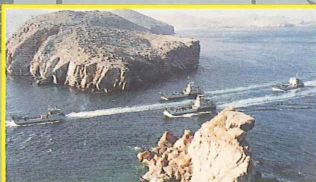
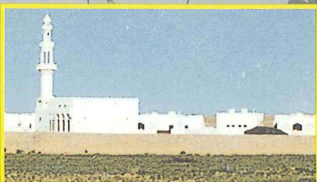
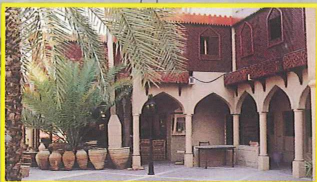
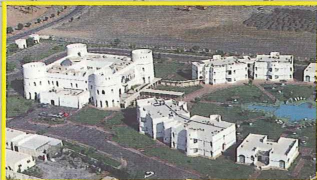
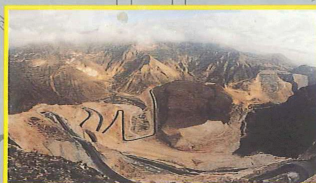
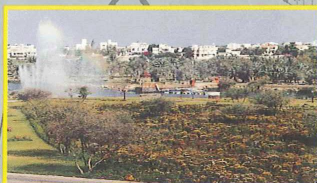
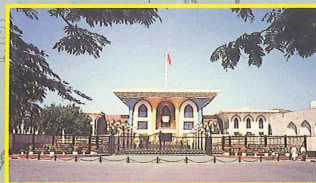


Sultanate
of Oman

Years of Endeavour and Achievement

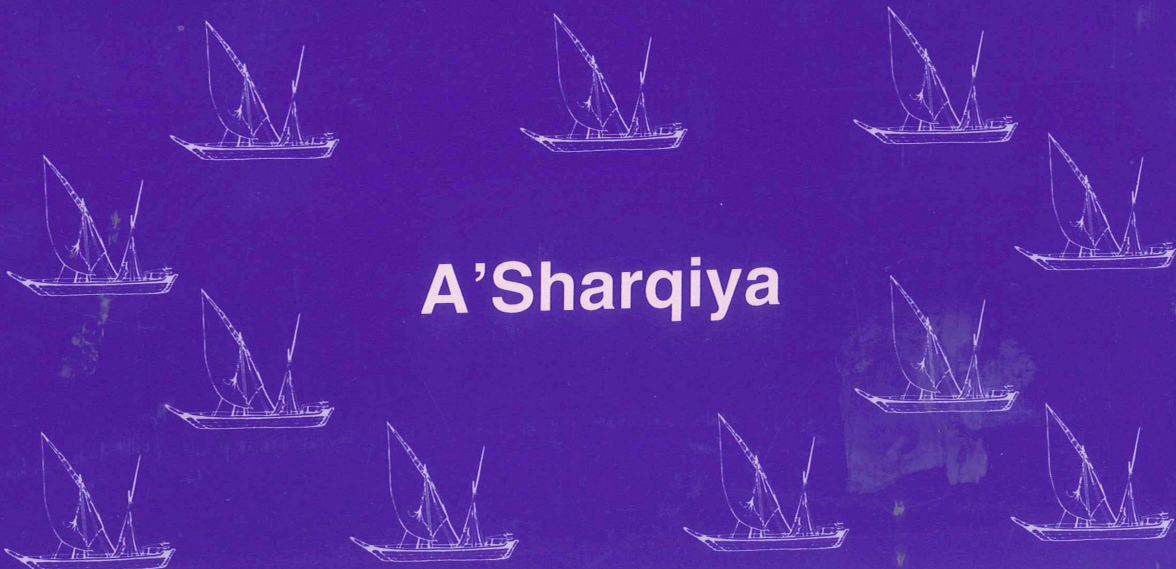


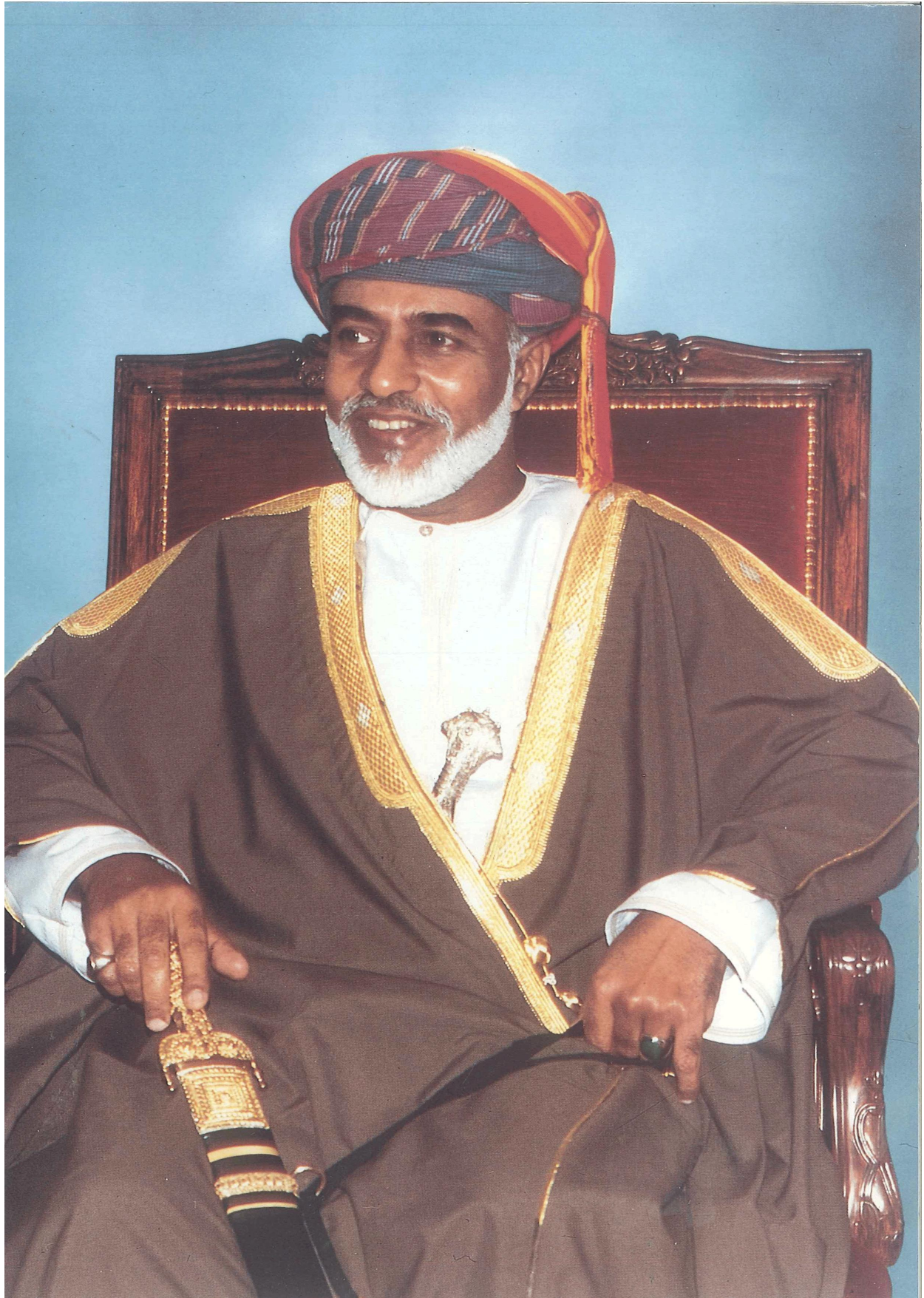
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Years of Endeavour and Achievement



