

**“A Child is Two Thirds of His Mother’s Bother” (On the Mother’s Brother
/Sister’s Child Relationship as Reflected in the Arab Proverbs)**

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(Summary)

The proverbs in the patrilineal Arab society register elements of the so-called avunculate, i.e. a system of rules governing social behaviour underlying the close relationship that exists between the mother’s brother and her children. The picture of these relations gives a better idea of the Arab social development at an early stage, prior to the emergence of the currently dominating patriarchal structure. Although the meaning of such proverbs cannot be explained at all times, collections of Arab proverbs meticulously preserve the folklore material and make it possible to reconstruct unsuspected kinships that today’s society would reject or at least treat with irony were it not for the power of tradition that requires respect for ancestral wisdom. Clearly, this could explain the co-existence of some expressions of Arab kinship that may seem contradictory at first glance.