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Anton Blok

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RAMS AND BILLY-GOATS: A KEY TO THE MEDITERRANEAN CODE OF HONOUR

ANTON BLOK

University of Nijmegen

Although anthropologists have dealt at length with the theme of honour and shame in the Mediterranean, the code of honour as such still awaits further unravelling. By combining structural with historical analysis, this article tries to demonstrate that the meaning of the horn-symbol as a disgraceful attribute of the deceived husband or *cornute* provides a key to an originally pastoral code of honour predicated upon virility and strength.

My wish has always been to take seriously Durkheim's idea that the properties of classification systems derive from and are indeed properties of the social systems in which they are used (Douglas 1975: 296).

The problem as to why deceived husbands in European societies have been referred to, derisively, as *cornutes*, men who wear horns, has never been solved (cf. Brand 1877; De Jorio 1832; Elworthy 1895; Cocchiara 1932; Onians 1951). A recent study of gestures in western and southern Europe and the Mediterranean rehearses no fewer than fourteen different 'theories' on the symbolism of horns and the vertical horn-sign (Morris *et al.* 1979). Although the authors have reasonable doubts about most of these explanations, they still believe that 'one day, some new evidence will come to light that will favour one above the rest' (1979: 121). As will be shown, however, the problem has less to do with a scarcity of ethnographic data than with the mistake of separating a code from its context.

Oddly enough, anthropologists writing on honour and shame in Mediterranean societies have fared no better than earlier folklorists and modern students of semiotics. Ignoring that 'the elements of symbolism are not things in themselves but "relations" organized in pairs and sets' (Leach 1973: 48-9), their emphasis has been on horns as such, on horns as a phallic symbol, and on horns as attributes of the Devil (e.g. Pitt-Rivers 1961: 116; 1965: 46; Campbell 1964: 152). This leaves the question regarding the implicit meaning of the *cornute* completely open.

In the Mediterranean code of honour we are not concerned with horns as such, but with the horns of a specific animal, namely the billy-goat—a fact

regrettably played down by Pitt-Rivers in his essays on honour and completely disregarded in the aforementioned study of gestures. The deceived husband in Italy, Spain and Portugal is identified with the billy-goat (*becco*, *cabrón*, *cabrão*). The Italian term *becco* is a synonym of *cornuto*—husband of an unfaithful woman. In Spanish, too, *cornudo* and *cabrón* denote a man who consents to his wife's adultery. The Portuguese *cabrão* is likewise synonymous with *cornudo*, with the double meaning of billy-goat and deceived husband or lover.¹ We may thus ask: why of all horned animals just the billy-goat?

External analogies and internal homologies

The answer may be quite simple for those familiar with certain characteristics of the behaviour of these animals. Like the deceived husbands, billy-goats tolerate the sexual access of other males to females in their domains, as I could observe when I lived for some years in a Sicilian mountain village. In his study of a Castilian rural community, Kenny (1966: 83) writes:

In popular terminology a wife's looseness is reduced to the level of mating among goats. I was assured by a shepherd that when two male goats fight over a female the winner covers her first and then allows the loser to do so. To call a man a 'buck' or 'he-goat' (*cabrón*) is the worst possible insult, the important implication being that he consents to the adultery of his wife. When referring to a cuckolded husband, it is said that he has been given 'horns'.

In ancient Greece and Rome, the billy-goat was considered a lascivious and somewhat anomalous animal, epitomising unrestrained nature. Summarising the views of various Classical writers, Keller (1909: 308) remarks that:

already at the age of seven months, the billy-goat was able to procreate, and the extravagant voluptuousness, already visible in his eyes, uses the animal up so quickly, that he loses his strength in a few years, reaching senility before the age of six.

