

Money Is to the West What Kinship Is to the Rest

I chose to focus on kinship and social organization in the Yarshater Lectures because I am fundamentally interested in the interactions of people in antiquity, much more so than in the plans of their houses or the temperature at which their pottery was fired. To be sure, there is a considerable body of studies that examines individuals in relation to Elamite law;¹ the institution of levirate marriage;² the sister's son in Elamite royal titulature and succession;³ matrilinearity in Elam;⁴ the Achaemenid tribes;⁵ Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sasanian noble families;⁶ the social and economic position of women;⁷ marriage in Iranian late antiquity;⁸ and the question of incest and close-kin marriage more generally.⁹ I will touch on many of these topics because there is yet more to be said on them. Studies explicitly devoted to kinship systems, in contrast, are notably few and far between.¹⁰ Yet, as the American anthropologist Marshall Sahlins observed in 1976, "money is to the West what kinship is to the Rest."¹¹ Even though this was a very glib,

1. See, e.g., Cuq 1931; Koschaker 1932, 1934, 1935a, 1935b, 1936b, 1941; Scheil 1939; Klíma 1963; Korošec 1964; Oers 2013; Badamchi 2018a, 2018b, 2019.

2. Yusifov 1974; Grilhot 1988.

3. Glassner 1994; Quintana 2010; Potts 2018.

4. König 1926a; Koschaker 1933; van Soldt 1990.

5. Von Gall 1972; Briant 1990.

6. Neuhaus 1902; Christensen 1907, 1936; König 1924, 1926b; Herzfeld 1937; Jones 1996; Pourshariati 2008; Maksymiuk 2015; Hyland 2018; Orlov 2018.

7. Keiper 1879; Neuhaus 1902; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1983; Larson 2006; Brosius 2010; Carter 2014; Matsushima 2016.

8. Gray 1915; Hjerrild 2003; Macuch 2007; Daryaei 2013.

9. Sanjana 1888; Cumont 1924; König 1964; Bigwood 2009; Frandsen 2009; Macuch 2010; Skjærvø 2013.

10. Perikhanian 1970; Herrenschildt 1987; Macuch 2003, 2017.

11. Sahlins 1976, 216.

almost tongue-in-cheek, throwaway line, Sahlins's observation encapsulates the widely perceived difference in the standing of kinship in Western vs. non-Western societies and the underlying assumption, whether justified or not, that so-called "traditional" societies are more tightly bound by ties of kinship than Western, industrialized ones. Although I think this dichotomy is far too reductionist, I am not concerned here with modern social formations but with ancient Iranian ones.

SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Traditionally, the study of kinship has been the domain of social anthropologists and sociologists who, unlike archaeologists and ancient historians, can actually interview informants. Kinship is far more deceptive than it might seem at first glance, for it is less about determining the identities of an individual's biological relationships than it is about revealing and appreciating socially constructed ones. As A. R. Radcliffe-Brown noted in 1950, "Two persons who are kin are related in one or other of two ways: either one is descended from the other, or they are both descended from a common ancestor." But descent is first and foremost "the social relationship of parents and children, not . . . the physical relation."¹² The impossibility of speaking to those whose kinship categories and systems we might wish to study has undoubtedly dissuaded many historians, philologists, and archaeologists from devoting much time to the topic. Yet there is plenty of evidence in the ancient sources of kinship relations in different ancient Iranian settings, as I will show, and this evidence makes sense only when it is treated like any other body of ethnographic data and interpreted in light of the innumerable anthropological studies that have been published in the course of the past 150 years, notwithstanding the objections of some scholars in the past who explicitly and almost proudly avowed an unwillingness to consult relevant anthropological literature for insights into ancient kinship systems. To cite just one example here: in 1926, a year in which the likes of Ruth Benedict, Franz Boas, R. B. Dixon, Melville J. Herskovits, Alfred L. Kroeber, Ralph Linton, Robert H. Lowie, Bronislaw Malinowski, Margaret Mead, Elsie Clews Parsons, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, and a host of other extraordinarily important social anthropologists were active, Friedrich Wilhelm König (1897–1972; fig. 1) had the temerity to proudly declare, in a study of alleged Elamite matrilinearity, that he had intentionally resisted any impulse to draw ethnographic parallels with other cultures that might bear on the issue, for he believed it necessary to first extract everything that the Elamite "sources" had to offer. Then, and only then, when his conclusions were firmly based on the Elamite evidence, could he and should he present comparisons with other cultures that, he did not doubt, would cast matters in a different light. To do otherwise, he believed, would only

12. Radcliffe-Brown and Forde 1950, 13.



FIGURE 1. Friedrich Wilhelm König. Photographer unknown. Archive of the University of Vienna, 106.1.2650.

prejudice his understanding of the Elamite evidence.¹³ It is unfortunate, however, that despite his recognition of the potential importance of ethnographic studies to his own work, König never moved beyond the initial study of the Elamite source material to actually test his conclusions against the abundant anthropological and, in this case, literary analyses of scholars studying precisely the same phenomenon in various times and places.