A'Sharqiya





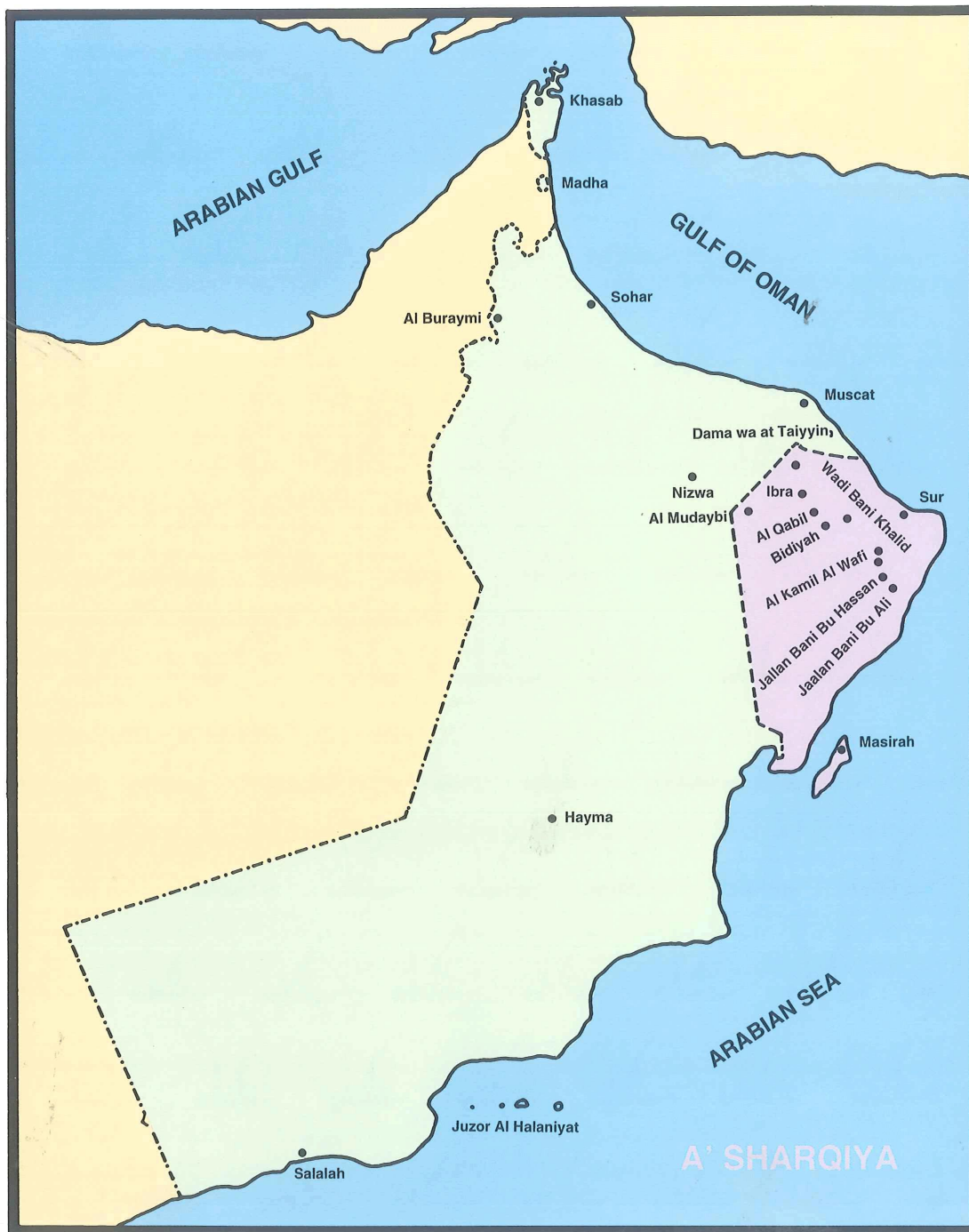
PROLOGUE

In an age when miracles have ceased, Oman has been privileged to witness its own miraculous transformation. The phenomenal successes of the past quarter of a century must be seen by any standards as constituting a remarkable period in history, certainly one with no parallel in modern times.

To assess the scale of what has been accomplished during the course of the Renaissance inspired and led by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, we must look beyond the physical landmarks, beyond even the time in which it was achieved, and view the human and cultural dimensions of the transformation. There we find the dedication and strength of purpose and also the pride in their country which has ever characterised the Omani people. The twenty five years which followed the new dawn which came on 23 July 1970 have been the formative years of a regenerated Oman, years which saw the successful struggle to regain the glories of the past and build the foundations of a future full of promise. In this review of the past 25 years, the Ministry of

Information has pleasure in presenting this set of ten volumes, "Years of Endeavour and Achievement" which recount the major episodes of Oman's history and its arduous path to its modern reconstruction, which include a brief resume of the geography and special features of each of the provinces.

These modest volumes do not aspire to contain more than the highlights of Oman's long and illustrious history and the successes of the Renaissance which has conferred such proud achievements on the land and people of Oman. "Years of Endeavour and Achievement" continues, and with it, it is confidently hoped, will come increasing prosperity, and the continued blessing of peace and stability. Today, as Oman advances towards the horizons of the 21st century, every Omani can take courage and faith from the leadership and solicitude for their future of their beloved leader, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said.





Years of Endeavour and Achievement

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos has been determined from the moment of his accession to improve the standard of living of his people and to provide coming generations with a full, fruitful and happy life. This achievement - the salvation of his country from its years of stagnation - has required a dedication and unity of effort by His Majesty and his people almost unparalleled in history.

The circumstances in which the country found itself in 1970 demanded what amounted to a declaration of a state of emergency. The situation was such that the desperate need for education and health care overrode any question of cost.

Today the success of those efforts can be seen in every aspect of the Sultanate's life - health care, education, housing, roads and communications, a variety of social services geared towards raising the standard of living of the Omani people, are all in place. It can be said that no fundamental need exists which has not been met in the Renaissance launched, led and stimulated by the Sultan's example.

Thus all of the needs for a healthy, literate and culturally satisfying life are today available to all Omanis, from the Shams mountains in the interior and the Qamar mountains in the remote south western corner of Dhofar; to the citizens of the stark rocky peaks of Musandam in the far north east. The fruits of development now belong in equal measure to the tiniest island of the Arabian Sea, to Thamrait and Muqshin and the settlements and towns of the western desert which challenge the harsh sands of the Rub' Al Khali or Empty Quarter. This is the tangible reality which is today part of the experience of every Omani citizen, irrespective of his origins or domicile, a mere 25 years from the accession of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos.

All this, of course, could not have been achieved without the massive injection of capital investment. Now the time has come when the responsibility for development must be shared as a collective obligation by all. Provision must be made for the increasing and youthful population to have the opportunities to play their full part in Omani's future in the knowledge that the fate of their country rests largely with their efforts, and careful measures must be taken to ensure that economic factors are taken fully into account.

The coming five-year Plan which will take effect

in January 1996, will pursue this road to balanced development, particularly now that the members of the Majlis Ash'Shura - representing the various regions and provinces - have contributed to its preparation, and in the process have expressed the opinions of their constituents.

It is important that the meaning of the term 'balanced development' be clarified in this context. It does not mean that development projects must be equally spread in the same number and type in every region, all of them enjoying permanent immunity against cutbacks. Development must be applied selectively for the benefit of the whole nation in those areas and in those forms when this can best be achieved.

Balanced development in the true sense cannot be achieved without the discipline of economic planning. The first consideration in assessing a region for investment must be to take account of its population; for a region populated by three thousand people cannot reasonably expect to obtain State investment of the same order of magnitude as a region with a population of fifty thousand. There has to be a sense of proportion in the allocation of funds.

Secondly, it would not be rational or fair to propose that equivalent quotas of State funding be allocated to regions of arid desert, coastal plain and rough mountain terrain. Every region demands an individual response to its specific development requirements, in line with the characteristics of the region and with a view to achieving a balance between satisfying as far as possible the needs of the regions and the needs and interests of the nation as a whole.

Thirdly, balanced development, with its projects

and priorities, and as it is anticipated that it will be effected in the Sultanate, will be preceded and supported by scientific studies to assess its economic viability and, in recognition of the two points outlined above, the relative natural advantages of each region will be examined and exploited.

Finally, and this is of the greatest importance, we cannot escape from the reality that resources, irrespective of the rate at which they might be expected to grow, will remain limited in the face of rising needs, a factor which makes it imperative that we are careful to choose the most appropriate plan. We have a difficult balance to strike between the two sides of the development equation: the resources available on the one hand and escalating needs on the other.

Over and above these controls, Oman is today faced by a challenge it shares with many other countries. It is being forced to review the schedule of its priorities and to tighten the reins on expenditure to more closely reflect available resources, while paying due respect to the needs and requirements of the coming stage of development. The challenge is presented by the instability of world oil prices and the fact that the future of these is no longer easily predictable as a consequence of a variety of international and regional factors.

Here in Oman, it has become necessary to acknowledge the sometimes unpalatable truth that it is no longer possible to achieve a result by taking short cuts or departing from the path of scientific development, with its specific programmes and precise methods.

To an equal extent it has become necessary to

acknowledge the logic of cost controls and to understand that proper development will never be the reward of misguided planning.

Efficient development is directly related to and subject to the level of economic activity. To expect otherwise or to attempt to purchase it by going into debt would not only fail, but would lead to disaster.



“The Mountain of Dreams” ... its origin in truth



Boat builders renovate the “Fatah Al Khair”



The people forced to leave the shores of Oman dreamed of returning, even before their journey, hoping for the simplest of necessities with which to fulfill their desire for a quiet simple life. They were merely dreams, but sometimes they changed into disturbing nightmares. The "Mountain of Dreams", however, we think of as having its origin in truth.



The Sharqiya has three different types of environment, each one with its own distinguishing features and special characteristics. The coastal area hugs the Arabian Sea, sweeping down to the Gulf of Oman. Here there is a noble conflict of powerful men. Their weapons are ships, made with their own strong hands, and their ammunition, nets, spun by their clever fingers. At the word, under the cover of night, they defy the awe-inspiring sea, opposing the tumultuous waves and struggle with the invisible adversary. They are caught between making a livelihood granted by the heavens and between the fierceness of the ferocious jaws of predatory sharks.

In the end, however, their God given livelihood triumphs and in the early hours of the morning the noble fighters return, their boats carrying nets with tons of "prisoners". They return with what has been granted them, to the sound of their traditional maritime songs, and, thanks be to God, they return safe and sound.

The sea is the primary source of wealth for the Sharqiya. It is paramount in Oman for fishing using traditional methods. In 1994 the total number of fish caught by these fishermen was 26,755 tons. The main fish of the Sharqiya is a type of shark, whose fins are sought after throughout the world, in addition to other types of deep-water fish, for which there is an increasing demand. It is of great importance to invest in and exploit these special resources, whether in the field of food industries or the exporting of various types of fish, which are a renewable source of wealth that will never be depleted.