In several respects, the billy-goat differs sharply from another horned animal typical of the Mediterranean, namely the ram. Unlike the billy-goat, the ram tolerates no rivals. Shepherds must regulate the number of rams with precision according to the size of the herd to prevent rams from fighting one another if the number of ewes decreases. Whereas two billy-goats are required to cover roughly fifty goats, one ram will serve at least the same number of ewes (cf. Keller 1909: 308, 319).² From antiquity onwards, the ram has been known for his virility, strength and fierceness. In various European languages the verb 'to ram' still connotes the most striking feature of this animal. Next to the bull, the ram was considered the most procreative of all animals (Keller 1909: 322). No wonder then that these characteristics have qualified the ram as an appropriate symbol of kings and the most powerful and prestigious gods, such as Ammon, Zeus, Apollo and Poseidon, and that the Latin *aries* (ram) is related to the Greek *aristos*, the best one (cf. Keller 1909: 319–26). Although in ancient Mediterranean myth billy-goats are also associated with gods, these are nature-like gods, such as Pan, Bacchus and Venus, known for their unrestrained behaviour.

In Mediterranean thought, rams and billy-goats form a distinct pair. Their

opposition reflects the differences between honour and shame. In the Old Testament—as in ancient Greece—rams are sacrificed to express gratitude to a god for his bounty, whereas billy-goats are sacrificed by sinners to appease the god's wrath (see Genesis 22, where Abraham sacrifices a ram instead of his son Isaac; Leviticus 10 and 16 for the notion of 'scapegoat', better rendered in the German word *Sündenbock*; and Numbers 15).³ As a symbol of honour and power, the ram formed the counterpart of the billy-goat, the symbol of shame. This union of opposites replicates and in fact stands in a homologous relation with the complementary oppositions between sheep and goats, right and left, good and evil (cf. Matthew 25).

In everyday language, Sicilians rarely refer directly to the ram as a symbol of strength, virility and honour. Only once did I hear a shepherd, pointing at the head and beautifully curved horns of a ram, speak of *il vero maschio*, the real male. An implicit reference to rams is nonetheless contained in the standard expression *un uomo coi coglioni grossi* ('a man with big testicles'), used by Sicilians to denote an influential and powerful personage.⁴ In the village where I stayed, lived a woman forced by circumstance to take care of many things which are usually men's affairs. She accomplished these tasks in a way which earned her wide approval. One male informant described her, favourably, as *una donna a cui mancano i coglioni*, that is, 'a woman who [only] lacked testicles [to make it as a man]'. He illustrated this phrase with a characteristic gesture: he moved both fists downwards in a curve, holding them demonstratively in front of the lower part of his body—the movement and posture evoking the image of a charging ram.

Although ethnographic material on the symbolic meaning of the figure of the ram is scarce, there are nevertheless important clues suggesting that in Mediterranean thought this animal has been since Homer's time the symbol of strength, honour, manliness and power, forming a complementary opposition with the billy-goat.⁵ Both animals differ in notable respects, but share enough features to form a distinct pair: both belong to the category of small livestock producing milk, cheese and wool, which sets them off from the bull, often and erroneously identified as the animal associated with the vertical horn-sign (e.g. Morris *et al.* 1979: 121–7).

Vestiges of classifications developed long ago by tribal pastoralists remain in the Mediterranean world. Since early times, sheep and goats have formed a principal source of subsistence for Mediterranean people (Braudel 1972: 85–94, 350–51; Finley 1977: 60–1; Houston 1964: 117). Indeed, the importance of small livestock is still carried in the word *pecunia* (from *pecus*, sheep, ram), meaning both wealth and livestock (cf. Keller 1909: 326, 432). The gradual expansion of agriculture at the expense of pasturage led both to the displacement of pastoralists to peripheral areas and to their stigmatisation.⁶ These long-term transformations could not but erode the categories of thought in which rams and billy-goats formed a union of opposites. In this way, the ram as one of the *imagines symbolicae* largely disappeared from the mental world of the Mediterranean population—as literally from the horizon of a growing peasant and urban population. Although goats are still part of daily village-life—a circumstance which may account for their persistence as a symbolic

image—the study of gestures mentioned earlier implies that none of the informants was aware that the vertical horn-sign referred to the billy-goat.⁷ This particular study clearly suffers from an urban bias, since there is abundant evidence, both linguistic and ethnographic, from rural areas attesting to the association between *cornutes* and billy-goats.