Notwithstanding the reluctance of König and others of his ilk to engage with the anthropological literature in seeking to understand kin relations in ancient Iran, it should be obvious that people are the actors in history, and we don't really need the prosopographical studies of ancient historians, the multiple career-line analyses of sociologists, or the collective biographies of modern historians to validate

13. König 1926a, 529.

this premise.¹⁴ Nor should it be the case that the consultation of comparable evidence from other times and places necessarily “corrupts” one’s understanding of a particular historical phenomenon. This is tantamount to ignoring all precedents pertaining to a given law in legal or judicial practice. In fact, I cannot think of a situation in which we *shouldn’t* apply exactly the *opposite* approach and scour the literature for similar expressions of a particular social practice, making every effort to understand it to the best of our abilities.

A further problem is endemic to the study of the ancient world. Because archaeologists and art historians tend to study material culture, and philologists tend to study literary and epigraphic sources, things like ceramic shapes and decoration, architecture, iconography, grammar, phonology, and loanwords often assume lives of their own and become, as objects of study, ends in themselves, leaving little time or space to draw conclusions about the people who created them. Similarly, the nature of the available ancient written sources in and about Iran means that, although they might wish it were not the case, ancient Near Eastern historians have often, *faute de mieux*, given military, political, and religious history priority over other fields. There are, of course, exceptions. Some economic historians have been at pains to stress the importance of family relationships in trading concerns, for example.¹⁵ Yet, by and large, these sorts of studies are few and far between, and the decision to devote the Yarshater Lectures to kinship and society is a reflection of my very basic desire to get at the people who made the artifacts and who used the loanwords that we study—not necessarily as individual actors but as members of kinship units or social groups. This is what primarily motivates me to examine Iranian archaeology and history in the light of kinship and modes of social organization.

In prioritizing the people behind the artifacts, the kinship system behind the stele, or the society behind the archive, I am only doing what others have long advocated. For example, in his obituary of the Australian prehistorian Vere Gordon Childe, Robert J. Braidwood famously wrote more than sixty years ago, “Although Childe loved the artifacts he could understand, he never forgot the

14. Stone 1972, 46.

15. For a later but well-illustrated example, see Baladouni and Makepeace (1998, xxxiv):

As opposed to the single, large, hierarchically organized joint-stock company, such as the English East India Company, the Armenian trading house was a network or alliance of organizations centered around a notable merchant, the *khoja*, who was at once business financier and entrepreneur. These widely spread but highly interrelated individual enterprises operated under an ethos of trust. Trust, and the shared moral and ethical norms underlying it, helped the Armenian trading houses to avoid the relatively rigid and costly operation of the hierarchic system of organization practiced by the English. Seen in this light, trust served as a human capital, but one that could not be acquired through a rational investment decision. It accrued to the Armenian merchant community as a result of their collective sociopolitical experiences over many generations. Based on family kinship and trusted fellow countrymen, the Armenian trading house did, indeed, rely on trust as its principal means of organization and control.

'Indian behind the artifact' and scolded his colleagues roundly if they did: e.g., 'Menghin insists so strongly on an axe as an expression of a historical tradition that the reader may forget that it is an implement for felling trees.'¹⁶ Actually, Braidwood's choice of this quotation was perhaps maladroit, for it would seem to warn against forgetting the functional, technical purpose of an artifact rather than the social context in which it was manufactured or its human maker. In any case, for the Austrian prehistorian Oswald Menghin's name here, one could easily substitute those of a multitude of archaeologists and art historians specializing in ancient Iran who, like Childe, "love" their cylinder seals, ceramics, rock reliefs, silver vessels, statuary, and inscriptions but, like Menghin, often ignore the people who fashioned or used them. By contrast, in the words of the Michigan anthropological archaeologist Kent Flannery, "the process theorist is not ultimately concerned with 'the Indian behind the artifact' but rather with the system behind both the Indian and the artifact."¹⁷ To be very clear, nobody who has ever read a word I have written would classify me as a "process theorist," but I am interested in systems, albeit social rather than processual ones. But let us also be realistic: we are, after all, dealing with periods, the most recent of which is separated from our own time by over a millennium. Therefore, what we can expect to reveal, at the level of kinship and social organization, is necessarily fragmentary and shadowy—bits of a web of social relations rather than links in a well-preserved chain of kinship relations.