What of the second environment and its characteristics ? It is formed of deep sand dunes



The sea provides a livelihood in Al-Sharqiya





with oases pulsating with tranquil Bedouin life in a pastoral environment. It derives its wealth from livestock, camels and horses, the development of which the government is now encouraging, through various services. The camels and horses for which

the Sharqiya is famous, are particularly fine in the Wilayat of Badiya, where they hold camel and horse races every weekend. The racing is enjoyed by both local people and people from abroad.

The third environment is the urban area - the city



A view of the beach



and its suburbs in both the desert and coastal environments. This makes a natural cocktail which blends the three environments, embodying the pulse of the people's lives who do not know idleness or inactivity and who have an aversion to



indolence and inaction. They are traders they buy and they sell they import and export. The third area has abundant fish and animal resources and trade, which they are bent on developing by modern methods.

At Ras Al Hadd, allied aeroplanes of the Second World War were hidden, and its twisting inlets are still used as a safe haven for sailing ships fleeing from violent storms or fearful of the raging winds.

In Wadi Bani Khalid, water falls from outlets in the famous cave - Maqa; it bursts out with a gurgling sound, forming a pool and, then before long disappears from sight, to reappear in "lakes" which make three falaj.

In Wadi Bani Jabir is the "Majlis Al Jin" (Place of the Jinn) located in a cave, discovered by satellite. It is the size of seven aeroplanes.

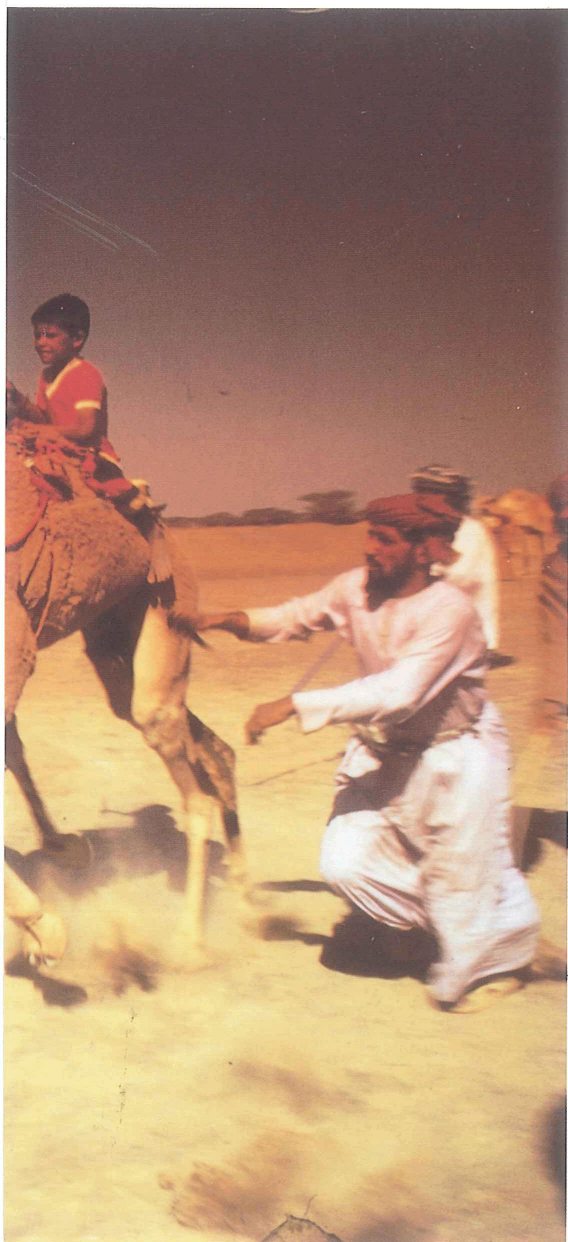
Qalahat was the abode of Malik Bin Faham Al Azadi Al 'Omani, who adopted it as his capital 2500 years before Christ. The island located in the Arabian Sea was once a base for Alexander the Great, who gave it the name "Serapsis". Here, in the traditional markets of the city, is a mirror of the heritage. They make embellishments for camels, saddles for horses, scabbards for swords, belts for ammunition the hooked khanjar and women's jewellery.

As regards their medicine, they use distinctive traditional methods for mending broken bones and other cauterization remedies.

With this long list of features and many others is it not a wonderful tourist attraction!



Camel racing is popular in Sharqiya



How to change this third environment so it could achieve the prosperity and stability its people so desired? How to change the Sharqiya from a place of exile to a centre of attraction. It was the boats of the Sharqiya which carried away the Omani emigrants, either secretly or openly before 1970, and it was at its beaches where the boats of the returnees anchored, in response to the call of their country and His Majesty, their Sultan.

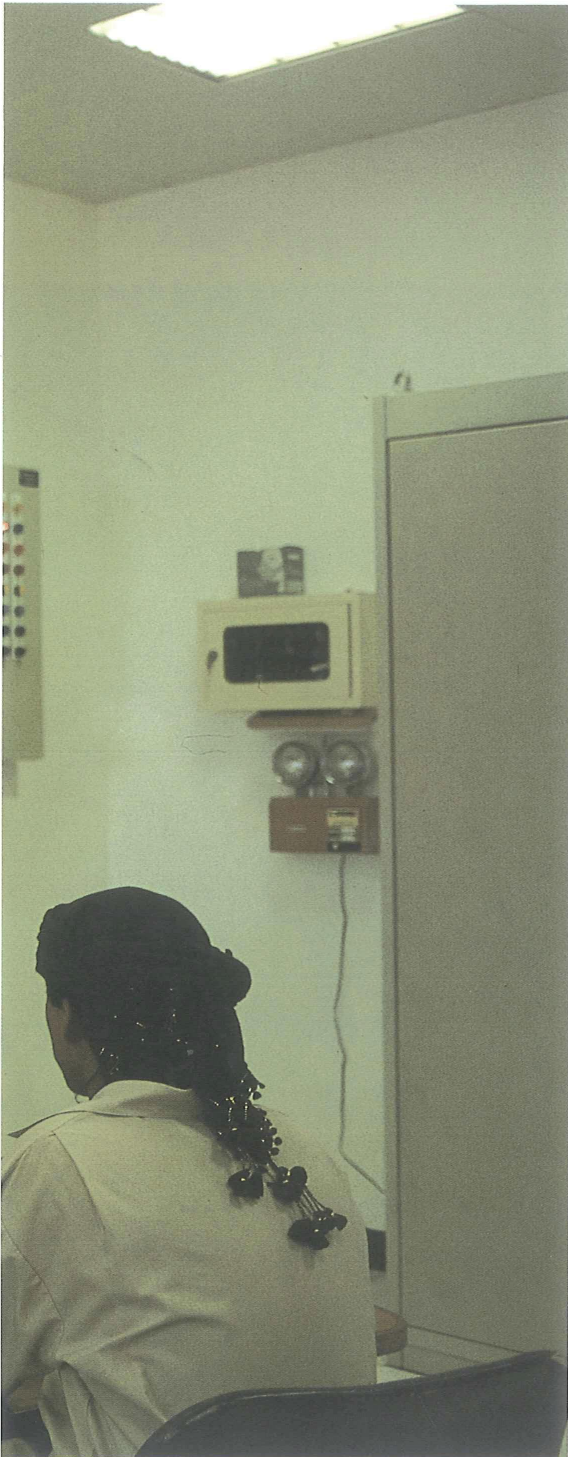
How to change the Sharqiya ? If the "Mountain of Dreams" was the name of a place in one of the Wilayats of the Sharqiya, then were the people of the area thinking about the "Mountains of Dreams" before 1970? The people forced to leave the shores of Oman dreamed of returning, even before their journey, hoping for the simplest of necessities with which to fulfill their desire for a quiet simple life.

No schools, no hospitals, no paved roads absolutely nothing limited means of livelihood, constricted living conditions and no freedom! They were only dreams swirling around in their heads, changing, sometimes, into disturbing nightmares. However, if the "Mountain of Dreams" was the name of a place in the Sharqiya then the mountains of dreams which its people thought about burst into reality, with the great achievements of the march led by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos.

What is there now ? Ten hospitals and eighteen health centres to take care of the citizens and their health needs. They have 608 beds, the annual use is 68% which clearly reflects the need. In addition, innoculations for children and pregnant women against various diseases amount to more than 16,000 a year, which reflects the value placed on health care. There are 154 schools for boys and girls in the three stages of education. More than



Sophisticated equipments now aids the worker



67,439 students, from a total of 258,344 adult inhabitants, study in them.

There are 12,044 telephone lines, 15 post offices, 6850 private post boxes, and hundreds of miles of paved roads.

There are 36 centres for the eradication of illiteracy, with 56 classes and 792 students and 78 classes to teach adults - 1958 students.

There are five centres for Omani women with about 521 members, which qualify them to participate in various fields in their country. This reflects the importance given the social role of women which did not exist before. Here is the "Mountain of Dreams" then, the origin of which is His Majesty the Sultan.

