that ties the village to the central organs of the government has also been outlined. This chapter will consider some of the general features of the village community that are relevant to the problem of stability and conservatism in a context of social change. I shall outline the economic structure and the extent of the economic differentiation existing in the villages studied, before raising the question regarding the persistence of traditional modes of action and behaviour in these communities.

1. Economic Differentiation:

Olive cultivation in Msellata has been the traditional basis of livelihood for a long period of time, probably since the Roman period. In 1964, the area had approximately 140,000 producing olive trees; that is, an average of 10 trees per head. Further, most olive gardens are also sown with cereals. The distribution of land in the area averaged (in 1964) 10 hectares per household.¹ Most of the land is usually sown with barley and the rest with wheat.

1. Figures obtained from the Department of Agriculture in Homs.

Barley is sown between October and January and harvested in April or May. It is cultivated for domestic and animal consumption, and as a cash crop.

Yields from olives and cereals vary greatly from year to year. In a good year an average olive tree produces something like 40 litres of oil, or a gross income of £L10. In a bad year, this can decrease to about a tenth. Barley yields can similarly vary from 1 to 15 fold². A hectare of land can produce from 40 or so kilograms of barley in a very dry year, to something like 600 kilograms in a wet year.² Consumption of olive oil and barley varies, but figures given by informants indicate that 15 to 25 litres of olive oil, and 60-80 kilograms of barley, are consumed annually by each household member.

Olives and cereals are virtually the only crops grown in the area. Yields from both of these are dependent on climate and rainfall. Because these are unpredictable and variable, crop yields tend to fluctuate widely from year to year.

The majority of the households in the five villages owned livestock (mostly sheep). Most of them had only a few sheep, which were kept for domestic use. In 1966, about 45% of all the households in these villages owned no, or less than, five sheep each, and only 15%

2. In 1966-7 every 22 Kilograms of barley were sold for £L1.

of the households have over 30 sheep each. Such flocks are usually given to shepherds to tend.³ It seems that the amount of livestock in the area is declining. The number of sheep declined by 25% in the four years between 1960 and 1964, and that of goats by 6% and of cattle by 5%.⁴

Local industry in the area, apart from weaving by the traditional hand loom (mostly done by women, and this is rapidly declining as a result of competition from Tripoli and foreign imported materials), is limited to olive presses and flour mills. There are, in Msellata, something like 30 olive presses, a third of which are mechanical. The rest are animal or hand presses and most of these have fallen into disuse. Pressing begins in October and continues until mid-February. Five to ten men are employed for each of the mechanical presses during the season, and are paid in cash about £L1 per day. The press owner receives the standard rate of 10% of the amount of olives pressed.

Olive oil is stored in big jars (qafeez), and is either sold locally in Qusbat market, or to merchants or their agents from Tripoli. The amount sold varies annually, but in a good year up to 90% of the

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3. Shepherds usually look after flocks of 100 to 150. Currently they receive 1/10th of the sheep they tend and a portion of the wool (1/7th) and butter produced by these flocks. In 1966 one sheep was sold for between £L6 to £L8.
 4. In 1960 Msellata had 15,380 sheep, 5,084 goats and 1,101 head of cattle (1960 Census of Agriculture, Tripoli, 1962). In 1964 the area had 11,580 sheep, 4,810 goats, and 1,052 head of cattle (figures obtained from Department of Agriculture, Homs).

produce, in the area as a whole, is sold in the market. There are about 15 flour mills in Quşbat, all of which are electrically powered. Flour or grain is usually stored in underground clay granaries in the ḥaush. In wet years, up to 50% of the area's yield is sold for cash.⁵

Farming retains its traditional importance for a large number of people in the area, and until very recently a failure of crops meant privation and famine for a significant portion of the local population. This dependence of the peasant on forces outside his control, together with his fear of famine, colours his general outlook on life. Years of famine such as that of 1917 (known as 'aam azinqn') and of 1947 (known as 'aam asbula') are frequently referred to and used as historical markers. It is the succession of the seasons, the alternation of natural events, and his relationship to the land, that colours the peasant's thinking about the past, the future, and about life generally.

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5. It is extremely difficult to determine the 'average' income per household in the area, or in the villages studied. The economic position of these households vary widely and income from the agricultural sector shows considerable annual variations. One household (composed of 7 individuals - one a student in Benghazi) which owned 16 hectares of land, 170 olive trees, and 10 sheep, had the following budget in 1966:
- a) 1. Weekly spending in piasters (100 piasters = £1):
tea = 30, coffee = 20, sugar = 10; macaroni = 20, vegetables = 15, fruit = 40, paraffin (for cooking) = 12, eggs = 10, meat = 70.
2. Annual spending: electricity = £14, clothes = £17, utensils = £16, wages (shepherd & 1 worker for a day) = £17, other expenses (hiring a tractor, and payment to olive harvesters) = £13.
Total weekly and annual expenses = £154. Further, the household consumed the value of £143.5 of wheat & barley, and the market value of £120 of olive oil.

Since the forces that traditionally determine his livelihood lie basically outside the farmer's control, his thinking shows fatalistic tendencies and tends to be more oriented to the present than to the future. It is said, for example, that "worldly wealth is like dirt"⁶ and "an egg today is preferable to one tomorrow".⁷ It is also said "spend what you have today and the future will take care of itself".⁸ Further, this is religiously expressed in the belief that the will of God is the determinant of all things. However, the belief that man's destiny is controlled by external forces, is balanced by the precept that calls on the individual to show initiative, hard work and manage his resources carefully. Many sayings express the virtues of hard work and self-reliance. It said, for example, that "honey can be found at the tip of the hoe"⁹ and "he who does not eat with his own hand cannot obtain satisfaction".¹⁰

Land Tenure and Occupational Structure:

Two economic sectors co-exist in the village society; the agricultural or traditional section, which includes all those whose

5 contd. b) Income: barley yields produced (an 'average' year). The market value of £L117, and £L38.7 of wheat. Olive yields had a market value of £L180. Livestock yielded an income of £L54. Total gross income = £L369.

6. "rizq aldunia ziy alwasekh"
7. "dehit alyum kheer min dehit ghudwa"
8. "Iṣruf ma fil gaib yati ma filghaib."
9. "al'esel 'ela fem ilfas."
10. "illi ma yakulsh bida ma yishbe'sh".

main income derives from farming, and the modern section which includes those whose basic source of income is non-agricultural.

a) The Agricultural Sector: A great deal of differentiation can be found within this sector. Over a quarter (27%) of all the households in four of the villages had no or very little property (i.e. less than a hectare of land and less than 5 olive trees). On the other hand, households with large land property, that is with more than 30 hectares of land and over 200 producing olive trees, comprised 10% and 18% respectively of the total households (see table 9 below).¹¹

TABLE 9

Distribution of Households in Relation to ownership of olive trees and land in 4 villages.

Village	Amount owned/No. of households.					
	0:0-5	6-20	21-50	51-100	101-200	201+
	L:0-1	2-5	6-10	11-20	21-30	31+
Za'feran	21 20	5 12	6 5	5 7	7 4	5 1
Luwata	2 6	4 9	5 8	6 9	10 -	12 7
Murad	12 11	9 6	5 5	- 3	- -	4 5
Qumata	2 -	2 4	1 8	4 2	7 4	3 1
Total 137						
House-	0:37	20	17	15	24	24
holds	L:37	31	26	21	8	14

11. Only 5 of 34 households belonging to Bu Ghalia and Tabeeb in Beni Mislim had over 30 hectares of land and over 200 olive trees.

Traditionally the poor and landless had to depend on the large property owners for their livelihood. To a lesser degree this remains so. However, working on the land is no longer the only source of employment available. Increased opportunities for non-agricultural work exist now in the locality and outside it, and as we shall see later, such opportunities are being used.

The normal method of working the land remains that of sharecropping. Here land is leased to a sharecropper who is required to provide the labour, half the seeds, and half the expenses involved in ploughing the land (now frequently done by a hired tractor). Under this system the landlord and the sharecropper share the yield equally. There are variations on this system. In some cases, the sharecropper provides nothing but his labour and obtains a third of the produce. In other cases where the landlord provides nothing, his share is usually a quarter of the total produce.

The most common system used in relation to olive trees is what is locally known as "tekh rees". Here trees are leased under an agreement (sometimes a written agreement), which stipulates the amount of olive oil that the owner of the trees is entitled to, after the harvesting and pressing of the olives. Such agreements are usually reached after an estimate has been given by a village 'expert', on the amount of olive oil that the trees in question are

likely to produce in that year. The tenant is under an obligation to fulfill his agreement, even if the total yield is less than the amount due to the owner. I was told, however, that owners rarely insist, in such situations, on their full quota of oil.

The 'tekhrees' system is nowadays used by some villagers who have regular non-agricultural occupations to supplement their incomes. For example, a villager from Za'feran leased, in 1965, half of his olive trees - he owned 170 trees - to another propertyless villager, who worked as an usher in a government department in the locality (he received a salary of £E15 per month). The total yields from the 85 trees in question amounted to approximately 824 litres of oil. The owner received his stipulated quota of 595 litres, leaving the tenant with a net income of approximately 229 litres, or the market value of something like £L50¹². Such a system enables individuals in similar positions to utilize the opportunities of regular work outside the village and locality, and at the same time to use their membership of the village community to supplement their income from outside it. Such individuals can also utilize the labour of the members of their households (wives and dependent children). The system also allows large landowners and the adult males of their households to have non-agricultural full time occupations, without the full responsibilities and the anxieties involved in managing their farms.

12. In 1966 the price of a litre of oil in the locality was 20 to 25 piasters.

Apart from sharecropping the individual can find seasonal or day labouring work at the time of the olive and cereal harvests. Here payment is made either in cash or in kind. With the increase in the opportunities for regular work, there has been an increase in the demand for seasonal agricultural workers. Many landlords complain about the difficulties in finding enough labourers to work on their land, and about the high wages demanded by these.¹³ It was said that the "amil" or day labourer has become the master ('seed') of the landowning fellaḥ. This was contrasted with the situation in the past when the agricultural labourer used to be grateful for obtaining a meal a day for his wage. Although this is, no doubt, an exaggeration, it does point to the fact that the landless and the poor individual is no longer dependent on large landowners for his livelihood. With the creation of a system of permanent wage-labour and salaried occupations, this dependence has been transferred to an impersonal labour market.

b.) The Non-agricultural Sector:

General economic change in Libya has meant that the excessive dependence on agriculture in Msellata has been lessened in a number of ways. A dry year no longer means famine and extreme hardship.

13. Agricultural labourers earned about £1 a day or its equivalent (e.g. 26 kilograms of barley) in 1966. Further, the landowner is customarily required to provide his workers with meals and tobacco during working hours.

In such years the government sells cereals at substantially reduced prices. Since 1960, taxes on land and crops have been abolished, and with the establishment of an agricultural bank, loans are available to farmers and some have used such facilities to purchase, at reduced prices, tractors which have become a general feature of farming in the area in recent years.¹⁴ These are not only used on their owners' land but are also hired out for cash to farmers who lack such mechanical aids.

In most cases it is the large landowners who utilize such facilities. This is so because large ownership of land makes access to available credit facilities relatively easy. Further, shortage of labour and the attempts by the relatively wealthy to diversify their sources of income by investing capital in the modern sector of the economy (in this case in machinery), are also relevant factors. Regardless of the causes or the motives, one consequence of such action is the further increase in the economic differentiation between individuals in these villages. Traditionally, men used to invest their surplus income in land, or in the purchase of livestock. Now, investment is more oriented to the non-agricultural sector (e.g. buildings, especially in Tripoli, shops, machinery etc.) than to agriculture or farming.

14. For example, in Za'feran village alone there were in 1966 two tractors, and another two were in the process of being purchased. In Luwata there were four tractors.