What I attempt in this volume might be characterized as historical anthropology, anthropological history,¹⁸ or "retrospective ethnography," although since Charles Tilly characterized this last approach as one that seeks "to recreate crucial situations of the past as a thoughtful participant-observer would have experienced them,"¹⁹ then it is clear that my own endeavor is nothing of the kind. Rather, my aim is to highlight those kinship, familial, and social structures, however poorly they may be represented in the written and archaeological record, that have tended to be sidelined or, if acknowledged at all, misunderstood, in previous studies of ancient Iran. Before continuing any further, however, a few words about the scope and chronology of this work are in order.

Iran is much more than a toponym. As Gherardo Gnoli showed so eloquently more than thirty years ago, Iran is, first and foremost, an idea.²⁰ No matter how much one parses the nomenclature of the Elamite, Achaemenid, and Sasanian royal inscriptions, or the classical sources on Persia, *Iran* remains an utterly anachronistic term in the discussion of any period prior to the appearance of the Achaemenid Empire in the mid-first millennium BC. Mesopotamian cuneiform sources abound in toponyms east of the Tigris, and while only a relatively small

16. Braidwood 1958, 734.

17. Flannery 1967, 120.

18. For these two terms see, e.g., Kalb et al. 1996.

19. Tilly 1984, 380.

20. Gnoli 1989.

number of these can be located with confidence, they leave us in no doubt that the area occupied today by the Islamic Republic of Iran was widely populated, culturally diverse, and anything but unified. To be sure, some regions were larger and more densely inhabited than others, but the only thing they have in common with Iran as we know it is their location east of the Tigris; north of the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea; south of the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea, and the plains of Turkmenistan; and west of the mountains of Afghanistan and eastern Baluchistan. In other words, to use the term *Iranian* when discussing the archaeology and early history of the regions falling within the boundaries of modern Iran is to adopt a convention, and an anachronistic one at that. No Marhašian prince of the third millennium BC, Elamite scribe of the second millennium BC, or Median chieftain of the first millennium would have understood the term *Iran*. When, therefore, archaeologists and historians categorize a particular site and its finds, or a particular region, as “Iranian,” this reflects an underlying assumption about what may or may not be included under this rubric, which almost always reflects the modern boundaries of the nation-state of Iran rather than any form of past cultural unity. Yet so ingrained have those boundaries become in our conception of Iran since the early nineteenth century that it is inordinately difficult to escape their strictures. Chronologically, therefore, all periods prior to the appearance of the first individuals in cuneiform sources with etymologically Iranian names can be considered pre-Iranian. Yet Iranian archaeology, as it has developed over more than a century, has appropriated the prehistoric, pre-Iranian, and non-Iranian Paleolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Bronze and Iron Age assemblages from sites across Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, Luristan, Khuzestan, Fars, Kerman, Baluchistan, Khorasan, the Central Plateau, and the circum-Caspian provinces, within the boundaries of modern Iran, deeming them the subjects of Iranian archaeology and ancient history. One may well ask, though, in what sense the Neolithic levels at Ganj Dareh in Luristan or the Bronze Age levels at Konar Sandal South in Jiroft are “Iranian”? The short answer to this question is “in no sense.” We are fully justified in designating the totality of the prehistory of the Iranian plateau and its immediately adjacent lands West Asian or ancient Near Eastern, but to call it Iranian is to make a leap of faith and to impose a much later concept on sites and finds dating to periods in which the concept of Iranianness did not yet exist. Thus, by this definition, at least half of the subject matter I deal with in the pages that follow, concerning prehistoric and Elamite evidence, must be classified as “pre-Iranian.”