On the shores of the Sharqiya, Oman rekindled memories of its glorious maritime heritage, when a team of thirty men, wearing green shirts, working ten hours a day for six days a week and for a period of 165 days using more than 75,000 coconuts and four tons of fibre to make a ship "from straw and rope", which would sail one fifth the distance of the world (6,000 miles). A splendid trip which began with a gunshot when the crimson flag, embroidered with gold and emblazoned with "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate", was raised. The boat spread its sails, proclaiming the beginning of its trip to the port of Canton in China ... then returned to Oman. The name of the ship was the "Sohar" and it was made in Sur. It began the trip from Muscat to revive the glorious Omani heritage. The Omanis knew how to avoid the dangers of the "magnetic mountains" in the seas and oceans.

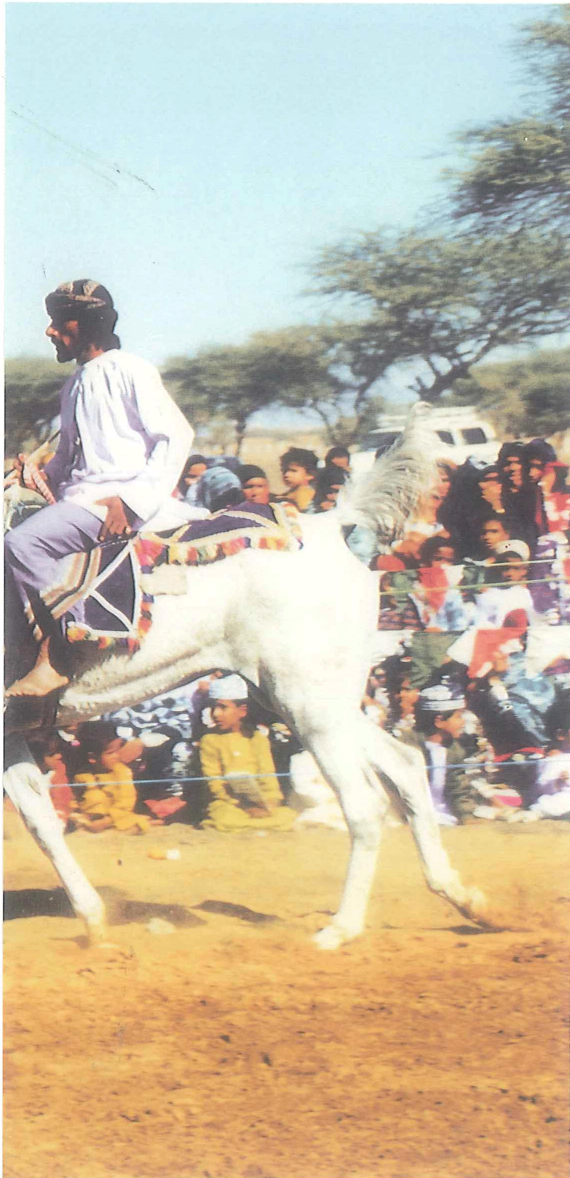
..... What else is in the Sharqiya ?



The Wilayats



Displays of horse manship are always popular in Sharqiya



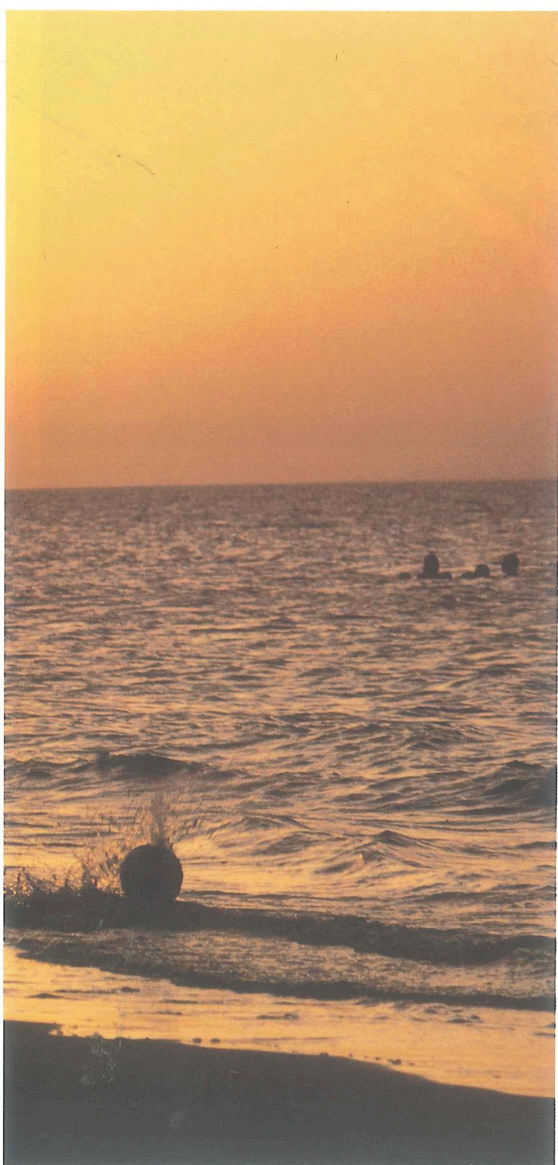
From the base of Alexander the Great, to the throne of Malik Bin Faham Al Azdi Al 'Umani, to the cave "Majlis Al Jinn", and to Ras Al Had to the hiding place of aeroplanes in the Second World War, the refuge of ships fleeing from raging storms and violent winds. All of them are witnesses to the fulfillment of the achievements that were promised them. The year 1970 was the starting point.



Wilayat Sur



Sunset in Sur



The total number of inhabitants in the Sharqiya is 258,344, and of these a 85% are Omani nationals.

The Sharqiya is made up of the following Wilayats:

The Wilayat of Sur, which has 53,504 inhabitants.

The Wilayat of Madaibi, which has 50,696 inhabitants.

The Wilayat of Ja'alan Bani Bu 'Ali, which has a population of 39,715.

The Wilayat of Ja'alan Bani Bu Hassan, which has 21,878 inhabitants.

The Wilayat of Ibra has a population of 19,986.

The Wilayat of Al Kamil and Al Waafi has a population of 16,712.

The Wilayat of Badiya, which has 15,136 inhabitants.

The Wilayat of Dama and Al Taaiyin has a population of 14,429.

The Wilayat of Al Qabil has 11,957 inhabitants.

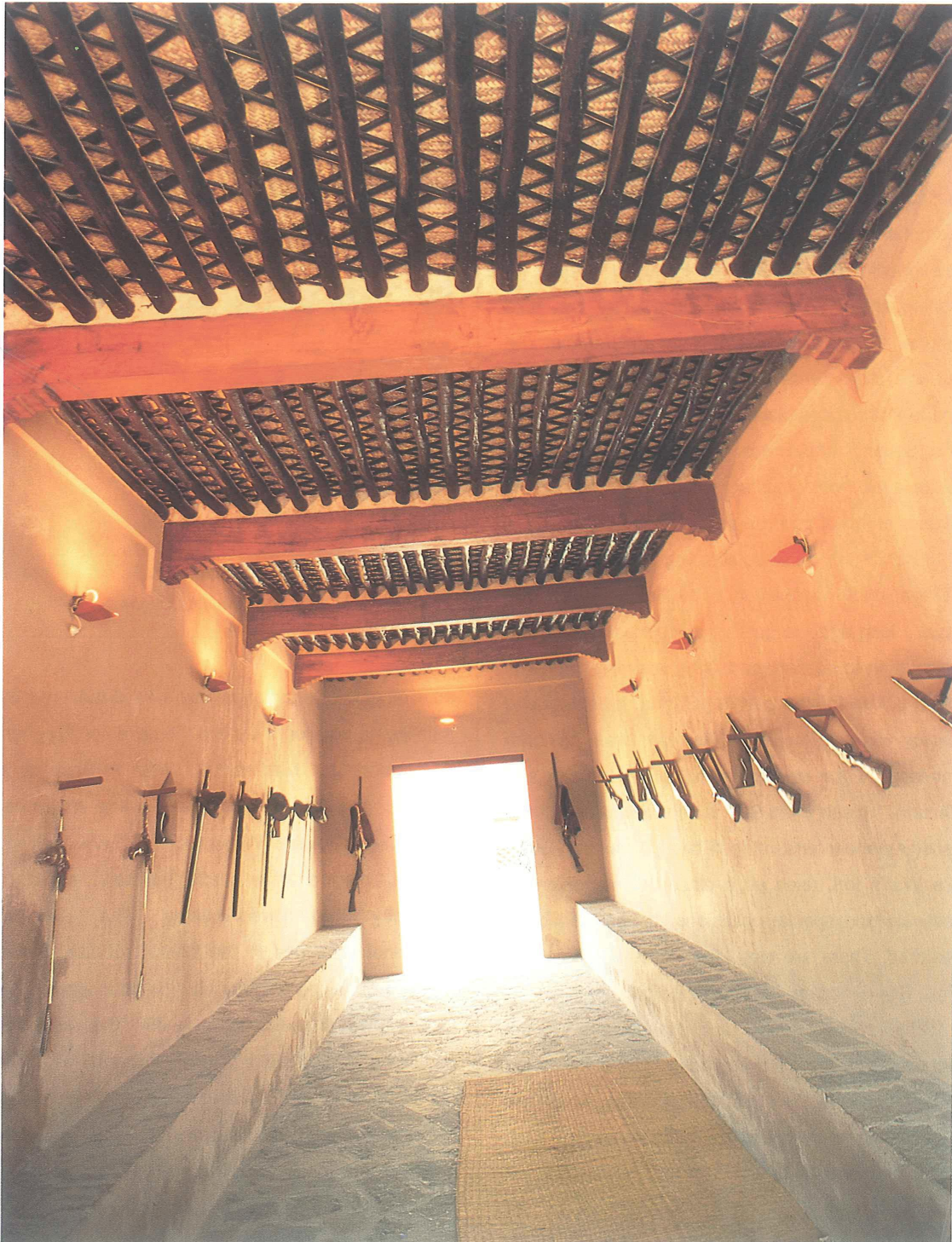
The Wilayat of Masira with a population of 8,299.

