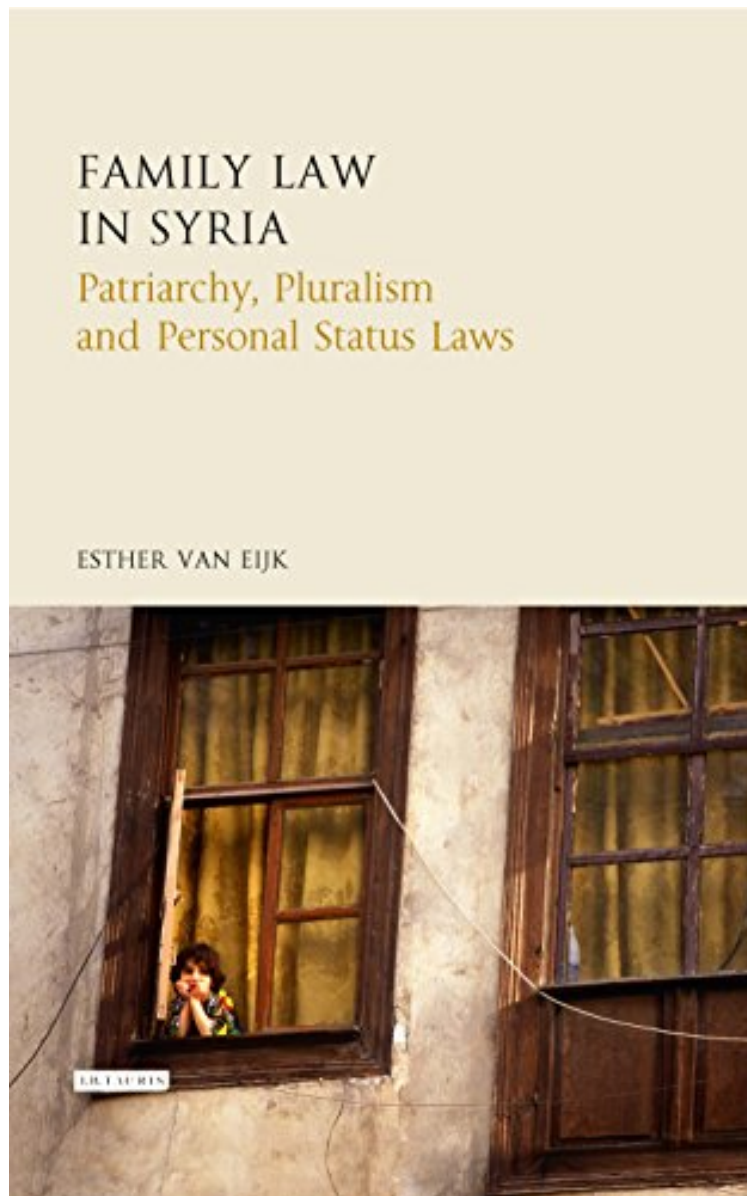


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Family Law in Syria (Library of Islamic Law)

Esther van Eijk

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The current Syrian crisis has its roots in the sectarian nature of the country's multi-religious society. Since Ottoman times, the different religious communities have enjoyed the right to regulate and administer their own family relations. Matters of personal status including marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance continue to be managed by a variety of religious laws and courts operating simultaneously within the legal system of the state. However, this complex system of competing jurisdictions has also affected inter-communal relations and has been used to deepen communal divides. Esther van Eijk discusses socio-legal practices in Syria by focusing on three courts: a shariyya, a Catholic court and a Greek-Orthodox court. While the plurality of Syrian family law is clear, she shows how irrespective of religious affiliation it is nevertheless characterised by the prevalence of shared cultural or patriarchal views and norms on marital relations, family and gender. Based on extensive fieldwork, *Family Law in Syria* offers a detailed analysis of a country that has in recent years been inaccessible to researchers. The book is a vital contribution to the growing literature on personal status laws in the Middle East and sheds light on the historical, socio-political and religious complexities and fault-lines that mark contemporary Syria.

"This book is a significant addition to the literature on contemporary family law in the Middle East, with valuable research material on Syrian law and court practice presented within the frames of emerging scholarly themes." - Lynn Welchman, Professor of Law, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London; "This is an excellent piece of work in a poorly researched topic. Indeed, while the personal status of Muslims attracted much attention, family law of non-Muslim communities in Muslim-majority societies was neglected. However, its study provides a wonderful entry into the legal and social evolutions of contemporary multi-confessional societies in which co-existence and tolerance became especially problematic recently." - Baudouin Dupret, Director of Research at the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), France, Associate Professor for Law, Political Science and Anthropology at University of Leiden, Netherlands, and University of Louvain, Belgium

About the Author Esther van Eijk is a postdoctoral researcher in the Faculty of Law at Maastricht University and holds a PhD from Leiden University. Her work has appeared in the books *Family Law in Islam: Divorce, Marriage and Women in the Muslim World* and *Sharia Incorporated: A Comparative Overview of the Legal Systems of Twelve Muslim Countries in Past and Present*. She has also published in the journals *Electronic Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law* and *Erasmus Law*. She is Board Member and Secretary of the Dutch Association for the Study of the Law of Islam and the Middle East.