One may expect that the symbolism of rams and billy-goats is best conserved in the surviving pastoral communities on the margins of the Mediterranean region. Yet the excellent ethnographer Campbell, who studied the moral values of Sarakatsan communities in northern Greece, makes no mention of it. Is it possible, then, that the ram as a symbolic image has become obsolete even among shepherds? Campbell's book contains evidence, however, that in Sarakatsan thought rams and billy-goats do form a distinct pair of opposites, as part of a more comprehensive symbolic representation hinging on the complementary notions of honour and shame.⁸

Among the Sarakatsani sheep and men are opposed in a binary fashion to goats and women. Sheep are milked exclusively by men, while women usually milk the goats (Campbell 1964: 31–2; cf. Földes 1969). Here Campbell refers to 'complementary oppositions'. But he does not push his analysis far enough to realise that a key to the code of honour lies within easy reach, as may be seen from the following remarks:

For the Sarakatsani, sheep and goats, men and women, are important and related oppositions with a moral reference. Sheep are peculiarly God's animals, and their shepherds, made in His image, are essentially noble beings. Women through the particular sensuality of their natures are inherently more likely to have relations with the Devil; and goats were originally the animals of the Devil which Christ captured and tamed for the service of man. It is consistent with these ideas that sheep and shepherds in their respective animal and human worlds display ideal moral characteristics. Sheep are docile, enduring, pure, and intelligent. When the shepherd carries out a small veterinarian operation or when the ewe gives birth, the animal suffers in silence. To match this purity and passive courage shepherds ought to be fearless and devoted guardians, and clean in the ritual sense. After sexual intercourse a shepherd must carefully wash his hands before milking sheep and it is generally preferable that the two shepherds of the flock of milking ewes should be unmarried men (Campbell 1964: 26).

Women and goats are conceptually opposed to men and sheep. Goats are unable to resist pain in silence, they are cunning and insatiate feeders. Greed and cunning are important characteristics of the Devil and Sarakatsani will often say that although Christ tamed these animals the Devil still remains in them. Sarakatsani keep some goats to exploit that part of their grazing land which is unfit for sheep. But as animals they are despised, and a stani with too high a proportion of goats to sheep loses prestige. Women are not, of course, simply creatures of the Devil but the nature of their sexuality which continually threatens the honour of men, makes them, willingly or unwillingly, agents of his will. It is consistent, therefore, that in the practical division of labour women rather than men care for the goats (Campbell 1964: 31).

The ethnographic evidence thus reveals the following symbolic pattern which I take as specific to a Mediterranean code of honour:

rams	—	billy-goats
sheep	—	goats
honour	—	shame
men	—	women
virile man	—	<i>cornute</i> (<i>becco, cabrón, cabrão</i>)

virility	— femininity
strong	— weak
good	— evil
silence	— noise
pure	— unclean

Following Lévi-Strauss (1962a; 1962b), we can speak here of homologies, not just external analogies between social groups and species of animals, but internal homologies between two systems of differences: between animal species (nature) and between groups of people (culture). The differences between honour and shame, and specifically those between jealous husbands and *cornutes*, are homologically phrased in terms of the differences between rams and billy-goats. As has long been recognised, men have used animals to represent the internal differentiation of their society (cf. Douglas 1975). In this sense, the operations of Mediterranean pastoralists have responded to the more general problem, 'faire en sorte que l'opposition, au lieu d'être un obstacle à l'intégration, serve plutôt à la produire (Lévi-Strauss 1962a: 128).

Only in this context can the symbolism of the horns and the *cornute* be fully understood. The deceived husband is dishonourable, and in more than one regard. His wife's adultery raises doubts not only about his sexual capacities but also about his capacity to protect her from the advances of other men, that is, his ability to control and monopolise his wife, to ensure her chastity and thus to guarantee the immunity of his domain.⁹ Successful claims on a woman entail domination of other men, both from the point of view of the husband who jealously guards his wife, and of the adulterer, who shows himself to be more powerful than the husband. Hence the 'domestication' of women, which has often been regarded as one of the most striking features of all Mediterranean regions (cf. Schneider 1971). Since they lend themselves to anthropomorphic symbolism, the differences between the habits of rams and billy-goats (rather than any other pair or set of opposites) have been seized upon to express the differences between strong, virile, courageous men and the weaklings, those who fail to meet the demands of a pastoral life in which, according to Campbell's apt phrase, 'reputation is impossible without strength' (1964: 317).