The Wilayat of Wadi Bani Khalid has 6,032 inhabitants.



Boats have been built in Sur through the centuries

Sur is located in the northern part of the Sharqiya coast in the Sultanate. It is constrained on the east side between the Arabian Sea on one side and the Gulf of Oman on the other. From the west it neighbours the Wilayat of Wadi Bani Khalid and from the north the Wilayat of Quriyat which is part of the Governorate of Muscat and in the south it neighbours the two Wilayats of Al Kamil and Al Waafi and Bani Bu Ali & Ja'alan Bani Bu Hassan. It stretches from Ras Al Had in the east to the mountains of Bani Jabir in the west and from Tiwi in the north to Al Faleej in the south. The number of inhabitants is 53,504, living in 112 villages and towns. They describe it as the pearl of the east coast of the Sultanate. It was the main source for sailors for Oman's navy, which played an illustrious role in maritime history. It formed the gateway of the



The rich heritage of our forefathers



east of Oman and was a historical meeting place for sea routes. Malik Bin Faham Al Azdi Al 'Umani adopted it as the capital of his kingdom in 2500 B.C. When Qalahat became an important urban centre, the Wilayat of Sur flourished. In ancient times it was a Phoenician settlement, named after a city in south Lebanon. Ras Al Hadd is part of the Wilayat of Sur, it overlooks the sea and it is a natural harbour for sailing ships. When storms blow, they can take refuge in the two inlets of Al Hajar and Jarama. The area is characterized by its tortuous inlets, which made it a suitable place to build an air base during the Second World war. It was a refuge where aeroplanes took shelter when they needed it. Traces of this airport can still be seen !

One of the most outstanding fortresses in the Wilayat of Sur is the fort of Al Rafsah which was used - long ago - to guard the main gateway to the Wilayat on the desert road. Now, a strong chain has been put up to stop people going in, for safety and preservation purposes. This fort was restored recently by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture. "Hasan Bilad Sur" is considered one of the most important forts in the Wilayat, it was previously the Wali's fort, used as a place of celebration on festivals and special occasions. It has also been restored. There are also other Forts like Sinaislah Fort, Ras Al Had and Ebn Magrib Fort.

The springs, falaj and caves are tourist attractions in the Wilayat of Sur. There are some small springs in the mountainous areas, which are used to irrigate cultivated areas. There are 102 falaj, which the people of the Wilayat use for various purposes. One of the most important caves, for which the Wilayat of Sur is famous, is "Majlis Al Jinn" which is located in Wadi Bani Jabir. It is the



People flock to meet H. M. Sultan Qaboos

size of seven aeroplanes and was discovered by satellite. In addition there are the caves of "Maghart Al'ais" and "Jarf Mankharaq". "Wadi Al Shab" is a touristic attraction in Tiwi. Among the traditional occupations in the Wilayat of Sur are: fishing, textiles, black-smithery, gold smithery, weaving, carpentry and sweet-making. The principal traditional industries in the Wilayat of Sur, is the building of sailing ships of all types and sizes. The best known of these ships is the "Ghanja" from which the Wilayat of Sur takes its emblem.

In addition, traditional old Omani doors, with their well-known embellishments, and wooden windows are made, together with the curved "Sur" Khanjas. Women's jewelry - old and new. Textiles are also produced, the most important are "Al Azar", "Al Saba'iya", "Al Shawadhir", "Al Masr", and "Al



The "Majlis Al Jinn" second largest cave in the world

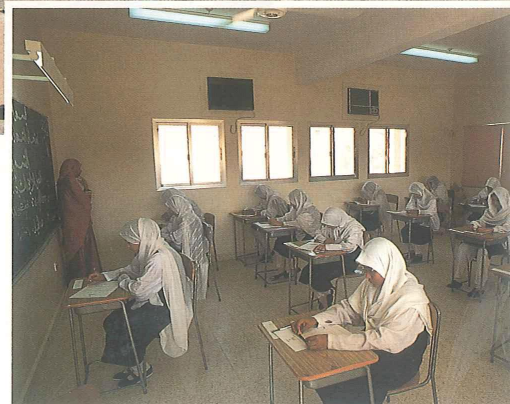


Hasr Al "Umaniya".

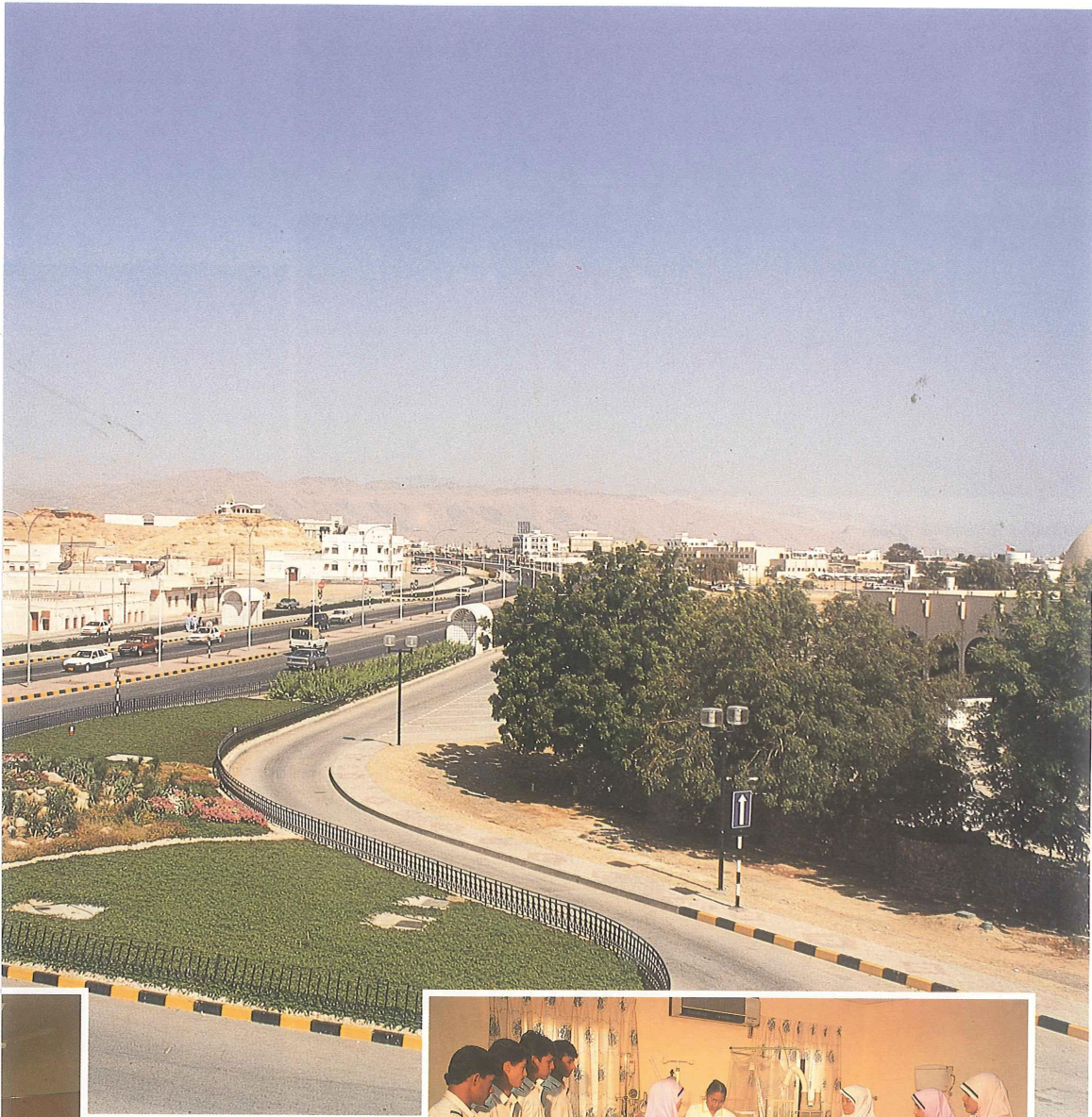
As for the traditional songs of the Wilayat the most important are: "Al Razha", "Al Midaan", "Al Sharah", " Al Makura", "Al Tanbura" and "Al Shawbani", Al Mudima.

Agricultural produce grown in the Wilayat of Sur consists of: wheat, barley, corn, garlic, peas, beans, date palms, lemons, bananas, figs, grapes, quince and mulberries.

Sur, which is one of the biggest Wilayats in the Sultanate, and the administrative capital of the Sharqiya has benefited enormously from the development of modern services. In the field of health care there is the Central Sur Hospital, and in addition the Sur Specialization Hospital consisting of about 240 beds is under construction.

