KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE
IN EARLY ARABIA
KINSHIP & MARRIAGE

IN

EARLY ARABIA

BY

THE LATE W. ROBERTSON SMITH
ADAMS PROFESSOR OF ARABIC IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

NEW EDITION

WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES BY THE AUTHOR
AND BY PROFESSOR IGNAZ GOLDZIHER, BUDAPEST

EDITED BY STANLEY A. COOK, M.A.
FELLOW OF GONVILLE AND CAIUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
1903
EDITOR'S PREFACE

The present edition of *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* is no mere reprint of the work, which from its freshness and originality attracted the attention of Semitic scholars and anthropologists in 1885 and laid the foundation of all subsequent research in this department of studies. During the nine years which elapsed between its publication and his lamented death, Robertson Smith had collected additional notes and references in his own interleaved copy, and there were indications that he contemplated the preparation of a second edition, and had even marked out for himself certain features and lines of argument which he proposed to develop.

When, in course of time, the call for a second edition began to make itself heard, it was felt that his new material—however incomplete—ought not to be withheld, and Professor Ignaz Goldziher of Budapest, a valued personal friend of the author, and the writer of a careful and discriminating review of the book in the *Literatur-blatt für*
Orientalische Philologie, was invited to see the proposed work through the press. This task he unfortunately found himself unable to complete, and, when it passed into the hands of the present writer in May 1901, he very generously placed at the disposal of the latter such notes as he had already collected.

In the discharge of this somewhat delicate task, the present editor's aim has been to give effect, in the first instance, to all the author's corrections, alterations, and additions, all other matter whether contributed by himself or others being placed within square brackets. *Kinship and Marriage* itself arose out of that epoch-making paper in the *Journal of Philology* referred to below (p. xiv), and simply marks a stage in the author's investigation of Semitic organisations, which was brilliantly followed up by the lectures on the fundamental institutions of the Semites. If in the *Religion of the Semites* primitive ritual rather than primitive society forms the chief theme, yet the two works are in a large degree complementary, and several points which are only lightly touched upon in *Kinship and Marriage* receive fuller treatment in the later work. Accordingly, it has seemed desirable to introduce into the present edition all necessary references to *Religion of the Semites*, more particularly in those cases—though few in number—where the author had modified his views.
Thoughout his life Professor Robertson Smith's position was in the vanguard of critics. He was quick to assimilate fresh material and to test his theories in the light of new evidence. The criticisms that were passed upon his suggested derivation of the name Terah were sufficient to cause him to erase three lines upon p. 220 of the first edition, and if the first half of note 4 on p. 311 has now been silently dropped—after consultation with well-known scholars—it can hardly be doubted that effect has only been given to what would have ultimately been his own wish. Some notice has also been taken of other criticisms, notably of Professor Nöldeke in the Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, vol. 40, pp. 148 sqq., and of Professor Wellhausen in his “Die Ehe bei den Arabern,” in the Nachrichten v. d. kgl. Gesellsch. d. Wissenschaften (Göttingen, 1893, no. xi. p. 432).

In one or two instances the author's notes have been developed or a suggestion has been worked out, but these cases are exceptional. Into the whole question of blood-feud Robertson Smith fully intended to go more thoroughly, but he has left no notes to indicate the lines he intended to pursue, and we can only regret that here again his purpose remained unaccomplished.²

¹ E.g., p. 131, n. 1, and Additional Note D, p. 297 sq.
² How important the subject is for the history of primitive Semitic organisation is abundantly evident from Procksh's essay, Über die
No doubt parallels, criticisms, and bibliographical notes might have been easily multiplied.\textsuperscript{1} The book, as we know, resolves itself into the theory that the primitive organisation of the Arabs—and indeed of all the Semites—finds its explanation in the assumption that they had passed through the totem stage. The whole theory of totemism no longer stands where it did in McLennan's day. Fresh discoveries are constantly being made, and the new facts call for at least a reconsideration of the opinions which were held ten or fifteen years ago. It is impossible to say to what extent Robertson Smith might not have been led to recast his views and what of the following pages might not have been rewritten—but his was the only hand which could modify his own statements, and it will be recognised that his additions and corrections even in minor points have their importance. After all, the totem theory is not the most prominent feature of the present work, and the value of the

\textit{Blutrache bei den vorislamischen Arabern} (Leipzig, 1899); reference may also be made to W. M. Patton, "Blood-revenge in Arabia and Israel" in the \textit{American Journal of Theology}, October 1901, pp. 703-731.

\textsuperscript{1} This is particularly true of evidence from the Babylonian field, a department to which only slight attention is paid in \textit{Kinship and Marriage}. Some idea of its importance may perhaps be obtained from the present writer's \textit{The Laws of Moses and The Code of Hammurabi} (chaps. iv.-vi.), where the earliest Babylonian family- and marriage-laws appear to be highly instructive for the study of primitive Semitic society.
facts which he has brought together from his unsurpassed stores of knowledge are in no degree dependent upon a particular attitude towards this theory.