There is thus no need to speculate about horns as such. It is not enough to point to the analogy between the billy-goat and the deceived husband, because the meaning of the symbol only becomes clear in relation to the symbol of its counterpart, the ram.¹⁰ Honour, too, acquires its meaning only in relation to shame.

Homologously to the complementary oppositions already mentioned, the Mediterranean code of honour includes those between the right hand and the left hand (e.g. Höeg 1925: 20), pastures and home, outside and inside, public and private spheres (e.g. Bourdieu 1979a; 1979b; Wolf 1969), healthy and ill, and the complementary opposition between cheese and milk. Sicilian men rarely drink milk. In fact, they regard it as abominable. Nor do women expect them to drink it. When it comes to dairy products, men prefer cheese. It is widely believed that milk (and *ricotta* to a lesser extent) is only good for women, children, the aged, and those who are ill, that is, people who belong to the category of the weak. It should be noted that milk from sheep always has

to be processed into cheese, while goats produce milk that can be directly consumed. The differences between cheese and milk are thus a particular instance of those between culture and nature, and both correspond to the social differentiation between men and women, between strong and weak.¹¹ This brings us to the subject of the next section.

Honour and the physical person

In spite of its erosion by the expansion of agriculture, the growth of towns and the rise of national states, the concept of Mediterranean honour is still primarily contingent on physical strength and bearing, especially so in small-scale rural communities in peripheral and mountainous areas, such as the Barbagia in central Sardinia, Sicily's western interior, the Zagori in northern Greece, the Andalusian sierras and Kabylia in northern Algeria.

The case of the *cornute* neatly exemplifies how closely the notions of moral and physical integrity are interwoven. First, the chastity of a woman has been violated, which damages both her reputation and that of her husband and family. Second, the deceived husband cannot, without having rehabilitated himself through violence, easily show up in the public domains dominated by competitive men. According to a popular saying in Sicily, to appear in public would 'hurt his horns'. Therefore *cornutes*, like women, try to avoid the public realm, thus aggravating their disgrace. Writing on public and private spheres among the Kabyles in Algeria, Bourdieu remarks:

All informants spontaneously give as the essential characteristic of the man of honour the fact that he *faces* others . . . (1979a: 128).

A man who spends too much time at home in the daytime is suspect or ridiculous: he is 'a house man', who 'broods at home like a hen at roost'. A self-respecting man must offer himself to be seen, constantly put himself in the gaze of others, confront them, face up to them (*qabel*). He is a man among men. Hence the importance attached to the games of honour, a sort of theatrical performance, played out in front of others (1979b: 141)

Metaphors and gestures expressed in the idiom of the human body (in West-European languages still implicit in the saying 'loss of face' and in the German *Ansehen*, which means both 'appearance' and 'reputation') abound in everyday conversation among Mediterranean men.¹² As the case of adultery suggests, the discourse of honour invariably bears on notions of physical integrity and strength. In Andalusia, the popular term *hombria*, manliness, refers to courage and the capacity to resist claims and encroachments on what a man considers his property. *Hombria* implies a direct reference to the physical basis of honour: those who live up to this ideal have *cojones* (testicles), while those who fail to show fearlessness are lacking in manliness and are considered *manso*, that is, castrated, tame. *Manso* is derived from the animal world, and is used to indicate a castrated ox or mule, which, as a consequence of the operation, has become more tractable (cf. Pitt-Rivers 1961: 89–91). In Sicily, too, the concept of honour is bound up with notions of virility and physical strength. As noted before, a powerful patron is called 'a man with big

testicles'; while a person who tolerates encroachments on his domains is called *manso*, with the same meanings as in Andalusia. The idea of physical integrity is also implied in the expression *in gamba* (from *gamba*, leg), meaning 'stalwart'. Likewise, the Sicilian phrases *omu di ficatu* and *omu di panza* (derived from the words for liver and belly), symbolise courage and endurance, qualities also contained in the well-known concept of *omertà* (from *omu*, man, rather than from *umiltà*, humility), the hallmark of *mafiosi* and bandits, who are specialists in the use of violence (Alongi 1886: 74–5; Blok 1974: 211–12; Schneider & Schneider 1976: 192–4). As in other European languages, the current expression *fare bella figura*, to cut a good figure, and the reverse, *fare brutta figura*, carry connotations of the physical person, while referring to a man's public image and reputation.