What is striking about the occupational structure of the area is the large number of people who are employed in other than agricultural occupations. According to figures from the 1964 national census, only 60% of the economically active males in Msellata were engaged in farming or related occupations. On the other hand 13.6% were classified as manual workers (skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled) and 6.8% had professional, technical, administrative and clerical jobs. Traders, and those engaged in commercial activities, comprised 5.7% of the total.¹⁵

In the five villages surveyed in 1966 (see Appendix, table VI) 93, or 42.4%, out of a total of 219 adult males were farmers, (most worked on their own land), and 23, or 10.5%, were agricultural labourers. On the other hand, 23, or 10.5%, were manual workers, and 63, or 28.7%, had various non-manual occupations, 36 of whom (57%) were in government employment as ushers, clerks, administrators, teachers, policemen, etc.; the rest were mostly traders and shopkeepers. Such figures indicate the degree of economic change that has occurred in the rural areas of Tripolitania, following the Libyanization of administration and, more importantly, the discovery

15. Figures were obtained from the Census and Statistical Department in Tripoli. According to these figures there were - in 1964 - 3,697 economically active males (total male population = 7,563, and total population = 14,488) with the following occupations: farming = 2,161, mining and quarrying = 55, manufacture = 55, construction = 170, Public services (electricity, water & sanitation) = 13. Commerce = 210, Transport, communication & storage = 97. Services = 447. Unknown = 348.

and export of large quantities of Petroleum in the country.

Thus the village has come to accommodate two distinct categories of people. There are those who, to a large degree, remain dependent on farming for their livelihood, and as such they remain dependent on unpredictable forces outside their control. The results of their work depends largely on climatic conditions, and on the prices of their produce on the market. On the other hand the village also houses individuals who have occupations with regular income, and whose work conditions differ radically from those of the farmer and agricultural labourer.

This does not mean that the non-agricultural group is a homogeneous one. Indeed, economic differentiation is more pronounced and much clearer than in the case of the farming group. The differences in their market situation, i.e. amount and source of income, occupational mobility, and job security, vary greatly. So do their work conditions. The market situation and the work conditions of the village shopkeeper, the unskilled manual worker, the teacher, and the administrator, differ significantly one from another. The government official obtains, or expects to obtain, many benefits, e.g. pension, medical facilities for him and his family, housing allowance, paid holidays, etc. Further, a government official can expect to have an income several times higher than an unskilled manual worker.

Economic differentiation exists, not only at the locality and village level, but also at the household level. It is not uncommon to find, for example, a household in which one adult male is a fellaḥ, another a teacher, and a third a salaried employee in a government office within or outside the locality. We have seen in some detail in Chapter two the consequences of such differentiation on the household structure. The unit of differentiation is increasingly coming to be the conjugal, rather than the joint or extended household.

The degree to which economic differentiation has penetrated the village economic structure can be further illustrated by the following facts: Of the 34 extended households in the five villages, 25, or 78%, contain one or more adult sons who derive their income from non-agricultural occupations. In these households the son is either a wage labourer, a salaried employee or, as in a few cases, self employed (e.g. shopkeeper). Similarly of the 14 joint households in these villages, 11, or 78%, had one or more adult brothers in a non-agricultural occupation, either within the locality (as in 8 cases) or outside it (3 cases). Further, 44.6% of the conjugal households (i.e. 46 out of 104) had an adult male (mostly the head of the household) employed as wage labourers or salaried employees in the locality (30 households) or outside it (16 households).¹⁶

16 30 of the above 46 households were propertyless or poor, 6 were large landowners, and the remaining 10 were 'middle' or 'average' households in terms of their village standards. This corresponds roughly to the overall distribution of property among conjugal households. (see table 3 in Chapter 2).

Another important consequence of the extension of the labour market and the increase in economic specialization, has been the decline of farming as a family or household enterprise. Indeed, 60.5% of all the households surveyed (excluding denuded households) had at least one of its adult male members engaged primarily in non-agricultural occupations. Further, farming, which is the most traditional activity in the area, seems to be viewed with low regard and is accorded little esteem or status as an occupation. This can be elicited from the choices given by 32 individuals from the above five villages, as to their favoured or desired occupations. (17)

The following table gives their choices:

<u>Desired occupation or Profession.</u>	<u>No. of individuals</u>
Commerce	10
Free-professions (e.g. doctor, lawyer, journalist, architect)	6
Teaching	6
Government & army (clerks, army officers, administrators)	6
Other (skilled builder (1), Professional farmer (2), manager & owner of a modern olive press (1))	4

17. This was not intended as a representative sample. Informants of various age groups and occupations were asked about the occupation they, or their children, would like to have, given the opportunity. More than one occupation was usually mentioned. However, such alternatives tended to be of a similar type. e.g. an individual who mentions medicine as his first choice is also likely to give law as an alternative. Only the first mentioned occupation is given in the above table.

Commerce, as the above table shows, attracted the largest number of choices. The reasons that informants gave for making such a choice emphasised the high income that can be derived from such occupations, and the fact that in such an occupation the individual is his own master, that is, he is not in a subordinate position of authority. The individuals who favoured commerce as an occupation were mostly middle aged or old farmers. This is so, I believe, because there are a number of structural similarities between farming and commerce. In both cases, work is not subject to the routine and regulations of, for example, the official or manual worker. Both occupations allow the maintenance of traditional leisure activities, and both occupations allow the participation of other members of the household (e.g. brothers or sons).

Farmers are usually familiar with trading activities. A number of them engage also in trade or shopkeeping. Further, as farmers they may have to sell part of their produce to merchants, and have, therefore, some familiarity with market activities. Moreover, the shopkeeper, like the fellah, is a full member of the village community, and as such they interact frequently. The village shop (dukan), or shops, play an important part in the village's social life. The shop is not merely an agency for the transfer of goods. It is the place where villagers meet in their

leisure to talk and drink tea, which is usually made and sold in such places. Unlike some other peasant communities¹⁸, the shopkeepers in the above villages are not outsiders, but full members of village society, with affinal, agnatic and other ties in these villages. Commercial and contract relationships exist side by side with other types of relationships. Therefore, the impersonal and 'urban' relationships of commercial activities are part of the life of the village rural community, and are not allocated to strangers or outsiders.¹⁹ This is proverbially articulated in sayings such as 'treat me (in commercial dealings) as an enemy (i.e. impersonally) and love me like a brother',²⁰ and "strict accounting makes companionship last long"²¹. Such sayings acknowledge the existence of impersonal relationships in the village community, and the desirability of isolating these relationships from the interference and influence of personal considerations. Further, Islam not only acknowledges commerce and trade as legitimate occupations, but also views them in favourable terms.

Those who favour modern occupations and professions belong mostly to the younger generation. Such occupations can only be found in the city or large towns. This orientation towards urbanity,

18 Redfield, 1953, pp 33-34

19 This is also a feature of the Near Eastern village. Sweet, 1960 p.229

20 ḥasibni zey 'a 'adoek oḥibni zey akhok"

21 "alḥisab iṭeoil al'ishre"

especially among those with some education, is also reflected in their boredom and dissatisfaction with rural life. Traditional leisure activities are confined to seeking the companionship of other men, usually over a drink of tea or coffee in the guest room, or in the local shop. After the cereal and olive harvests, there is little to do in the long months of the summer, but to seek the company of other men. There have been persistent attempts - since 1963 - by the younger and educated men, to establish a Youth Club in the area.²² This was established early in 1968 in Quşbat and had a membership of about 350 individuals by mid-summer of the same year. Such an undertaking can be seen as an attempt to establish a new pattern of leisure activities, more suited to modern occupations and the urban-orientation of an increasing number of individuals.

Only two - both are farmers - of the 32 individuals asked, mentioned farming as a desirable occupation. However, the farming they desired was not the traditional farming they know. What they wanted was mechanized and irrigated farming where vegetables - among other things - could be grown for a wide market. In short they wanted to be professional farmers. The reasons for this general lack of attachment to traditional farming (flahe) are complex, and some of

22 Permission must be obtained from the government before such a club can be established. Further, such clubs - which usually allow athletic, artistic and other pursuits - are financially subsidised by the government through the newly established Ministry of Youth.

these have already been indicated. The Quran, unlike the Bible, never dwells on the peasant. Manual work has traditionally - in Arab culture as a whole - been viewed with disdain, and has been accorded low status. Secular education has tended to accentuate this outlook. Individuals with no more than elementary education, have come to feel that manual, and especially agricultural, work is demeaning.

More important, perhaps, than the above, is the fact that land remains a major source of problems and anxiety for the individual fellah. A visit to the civil court dealing with the area would show some of the various problems that land brings to its owner and cultivator. In a large number of cases land ownership remains unregistered. This, together with the lack of clear boundaries between plots of land, is one major source of problems between villagers. Further, animals of one individual can attack crops or pasture on land belonging to a different owner, and rain-fed canals dug to carry water to olive trees can easily be re-routed and so on. Thus, disputes between individuals are constantly erupting.

Since agriculture in the area depends on rain, and since rainfall is irregular, and climatic conditions unpredictable, farming becomes infused with tension and a continual source of anxiety. Further, since the peasant has come to be part of a national and international economic system, his bargaining position

has become limited, since the prices at which he can buy and sell products are now determined by national and international factors, which he can neither predict nor control. Many farmers complained of the low prices at which they have to sell their produce, at the same time when the cost of living is increasing rapidly, higher wages are being demanded by agricultural workers and imports of agricultural products from abroad are rising annually. All this has induced a general feeling that farming is no longer a viable source of livelihood.

The difficulties of farming are further increased by the phenomenon of the fragmentation of landholding into several parcels. In 1960, Tripolitania had an average of 9 parcels of land per holding, and in Msellata an average of seven.²³ It is not uncommon to find the land of a farmer with 15 or so hectares, dispersed over 20 parcels of various sizes and locations. This is basically due to the Islamic system of inheritance, where every brother inherits an equal (in area and quality) share of land. This is basically why brothers are hesitant to divide their land inheritance. For with each division, the difficulties of farming and of the workability of land increase, and the land's market value decreases. Further, the phenomenon, found in Msellata and elsewhere in Tripolitania, of the separation of ownership of some olive trees from the land, does

23. 1960 Census of Agriculture. Tripoli, Ministry of Agriculture. 1962 p. 5 & 7.

not reduce the problems and difficulties of farming. Landowners are traditionally reluctant to sell land because of the stigma that may be attached to such action.²⁴ They, therefore, prefer to sell trees, but retain the ownership of land. Such an action does, however, enlarge the area of potential disputes and quarrels, which in this case may arise over the pasturing of animals, the digging of canals and so on.

The fact that the selling of land is viewed as a serious matter does not mean that it is rare: one only needs to look at the distribution of land ownership among the households of the same 'aila, to realize that such wide differences between them can only be accounted for by the fact of buying and selling. In Tabeeb 'aila (Beni Mislīm village) for example, some households owned over a 100 hectares of land, and over 600 olive trees, while others were propertyless. Similar wide variations can be found in very shallow 'ailat like 'araba in Luwata village, where some households had only a few olive trees, while others had an ownership of several hundred. Further, some of the recent immigrants (of 3 or so generations) to some of the above villages are now large landowners (e.g. Bu Shiḩa in Za'feran and Bin Della in Murad).

24. Such an action is sometimes denigrated as "selling for the sake of one's belly", that is, to satisfy immediate needs.

Emigration

There is no doubt that urbanization, or the movement to cities and towns in Libya, has shown a rapid increase in the last decade or so. The annual increase in the Libyan population of Tripoli and Benghazi has, between 1954 and 1964, averaged 8.2% and 9.2% respectively. The percentage of the Libyan population living in these two cities rose from 16.4% in 1954 to 20.6% in 1964. The General Population Census of 1964 found that only 51% of the total population of Tripoli were born there.²⁵

On the other hand, the population of Msellata increased from 14,157 in 1954, to 14,488 in 1964, that is, with an annual average of only 0.24%. The five villages surveyed, lost, since the end of the Second World War, over a third (or 37%) of their adult males; that is, 129 adult males out of a possible total of 348, have left their villages to work and live - together with wives and children - in the cities and towns of Libya (see Appendix; table IV). Most of them emigrated to Tripoli (72%) or to Benghazi (18%). Further, 15.5% of the 219 adult males living in the five

25. Percentages were calculated from the General Population Censuses of 1954 and 1964. According to these censuses, in 1954, Benghazi had a total of 67,188 Libyans and Tripoli a population of 99,925 Libyans. In 1964 the population of these two cities increased to 130,628 and 182,672 respectively. Tripoli Municipality gives the city a Libyan population of 212,956 in 1967. Not all the above increases in the population are due to immigration and natural increase. Some are due to the return of Libyans from neighbouring countries, especially from Tunisia.

villages were, in 1966, working outside the locality, and most of them worked in Tripoli.

Rural-to-urban migration is usually explained in such terms as low agricultural productivity, population pressure on land, land tenure ('push' factors), and in terms of higher standards of living and the expansion of employment opportunities in the cities ('pull' factors). Such demographic and economic factors are, no doubt, relevant to the understanding of emigration in the area. However, to think solely in such terms is to oversimplify a complex and intricate phenomenon.