The focus here on aspects of kinship that, in an Iranian context, have been understudied and often misunderstood also deserves a few words of further explanation. *Kinship* is a venerable term in anthropology and ethnology, and it has a tendency to conjure up “traditional,” “primitive,” or “tribal” societies—all deeply flawed terms—which we somehow know differed from complex agricultural and urban societies. *Kinship* triggers in some an expectation that the societies in which it is most important have a seemingly endless array of terms for mother’s brother’s

sister's sons, and so forth. Kinship, visualized and concretized as a series of diagrams of marriage patterns, descent groups, and moieties, was dear to the hearts of many a Victorian and early twentieth-century scholar. Yet kinship is just as much with us today as it was with our ancestors. It constitutes a lens through which societies can be studied, and it will be the principal arc running through this book. This is not to say that competing forms of allegiance and group membership that crosscut biologically or socially based units and were not strictly based on kin relations haven't also played their part in human history or that all collective action in the societies examined here was based on kinship.²¹ But it is important to move beyond simple characterizations of kinship ties as the glue that bound premodern societies together and to seek to understand those specific situations and institutions alluded to in ancient sources that have too often, in previous scholarship, been treated as aberrations largely because of an ignorance of comparative cases from later periods and other cultures around the world.

This study was never intended, however, to present a catalogue of kinship terms in Elamite, Old Persian, and Middle Persian, along the lines of Oswald Szemerényi's 1977 monograph on Indo-European kinship terminology²² or R. S. P. Beekes's detailed analysis of terms for uncle and nephew in the Indo-European and proto-Indo-European languages.²³ Instead, I have tried to identify cases that illustrate a particular principle recognized in the anthropology of kinship but that has been overlooked or misunderstood. Some of these cases are attested only once in our admittedly fragmentary source material from the past. Others occur repeatedly, suggesting a pattern of kin-related practice that, far from unique, is attested in other cultures around the world as well, even if this has not always been appreciated. The scope ranges from prehistory, when the evidence is certainly sparse and always equivocal as well as controversial, to late antiquity.

To begin with, however, it may be helpful to clarify certain fundamental concepts that are frequently confused as they feature in subsequent chapters. At the heart of what David Schneider termed "the universe of kinship"²⁴ are two concepts: filiation and descent. Although often used interchangeably, these terms are not synonymous and are often used incorrectly in the historical literature. While the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *filiation* as the "fact of being the child of a specified parent," filiation is necessarily bilateral or, as some scholars prefer to say, equilateral. As the British anthropologist Meyer Fortes noted more than

21. Similarly, in the case of Merovingian Franconia (Franken), White (2005, 86), for example, stressed that "in feuds waged by kings and nobles . . . pre-existing family groups did not spontaneously organize themselves to avenge injuries against one of their members. . . . Instead, feuds were occasions for constituting groups of kin to achieve multiple political purposes"

22. Szemerényi 1977. For a brief survey of kinship terms in New Persian see Bateni 1973.

23. Beekes 1976.

24. Schneider 1967, 65.

sixty years ago, filiation “is essentially the bond between successive generations.”²⁵ *Descent*, however, as Fortes stressed, “can be defined as a genealogical connexion recognized between a person and any of his ancestors or ancestresses.” Filiation and descent, he went on to stress, are “two analytically distinct institutions.”²⁶

In surveying the literature, we find it clear that many French- and German-speaking authors have not observed the strict distinction between filiation and descent favored by Anglophone anthropologists. The use of *filiation* when *descent* is in fact meant typifies exactly what Edmund Leach tried to clarify in a paper addressing Claude Lévi-Strauss’s use of *filiation* rather than *descendance*.²⁷ The same pattern can be observed in the works of some Assyriologists, who have been known to use *filiation* synonymously with or in place of *descent*, as understood in the Anglophone anthropological literature, when in fact German *Filiation* should be distinguished from *Deszendenz*.²⁸

The difference between these two terms is, moreover, extremely important. As Schneider emphasized, “Filiation originates in the domestic domain, descent in the politico-jural domain.” Descent “has to do with a category of culturally differentiated statuses,” some of which “are abstracted from a genealogical mesh or a universe of kinsmen . . . defined by a particular culture, and constituted as a single, conceptual category.”²⁹ In Marshall Sahlins’s words, “Descent is not recruitment but arrangement and alignment, in the first place a principle of political design, exercising arbitrary constraints on the suppositions of ancestry.”³⁰ Descent may be unilineal and either patrilineal or matrilineal—that is, determined through the line of male or female ancestors—or it may be bilineal/bilateral—that is, determined through both ancestral lines. In questions of succession and inheritance, Fortes noted, descent “establishes what might be called a right to a place in the queue of potential successors.”³¹