In Sicilian society honour is at stake whenever property rights are wilfully infringed: when the chastity of a woman is violated, when livestock or crops have been stolen, when part of the harvest is damaged, when cattle, sheep or goats are driven through another man's pastures or fields (*pascolo abusivo*) or when fruit-trees or vines have been cut down. In all these cases the honour of the owner, proprietor or guard is impugned. Sometimes, these infringements are denoted by the term *sfregio*, affront. Again we are concerned with the idiom of the human body, since *sfregio* literally means the disfigurement or mutilation of someone's face by cutting his cheek with a knife so as to leave a long, visible scar as a lasting mark of dishonour. *Un furto per sfregio* is thus a special kind of theft (sheep or cattle), carried out not to ruin the owner but to jeopardise his honour in revenge, to damage his reputation. This may explain the excitement and the violent encounters that even 'little' damage or a 'small' offence can bring about. There is a parallel here with the so-called *point d'honneur* in western Europe under the *ancien régime*: on account of an 'insignificant' incident, men demanded satisfaction, and challenged their opponents to fight it out in a duel. (These were, of course, by no means bagatelles for the people concerned, since an affront could imply that doubts had been raised about the group membership of the offended. Therefore nobles in early modern Europe were to some extent immune to offences from those who did not belong to the 'good Society', and who consequently lacked *Satisfaktionsfähigkeit*, that is, the right to provoke a duel.) Very similar attitudes are prevalent among the Kabyle, where *nif*, point of honour, literally means 'nose' (Bourdieu 1979a: 99–103). For the Sarakatsani, physical perfection is an important ideal, both for women and men. Campbell writes that 'Maidens must be virgins, and even married women must remain virginal in thought and expression' (1964: 270); while 'a youth ought to be tall, slim, agile, and tough. Any kind of physical deformity is fatal to the reputation of a young shepherd' (Campbell 1964: 278). Adult males must be *barbatos*, literally 'provided with a beard', but metaphorically,

well endowed with testicles and the strength that is drawn from them. The word also describes a certain ruthless ability in any form of endeavour. Here again we see the 'efficient' aspect of manliness. . . . The manliness that is related to honour requires this physical basis, yet it must discipline animal strength and passions to its own ideal ends (1964: 269–70).

In such Mediterranean pastoral communities the notion of honour hinges directly on manly, self-assertive values (cf. Schneider 1971; Herzfeld 1980). Reputations can only be made and maintained on the basis of physical force and courage. The moral and physical existence of transhumant shepherd families depends on the capacity and readiness of men to defend themselves physically against thefts, insults and offences. Among the Sarakatsani

although aimless violence is dishonourable there is no missing the pleasure it gives when a man is forced to kill; nor the prestige which it brings him. For there is no more conclusive way of showing that you are stronger than by taking away the other man's life (Campbell 1964: 318).

Pitt-Rivers has pointed to this intimate relation between honour and the physical person (1965: 25–9; 1968: 505–6). He writes that honour is linked to the physical person 'in terms of the symbolic functions attached to the body: to the blood, the heart, the hand, the head, and the genitalia' and that 'any form of physical affront implies an affront to honour', while 'the ultimate vindication of honour lies in physical violence'. Yet he does not pursue the question *why* honour is symbolised in terms of the physical person and *how* this code has developed over time. Why, indeed, has the English word *comute*, along with its equivalents in other West-European languages, become obsolete—together with much of the vocabulary of honour (cf. Pitt-Rivers 1965: 39; 1974: 7; Berger 1970)—while in southern Europe, particularly in peripheral rural communities, these notions are still very much alive?