Rural migration is not an entirely new phenomenon. A number of events, in the last half of the 19th century and the first half of this century, have led to an increase in emigration. Apart from years of severe drought and famine, the growth of private ownership in the last century led to the growth of landlessness, and to the search for jobs elsewhere. Turkish laws regarding taxation and conscription influenced some to leave the country. In 1881, Tunisia was colonized by the French, who established large farms and initiated industrial and commercial enterprises. Thus, opportunities for work were created for some of the Tripolitanian rural population, fleeing from Turkish and Italian rule. In 1921 there were about 20,000 Libyans (mostly from Tripolitania) ①

in Tunisia.²⁶

With the Italian colonization, the importance of Tripoli was greatly enhanced. Under Italian rule it grew from a small Turkish town into a modern European-style city.²⁷ The construction of the port and work on drainage and water systems began to absorb a relatively large number of migrant labourers. After the Second World War, employment could be found on the U.S. Air Force base (Wheelus) and with the British military establishment, or as night-watchmen, domestic workers, cooks, etc. with a wealthy expatriate community (British and American).

Emigration on a relatively large scale did not start in Msellata until after the Second World War. It increased following Independence, and more significantly, following the discovery of oil in Libya in the late 1950's. The development of the Petroleum industry in the country stimulated greatly the construction industry, and the revenue from the exports of oil helped to finance numerous public projects related to roads, housing, schools, hospitals, tourism, etc.

It was estimated that Msellata had a population of 13,110 in 1917.²⁸ Thus, the resident population of the area has increased by only 10.5%

26 Brehony, 1961. pp 263-5

27 In 1911, a Turkish census gave Tripoli a total population of 29,761. In 1936, the city had a Libyan population of 66,479 (Harrison, 1967, p.406)

28 Agostini, 1917

in the last 50 years, or so. In 1910, it was estimated that the area as a whole had 125,000 olive trees - 10% of which were immature (see Chapter one). In 1964 the number of mature trees was nearly 140,000 and this represents an increase of 12% or so. This is apart from any land reclamation that may have taken place since the 1910's. Therefore, the explanation that pressure on land is a cause of emigration in the area cannot be considered as fully adequate.

Further, many farmers said that agriculture has declined in the last decade or two. Before that, it was said that many farmers used to grow vegetables for domestic consumption and for the local market. This is no longer the case. Vegetables and fruit are now imported to the area from the Homs coastal area and from Tripoli. It was generally agreed among farmers that land is not fully exploited in the area.

All the villages surveyed show a high rate of emigration. In Luwata, one of the richest in the area, with an average of 28.5 producing olive trees per head, 32.9% of its living adult male population has emigrated within the last 20 years or so. (see Appendix; table X). In Murad, the poorest village surveyed, with only 12 producing olive trees per head, 39.2% of its adult males have left. Yet about 30% of its resident adult males are recent (within a generation or two) village immigrants (see Appendix; table XVI). In Za'feran, where

35% of the village's adult males have emigrated, we find that about a third (29.2%) of the adult males resident in the village, are either village immigrants themselves, or sons of immigrants. In short, the assumption that recent emigration in the area is the result of population pressure on land resources, has very little evidence to support it. For apart from the above-mentioned fact that the number of olive trees has increased more - since the 1910's - than the number of the resident population, and the fact that villages rich in land and trees do not seem less immune to emigration than others, the area has now more job opportunities than ever before. A number of jobs have been created with the expansion of administration, schools, and with the initiation of several schemes related to the construction of houses, roads, water, electricity and other facilities in the area.

Rural-to-urban emigration has reached such a stage that it is necessary to mention a number of diverse factors to explain the phenomenon. Village depopulation, shortage of labour and the overcrowding of a large population in shanty towns in Tripoli²⁹, indicate, among other things, that purely economic and demographic factors can no longer fully explain the phenomenon.

Contemporary rural-urban migration in the area must, I believe,

29 An estimate gives the population of the shanty town in Tripoli in 1964 as 50,000. That is, over a quarter of the total population of the city. (Harrison, op. cit., p.418)

be examined in relation to a) the existing peasant-land relationship,
b) the traditional structure of the arab household, and c) it must be viewed within the context of recent changes that have occurred at the societal level.

From the individual's point of view, emigration can be seen as an attempt to deal with a general or a specific problem. A basic problem that continues to face the fellaḥ is concerned with his relationship to the land. I have outlined the structure of this relationship in some detail earlier on in this chapter. I have argued that, generally speaking, agriculture or farming in the area tends to present the individual farmer with a set of problems. This is so regardless of whether he happens to be a landowner, a sharecropper or even an agricultural labourer. The dependence of farming on rain, the fragmentation of landholdings, the frequent disputes about boundaries, canals, the separation of the ownership of trees from land, the fact that an olive tree takes a long time to mature, and the increasing need for cash to manage the daily business of living, all these factors make it extremely difficult for the fellaḥ to become a professional farmer, and increase his orientation and commitments to the modern sector of the economy. For some, this can only be achieved by emigration, or if not, by making it possible for at least one member of the household to find and maintain regular jobs, either in the locality or in the city.

It was argued in chapter two, that the structure of the household, especially the extended and the joint type, is characterized by conflict. Conflict characterizes ~~the relationship of~~ the father-son relationship, and that existing between brothers of the same household. The adult male living in his father's household remains dependent on him, since he owns and manages the household property. The son thus may have little influence over the major decisions affecting himself or his wife and children. He has little control over the results of his labour. In such situations emigration may present itself as the best course of action available. Thus, as was pointed out in chapter two, household fission does frequently manifest itself in emigration.

Recent changes in the economic situation in the country as a whole, have increased the opportunities for fission in the rural household. Wage labour and salaried occupations have become available in the cities and towns, and, to a lesser degree, in the rural areas themselves. The dependence of the individual on agriculture and on the support of his kin has, therefore, decreased considerably.

Modern secular education - apart from the fact that it increases differences between individuals - is basically urban-oriented. It is designed to equip and provide the individual with skills and attitudes that are typically urban. Most of the subjects

taught, and the training given in elementary and preparatory schools - to say nothing of secondary schools - have no basic relevance to traditional farming or rural life generally, as can be seen from the following table:³⁰

<u>Subjects Taught</u>	<u>No. of weekly periods allocated to each.</u>	
	<u>Elementary Schools</u> <u>(5th & 6th year)</u>	<u>Preparatory Schools.</u>
Arabic	10	7
Mathematics	7	4
Religious education	3	3
Science	3	4 (5 in 2nd yr.)
Physical training	2	2
Arts & Practical work	2	5
Geography	2	2
History	2	2
National Culture	1	1
Health	1	-
Farming and Gardening	1	-
English Language	-	7

Secular education in the area - as in the country generally - has expanded rapidly since Independence. In Msellata there were only two schools in 1952. By 1967, the number of schools (all elementary apart from one preparatory school) has risen to eight, with a total student population of 1,737 pupils.³¹ Illiteracy,

30. Pupils spend 6 years at elementary school, 2 years at preparatory school, and 3 years at secondary school. The subjects taught and the number of weekly periods allocated to each, are uniform in all schools.

31. Figures were obtained from the Department of Education in Homs. Only a small number (167) of the total student population is female. An estimate (based on the total number of males between the ages of 6 and 14 and the actual number attending schools)

however, remains high. The 1964 census gives an illiteracy ratio of 69% for males (over 6 years of age) and 98% for females in the Homs' Mutusarifia.³² Of the villages studied, Luwata had the highest literacy ratio where 71% of the adult males (over 15 years of age) could read and write. However, only 38 of the 108 adult males (including recent emigrants) had an elementary education.³³ Luwata is exceptional and is acknowledged as such. Most villages in the area probably have a similar literacy rate to that of Za'feran where only 26% of the adult males (over 15 years of age) could read and write. Most of the older generation who can read and write have learnt to do so in the traditional Quranic schools. In 1966 there were three such schools in the area (one of them in Za'feran village) with a total student population of 250. Before 1946 such schools were the only type that could be found in the area. Their teaching is limited to that of reading, writing and reciting the Quran.

What is important to emphasise here, is the fact that modern

31 indicate that approximately two thirds of the total were in contd. 1966 attending elementary & preparatory schools in the area. Elementary education is compulsory in the country. Only 160 of the above were attending the preparatory school in Qusbat. There were 12 pupils from Msellata attending Homs Secondary School in 1965. In the same year 4 students from the area graduated from the Libyan University.

32 For Tripoli City the ratio, for the same census, is 37% for males and 75% for females.

33 25 were attending or attended preparatory school, 10 secondary school, and 9 Higher institutes of education.

secular education has an economic value. It has become an important - perhaps the most important - channel for the improvement of one's market and status situations. The traditional religious education did in the past - and does still now - improve one's status in the local community, but unlike modern secular education, it was not oriented to the labour market. Apart from the general enhancement of one's status through literacy, religious education did not mean occupational mobility. After attending his Quran school, all that a person could have hoped for was to become, perhaps, the Imam of the village mosque, and this had little economic or financial reward attached to it.

Since education is free at all levels, including the university,³⁴ some of the economic obstacles that existed previously have been removed. This increasing accessibility to secular education means an increasing orientation to urban centres. Thus, emigration, or rather some of it, is intricately interconnected with some aspects of secular education. For even individuals with no more than an

34 All pupils are provided with a mid-day meal at school. Individuals who have to attend secondary education outside their locality are usually provided with free board and lodging. University students are provided with accommodation and are given a grant of £120 per month.¹⁹⁸¹ This is equivalent to the monthly wage of an unskilled manual worker.

elementary education, find it difficult to reconcile their aspirations with an agricultural or a manual job. Education implies and emphasises occupational mobility and choice, and the opportunities for these are, so far, confined to the cities.

Similarly, the radio - which has become part of every, or almost every, household in the area - is also an urbanizing agency. The constant underlying message of the radio is that "things happen in the city and not in the village". The news, the plays, talks, and even the popular songs, relate more to the city than to the rural environment.

The development of transport facilities have made it possible and relatively easy for a large number of individuals from these villages to make visits to Tripoli. Here, they are confronted with a European-style city with Banks, cinemas, cafes, modern shops, night clubs, traffic jams etc., a city with a relatively large European community with a conspicuously different style of life.³⁵ Such contacts with the city have made it possible for the individual concerned to give a new meaning or evaluation to his rural environment. To the rural individual, the contrast between the city and his village is drastic. Indeed, the type of changes that

35 In 1964, Tripoli had 30,834 resident aliens (mostly Europeans) out of a total population of 213,506 (1964 General Population Census.)

the villager wanted to introduce into his village and area, may help to illustrate the critical outlook towards his every day social environment that he has come to acquire. Such desired changes include electricity, piped water, planned streets, schools, hospitals or health centres, demolition of old houses, new shops and even a brothel. It can easily be seen that desired changes are 'urban' in character, in the sense that such things remain basically the attributes of cities and large towns. Such an outlook illustrates the urbanization of rural culture and the increasing orientation of the villager to a generally urban way of life.

The poor and landless individual is less economically tied to his village than others, so he may be among the first to emigrate. As a landless individual in the village, he can either obtain seasonal or temporary work, or become a sharecropper, and thus inherit some of the major worries and problems related to land and farming. Therefore, many such individuals may find themselves better off in a job with regular wages, even if this means having to live in an overcrowded insanitary shanty town. Such living conditions are not different - in many respects - from those experienced in their village of origin.

The wealthy, on the other hand, can afford to live in both worlds. Such individuals manage - as was seen in chapter two - to

remain on the one hand, owners of land property and committed to agriculture, while minimizing the problems connected with it, by investing some of their capital in non-agricultural resources. On the other hand, such individuals, or members of their households, can live in the city without the poverty and the rootlessness which other emigrants may have to endure. For they can obtain better housing, accommodation and jobs in the city, and are better able to maintain their ties with their village of origin. These are the type of individuals who are better able to commute regularly between Tripoli and their village.

Emigration does not mean the severing of all ties with the village. Information about the most recent visits of 31 emigrants from Za'feran village,³⁶ illustrates this. By September 1967, 15 visited the village within a period of two years; 6 of these in the last month, another 5 within the year, and 4 in the preceding year. The remaining 16 emigrants made no visit within this period.³⁷ Similar information about 19 emigrants from Luwata village³⁸ indicate that 17 visited the village within the period of two years (i.e. between August 1965 and September 1967); 1 of these in the last month, another 10 within the year and 6 in the preceding year.³⁹

36 All these have been emigrants for at least 3 years. 16 of them have left the village since 1956, 15 before then.

37 12 of these 16 individuals have been emigrants for more than 10 years.