But we would also do well to bear in mind what Sahlins wrote more than fifty years ago:

25. Fortes 1959, 206.

26. Fortes 1959, 206.

27. Leach 1977.

28. Thus, speaking of a sequence of ancestors, rather than just ego’s parent(s), Paulus (2013, 432) wrote of the *Filiation* of a series of Elamite kings, where, in fact, the German term *Deszendenz* (descent) is meant. Similarly, when Paulus referred to gaps in the filiation of Elamite rulers mentioned in the so-called Berlin Letter, it is important to note that, by definition, more than one gap, or two if the names of both parents are expected, necessarily implies descent, over multiple generations, as opposed to filiation, which concerns only ego and his/her parent(s). When Paulus says that the Berlin Letter (about which more below) invokes filiation as an argument for legitimate rights to succession to the throne, she clearly meant descent in the Anglo-American anthropological sense of the term. See Paulus 2013, 431.

29. Schneider 1967, 65.

30. Sahlins 1965, 104–6.

31. Fortes 1959, 208.

In major territorial descent groups, there is no particular relation between the descent ideology and group composition. . . . The ideology of descent has a career of its own, largely independent of internal contradictions in recruitment. . . . Facts of life overcome norms of membership. And if the facts be known, the ancestry is mixed. . . . Purity of lineage has been undone. . . . Therefore, a serious objection is in order to the popular tactic of perceiving structural principle ("jural rule") as the outcome of how people are associated on the ground and in fact. In the conventional wisdom, structure is the precipitate of practice. . . . But immediately we shift our sights to the major descent system, the received wisdom falls to the ground.³²

This perspective will be helpful when we turn to the question of matrilinearity in ancient Iran, specifically in Elam, a topic on which simplistic conclusions have frequently been drawn based on evidence that, instead of testifying to the uniqueness of Elamite social structure, simply needs to be understood in light of comparative evidence from around the world.

One aspect of kinship systems that has gone largely unrecognized in most studies of Elamite, Achaemenid, Arsacid, and Sasanian society is the very important distinction between what Lewis Henry Morgan (1818–81) termed classificatory vs. descriptive kinship terminology. Although a voluminous body of literature, much of it critical, has sprung up since the nineteenth century on the validity of this distinction, its fundamental utility remains, as argued cogently by Leslie White and Meyer Fortes,³³ among others. To put it simply, classificatory relations are socially, not biologically, defined. As Elman Service emphasized sixty years ago, "no one has succeeded in showing that there is, in fact, a simple direct correlation between an actual genealogical form of a society and a particular kind of kinship terminology." Moreover, paraphrasing Radcliffe-Brown, Service observed, "kinship terms are used in address and reference as denotative of social positions relevant to interpersonal conduct. They are, therefore, a form of status terminology"³⁴ and are not always to be taken literally in the sense of biological relations between parents, children, siblings, parents' siblings, and so forth. In other words, in classificatory systems, fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, aunts, and uncles are socially, not biologically, defined. As Morgan noted in describing the Malayan system, "my father's brother is my father; his son and daughter are my brother and sister . . . and I apply to them the same terms I do to my own brothers and sisters. . . . My father's sister, in like manner, is my mother; her children are my brothers and sisters. . . . My mother's brother is my father; and his children and descendants follow in the same relationships as in the previous cases."³⁵ To cite another example, among the Tallensi of northern Ghana, as Jack Goody noted, where "'sister' can refer to

32. Sahlins 1965, 104–6.

33. White 1958; Fortes 1969, 20–21.

34. Service 1960, 750.

35. Morgan 1868, 444–45.

clan females as a whole,” the rule of exogamy is so strong that a taboo exists against marrying even distantly related classificatory “sisters.”³⁶

As demonstrated below, the distinction between biological and socially constituted parents and siblings, or members of different generations more broadly, has enormous implications for our understanding of many situations attested in ancient sources. Ignorant of the reality and significance of classificatory kinship systems, Western commentators have often naively assumed that every reference to a father, mother, brother, or sister implies the narrow, biological definition of such terms, as it would, generally speaking, apply in modern Western societies. Once that simplistic equivalence is stripped away, however, many problems that have plagued scholars for centuries can be resolved, such as the case of the Elamite king Hutelutuš-Inšušinak (c. 1120 BC), who refers to himself as the “son” of three different ancestors. In the same way, when descent is viewed as an organizing principle, rather than the projection of a biological diagram, then the question is not whether a family tree is fabricated or falsified, a charge that has sometimes been leveled at certain ancient Iranian rulers, nor is the issue at stake “genealogical amnesia” vs. accurate recording. Rather, descent is a blueprint of recruitment and inclusion, as Sahlins stressed. We should keep this perspective in mind when we look at some of the Elamite and Old Persian evidence, in particular, for, as Fortes pointed out, paraphrasing Bronislaw Malinowski, “a genealogy is, in fact . . . a legal charter and not an historical record.”³⁷ This sounds like a sentiment with which Darius I would have concurred.