Honour and state-formation

The strong emphasis on physical integrity and strength in the Mediterranean discourse of honour suggests that the people who think in these terms cannot depend on stable centres of political control for the protection of their life and patrimony. In the absence of effective state control, they have to rely on their own forces—on various forms of self-help (Steinmetz 1931; Black-Michaud 1975). These conditions of the wider power fields put a premium on self-assertive qualities in men, involving the readiness and capacity to use physical force in order to guarantee the immunity of life and property, including women as the most precious and vulnerable part of the patrimony of men.¹³ The extremes of this sense of honour are reached when even merely glancing at a woman is felt as an affront, as an incursion into a male domain, touching off a violent response. When might is right, women's virginity and chastity can become men's dominant concern, the physical integrity of women forming the linchpin of male reputation. Hence the intimate relation between honour and strength as expressed in the idiom of the human body and symbolised in terms of a specific set of animals. Moral and physical integrity can be related to the point that

to maintain one's honour is so much a duty, that one derives from it the claims to the most frightful sacrifices—not only self-inflicted ones, but also those involving others (Simmel 1968: 405).¹⁴

During the past two centuries, the role of physical strength in the West European concept of honour has lost much of its significance. In everyday language, the term 'honour' and its various derivations have acquired archaic and sometimes ironic overtones. In fact, *cornutes* have become 'cuckolds', a term in which the link with the physical person has gradually lost its explicit imprint, while women have become much less dependent on men for their protection and immunity. With the growing pacification and democratisation of western societies, cultural forms of homage and chivalry have slowly eroded. Apart from some important exceptions, to be presently discussed, the vocabulary in which differences of rank—especially those based on physical strength—were expressed, is disappearing from ordinary conversation. The notion of honour as a universal element of social evaluation is now phrased in other terms. One avoids the word honour. The impugned honour of yore has become the hurt vanity of today. Giving evidence of pride and self-importance is no longer appreciated. Those who indulge in it are now regarded as pompous and condescending, while in former times they were merely competing for points of honour. Insults are no longer felt to be injuries. Without 'losing face' one can often simply ignore them, the more so since insults have become more embarrassing and painful to the offender than to the offended. It has been noted that in our society 'the *reality* of the offence will be denied' (Berger 1970: 339).

In two widely different sectors of western societies, the notion of honour is still very similar to those prevalent in early modern Europe and the Mediterranean. One can understand why. First, it thrives in certain peripheral subcultures of 'men in groups', in bars, dockyards, prisons, and the premises of organised crime, where rank and esteem are largely matters of sheer physical force. Second, a code of honour intimately linked with the physical person is still conspicuous in the army as well as among sportsmen and certain members of the surviving aristocracy. In these sectors of society, honour does not only concern the bearing and physical feats of human beings, but also the power and prestige of the national state to which they belong, and which they represent. Indeed, since the French Revolution, the discourse of national honour has gradually appropriated the vocabulary of personal honour (cf. Cobb 1969; Hampson 1973; Pitt-Rivers 1974: 7). In particular matches and games, in diplomatic negotiations, and in wars, national honour may be regarded as at stake. It has been rightly emphasised that the *point d'honneur* 'is still evident today in the intercourse between sovereign nations' (Jones 1959: 35). Since the end of the sixteenth century, the functions of attack and defence and the corresponding loyalties and sentiments have step by step been transferred from local and regional levels to the national arena. Dynastic states have grown into national states, and the armies with which the European powers used to fight one another have become national armies. For protection and security, people have become much less dependent upon their own forces. Their self-help has given way to multiple forms of state-control.¹⁵ The extension and differentiation of social networks, along with pacification and democratisation, entailed a gradual subduement and 'refinement' of feelings and increasing control of bodily functions—specifically the control of violent impulses in everyday

social intercourse (cf. Elias 1969*b*). Only in this context can we understand why and how a person's bearing and physical strength have lost much of their importance to his social position, self-esteem, personal identity, pride and sense of honour. With the expansion of scale, moreover, public opinion acquired other forms and functions: it became less *existenzbegründend*, less a foundation of social existence, than in the small-scale, relatively closed circles of herdsmen, peasants, and aristocrats, whose sense of honour and personal identity were largely and sometimes completely dependent on membership in those communities.¹⁶