38 The above figures for both of the villages, do not include students or individuals who work outside the locality but have immediate families in the villages.

39 All the above 17 individuals have been emigrants for less than 10 years.

The remaining two individuals made no visit during this period, having left the village in 1948.

It appears from the above that visiting by emigrants is more frequent in Luwata than in Za'feran. This seems to be related to two factors; the degree to which emigrants have economic interests in the village (i.e. property), and the length of time they have been emigrants. Emigration from Luwata is a relatively recent phenomenon compared to Za'feran. That is, it seems that once emigrants settle in the city, their need to interact with their village of origin diminishes. Further only 7 of the emigrants in the latter village have property, or can expect to inherit property in the village.⁴⁰ In Luwata on the other hand, 15 of the 19 emigrants have property interests in the village.⁴¹ The reasons for the visits were mostly either to participate in an important village event (e.g. a wedding or a funeral of a relative or a friend), or to see a relative in the village (usually a brother, father or a married sister). In some cases the emigrant returns to settle some problems connected with land (e.g. to settle a dispute about boundaries, to help with the harvest or to sell or lease land and other property).⁴²

40 2 have 'above average' (by village standards) property in the village, 3 'average', and 2 'below average'.

41 11 have 'average' amount of property in the village, and 4 'below average'.

42 Visiting also occurs in the opposite direction. That is, villagers go to visit their emigrant relatives or friends. I have no systematic information on this, but I gained the impression that it is not infrequent. One can say therefore that a two-way traffic exists between the village and the city. The village seems to draw to itself periodically most of its recent emigrants, and the city, via its immigrants, seems also to attract to itself temporarily (and sometimes permanently) a number of rural individuals.

Occupationally, emigrants are diverse. About 15% of the emigrants from the 5 villages surveyed, engage in trade such as peddling or shopkeeping. (see Appendix; Table V). Another quarter have unskilled manual occupations, such as porters, building workers and dock workers. A further quarter have non-manual but unskilled occupations such as messengers, guards, ushers in government offices, or waiters. The remaining third of the emigrants have skilled or semi-skilled jobs, such as teachers, clerks, administrators, policemen, drivers. Most of this latter group are, generally speaking, the younger, the more educated, and the more recent of the emigrants. A large percentage of them, especially those working in the various government departments,⁴³ have been the first generation to benefit from the expansion of modern education and job opportunities.

I have argued in the above section, that recent rural-to-urban migration in Msellata can be seen as attempts by individuals to cope with problems arising from the socio-economic structure of village life. Some of these problems are related to the specific peasant-land relationship existing in the village. Others are related to the inherent structure of the traditional household. Both of these aspects must be seen in the wider societal context.

43 In 1967, there were 23 different ministries in Libya.

Economic changes have created opportunities for employment in the major cities of the country (i.e. Tripoli and Benghazi). Further, the expansion of education in the area has meant that individuals who participate in this become oriented (occupationally and aspirationally) to urban centres. I have also suggested that the penetration of the mass media (especially the radio) and the availability of transport facilities, have made it possible for the rural individual to become more aware of urbanism as an alternative mode of life. At the personality level, one may agree with Lerner⁴⁴ that the mass media facilitates the emergence of a new type of personality (what he calls "transitional"); that is, individuals who, though illiterate and rural - desire social change and participation in it.

44 Lerner, 1958 pp 69-79

2. Social Stability and the Village Community

The analysis outlined in the foregoing chapters suggest the following question: Why is it that the drastic changes, that the village has experienced in its recent history, have not led to other social changes?

The degree to which occupational mobility⁴⁵ and economic differentiation have progressed has been outlined in the preceding section. We have also seen (especially in Chapter one) the range and scope of the incorporation of the village within the nation state. The state uses its authority in various ways to influence village life. It empowers certain people in the village (e.g. the Shaikh) to act on its behalf. The police ~~to~~ keep order and supervise activities (e.g. at religious festivals) traditionally free from government interference. It ~~has to~~ approve the decisions of the Municipal council and ~~is~~ appoints its members. Further, through the compulsory carrying of identity cards by all adult males,⁴⁶ it can keep a check, if and when necessary, on the movements of individuals.

The government also controls a major part of the labour market.

45.48 out of the 76 males with living fathers in the villages of Za'feran, Qumata, and Luwata, had, in 1966, occupations different from those held by their fathers. These males had occupations within the modern sector of the economy, while their fathers' were within the traditional sector.

46. A law was passed in 1966 requiring all adult males (over the age of 16) to carry identity cards issued by the Ministry of Interior.

It determines (through the Ministry of Agriculture) the time of the olive harvest, sells cereals - at reduced prices to farmers, and it provides some (through the Agricultural Bank) with the necessary credits to purchase agricultural machinery. In the last few years the government started to provide needy households with financial relief. In April 1967, the Ministry of Social Affairs was providing 347 households (or about 10% of the total households in the area) with such assistance.⁴⁷

The Persistence of Traditional Forms of Action:

However, despite the above changes, many aspects of the village social life retain their traditional and conventional character; religious life remains strongly Islamic, land ownership remains fragmented, and little has been done to amalgamate parcels of land through purchase. Visiting patterns and commensality among villages remain on the basis of kinship and friendship, with no apparent regard for the facts of economic differentiation. This can be illustrated by the information gathered on the friendship pattern

47. The amount given varied according to the size of the household. A household of 1 individual received £15 per month, and this increased to the maximum of £15. Za'feran and Luwata each had 8 such households, and Beni Mislīm, Qumata, and Murad had a total of 40 households receiving public relief in April 1967. The above figures do not include needy 'local dignitaries' who receive greater assistance. Further, the Ministry of Interior gives a pension to surviving individuals who fought against the Italians (mugahideen). Figures were obtained from Qusbat Mutasarifia.

of 30 adult males in Za'feran village. This revealed that in 22 cases prosperous individuals, or individuals of prosperous households, had, as an intimate friend, at least one villager who was both poor and not from their own 'aila', and vice versa.⁴⁸

Village leisure activities are limited mainly to socializing with other men. Such groups are not confined to men with similar economic status, but include men with diverse economic positions and pursuits. For example, one of the richest men in Za'feran village (reported to have over 1,000 olive trees) who was also the Quşbat municipal head (1966), was frequently to be found in the company of one of the poorest in the village (a landless middle aged man living in one of the village shrines and separated from his wife) with no special claim to status. There was no apparent reason for this apart from the fact that both men were neighbours and from the same age group.

The analysis of marriage choice in Chapter three shows that mate selection - where demographic factors make it possible, and where emigration is limited - maintains its traditional pattern, and marriages to bint al'amm and other 'aila women remain the preferred forms of marriage. Similarly, although many complex and intricate changes related to the structure of the household have occurred,

48. In terms of wealth, the above 30 villagers can be classified as follows: 11 belong to "wealthy" households, another 11 to "poor" households and the remaining 8 belonged to "middle" households. For an idea of the village 'norm' see Appendix; table III.

the percentage of households that retain the traditionally desirable formal structures (i.e. extended and joint) remains high.

Moreover, little change can be seen in the structural position of women in these villages. There is no, or very little, participation, on their part, in the labour market, education, or in the political sphere. This, despite the legal changes which give them equal access with men to education, political office, employment and voting. Indeed the differences between the position of men and women pervades all social activity, and provides a major division in the village social life, which cuts across all others. In this respect there has been little observable change. The patterns of relationship between the two sexes - as outlined in the Third chapter - applies equally to all members of the village community, regardless of wealth, occupation, status, or education.

Economic differences are not spatially organized or displayed. Residential patterns, and, to a lesser degree, ownership of land, are either based on kinship and affinity, or exhibit a disorganised pattern (see Figures 3 and 4). That is, residence is not, in any clear way, based on the 'class situation' of the individuals involved. Nor is it true to say that economic differences are automatically and conspicuously displayed in areas where one would

expect them to be so, i.e. dress, food, recreation, housing and ideologies. Differences do exist in some of these areas, but they tend to be quantitative rather than qualitative. That is, people, regardless of their market situation,⁴⁹ eat the same type of dishes, adhere to the same type of dress, and dwell in houses of the same traditional design. Nor is it possible to discern any political ideologies that can be said to reflect the incipient class divisions in these villages.

The question, therefore, arises of why the fact of a permanent wage labour in a cash economy, together with the existence of considerable differences in wealth and occupations, has not led to the formation of clearly defined social classes? Or, to put it differently, why is it that individuals do not articulate the visible economic differences between them in terms of social classes? To explain why social reality is not perceived or articulated in terms of social classes or market situations, requires, I believe, an examination of the nature of community life in the villages under study.

It may be recalled that, as settlements, these villages possess a compact, nucleated structure, with contiguous houses surrounded by fields and olive gardens. That is, the village forms a clearly

49. The phrase 'market situation' is employed in its Weberian sense. See Gerth & Mills, 1948, pp.181-186.

delineated physical entity. Further, such entities also form administrative units.⁵⁰ Secondly, all the five villages - like all the villages in the area - are of such a size as to allow all the individuals living in them, not only to have regular and frequent face-to-face encounters, but also to acquire a large body of knowledge about each other's biographies and conditions of life. Thus, knowledge of other villagers tends to be 'all-rounded', and this makes it possible for individuals to interact as 'whole personalities' rather than in a fragmentary or 'one-sided' fashion. Thus, encounters and social relationships between such individuals tend to be personal and diffuse rather than impersonal and specific.

Thirdly, it may be recalled that the villages under discussion are some 90 miles away from the nearest major town or city (i.e. Tripoli). This means that men, who could form a 'middle class' (e.g. clerks, administrators, teachers, army officers, etc.), are drawn away from their village. They cannot commute daily or frequently to it. Instead, they tend to establish homes in the city. Those whose homes remain in the village, while they work in the city, are rarely in the former. However, if Homs - which is within the community distance of 15 miles or so - develops into

50. This is not always the case. Although Qumata, Murad, and Beni Mislim are all distinctive geographical entities (see Fig. 2), and at one time each was a separate administrative unit, they are now - and since the Italian occupation - defined as one administrative unit, i.e. as one village.

a major urban centre,⁵¹ then this would introduce a new and important factor into the situation.

Another factor, related to the specific circumstances of the villages under study, has been dwelt on earlier. It was argued that the general conditions surrounding agriculture (e.g. paucity and irregularity of rainfall, the fragmentation of land ownership, etc.) make the rise of a class of professional farmers extremely difficult. Further, such conditions together with the system of Islamic Inheritance, put a ceiling on economic differentiation in the sphere of land property. Very large landowners are a rare phenomenon in the area. Indeed, only one individual in the villages surveyed, owned above 1,000 olive trees and 100 hectares of land.

Within the traditional sector of the economy, the social relations of work remain to a large extent personal and informal. It is common for landlords to work alongside the labourers they employ. It is also customary, in this area, for the employers to feed, and provide tobacco for, their agricultural labourers during hours of work. Further, it is usually left to the labourer to decide whether he wants to be paid in kind (e.g. in barley) or in cash. The relationship between the landlord and the labourer is a temporary one. This is so because of the seasonal nature of farming in the area. At most, employment may last a few months a year. That is, there is no one stable group of people who

51. There are many indications that this is likely. See Chapter I, section 2.

remain permanently, through the year, agricultural labourers. Such groups are not only seasonal, but their membership changes annually, as some find other sources of income.

However, an adequate explanation of the general lack of class type of social action and articulations must refer to the type of social relationships that predominate in the above communities. Above all, the village society is characterized by the multiplicity of ties that bind its members together. Since these social relationships are predominantly "multiplex",⁵² they tend to serve many interests. Thus, where two individuals interact, they tend to do so on the basis of a network of social ties. Such individuals may be at the same time kinsmen, affines, neighbours, co-worshippers in the local mosque, owners of adjacent plots of land, friends, individuals who spend some of their leisure time together, and so on. Therefore, economic relationships (and similarly authority relationships) are only one basis, among others, on which individuals interact.