The preparation of the new edition has been felt to be a privilege, but also a responsibility. Every effort has been made to maintain that degree of accuracy, which marked all Robertson Smith's published writings, and the time involved in the verification of references in the new material—apart from heavy pressure of other work—has delayed the publication until now. It remains for the present writer to express his thanks to Dr. J. S. Black, Dr. J. G. Frazer, and Professor Nöldeke, for advice and suggestions, to Professor A. A. Bevan for the notes signed with his initials on pp. 9, 32, 33, 48, and above all to acknowledge his profound gratitude to Professor Ignaz Goldziher for his numerous notes (all of which are distinguished with the initials I. G.), and for his goodness in reading the proof-sheets.¹

S. A. COOK.

London, October 10, 1903.

¹ The present writer may perhaps be allowed to refer to his article "Israel and Totemism" in the Jewish Quarterly Review, April 1902, pp. 413-448, where the endeavour was made to estimate Robertson Smith's theory of Semitic totemism in the light of the present position of totemism generally.
AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The object of the present volume is to collect and discuss the available evidence as to the genesis of the system of male kinship, with the corresponding laws of marriage and tribal organisation, which prevailed in Arabia at the time of Mohammed; the general result is that male kinship had been preceded by kinship through women only, and that all that can still be gathered as to the steps of the social evolution in which the change of kinship law is the central feature corresponds in the most striking manner with the general theory propounded, mainly on the basis of a study of modern rude societies, in the late J. F. McLennan's book on Primitive Marriage. The correspondence of the Arabian facts with this general theory is indeed so close that all the evidence might easily have been disposed under heads borrowed from his exposition; and for those who are engaged in the comparative study of early institutions this would probably have been the most convenient arrangement. But the views of xi
my lamented friend are not so widely known as they deserve to be, and several of the Essays in which they are expressed are not very accessible. Moreover I wished to speak not only to general students of early society but to all who are interested in old Arabia; for if my results are sound they have a very important bearing on the most fundamental problems of Arabian history and on the genesis of Islam itself. I have therefore thought it best to attempt to build a self-contained argument on the Arabian facts alone, following a retrogressive order from the known to the unknown past, and not calling in the aid of hypotheses derived from the comparative method until, in working backwards on the Arabian evidence, I came to a point where the facts could not be interpreted without the aid of analogies drawn from other rude societies. This mode of exposition has its disadvantages, the most serious of these being that the changes in the tribal system which went hand in hand with the change in the rule of kinship do not come into view at all till near the close of the argument. In the earlier chapters therefore I am forced to argue on the supposition that a local group was also a stock-group, as it was in the time of the prophet; while in the two last chapters it appears that this cannot have always been the case. But I trust that the reader, if he looks back upon the earlier chapters after reaching the end of the book, will see that this result has been
tacitly kept in view throughout, and that the substance of the argument involves nothing inconsistent with it.

The first chapters of the book do not, I think, borrow any principle from the comparative method which cannot be completely verified by Arabian evidence. These chapters are rewritten and expanded from a course of public University lectures delivered in the Easter Term of the current year, and my original idea was to confine the present volume to the ground which they cover. I found, however, that to break off the argument at this point would be very unsatisfactory both to the author and to the reader, and that, to round off my results even in a provisional way, it was absolutely necessary to say something as to the ultimate origin of the tribal system. And here it is not possible to erect a complete argument on the Arabian evidence alone. But it is, I think, possible to shew that the Arabs once had the system which McLennan has expounded under the name of totemism (chap. vii.), and if, as among other early nations, totemism and female kinship were combined with a law of exogamy, it is also possible to construct, on the lines laid down in *Primitive Marriage*, a hypothetical picture of the development of the social system, consistent with all the Arabian facts, and involving only *vera causae*, *i.e.*, only the action of such forces as can
be shewn to have operated in other rude societies in the very way which the hypothesis requires (chap. viii.). I have thought it right to limit myself, in this part of the subject, to the briefest possible outline. The general principles of the hypothesis, as laid down by J. F. McLennan, are not, I believe, likely to be shaken, but it is premature to attempt more than the most provisional sketch of the way in which they operated under the special historical conditions existing in the Arabian peninsula.

The collection of the evidence on which my arguments rest has occupied me at intervals since the autumn of 1879, when I put together a certain number of facts about female kinship and totemism in a paper on "Animal worship and animal tribes among the Arabs and in the Old Testament," which was published in the Journal of Philology, vol. ix. At that time I had access to no good library of Arabic texts, so that I could only pick up what lay on the surface of the unsearched field; but the results of this provisional exploration appeared so promising that it seemed desirable to publish them and to invite the cooperation of scholars better versed in the early literature of Arabia. Several orientalists of mark responded to this invitation; in particular Prof. Th. Nöldeke sent me some valuable observations, which have since been incorporated in his review of Prof. G. A.