Conclusions

I have tried to argue that the symbolism of the horns of the deceived husband or *cornute* should be understood as an integral part of an originally pastoral code of honour, predicated upon virility and physical strength. The Mediterranean code of honour, to which the complementary opposition between rams and billy-goats forms a main key, emphasised the physical integrity of both men and women. In rural communities located on the margins of larger state-societies, women formed the most precious and vulnerable part of the patrimony of men, who were thus prompted to sustain self-assertive qualities. Under the impact of the wider process of state-formation and of the 'civilising' movement, the code of honour in western Europe—once similar in its main features to the Mediterranean variant—lost much of its significance. Leaving little room for the idiom of the physical person, the terminology of honour has largely become obsolete. Instead, the term 'civility', in which the connexion with the human body is much attenuated, has become more appropriate to denote honourable behaviour.

The anthropological literature on Mediterranean societies contains various fragments of the categories of thought with which this article has been concerned. This state of affairs is partly due to ecological and political discontinuities within the Mediterranean region—the *monde conçu* of rams versus billy-goats does not agree any more with the *monde vécu* of people who have slowly turned away from pastoralism—and partly to a lack of historical depth in most anthropological studies. Despite their attention to the so-called material basis of Mediterranean cultures, anthropologists have neglected the minutiae of the behaviour of domesticated animals. Moreover, as Davis (1977: 9–10) has indicated, few anthropologists who have worked in this part of the world have dealt with the means of orientation, with religious forms of expression and other collective representations. Although structuralists—such as Lévi-Strauss in his studies of myths and totemism—have been concerned mainly with a formal analysis of classification systems, abstaining from the study of the sequential order of events and from 'thick description' by endorsing an ahistorical perspective, one may also consider the Mediterranean code of honour as a function of pastoral and peasant communities only nominally integrated into state societies. Therefore, if my interpretation of this code of honour is plausible, new light may be thrown on an old problem: how structural and historical analyses can be combined.

NOTES

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¹ Cf. Zingarelli (1965); Pitt-Rivers (1965: 76); Cutileiro (1971: 142); and De Morais Silva (1950). The Portuguese term *cabra* (goat) also means 'promiscuous girl or prostitute'. On the meaning of the Spanish *chivato* (billy-goat, spy), see Gilmore (1980: 104).

² In the ethnography of Mediterranean communities information on the habits of domesticated animals is almost completely absent. Apart from my own work regarding western Sicily, I have drawn on the report of Moyal (1956), which concerns transhumant shepherds in southern France, and the study of Keller (1909). I should indicate that my research interests were quite different when I conducted field work in Sicily in the 1960's.

³ For ancient Greece, see Homer's *Iliad* (Book 3), where rams are offered to Zeus, and where Odysseus is compared with 'a thick-fleeced ram'. In the *Odyssey* (Book 9), the hero and his companions escape from the Cyclops tied under the bellies of rams. The biggest ram, which had carried Odysseus, was later sacrificed to Zeus.

⁴ An extremely powerful man is sometimes described as *un uomo con i coglioni fino a terra* ('with testicles reaching the ground').

⁵ See, for example, Herodotus, *History* (Book 2, ch. 2); and the passage on the ram as a symbol of a powerful ruler in Artemidoros, *Oneirocritica* (Book 2, ch. 12). A fifteenth-century edition of Fulgentius's *Mythologiae* contains a picture of Jupiter (Zeus) with the head of a ram above his own head and a billy-goat at his feet. Cf. the text of the fourteenth-century monk Ridevall in Liebeschütz (1926: 78–9 and Plate I); also Gombrich (1978: 135–7 and Plates 144, 145, 147), to whom I owe this reference. Further evidence concerning the opposition between rams and billy-goats may be found in the astrological literature on Aries and Capricornus.

⁶ Cf. Schneider (1971); Freeman (1970: 177–84; 1979); Braudel (1972: 94). On the stigmatisation of shepherds in central Europe, see Danckert (1963: 174–80); and Jacobeit (1961: 173–224).

⁷ The study *Gestures* is based on three years' research in 40 localities in 25 European countries. The authors were assisted by 29 research workers and interpreters. Their research involved detailed interviews with 1,200 informants regarding 20 different gestures (Morris *et al.* 1979: xiii).