It can be seen, therefore, that the market situation and

52. The term 'multiplex' was first used by Gluckman in 'The Judicial Process Among the Barotse', 1954. I am indebted in this part of the chapter to Antoun's article "Conservatism and Change in the Village Community: A Jordanian Case Study", Human Organization, Vol24. No.1 1965 pp 4-10, which employs the above concept, among others, to explain social stability and conservatism in a similar social context to the one discussed in this thesis (i.e. an Arab Moslem village with a relatively large degree of economic differentiation).

occupation of individuals is only one factor, among others, which can be said to influence the actual pattern of their social relationships within the village. Outside his village and locality (especially in the city) the above factor is more important in structuring his sphere of activity and social relations. But within his village their influence is circumscribed. Two individuals, occupying different positions in the economic structure, may nevertheless retain links of kinship, affinity, neighbourliness, friendship, etc. As has been pointed out previously, it is not uncommon, nowadays, to find an individual (e.g. as a teacher) earning several times more than his fellah or manual worker brother or cousin. Thus, individuals, who potentially form the nucleus of a middle class, retain many ties with others, who have a different market situation as manual workers or landless peasants.

Given the situation outlined above, it is not difficult to see why there is an absence of a class vocabulary and ideology. People do not conceptualize their economic position in society in social class terms. Words like fellah, 'amil (manual worker) or a muwadhef (salaried employee) are used to indicate individuals' source of income, and not their class position or their exact position in the economic structure (e.g. the word 'fellah' does not indicate whether a person is landless, or works on his own land, or is a sharecropper, and the word 'muwadhef' does not

differentiate between a simple clerk and a highly paid administrator). Concepts like 'working class', 'middle class' or 'upper class' are not employed. General classification of the wider society retains its traditional character; that is, a classification in terms of the type of the style of life associated with different types of communities, i.e. urban, rural, and nomadic. This can be illustrated by the following hierarchical classification of Libyan society, provided by one middle aged informant.⁵³ He classified the society into the following three strata: the top stratum eats only beef, lamb, and bread made of wheat; uses butter; has running water, electricity, modern-style furniture; uses cars; employs servants; and women in this stratum do no, or little, housework. This stratum, according to my informant, is found in the cities only. The middle stratum eats also camel and goat meat, and bread made from barley. It uses cistern water for drinking, and paraffin for cooking and lighting; women of this stratum work inside the house. This stratum is found in the rural settled areas like Msellata. The third stratum uses oats for bread; eats dates and figs; dwells in caves and tents; uses wood for cooking; and women work outside the houses. This

53. He is a relatively large landowner (about 1,000 olive trees, 40 hectares of land and 2 olive presses) from Sindara village. His three married sons had the following occupations: a fellaḥ, a school teacher in Qusbat, and the third became (in 1967) the head of the Homs section of the Ministry of Information and Culture, after working for some years in the above Ministry in Tripoli. Although the unprompted classification given above, is the work of one individual, I gained a strong impression that he was articulating generally held opinions and attitudes.

stratum is mainly confined to nomadic or semi-settled areas. It can be seen that the above classification ignores the greater diversity of styles of life in cities like Tripoli - where the large percentage of the population do not have the style of life attributed to the top stratum, and the degree of differentiation in the rural areas. What is interesting about it however, is not its accuracy, but its attempt to fit the society into the traditional framework of societal stratification.⁵⁴ No mention was made of occupations, or the source and amount of income as a basis for stratification. In short, it is conceptualized in terms of styles of life based on urban-rural differences, rather than on class.

Reference must also be given to Islam. The Islamic ethos is essentially universalistic and equalitarian. It preaches the equality of all believers regardless of differences in wealth, power and occupation. As a comprehensive definition of reality, Islam lacks a dominant hierarchical outlook on social life. Such an ethos can also be found in the secular thinking of men. A local maxim runs, 'We are all born after nine months.'⁵⁵ It is also said that "If you mock your neighbour you are likely to sleep without supper,"⁵⁶ and "worldly wealth is like dirt", i.e.

54. See Van Nieuwenhuijze. 1965. pp 12-27

55. "Kulna Iwlad tis' Ishhur"

56. "Ya 'abi 'ela garek ya bayit bila 'esha"

it comes and goes. It is also relevant to mention that in Islam, especially at the village level, there is no group of people who have a monopoly on religious knowledge or ritual, and who therefore can claim a special status or maintain a distinctive style of life.

What is more important in relation to social stratification however, is the type of social, ritualistic and symbolic action that religion encourages and gives rise to at the village level. Islam strongly supports norms of generosity and charity. The Zeka (alms-giving to the poor and needy) is one (the third) of the five pillars of the faith. It is part of the accepted definition of a 'good moslem'. Other forms of alms giving also exist (i.e. Karama, Sedaga and reḥma), and these are given (mostly in money and food) in penance, thanks offerings, in memorials to dead relatives, and at the return of pilgrims.⁵⁷

Islam also provides the basis for rituals which tend to express

57. Pilgrimage to Mecca (hej) is the 5th and last pillar of Islam and it should be undertaken whenever possible. As a religious action it has, contemporarily, a complex relationship to social stratification. It requires, now, the outlay of £120 to £200 per person to make the pilgrimage. This means that villagers must accumulate, and this may take many years, the cash to be able to undertake the journey. This 'drain' on capital can be seen as helping to put some ceiling on economic differentiation based on wealth. But it also can be viewed as encouraging the accumulation of capital and perhaps 'rational' forms of economic action, and thus enhancing and reflecting existing economic differentiation. There is no doubt that the hej has increased in recent years in the villages studied. 9 individuals from Za'feran, and 23 from Luwata, made the journey in 1968, some for the second time. Such numbers are a record in both villages. Increased prestige is also a consequence of the hej, and this is symbolised by the individual acquiring the respectable title of "ḥaj".

and reaffirm periodically common interests and ties. The mosque is a feature of each village community and the Friday congregational prayer (ṣalat aljum'a) provides a regular occasion for the assembly of the adult males of the village for the purposes of prayer. Here, men meet as equals to perform the same ritualistic actions without regard to distinctions or divisions, based on authority, status or economic position. Prayer in a group (as in the Friday prayer) is held to be far superior to the observance of prayer alone. Indeed, the village mosque is the place where membership of the village community is displayed and reaffirmed. Men, who for one reason or another are not on good terms with other men in the village, often seek another mosque within which to perform the Friday prayer. In Za'feran two men (from different 'ailat) were, in spring 1967, attending the Quşbat mosque, and not the village mosque. Both of them had strained relationships with a number of men in the village, and neither had friends in the village.⁵⁸

Annual religious festivals provide occasions whereupon the consciousness of membership of one's village community can be said to be heightened. 'Eed alfiṭr, which comes at the end of

58. The circumstances leading to this seem complex. Both individuals were considered to be ruthless, both quarrelled with others in the village, and court action was sought against one of them.

the fasting month of Ramadan,⁵⁹ provides an occasion for alms-giving (called zekat alfiṭr) to the poor and needy of the village.⁶⁰ It is also customary for each household head in the village to take - on the last day of Ramadan - a dish (qes'a) to the village mosque. Following the collective prayer and the shaking of hands, each individual present is expected to partake from the dishes of others, regardless of consideration of wealth, status, occupation or any disagreements or strains existing between those attending. Symbolic and ritualistic actions of this type occur at other religious occasions, such as at 'eed al qḥa, where prosperous men sacrifice sheep (yuḡeḡu) and distribute its meat to the needy in their village.

The saint's tomb is another common feature of the villages in the area. Indeed, it is a feature of the whole Middle East.⁶¹ Such a shrine, usually domed and whitewashed, is said to contain the tomb of a holy man (murabit). Most villages in the area contain at least one of these tombs. Visits to these are frequent,

59. The observance of the fast of Ramadan - the 9th month of the Muslim calendar - is the fourth pillar of Islam. It is obligatory on all adult Moslems, except in a few special circumstances (e.g. during sickness, pregnancy, and menstruation). Fasting (ṣiyam) requires abstinence from eating, drinking, smoking, and sexual contact during the daylight hours of the entire holy month of Ramadan.

60. For each individual in the household the amount given should be four cupped handfuls of each basic ingredient that has featured in the supper during the month of Ramadan.

61. See Baer; 1964, p.164. Ayrout; 1963, p.93. Barclay; 1964, p.182.

and usually made in cases of illness or injury, and for the purposes of thanksgiving and gift offerings. What concerns us here, however, is the annual pilgrimage (mezar) some of these villages make to such shrines. On such an occasion family households are expected to take food to the site of the shrine, usually a large dishful of bazeen, rice, macaroni or kuskusi and meat.⁶² Sometimes a sheep is slaughtered and cooked at the scene of the gathering. The sacrificial meal follows after a short prayer. It is uncommon for men and children to eat in family groups. Instead, these groups are usually mixed, and outsiders (those not belonging to the village holding the mezar) are given precedence over others, and it is customary to offer them food first. The whole village is expected to act as a host, and all those who are not from the village are welcomed as guests. The meal is followed by tea and horse riding displays (leheed). Sweets, soft drinks, tea and toys are sold on the site. More important is the fact that goodwill and forgiveness is what are emphasised on such occasions. Quarrels, aggressive behaviour, or unfriendly talking are unwelcome.

62. Bazeen is a stable traditional dish. It is made of barley flour cooked in water into a thick paste with olive oil, with tomato paste added. It is common now to have cooked meat and vegetables with it. Kuskusi is another traditional dish and is made of wheat flour. Rice and macaroni are recent additions to their cooking.

Permission to hold a mezar must be obtained now from the Mutasarifia, the police being notified and present on such occasions.⁶³ The mezar I attended in 1965 - which was held by Beni Mislum village, including Qumata and Murad - had a gathering of something like 500 males, half of whom were children. Women do not participate publicly on such occasions. Some come as helpers (i.e. to cook), and they camp some distance away from the site. About half of those who were present at the above gathering were outsiders. Informants insisted that participation in the mezar is declining, and this is because - as one informant put it - "people are no longer hungry, and most families nowadays can afford to buy meat."

Only four villages (out of a total of 30) in the area hold a mezar regularly.⁶⁴ What is interesting about these four villages is, not only that they are the largest in the area, but also that

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63. A large Mezar which used to be held near Homs town, and involving the whole area including Msellata, has been banned by the government. The reasons for this are not clear. Some individuals thought that the motive behind it was political - the fear that a large crowd might attempt to make a political gesture. Government officials said that such a large, uncontrolled gathering endangers safety. Religious Orthodoxy is also against such customs, since Islam, it is said is against the veneration of saints.
64. These are Beni Mislum (including Qumata and Murad), al-shafeen, al-fwateer, Awlad Hamid (sometimes with Wadua, Swadriya and Ig'areen - see Chap. 1. section 2.)

they are fragmented. That is, they are composed of a number of nearby settlements. It is here that a greater need for a periodic restatement of solidarity presents itself.

It is generally felt that such festivities are declining. If this is true, and it does seem to be so, then it is probable that it is a reflection of basic structural changes in the economic life where there is a decreasing need for economic co-operation between individuals. It may also be due to increasing governmental interference and the spread - through schools and mass media - of religious orthodoxy which generally frowns on such practices.

Reference must also be made to the categories of ranking used in the village community and beyond. Such categories can be grouped into two basic systems. In the first, the traditional criteria of ownership of basic productive resources (usually land), religious learning and respectability, generosity, seniority, and the ability to mediate between men, provide the basis for the allocation of social esteem. In the second, esteem tends to be allocated on the basis of factors related to the individual's position (actual or potential) in the modern sector of the economy. Here, aspects like age, religiosity, and amount of land owned are irrelevant. More relevant are factors like occupation, income, amount of secular education, and position of authority.

The above two systems of ranking can be said to co-exist side by side with no apparent conflict. It is possible, therefore, to argue that the co-existence of two different types of ranking systems inhibits the emergence of clearly defined class situations. For esteem or status can still be successfully claimed on the basis of factors not related to the existing economic structure (e.g. age, religiosity etc.). Thus, for example, the esteem that one individual attains through secular education, can be attained by his illiterate brother through traditional means (e.g. the accumulation of landed property, religious devotion, seniority and the like). In other words, dominant status values tend to circumscribe the influence of economic divisions in the community.

In summary, I have argued that the persistence and continuity of traditional forms of actions, despite major economic, political and administrative changes, is related to the following aspects:

- a) the ecological structure of these village communities, b) the 'multiple' nature of social relations in these communities, and
- c) the way in which the individuals involved define and conceptualize certain aspects of the existing social reality, and the types of symbolic actions they periodically engage in.