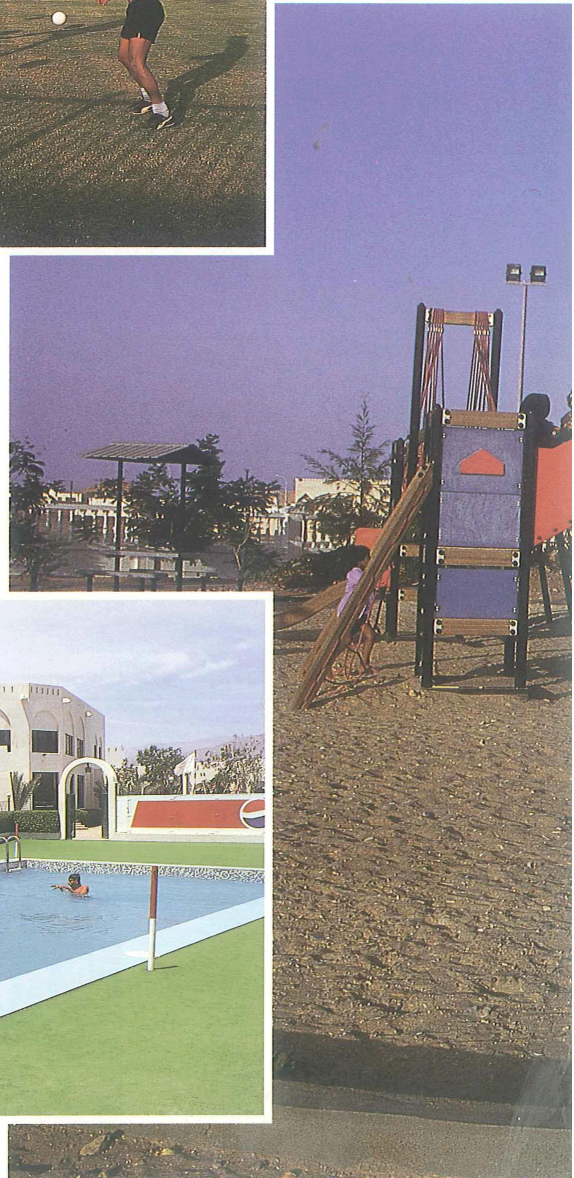


Today's young people enjoy the benefits of modern society





Football is a national sport



Swimming is popular with all

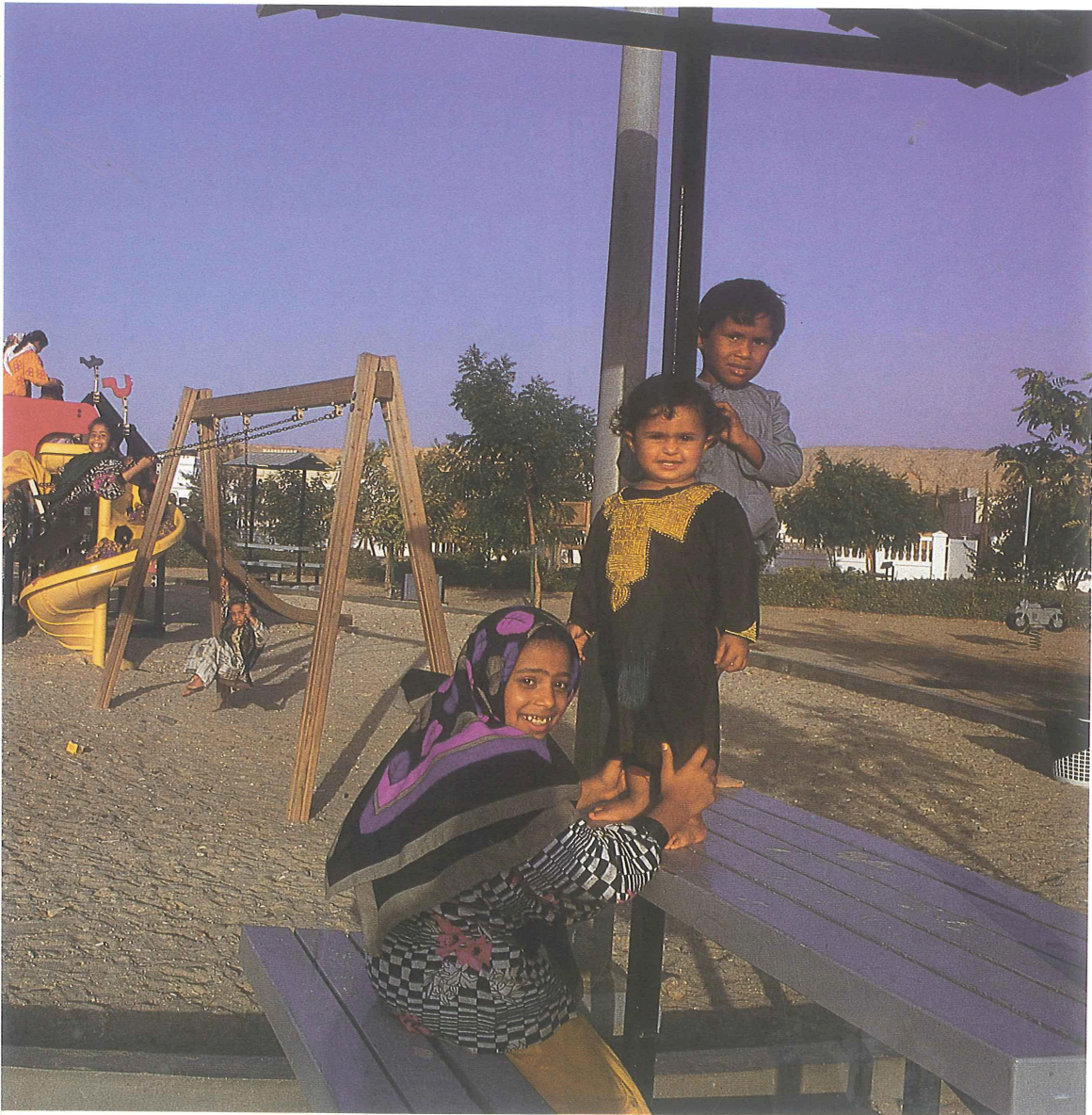
Fun for the children in one of many parks



In the field of educational services there are about 26 schools divided between boys and girls, meeting the needs of the citizens of the Wilayat in the three stages - primary, preparatory and secondary - aside from an Intermediate College for

teachers and an institute for vocational training.

There are also three industrial areas: Sur Industrial Area, BarBira Industrial Area and a third like Rusayl Industrial Area. It is estimated that, eventually, Sur Industrial Area including Barbira will

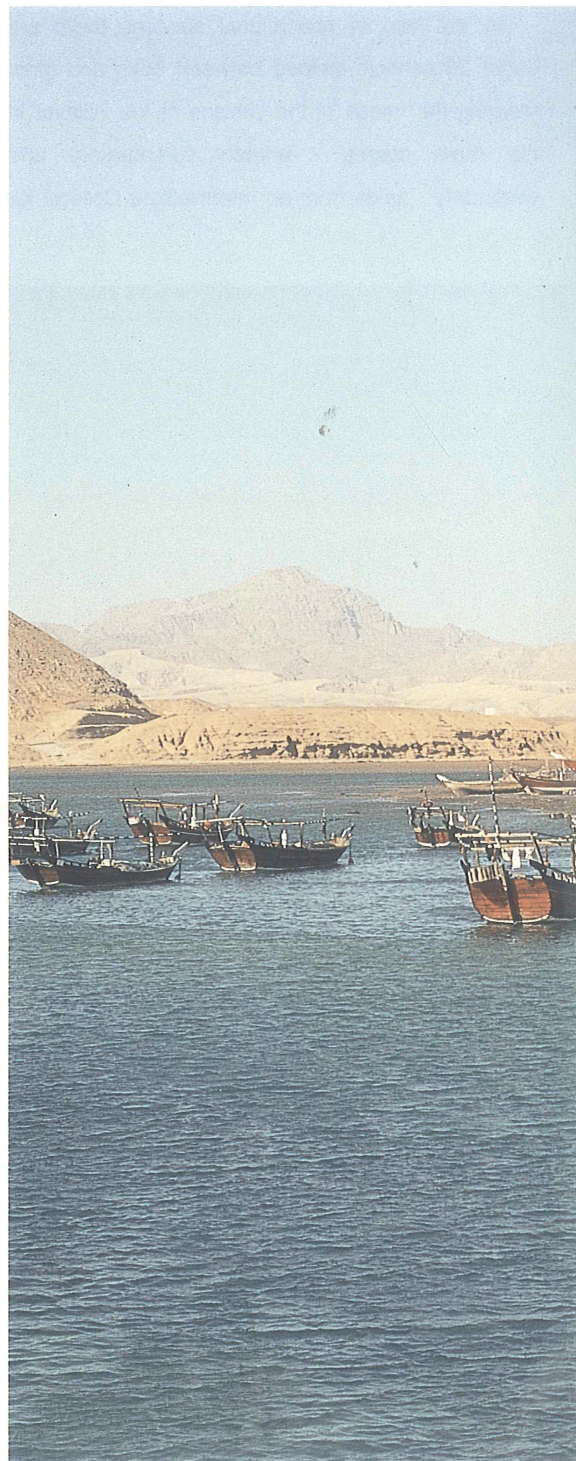




cover a total area of 1,831,295 square metres. The first stage covers 200,000 square metres.