Turning now to preferential marriage patterns, these are often intimately linked to kinship and feature in several of the chapters herein. A favorite topic of anthropologists all over the world, like kinship studies in general, preferential marriage patterns have received less attention in the study of Near Eastern antiquity, except, it seems, when it comes to incest or so-called next-of-kin marriages. Two forms of preferential marriage, so-called cross-cousin and parallel-cousin marriage, have generated an enormous body of literature since the nineteenth century. Cross-cousins, a term coined by E. B. Tylor (1832–1917),³⁸ are the children of siblings of the opposite sex (that is, brothers and sisters), whereas parallel-cousins are the children of siblings of the same sex (that is, of a set of brothers or a set of sisters). This classification is linked to the concept of the “moiety,” since cross-cousins are by definition members of opposite halves or moieties of a group, whereas parallel-cousins, like siblings, are always members of the same half.³⁹ For Tylor, “cross-cousin marriage is part and parcel of exogamy,” and exogamy is the surest

36. Goody 1956, 302.

37. Fortes 1953, 27–28.

38. Tylor 1889, 263. Cf. Crawley 1907.

39. Urban 1996, 100.

means of building alliances for social groups faced with “the simple practical alternative between marrying-out and being killed out.”⁴⁰

Marriage preferences, however, are rarely strictly binary. Adam Kuper noted what all of us have probably observed in our own social circles: “Sustained alliances between a few families in the same ecological niche gave the members of these clans a powerful competitive advantage.”⁴¹ Yet as Malinowski’s South African student Isaac Schapera observed in the case of the Tswana of Botswana, while cross-cousin marriage was preferred, any cousin would do, and although matrilineal cross-cousin marriage was common throughout Tswana society, Tswana nobles opted when possible for patrilineal parallel-cousin marriage—that is, with the father’s brother’s daughter. As Kuper wrote, “In both cases, the reason was very similar. Men tried to reinforce relationships with powerful kin. For a commoner, these were often mothers’ brothers. For a noble, the best-placed relatives would be fathers’ brothers.”⁴² In fact, there is perhaps no better illustration of this, as Kuper pointed out, than the Rothschild family, who, from 1824 to 1877, witnessed the marriages of thirty-six patrilineal descendants of the *pater familias* Mayer Amschel Rothschild, thirty of which involved cousins and twenty-eight of which were first and second cousins. “First or second cousins related through the male line only.”⁴³ This means that a staggering 78 percent of those marriages involved parallel-cousins.

THE NEXT STEP

The topics just adduced all feature in the following chapters, where I discuss a range of issues extending from succession and endogamy to dowry, brideprice, residence, the definition of tribe, patronymics, the avunculate, the levirate, and feudalism. As noted above, the lectures on which this text is based were never envisioned as a comprehensive presentation of kinship terms, let alone an exhaustive inventory of all kin-related data in ancient Iran. Rather, the aim was to highlight instances in the sources where our understanding can be deepened by drawing on insights from the work of some of the giants of social anthropology, as well as data from non-Iranian historical and literary studies. This attempt—for it is nothing more than that—should not be seen as an effort to privilege the data or conclusions of anthropology over those of the diverse branches of ancient Iranian studies. Nor is it a thought experiment. In deploying insights from anthropology,

40. Tylor 1889, 265, 267. In Fredrik Barth’s opinion, “This fact of exogamy has important implications, e.g. for the development of dispersed clans and normalizing of a ‘daughter’s son’ relationship as a mechanism for grafting foreign lineages to the dominant lineage of an area” (Barth 1986, 389).

41. Kuper 2008, 721.

42. Kuper 2008, 727.

43. Kuper 2008, 728.

I simply mean to open the way toward a better understanding of some of the Iranian data that may have gone unnoticed, underappreciated, or simply misunderstood over the years and to broaden the perspectives of historians, philologists, and archaeologists for whom the social fabric of past societies has, at times, been given less emphasis than it deserves.