The foregoing analysis has also suggested that knowledge of others in this type of community, tends to be 'all-inclusive' and 'exhaustive', instead of being 'fragmentary' or 'partial'.

That is, any adult villager is likely to have detailed knowledge about the past and present history of others in his village. Thus, each individual's map of social relations (e.g. kinship ties, affinity, friendship patterns etc.) and the significant events in his biography (e.g. past and present occupations, marriage, divorces and so on) are part of the village's common stock of knowledge. This situation, together with the existence of a multiplicity of social ties between individuals, tends to make social relationships acquire an intense, personal character. This may explain why individuals, who engage in non-traditional behaviour (e.g. drink alcohol and disregard traditional clothes) when in the city, revert to traditional modes of behaviour when they return to their village and locality.⁶⁵ For in the latter situation, social control is immediate and intimate. Any 'deviant' behaviour is likely to become immediately available as public knowledge, and thus subject to the informal mechanisms of social control operating at the village level (e.g. gossip, ridicule, ostracism).

Reference was also made to Islam as an ideological force tending to inhibit the emergence of clearly defined class situations. More important, however, is the fact that Islam provides the language in which a number of rituals and symbolic

65. This has also been observed in other Arab communities.
See Lichtenstadter, 1952, p.382. Antoun, op. cit. pp 4-11.

interactions are articulated. Such interactions, as it was illustrated earlier, either deliberately ignore the economic structure, or attempt to minimize its social significance. Instead, emphasis is laid on the meaningfulness of belonging to a community. Ideally, the community is that of all believers, but since these interactions take place within the specific context of the village, it is the membership of this community which acquires immediate significance.

However, the relationship - outlined in this chapter - between the persisting modes of behaviour, and the emerging forms of action, is not a static one. Some of the ongoing changes that have been referred to may indicate that the village community is engaged in an on-going process of transforming its structure and meaning. These changes include the following. Firstly, there is the increasing economic differentiation that is taking place at the village, locality and societal level. Secondly, the spread of secular education and its increasing availability at the higher level, is an important new factor that has already become a significant determinant of the life chances of individuals. Education is free at all levels. However, the poor and needy families are less inclined to make full use of the educational system than other families. This is so, because such families are likely to find the loss of income, that accompanies the period

of schooling of a member of the family, prohibitive. Prosperous or wealthy families are more inclined, on the other hand, to make full use of the educational system to ensure occupational mobility, and as a means to diversify their sources of income (see Chapter two).

Thirdly, the existence of an expanding state apparatus with pension schemes, family grants or allowances, free medical care, and financial relief funds for needy families, means that the village individual is becoming increasingly less dependent - economically and otherwise, on the support of his community. Thus, the "horizontal" and personal ties of the village community are in the rapid process of becoming less significant - as a determinant of one's major life activities - than the 'vertical' ties of the impersonal labour market and state apparatus.

Fourthly, the availability of a large variety of durable goods in the local markets, and the introduction (actual and planned) into these villages of electricity, piped water, roads and the like, will, probably, have a conspicuous effect on the existing pattern of social stratification in these villages. For, only some individuals can afford to buy and use these goods and facilities. For instance, not every villager will be able to install in his house electricity and piped water, or buy modern furniture and the like. This means the appearance, in

the village and locality, of divergent styles of life. Some of this has already taken place. The last few years have seen the appearance of privately owned cars, the investment by some individuals in houses, shops in Tripoli, and the purchase by some of tractors for use and hire. Similarly, the emergence of a nation-wide credit market ensures that only those who own substantial productive resources (usually land), or have high incomes, are able to utilize such a market, and this means further economic differentiation.

Finally, the urbanization of rural culture through the spread of secular education, mass media, transport facilities, and mass produced consumer goods means, as was suggested previously, the orientation of the rural individual towards urban life, and his rejection of village agriculture as an acceptable source of livelihood. Consequently, the impersonal labour market is emerging as the most important determinant of his life chances, and the agency that is transforming the meaning and structure of his basic social relations and activities.

S U M M A R Y

This study of some villages in Msellata, Tripolitania, has been divided into four main chapters. The first part of Chapter One attempts to put the present study in its wider socio-cultural and historical context. This is followed by an outline of the administrative and political changes that area (i.e. Msellata) has experienced in the last hundred years or so. Livelihood in the area depended traditionally on the cultivation of olives and cereals. Although agriculture retains some of its traditional importance, recent economic and political changes (especially those related to the rapid rise in the exports of fuel oil, and the Libyanization of administration in the early 1950's), have significantly altered the occupational and economic structure of the area.

It is within the above context that the second chapter deals with kinship and household structure. The largest kinship group in the area is the 'aila'. The 'aila' is a shallow patrilineal group of a depth of three to six generations. Such groups cannot be called 'lineages' in the proper sense of the term. They have no collective ownership of land, trees or animals. They are not vengeance groups. Further they lack formal leadership, and they have no formal system of sanctions or a central guesthouse. Because of the high rate of rural-to-urban migration, these groups have become residentially dispersed.

The increasing fragmentation of these 'aila' groups together with the increasing economic differences (in wealth and occupation) between individual members, have enhanced the diffuseness and lack of specificity of kinship relations outside the domestic group. I have suggested, therefore, that the 'aila' is used for two basic purposes: to define the limits of inheritance rights in cases of intestacy and to define the limits of operation of a fully developed kinship system. The rate of marriage to 'aila' members makes the 'aila' group a bilateral kinship system. To view it in static terms, i.e. as a kinship system with certain characteristics (e.g. patrilineal descent, etc.). However, an examination of the terms 'family' and 'household', reveals that they are used in the above way. Terms like 'household' and 'family' are used with a dynamic, complex and flexible meaning. This is so because the kinship system is dynamic and complex. To avoid confusion it is necessary to differentiate, as the participants themselves do, between household and family. The household is defined - in current usage - as a group of related individuals who share a common budget and usually a common residence. The ideal household unit is an extended one. However,

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only a small percentage of households (18.7%) are of this type. This can be explained in terms of two different sets of reasons: (1) Demographic; that is the size of a household is limited - in pre-industrial conditions - by early death of parents and high infant mortality rates. (2) Socio-economic; these refer to the factors that lead to fission. Changes in the labour market, landlessness and poverty, and the structural conflict that characterises the Arab extended household, are some of the factors that lead to its fission.

The majority of the existing extended (or joint) households are significantly different from the traditional type. Such households differ from the traditional type in that they are integrated - in varying degrees - into the non-agricultural sector of the national economy, and also in the degree to which the adult male members participate in their village social life. The traditional extended (or joint) family household, where land was the basic or only source of income, and where all the household members worked as an economic and residential unit, and where occupational mobility was very limited, is no longer a predominant type in the villages surveyed. Instead, the existing extended household tends to be occupationally differentiated, and depends to a large extent on money income from salaried occupations or wage labour.

One of the unique features of Arab Moslem society is the preference for father's brother's daughter marriage. This - it is

argued in Chapter Three - cannot be explained by reference to Islam or in terms of 'Arab sentimentality' towards kin. Other writers have attempted to explain the phenomenon in terms of the economic or political motives of some of the participants in such marriages. Others, still, attempted to give a structural-functional explanation; that is, an explanation in terms of the social functions or consequences of such a marriage. Such theories, however, tend to confine their scope to segmentary types of society (i.e. Bedouins) and seem to ignore the existence of the phenomenon in Arab peasant communities.

I have argued in Chapter Three that all the above theories suffer from confining their attention to the direct consequences of such marriage on the relationships between males, and to the latter's aims and possible intentions. A more adequate explanation must, I believe, make reference to the typical male-female relationships that one finds in traditional Arab communities. A model of such relationships and attitudes was outlined in Chapter Three. It was suggested that men tend to have two conflicting attitudes towards women - i.e. an 'exploitative' and a 'protective' one. Father's brother's son is the nearest male agnate that can be a husband (i.e. one who can 'exploit' his cousin's sexuality and labour) and act at the same time as a 'protector'. Thus, from a woman's point of view, her 'ibn al'amm' is structurally the best possible husband. In such a situation she is at her best bargaining position as a wife.

Women who marry strangers are not, however, without protection.

There are a number of factors which enable women to manipulate, influence and sometimes control the actions of men. First of all, women can accumulate a wealth of their own through which they can influence their husbands. Secondly, women remain, after marriage, part of their parental household, and as such can always seek protection there. Thirdly, marriage in Islam is based on a legal contract and this allows the woman's guardians to stipulate specific conditions relating to the 'delayed bride-wealth', divorce, treatment and so on. Fourthly, the existence of a strict sexual division of labour, together with the prevalence of certain folk ideas, enables women to influence the behaviour of their husbands.

Mate selection (outside 'ailia' groups) can be seen to operate like a market, with men (and women) occupying different positions in it, and where the various qualities of the girl (or man) are given a market value. However, the idea that bride-wealth (mehr) in Arab communities is a compensation to the father of the girl for the loss of her labour power and her ability to bear sons for outsiders, is inadequate. I suggested that the 'mehr' system is more adequately explained if it is seen in terms of status affirmation and manipulation.

Over emphasis on 'bint al-'amm' and other 'aila' marriages undermines the significance of the overall marriage pattern. Intra-village marriages create a complex web of affinal connections. Such a fact is important for understanding the meaning and structure of the

village community. Inter-village marriages form a definite pattern. Such a pattern seems to be basically determined by 'market' factors, i.e. availability of women and the differential accessibility to these. Most inter-village spouses are selected from the largest and nearest village or place.

In so far as any changes have occurred in the marriage pattern of descending generations, these can be explained in terms of demographic factors and/or in terms of recent changes in occupational and residential mobility. That is, changes in the pattern of mate selection of the younger generation are basically due to their changing position in the marriage market. This is dependent on the recent socio-economic changes that have affected the village community.

Chapter Four attempts to interpret the persistence of traditional forms of behaviour, despite the drastic economic, political and administrative changes that the villages studied have experienced in recent decades. Part one of the last chapter outlines the relatively high degree of economic differentiation (in wealth and occupations) that exists in these villages. It also attempts to provide an explanation for the high rate of emigration from the area to the urban centres of the country. It was suggested that apart from any demographic and purely economic factors, a full explanation of the phenomenon must refer, first of all, to the existing relationship between the fellah and the land. Dependence of farming on rain,

the fragmentation of land ownership, frequent disputes about boundaries and canals, the separation of ownership of land from olive trees, are some of the factors that make land a continuous source of anxiety and worry for the cultivator. This is likely to minimize his attachment to land and farming, and to increase his orientations towards the modern sector of the economy.

Secondly, emigration should be examined in relation to the structure of the family household. Conflicts exist in the extended and joint family household, and these could lead to fission, and this manifests itself usually, in emigration. Thirdly, emigration has to be examined within a societal context; that is in relation to the penetration of secular education and the mass media to the rural areas.

Despite the emergence of a permanent wage labour in a cash economy and the incorporation of the village into a nation state, no clearly defined social classes can be said to exist at the village level. Part two of the last chapter is an attempt to explain this, together with the persistence of traditional forms of action in these villages. Firstly, reference is made to the ecology of the villages studied. Here, the fact that they form a compact nucleated structure, their relatively small size, and their relatively long distance (some 90 miles) from the nearest major town, together with the nature of agriculture in the area, are relevant to the discussion.

Secondly, reference is made to the 'multiple' nature of

of social ties that predominate in these villages. Thirdly, it is argued that Islam, as a world view, together with the fact that it inspires - at the village level - certain symbolic and ritualistic actions, tends to inhibit the rise of a clearly defined class structure and articulation.

Nevertheless, it is suggested that the existing socio-economic forces tend to favour the emergence of a 'class' type of social relations in the village. Such factors as the increasing economic differentiation at the village, locality and societal level, the spread of secular education, an expanding state apparatus, the increasing availability of a large variety of durable goods in local markets, together with the initiation of projects to supply the villages with electricity, piped water and roads, are not likely to leave the existing system of ranking in these communities unaffected. The above changes, together with the apparent urbanization of rural life - through the spread of secular education, mass media, transport facilities and the availability of mass-produced consumer goods - are in the process of creating divergent styles of life within the village and locality. Indeed, the rural individual's relationship to the labour market, education and the state (what might be called his 'market situation') is emerging as the most important determinant of his life chances.

APPENDIX TABLE Ia

PHONEMIC SYMBOLS USED IN TRANSCRIPTION
OF ARABIC WORDS.