There are a number of commercial bank branches as well as a branch of the Omani Housing Bank.

There are 26 governmental organizations throughout the Wilayat of Sur, among them public and administrative departments. All these organizations provide central services to the inhabitants of the Wilayat and the region.



The port in Sur





A Boat Made of Straw and Rope!



The famous ship "Sohar" built in Sur, which made its historic voyage from Muscat to Canton in China



A single bullet, shot from a rifle, echoed thunderously among the mountains of Oman, and, at the same time a crimson triangular shaped flag, embroidered with gold was raised, with "In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful" emblazoned on it. The great adventure had begun! A sailing ship "of straw and rope" which was to cross a distance of a fifth of the world.



Ship building in the Sultanate is not confined to one Wilayat only, there are several - including Al Batinah and the Governorates of Dhofar and Musandam. However, the Wilayat of Sur, part of the Sharqiya, and its administrative capital, presents an exemplary model for this industry. There are now 7 ship building yards belonging to the private sector, in addition to one run by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, which was established in 1973. It produces more than 35 small models of various types of Omani boats like, the Ghanja, the Badan, the Jalut, and the Sanbuk. The shipyard of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture also encourages the people of the Wilayat, who are tradesmen in this industry, to preserve and hand on their skills to future generations, as it is part of their glorious heritage.

The Omanis have used two methods of ship building for centuries. The cords used for tying the parts of the boats together are made from a wood called "Saaj". This is an extremely strong wood, which is also characterized by its suppleness which makes it easy to use. In addition it can stay in water a long time, more than a year, with hardly any deterioration. This is described in the book "The Arabs and Navigation in the Indian Ocean" - "The "Saaj" is imported from India where it is found in abundance. The cord which the Omanis use to tie the parts of the boat together is made from this wood. It is as strong as rope made from coconut fibre. The Arabs and ancient Persians imported it from India and its islands, or had Indians themselves build their ships, but the Omanis didn't do this."

In the second part of the book " News of India and China " which is attributed to Abu Zaid Hassan



Boat - building in Sur using traditional materials





Al Sirafi, and was probably written in the 9th century A.D., it says "In India people went in their sailing ships to islands in the sea, they planted them with coconuts and lived there... and in Oman are those who made for these islands where coconut is found, taking with them carpentry tools and other equipment. They cut from this wood of the coconut what they needed and built a boat from it. They hewed from it all the masts, and wove from its palm leaves sails and from its fibres they made ropes. When they completed them, they loaded the boats with coconuts and made for Oman, where they sold them, and their blessing and benefit became great".

It is clear from this that the Omanis brought with them, on the boat made from coconuts, the ropes which they had used to tie together the parts of the ship made from the strong "Saaj" wood, which has special characteristics.

How did they make these boats ? They placed the planks side by side then drilled precisely at intervals with a hand drill. Then they used these holes to fasten the planks by means of the rope made from coconut fibre. Then they covered these holes by using a mixture of fibre or raw cotton soaked in fish oil, or also coconut or sesame oil. After that they painted the part of the framework of the ship which is below the water level with protective paint, made from oil and paint or glue with some lime added to it. But what is the secret behind fastening the wooden boards with rope and not with nails ? The Byzantine historian Procopius states that the method of using nails was used by the Greeks and Romans in the 6th century A.D. Perhaps it was the expense and the effort involved in the known traditional method that led the Omanis to prefer the method of using rope made from fibre,

because the material was abundant and the expense less, as was mentioned in the book "Oman and its Maritime History ". The historian Procopius refers to an explanation of the method of making boats "Perhaps it emanates from the boats made from tight fibres of sugar cane which were known in Sumer during the third century before Christ".

The explanation the Omanis prefer is the one that refers to the "lessening of expenses " of outlay on primary materials for ship building, particularly as the strong nails were so expensive. There is another explanation which is mentioned by Arab geographers - like Idrisi and Ibn Jabir who believed that boats tied with fibre were safer and firmer if they hit the sea bed or struck rocks, and they mean - here - the coral reefs than those fastened with metal nails.

As for Al Mas'audi, he mentions another thing: that strong salt water and high humidity leads to the erosion of metal and the metal nails are quickly afflicted with rust. Perhaps this explains why the Greeks and the Romans used copper nails in the boats which have recently been raised from the sea bed of the Mediterranean. This last explanation is one of legend.

The ancient Sanskrit author, Bahuja, was the first to say that there were magnetic rocks in the sea, which attract those boats fastened together with iron to their destruction. This idea is often found in popular stories, for example in the book "1001 Nights". According to the text published by Cairo Press, Shaharazad tells a story on the 14th night, in which she mentions the "magnetic mountains" which attract the nails of boats so that they break up and sink.

Perhaps the best example of the Omani method



of ship building without using iron nails or any other nails, was a wonderful experiment which took place on the shores of the city of Sur in the Sharqiya in the Sultanate at the end of 1980. It was the ship which succeeded in sailing from Muscat to the port of Canton in China in 1981, China officially celebrated the 10th anniversary of its arrival at the port 4 years ago, in 1991. This is the story of that ship, made from "straw and rope", which the Omanis built on the shores of the Sharqiya, and sailed on a journey of 6000 nautical miles, the story of the ship "Sohar" which was made in Sur and which began its historic journey from Muscat.

On the 18th November the Omanis transported about 300 tons of gravel to build a working platform on the shore of Sur, raising it above the level of the water by about a metre so that they could build "the ship of Sindbad". Work began with a team of 30 men wearing green shirts, which was the special garb of the team of workers on the ship. They worked for 10 hours a day, six days a week for a period of 165 days. The wooden boards were fastened together with rope and then a whole week passed in stuffing the fibre of the coconut husks into the holes between the boards. The order to stitch them together. Supervisor of the team estimated that 20,000 holes had been made in the wooden boards, which had to be sealed again until the water did not soak into the boat. This was done with paste made from glue of various coastal plants and powdered sea shells. The men finally climbed into the boat and with brushes and rags coated the internal timbers with vegetable oil, at the same time letting it soak into the fibres of the coconut husks, which had been used for tying the planks together. The idea behind using oil to coat the wood, was to

preserve it and so prolong the life of the ship.

Experienced Omani ship builders in the Wilayat of Sur say that it is necessary to protect the rope with oil if they want it to have a long life. They estimate that, were it possible to soak the rope in oil once every four or six months, then the life of the ship would be preserved for a period ranging between 60 and 100 years.

Sea Worms

One week before its launch the outer part of the ship was painted for protection from sea worms, which attack and eat the body of the ship. This paint is a traditional method for protecting it. The paint is made of lime mixed with mutton fat. Finally the ship "Sohar" appeared after 165 days of strenuous work. It was like a butterfly emerging from its cocoon. It appeared towering proudly on the sand. It took 140 tons of wood to make it, wood of a kind chosen from the forests of India, characterized by its strong resistance to absorbing water. Its shape came about by carefully placing the boards side by side, with an accuracy varying less than 1 part from 64 parts of the inch. Then the operation came of sewing each board in its place by means of coconut fibre rope twisted by hand and pulled taut. Then the holes were stuffed with coconut husks as well.

The ship "Sohar" used more than 75,000 coconut husks and 4 tons of rope of coconut fibre for tying the boards and fixing the sail to the mast. The ship's main mast was 75 feet in length.

This is the characteristic method of ship-building in Oman which forms an important part of Omani maritime heritage. But what of the other method? The second method is the method which uses nails and it is a traditional method famous throughout the



other Gulf areas and likewise in countries bordering the Red Sea.

Making the shape of the ship begins with arranging the boards on the floor then adding the sides. The boards are joined together, side by side, without recourse to plans or drawings, rather the ship builders rely on experience. They use supports or props to give the structure its desired shape. The ship is then built, by using nails, under the supervision of an expert, who is called "Al Ustadh" (the master). The most important woods used in boat building are : "Saaj", "Mantij" and "Mit", in addition to the woods of the "Qirt", "Sadar" and "Samar" trees, in addition to trees found in the Sultanate. As for the tools used in boat building they are all wonderfully simple like the hammer, the saw,

the fiber thread drill, the "Qus", the chisel, the plane and the metal caulking chisel.

There are numerous kinds and shapes of Omani boats. Some of which are not used today, whilst others are still in service. One of the boats which is famous in the Wilayat of Sur is the "Ghanja" the design of which reflects the Indian styles, but it has been developed to suit the Omani character of boat building. It is characterised by engravings and embellishments on its prow. It takes a whole year to build a Ghanja. Its tonnage is between 150 and 300 tons and its length is between 75 and 120 feet. It was used for transporting goods and for trading across the oceans. It is not in general use now, but is made to order. The expense of building a ship is about 150,000 Omani Riyals (about 400,000 US



An official welcome by the public on the return of the ship "Sohar"



His Majesty welcomes the return of the ship "Sohar" from Canton

Dollars). The people of Sur celebrate when the "Ghanja" returns from a voyage; this celebration is called "Fatah Al Kheer" in the Wilayat. Aside from the "Ghanja" there are other kinds of Omani boats, like the "Sambuk" which costs about 150,000 Omani Riyals and takes a whole year to make. Then there is the "Badan" which takes 6 months to build and costs 30,000 Omani Riyals. Omani boat manufacture is characterized by strength and durability, they can last anywhere between 68 and 100 years.