⁸ The Sarakatsani, too, refer to the deceived husband as a man who wears horns (*keratas*), but Campbell misses this clue in following the lapsus of Pitt-Rivers (Campbell 1964: 152).

⁹ For the relations between the notion of honour and immunity, see Bourdieu (1979a: 115). Friedrich (1973) and Redfield (1975: 160–223) discuss Homeric honour in terms of integrity and purity. The meaning of the medieval concept of *honor* ranged between 'patrimony' and 'immunity' (cf. Niermeyer 1959). Of Sicilian *mafiosi*, men of honour par excellence, it is sometimes said that they are *intoccabili*, 'untouchable' in the sense of unapproachable and awe-inspiring, a quality which underwrites the immunity of their person and patrimony (Blok 1974: 146–7).

¹⁰ In his account of the Spanish expression *cabrón* and the English equivalent 'cuckold', Pitt-Rivers (1961: 116; 1965: 46) does not look for *sets* of animals. Nor does he point to the most obvious analogies. Instead, he regards the billy-goat as a symbol of sexuality (and horns as a phallic symbol), and then tries to explain the identification of the deceived husband with the billy-goat by means of what he calls 'a curious inversion'. He follows the same line of argument regarding the English expression 'cuckold' (from cuckoo, the bird which lays its eggs in other birds' nests). Yet both animals—billy-goats and male cuckoo—have been considered anomalous, simply because they accept the wanton behaviour of their females. This matter is discussed in more detail by Mario Alinei in a forthcoming issue of *Quaderni di Semantica*.

¹¹ Very similar oppositions have been described by Ott (1979) in her article on a French Basque mountain community, in which she deals with the analogy between the skill of making cheese and that of causing or preventing pregnancies.

¹² Cf. Mauss (1954: 38); and Goffman (1972: 1–15), who also refers to the discussions of the

Chinese conception of face. See also Pitt-Rivers (1961: 114) on the notion of shamelessness in Andalusia: to be *descarado* or *cara dura* (hard-faced; cf. Italian *sfacciato*, *faccia tosta*) is 'a far more serious matter than to be "thick-skinned", the nearest expression in English to it'.

¹³ On this point, see the perceptive remarks in Schneider (1971: 18). It has not always been recognised that women, at least in the peripheral rural communities discussed in this essay, form part of the patrimony of men, and that they, by implication, can have no honour. See, however, Black-Michaud (1975: 218), who writes: 'Women have no honour. But they do have "shame" or sexual modesty, the feminine counterpart of and the complement to honour, which both they and their menfolk must do their utmost to defend'.

¹⁴ In western Europe, the differentiation between moral and physical integrity is of recent origin. Until the early nineteenth century, the whole ritual of public torture and *post mortem* mutilation formed an integral part of punishment—adding infamy to death (cf. Foucault 1975: 36–72; Linebaugh 1975: 65–117; Blok 1979; and Ranum 1980). The idea that honour can be more important than life itself, has been known since antiquity—cf. Tacitus, who wrote in *Agricola* (ch. 33): 'an honourable death would be better than a disgraceful attempt to save our lives'; Snell (1975: 156); Walcot (1978: 15–16); the Arab proverb quoted in Farès (1932: 114); Ranum (1980: 66); and Elias (1969a: 145–6), who, writing on the French nobility under the *ancien régime*, also provides an explanation by stressing the relation between honour, personal identity and membership in the 'good Society'.

¹⁵ Steinmetz has emphasised the dialectic relation between self-help and state-control, when pointing out that self-help is the only device for people who are either abandoned (*im Stich gelassen*) or suffocated (*erstickt*) by central governments (1931: 522).

¹⁶ Cf. Simmel (1968: 403–6); and Elias (1969a: 144–51). How slowly this process took place, may be illustrated by the reception of the short story *Leutnant Gustl* by Arthur Schnitzler. Its publication in 1900 caused a sensation, especially in military circles, and the author, who had been an officer in the Austrian-Hungarian army, lost his military rank (see Scheible 1976: 84). For Germany, see Jones (1959), and Demeter (1964: 108–44, 260–86), who deals with the development of the jurisdiction concerning duelling. The fate of honour in Britain has lately been dealt with by James (1978).

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