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Arabic Script</u>	
a	أ	
b	ب	
m	م	
t	ت	
th	ث	(like in <u>three</u>)
d	د	
ḡ	ذ	(like in <u>thus</u>)
f	ف	
n	ن	
o,w,u	و	(like in <u>olive</u> , <u>wall</u> , and <u>put</u>)
i,y	ي	(like in <u>list</u> , <u>year</u>)
l	ل	
r	ر	
s	س	
sh	ش	
z	ز	
j	ج	
T	ط	(velarized t)
ẓ	ظ	(velarized d)
ṣ	ص	(velarized s)
<u>dh</u>	ڤ	(velarized z)

APPENDIX TABLE Ia contd.

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Arabic Script</u>	
K	ك	
<u>Kh</u>	خ	(voiceless velar fricative)
<u>gh</u>	غ	(voiced velar fricative)
q	ق	(velarized k)
h	ه	
ħ	ح	(voiceless pharyngeal fricative)
ʕ	ع	(voiced pharyngeal fricative)

APPENDIX TABLE Ib

KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY IN MSELLATA.

<u>Kinship</u>	<u>Terms of reference of address</u>
Father	seed, bu.
Mother	omm.
Son	wild.
Daughter	bint.
Brother	<u>khu.</u>
Sister	<u>khut.</u>
Grandfather (father of both parents)	jed.
Grandmother (mother of both parents)	jedde, hennyie
Father's brother	'amm.
Mother's brother	<u>khal.</u>
Father's sister	'amme
Mother's sister	<u>khale</u>
Father's brother's son	ibn 'amm.
Father's brother's daughter	bint 'amm.
Father's sister's daughter	bint <u>khale</u>
Mother's brother's daughter	bint <u>khal</u>
Stepfather	'amm, zoz omm.
Stepmother	dadayie
Half-brother/sister (same father)	<u>khu/khut</u> (min albu)

APPENDIX TABLE Ib contd.

<u>Kinship</u>	<u>Terms of reference or address</u>
Half-brother/sister (same mother)	<u>khu/khut</u> (min al-ṣurre)
Brother's wife	mrat al <u>khu</u> , ahl al- <u>khu</u> .
Husband's brother's wife	self (singular self)
Husband's brother	self
Husband's sister	ḡema
Wife's father	neseeb
Wife's mother	neseeba, omm al'aila
Wife's sister's husband	'edeel
Son's wife	Kunne
Husband's mother	'ezuze
Husband's father	sheebani, 'amm, seed.
Co-wife	zerra
Wife	'aila, ḡaush
Husband	zoz, rajil.

APPENDIX TABLE II

MARRIAGES OF MALES IN FIVE VILLAGES
IN MSELLATA (3-4 GENERATIONS)

Village	No. of Males	Total marriages	Father's brother's daughter marriage	Other 'aila marriages	Other Intra-village marriages	Outside-village marriages	Remarks
Za 'feran	137	196	13 (6.6%)	12 (6.1%)	38 (19.4%)	133* (67.8%)	*9 of these are 'aila marriages. Another 9 (4.5%) are cross-cousin marriages.
Qumata	66	79	3 (3.8%)	5 (6.2%)	14 (17.7%)	57* (72.1%)	*5 (6.3%) are cross-cousin marriages.
Murad	99	123	11 (8.9%)	12 (9.7%)	38 (30.8%)	62* (50.4%)	*5 are cross-cousin marriages.
Beni Mislīm (selected 'ailats)	98	117	16 (13.6%)	18 (15.3%)	53 (45.3%)	30* (25.6%)	*2 are cross-cousin marriages.
Luwata	123	170	23 (13.5%)	17 (10%)	41 (24.1%)	89* (52.3%)	*6 are cross-cousin marriages
Total	523	685	66 (9.6%)	64 (9.3%)	184*1 (26.8%)	371*2 (54.1%)	*1 7 are cross-cousin ('bint al khal') marriages *2 27 are cross-cousin marriages

APPENDIX TABLE III

TYPES OF HOUSEHOLDS IN 5 VILLAGES
IN MSELLATA

Village	No. of house- holds	Ex- tended	Joint	Conjugal	Deruded	No. of Producing Olive trees:	
						Per household	Per Head
Za 'feran	49	10 (20.4%)	4 (8.1%)	27 (55.1%)	8 (16.2%)	79	15
Qumata	19	5 (26.3%)	1 (5.2%)	10 (52.6%)	3 (15.6%)	117	21
Murad	30	2 (6.6%)	1 (3.3%)	25 (83.3%)	2 (6.6%)	50	12
Beni Mislum	34	5 (14.7%)	2 (5.8%)	23 (67.6%)	4 (11.6%)	68	14.5
Luwata	39	10 (25.6%)	6 (15.3%)	19 (48.7%)	4 (10.2%)	192	28.5
Total	171	32 ^{*1} (18.7%)	14 ^{*2} (8.1%)	104 (60.8%)	21 (12.2%)	101	19

*1 7 contain an only son, 13 contain one married son only, another 9 contain two married sons, and the remaining 3 households have 3 married sons each.

*2 5 of these have one married brother only, 7 have two married brothers, the remaining two have 3 married brothers and 4 married brothers.

APPENDIX TABLE IV.

VILLAGE EMIGRATION

Village	No. of adult males in village (1966)	No. of emigrants (1940-66)	Place of emigration			Remarks
			Tripoli	Benghazi	Other	
Za 'feran	65 ^{*1}	35	25 ^{*2}	5	5	^{*1} 4 of these have extra-village jobs ^{*2} 24 males emigrated outside Libya between 1910-1920.
Qumata	28 [*]	22	14	8	-	[*] 13 of these have extra-village jobs.
Murad	34 ^{*1}	22 ^{*2}	21	1	-	^{*1} 8 of these have extra-village jobs. ^{*2} 8 left Libya between 1910-1920.
Beni Mislīm (two 'ai lat only)	35 [*]	22	14	6	2	[*] 6 of these have extra-village jobs.
Luwata	57 ^{*1}	28 ^{*2}	20	3	5	^{*1} 3 of these have extra-village jobs. ^{*2} 2 left Libya between 1910-1920.
Total [*]	219 ^{*1}	129 ^{*2}	94	23	12	^{*1} 34 have extra-village jobs (mostly in Tripoli) ^{*2} 34 left Libya between 1910-1920.

* These figures do not include students who study outside Msellata. In 1966 they numbered 19%.

APPENDIX TABLE V

OCCUPATIONS OF EMIGRANTS IN 5 VILLAGES

Village	No. of emigrants	Occupations of emigrants			
		Trade	Unskilled Manual work	Non-manual unskilled occupations	Skilled/ semi-skilled occupations
Za'feran	35* (occupations of 7 of these are unknown)	-	4	9	15
Qumata	22	2	9	4	7
Murad	22	1	6	9	6
Beni Mislim (7 'ailat)	46	12	16	12	6
Luwata	28	7	3	5	13
Total (known)	146	22 (15%)	38 (26%)	39 (26.7%)	47 (32.3%)

APPENDIX TABLE VI

OCCUPATIONS OF ADULT MALES IN 5 VILLAGES

Village	No. of adult males	Fellah or farmer	Agri-cultural worker	manual worker	Other occupations	Old/unemployed	Remarks
Za'feran	65	19 ^{*1}	13	9	21 ^{*2}	3	^{*1} 7 of these have also other occupations (e.g. trade) ^{*2} 13 are employed by the Religious Institute and another 3 by the govt.
Qumata	28	15 ^{*1}	-	3	8 ^{*2}	2	^{*1} 3 of these have also other occupations ^{*2} All are govt. employees (e.g. teachers, policemen, etc.)
Murad	34	13 ^{*1}	8	6	5 ^{*2}	2	^{*1} 2 have also other occupations. ^{*2} 2 are govt. employees.
Beni Mislim	35	19 ^{*1}	-	4	9 ^{*2}	3	^{*1} 1 is also a trader. ^{*2} 2 are govt. employees.
Luwata	57	27 ^{*1}	2	1	20 ^{*2}	7	^{*1} 2 have also other occupations. ^{*2} 8 are govt. employees.
Total	219	93 ^{*1} (42.4%)	23 (10.5%)	23 (10.5%)	63 ^{*2} (28.7%)	17 (7.7%)	^{*1} 15 have also extra-agricultural jobs. ^{*2} 36 are govt. employees

Notes: The above figures do not include secondary school or college students. In 1966 there were 19 such individuals.

APPENDIX TABLE VII

MARRIAGES OF MALES IN LUWATA VILLAGE

'Aila	No. of males	No. of marriages	Total village marriage	Father's brother's daughter marriages	Other 'aila marriages	Outside-village marriages
Naṣr	20	32	15 (46.8%)	12 (37.5%)	1 (3.1%)	17 (53.1%)
Feqeeh 'Ali	20	27	15 (55.5%)	2 (7.2%)	5 (18.5%)	12 (44.4%)
Irḥymia	12	18	9 (50%)	-	3 (33.3%)	9 (50%)
'Abd Al-'ali	12	16	5 (31.2%)	-	1 (6.2%)	11 (68.7%)
Shwameen	14	18	11 (61.1%)	-	1 (5.5%)	7 (38.9%)
Maṣa'eed	13	17	6 (35.2%)	-	2 (11.7%)	11 (64.7%)
'Araba	32	42	20 (47.6%)	9 (21.4%)	4 (9.5%)	22 (52.3%)
Total	123	170	81* (47.6%)	23 (13.5%)	17 (10%)	89 (52.3%)

All the above 'ailat claim common descent (see Fig.5). Such a claim makes all intra-village marriages, marriages between agnates.

APPENDIX TABLE VIII

FIRST MARRIAGES OF MALES IN LUNATA VILLAGE
(3 GENERATIONS).

'Aila	Total No. of marriages	Total village marriages	Father's brother's daughter marriages	Other 'aila marriages	Outside- village marriages
Nasr	20	14 (70%)	11 (55%)	1 (5%)	6 (30%)
Feqeeh 'ali	20	11 (55%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	9 (45%)
Irbymia	12	6 (50%)	-	3 (25%)	6 (50%)
'Abd al-'ali	12	4 (33.3%)	-	1 (8.3%)	8 (66.6%)
Shwameen	14	9 (64.2%)	-	1 (7.1%)	5 (35.7%)
Masa'eed	13	4 (30.7%)	-	-	9 (69.2%)
'Araba	32	19 (59.3%)	9 (28.1%)	4 (12.5%)	13 (40.6%)
Total	123	67 (54.4%)	22 (17.81%)	14 (11.31%)	56* (45.5%)

* 6 are marriages to 'bint al khal.

APPENDIX TABLE IX

TYPES OF HOUSEHOLDS IN LUNATA VILLAGE

'Aila	Total No. of households	Extended	Joint	Conjugal	Deruded	Remarks
Naṣr	7	2 ^{*1}	2 ^{*2}	3 ^{*3}	-	<p>*1 Each has one married son only.</p> <p>*2 Each has two married brothers - and each constitutes also an extended household.</p> <p>*3 One is a polygamous household.</p>
Faqeeh 'ali	7	2 ^{*1}	1 ^{*2}	2	2	<p>*1 one contains an only son. The other has one married son only.</p> <p>*2 Composed of 3 married brothers with their mother.</p>
Irḥymia	4	-	-	4 ^{*1}	-	*1 One is a polygamous household.
'Abd Al-'ali	2	-	-	2	-	
Shwameen	5	1 ^{*1}	2 ^{*2}	2	-	<p>*1 Has two married sons.</p> <p>*2 One household contains 2 married brothers. The other has one married brother only together with the mother.</p>
Masa'eed	5	-	-	4 ^{*1}	1	*1 Since the completion of this survey two of these households have become extended

APPENDIX TABLE IX contd.

	Total No. of households	Extended	Joint	Conjugal	Denuded	Remarks
'Aila						
'Araba	9	5*1	1*2	2	1	*1 2 households have one married son each. A third has 2 married sons, and the remaining two have 3 married sons each. *2 Have 4 married brothers.
Total	39	10 (25.6%)	6 (15.3%)	19 (48.7%)	4 (10.2%)	

APPENDIX TABLE X

EMIGRATION IN LUWATA VILLAGE.

'Aila	No. of adult males in village	No. of emigrants (1940-66)	Place of emigration			Remarks
			Tripoli	Benghazi	Other	
Naşr	11*	2	2	-	-	* Includes 2 students in educational institutes outside the area.
Feqeeh 'ali	10*	6	5	-	1	* one works in Tripoli and another is a student living outside the area.
Irşymia	6*	5	3	-	2	* one is a student in Germany.
'Abd al'ali	3* ¹	5* ²	4	1	-	* ¹ one moves between village and Tripoli. * ² 2 emigrated to Algeria & Tunisia early this century.
Şhwameen	8*	2	1	-	1	* 3 of these are students living outside the area.
Masa 'eed	4	3	2	-	1*	* moved to a neighbouring village.
'Araba	26*	5	3	2	-	* 5 are students outside the area. One adult works outside the area.
Total	68*	28	20	3	5	* 11 are students living - for most of the year - outside the area.

APPENDIX TABLE XI

MARRIAGES OF MALES IN ZA'FERAN VILLAGE
(3-4 GENERATIONS)

'Aila	No. of males	No. of marriages	Total village marriages	Father's brother's daughter marriages	Other 'aila marriages	Outside village marriages	Remarks
Belaghta	25	32	13 (40.6%)	2 (6.2%)	3 (9.3%)	19* (59.3%)	* 4 of these are cross-cousin marriages.
Gnahat	15	23	9 (39.1%)	2 (8.7%)	-	14* (60.8%)	* one is to father's sister's daughter.
Turki	12	19	5 (26.3%)	2 (10.5%)	-	14 (73.6%)	Since completion of this survey 2 more marriages occurred (1967). One married his father's brother's daughter, the other from 'aila.
Bu Shiqa	9	10	6 (60%)	-	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	in 1967 one additional male married from village. Another (lives in Tripoli) married from Tripoli.
Gda'	14	28	6 (21.4%)	1 (3.5%)	-	22* (78.5%)	* 7 of these are to women from the male's village of origin.
Zeddarn	5	7	2 (28.5%)	-	-	5*	* 2 are cross-cousin marriages. In 1967 an additional male married from outside the village

APPENDIX TABLE XI contd.

'Aila	No. of males	No. of marriages	Total village marriages	Father's brother's daughter marriages	Other 'aila marriages	Outside village marriages	Remarks
Qadi	15	20	1 (5%)	3 (15%)	6 (30%)	11* (55%)	* one is a cross-cousin marriage. Other members of this 'aila live in another village in the area.
Other households	42	57	21 (36.8%)	3 (5.2%)	1 (1.7%)	35* (61.4%)	* 2 are to <u>bint al khal</u> . Most of these families are village immigrants (1-3 generations).
Total	137	196	63 (32.1%)	13 (6.6%)	12 (6.1%)	124* (63.3%)	* 9 are cross-cousin marriages.

APPENDIX TABLE XII

TYPES OF HOUSEHOLDS IN ZA'FERAN VILLAGE

Household Type	No. of Households	Remarks
Extended	10 (20.4%)	4 of these households contain an only son. 2 additional households contain one married son only. The remaining 4 households have 2 married sons each.
Joint	4 (8.1%)	3 of these households have the mother. All these households have one married brother only.
Conjugal	27 (55.1%)	3 of these households contain the mother. All the households have one married brother only.
Denuded	8 (16.2%)	5 are widows with dependent children. 1 is a divorcee. 2 are middle aged bachelors.
Total	49	2 of these are polygamous households (with 2 wives in each).

APPENDIX TABLE XIII

EMIGRATION IN ZA'FERAN VILLAGE

'Aila	No. of adult males in village	No. of emigrants 1940-1966	Remarks
Belaghta	5	7*	* 3 left the village before 1940; (2 between 1910 & 1920 to Tunisia) the other emigrated to Tripoli in 1935. It is generally accepted in village that this <u>'aila</u> is originally from the neighbouring area of <u>Tarhuna</u> . It has been in the village for several generations.
Gnahat	5	5	This <u>'aila</u> is also considered to be originally from <u>Tarhuna</u> . It has been in the village for several generations.
Turki	11	-	Named after their grandfather (a Turk who settled in the village sometime in the second half of last century). It has been in the village for 4 generations. One individual emigrated to Tunisia early this century.
Bu Shiqa	6	3*	* 3 emigrated to Egypt, Fezzan & Benghazi early this century. Originally from Orfella it has been in the village for four generations.
Gda'	6	1*	Originally from Qusbat, and a section of this <u>'aila</u> remains there. It has been in Za'feran for 3 generations. * One left for Tunisia early this century.
Zeddani	4	1*	* 1 left for Tunisia early this century. Originally from a neighbouring village, i.e. Wadna. A section of this <u>'aila</u> remains there.

APPENDIX TABLE XIII contd.

'Aila	No. of adult males in village	No. of emigrants 1940-1966	Remarks
Qadi	5	1	Has been in Za'feran for 2 generations. Originally from Qusbat where a section of the <u>'aila</u> remains.
Other households	23	17*	* 15 left Za'feran early this century (1910-1920). The majority of these households are recent immigrants to Za'feran. Most of them are emigrants from neighbouring villages and areas.
Total	65	35*	* This does not include students who are outside the area (i.e. outside <u>Msellata</u>).

APPENDIX TABLE XIV

MARRIAGES OF MALES IN MURAD VILLAGE

'Aila	No. of males	No. of marriages	Total village marriages	Father's brother's daughter marriages	Other 'aila marriages	Outside village marriages	Remarks
Imhameed	40	50	22 (44%)	7* (14%)	7 (14%)	28* (56%)	*1 1 of these was a <u>Levirate marriage</u> . *2 3 married ' <u>bint al khal</u> '
Irzaq	10	12	9 (75%)	2 (16.6%)	-	3 (25%)	
Mahasna	21	21	21* (57.1%)	1 (4.7%)	4 (19%)	9* (42.8%)	* 1 married ' <u>bint al khal</u> '
Shanashha	15	21	6 (28.5%)	1 (4.7%)	-	15* (71.4%)	* 1 married his father's sister's daughter and another a cross-cousin.
Other families	13	19	12 (63.1%)	-	1 (5.2%)	7 (36.8%)	All these families immigrated to village within the last 2 generations.
Total	99	123	61 (49.6%)	11 (8.9%)	12 (9.7%)	62* (50.4%)	* 5 married cross-cousins (<u>bint al khal</u>)

APPENDIX TABLE XV

TYPES OF HOUSEHOLDS IN MURAD VILLAGE

'Aila	No. of households	Extended	Joint	Conjugal	Denuded households	Remarks
Imhameed	5	-	-	5	-	
Irzaq	2	-	-	2	-	
Mahasna	10	1*	-	7	2	* contains 2 married sons both are working in Tripoli.
Shanashha	3	1*	-	2	-	* contains one married son who works in Tripoli.
Other non-'aila households	10	-	1*	9	-	* composed of 2 married brothers with their mother.
Total	30	2 (6.6%)	1 (3.3%)	25 (83.3%)	2 (6.6%)	

APPENDIX TABLE XVI

EMIGRATION IN MURAD VILLAGE

'Aila	No. of adult males in village	No. of emigrants (1940-66)	Places of emigration			Remarks
			Tripoli	Benghazi	Other	
Imbameed	5 ^{*1}	13	13 ^{*2}	-	-	*1 1 works in Tripoli *2 another 2 emigrated to outside Libya, and another to Tripoli before 1940.
Irzaq	2	3	3 ^{*1}	-	-	*1 2 emigrated to Tripoli before 1940.
Mabasna	12 ^{*1}	3	2 ^{*2}	1	-	*1 6 of these work in Tripoli, and another 2 have extra-village jobs. *2 3 emigrated to Tunisia between 1910-20
Shanashqa	4 ^{*1}	3	3 ^{*2}	-	-	*1 1 works in Tripoli *2 1 of these was in Tunisia from 1930-1964.
Other households	11 ^{*1}	-	-	-	-	*1 all these families immigrated to Murad within the last 2 generations
Total	34 [*]	22	21	1	-	* a total of 10 adult males left Murad (mostly to Tunisia) before 1940.

APPENDIX TABLE XVII

MARRIAGES OF MALES IN QUMATA VILLAGE

'Aila	No. of males	No. of marriages	Total village marriages	Father's brother's daughter marriages	Other 'aila marriages	Outside village marriages	Remarks
Hadar	21	29	12 ^{*1}	2 (6.8%)	4 (13.7%)	17 ^{*2} (58.6%)	^{*1} 2 are 'bint al khal' marriages ^{*2} 2 are 'bint al khal' marriages
Fantiya	23	25	5 (20%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	20 ^{*1} (80%)	^{*1} 3 are cross-cousin marriages
Zengoli	11	13	3 (23%)	-	-	10 (77%)	
Non-'aila families	11	12	2 (16.6%)	-	-	10 (83.3%)	The majority of these families are recent immigrants
Total	66	79	22 (27.8%)	3 (3.8%)	5 (6.2%)	57 [*] (72.1%)	[*] 5 are cross-cousin marriages

APPENDIX TABLE XVIII

TYPES OF HOUSEHOLD IN QUMATA VILLAGE

'Aila	No. of households	Extended	Joint	Conjugal	Denuded	Remarks
Hadar	4	3 ^{*1}	-	-	1 ^{*2}	*1 one contains one married son only. The other two have two and three married sons. *2 An only married son has emigrated
Fantiya	6	2 [*]	-	2	2	* One household contains two married sons. The other has one married son only.
Zenqoli	5	-	-	5 [*]	-	* includes one polygamous household. In another household all the married sons have emigrated.
Other non-'aila families	4	-	1 [*]	3	-	* contains one married brother only (another two are bachelors) and the mother.
Total	19	5	1	10	3	

APPENDIX TABLE XIX

EMIGRATION IN QMATA VILLAGE

'Aila	No. of adult males in village	No. of emigrants (1940-66)	Place of emigration			Remarks
			Tripoli	Benghazi	Other	
Hadar	11*	7	1	6	-	* a total of 7 have extra-village jobs (5 work outside the local area).
Fantiya	8*	9	8	1	-	* 2 have extra-village jobs within the local area.
Zenqoli	6*	3	3	-	-	* 2 work in Tripoli, and another has an extra-village job (within the locality).
Other households	3*	3	2	1	-	* one works periodically outside the village.
Total	28*	22	14	8	-	* a total of 13 have regular occupations outside village (5 in Tripoli).

APPENDIX TABLE XX

MALE MARRIAGES IN BENI MISLIM
(SELECTED 'AILAT).

'Aila	No. of males	No. of marriages	Total village marriages	Father's brother's daughter marriages	Other 'aila marriages	Outside- village marriages
Bu <u>Ghalia</u>	42	48	35 (72.9%)	8 (16.6%)	7 (14.5%)	13 (27%)
Tabeeb	56	69	52 (75.3%)	9 (13%)	11 (15.9%)	17 (24.6%)
<u>Five other 'ailat</u>	-	55	35 (63.6%)	6 (10.9%)	6 (10.9%)	20 (36.3%)
Total	-	172	122 (70.9%)	23 (13.3%)	24 (13.9%)	50 (29%)

APPENDIX TABLE XXI

EMIGRATION IN BENI MISLIM VILLAGE

'Aila	No. of adult males in village	No. of emigrants (1940-66)	Place of emigration			Remarks
			Tripoli	Benghazi	Other	
Bu <u>Ghalia</u>	16*	11	8	3	-	* 3 of these work in Tripoli, and another 4 have extra-village jobs.
<u>Tabeeb</u>	19*	11	6	3	2	* 3 of these work in Tripoli, and another has an extra-village job.
Five other <u>'ailat</u>	25*	24	14	8	2	* 5 work in Tripoli, and another 4 have extra-village jobs.
Total	60*	46	28	14	4	* 11 work in Tripoli (families in village), and another 9 have extra village jobs.

APPENDIX TABLE XXII

TYPES OF HOUSEHOLDS IN BENI MISLIM

'Aila	Total No. of households:	Extended	Joint	Conjugal	Denuded	Remarks
Bu <u>Ghalia</u>	16	-	1	12	3	6 of the conjugal households are households of brothers living separately. In two other households, all the married sons have emigrated.
Tabeeb	18	5	1	11	1	All the extended households contain one married son only. In 2 cases the son is an only son. The joined household contains two married brothers. Two of the conjugal households are those of brothers.
Five other <u>'ailat</u>	27	4	-	21	2	3 of the extended households contain one married son only. In one case he is an only son. 6 of the conjugal households are those of brothers living separately.
Total	61	9 (14.7%)	2 (3.2%)	44 (72.1%)	6 (9.8%)	8 of the extended households contain one married son only, and in 3 of these he is an only son.

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