There are special customs associated with the inaugurating of the building of a ship. At the beginning of the work they slaughter a goat, and as the end of the work approaches there are celebrations with popular songs, performed by fishermen and sailors. They are traditional Omani

songs in which both men and women participate. The women also carry out the work of caulking the cotton rope, which they deliver to the men to stuff between the nails, to prevent water soaking into the inside of the boat. These traditional customs were practised in 1980 at the building of the famous ship the "Sohar" on the beaches of Sur.



The Fire and the Storm

In the book "The Sindbad Voyage" written by the Irish adventurer, Tim Severin, the supervisor of the building of the ship, and leader of the voyage to Canton, he describes the stages of building the "Sohar".

Tim Severin says "It was the month of February, the worst month, a storm blew up from the desert. It blew through the gap between the mountains behind Sur and scattered burning embers, which started a fire in the ship. Before long the green shirts were lined up and handling buckets filled with water to put out the sparks of the fire before it spread".

The Sohar survived the fire and sailed from Sur to Muscat. At exactly 11 o'clock in the morning on the 23rd November 1981 Oman was gripped with excitement and ready to celebrate. Triumphant arches were set up along the road and four huge boards showing aspects of Omani life. One of them was a picture of the Indian Ocean and on it was a model of the Sohar. From Muscat "the Sohar" sailed to trace the ancient maritime routes. It began by following the ancient route to China. The ship Sohar sailed equipped with food and weapons, ready for the great adventure. The sailing ship covered about a fifth of the distance around the world (6,000 miles).

A single bullet shot from a rifle, echoed thunderously between the mountains amongst which Mina Qaboos nestles, on the shores of Muscat. At the same time the triangular shaped flag was raised, announcing the beginning of the voyage. The flag was crimson, embroidered with gold and emblazoned on it "In the name of God, the Merciful the Compassionate"

The Sohar set off, and on its decks 20 sailors, most of them from Oman under the leadership of the Irish adventurer Tim Severin. The Sohar arrived at the port of Canton in China where an official celebration was held to mark the occasion. China held a celebration on the same date in 1991 on the 10th anniversary of the arrival of the Sohar in the port of Canton. An official Omani delegation attended the activities headed by the Minister of National Heritage and Culture.



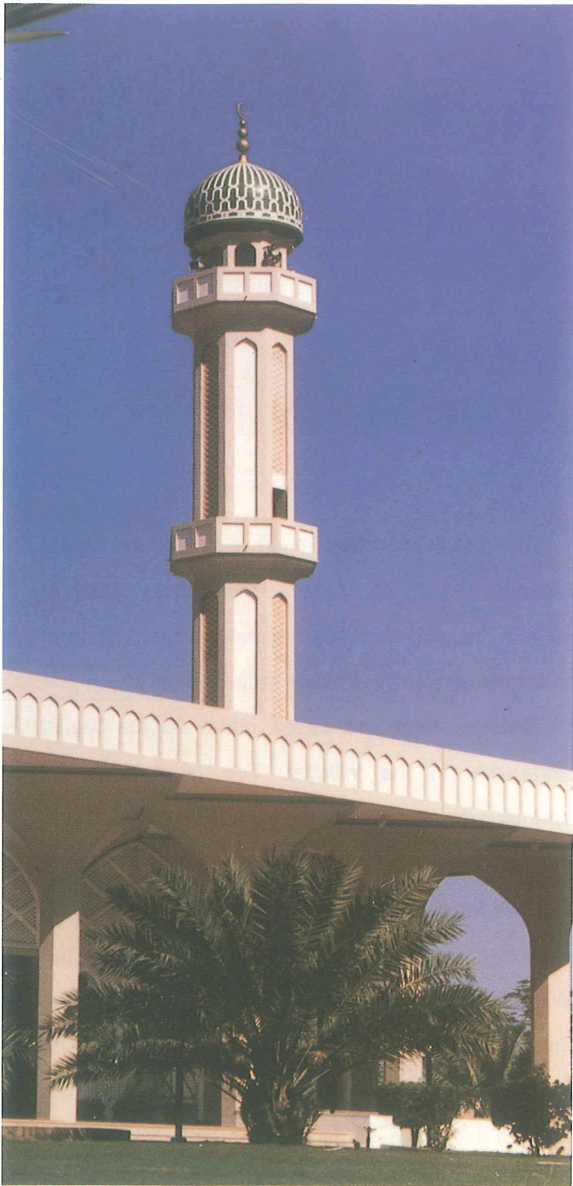
The "Ghanja" boat with decorations and various designs. It is usually built in a year

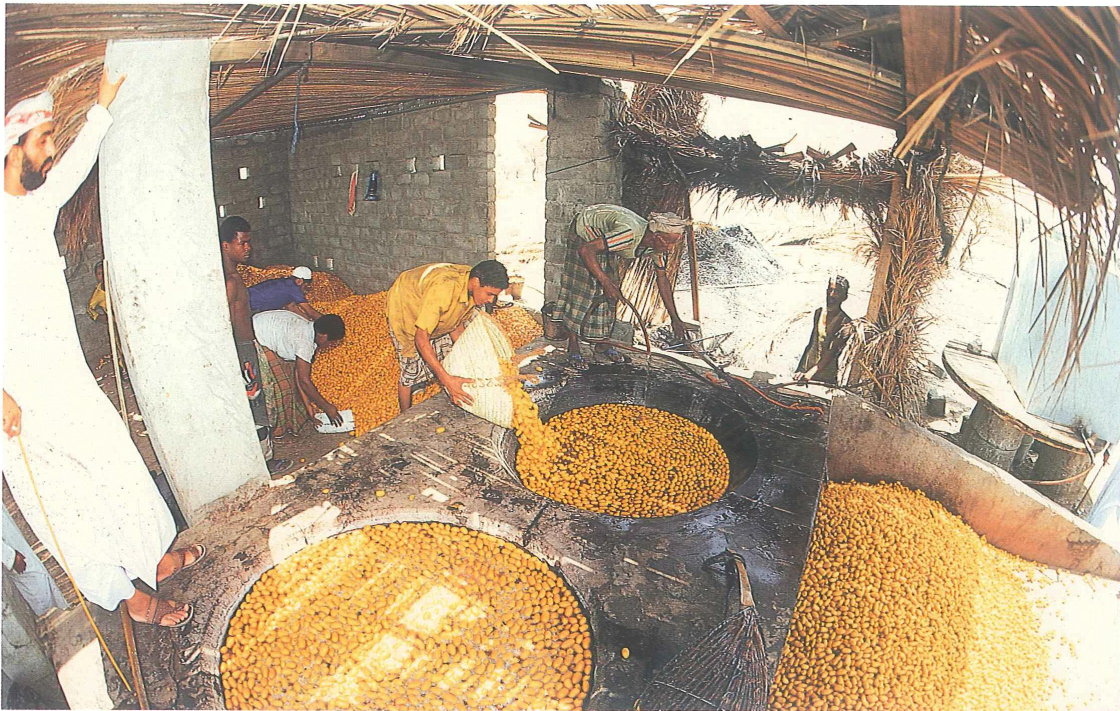


Wilayat Ibra



The mosque of Ibra





"Al Tabsieel" is a traditional way of cooking and drying dates

In the north and west it neighbours the Wilayat of Al Mudaibi, in the south the Wilayat of Qabil, and in the east the Wilayat of Dima and Taaiyin.

There are about 19,986 inhabitants, living in 70 villages. There are a number of archaeological features, castles, forts, towers and ancient mosques.

There is only one castle, Al Dhahir, which is in the Al Yahmadi area which has recently been restored by the Ministry of National Culture and Heritage.

There are five forts : Al Shubbak, Farifar, Al Daghsha, Al Yahmadi and Bait Al Qasimi. There are also nine towers: Al Qatabi, Al Naasiri, Al Qala'a, Al Mansur, Al Nataala, Al Qarin, San'aa, Al Safah and Burj Al Qarun.

The most important mosque is the Al 'Aqaba Mosque, which was built at the foot of Jabal Al Naasiri. Its mihrab faces Jerusalem and it is from this mosque that the Wilayat took its emblem.

Springs, falaj and caves make up the tourist attractions in the Wilayat. The most important springs are: Abu Saalih, Al Diyaan, and Shabihaat, the water from all of these can be drunk. 'Ain Al Milah is famous because its mineral water can cure skin diseases. There used to be 64 falaj in the Wilayat, but now only 34 remain. The most important are : Al 'Afrit, Al Masmum, Al Thaabati, and Abu Makhirin. The most outstanding cave is the cave of Jarf Rajib. In addition there are some other tourist attractions noted for their water and shady trees, places such as: Faj Majaaza in Al Haaimah



Trained Omanis in banks

area, Al Hadima in Al Yahmadi area and Qasiba in the south of Qaghifa.

The traditional occupations, industries and songs of the Wilayat are various. The most important are: weaving, and especially weaving traditional Omani clothes, spinning of goats hair, making khanjars and women's jewellery, making artifacts from palm tree leaves and ropes, and leather tanning etc. The industries are: drying dates and unripe dates, drying lemons, weaving from palm leaves, making traditional leather goods, and gold and silver working.

Al Razha, Al Qasaafiya, Al Hambal, Al 'Azaazi and Al Tashhashah are among the most important traditional songs.

The Wilayat is also famous for a number of agricultural products, the most important being:



Palm frond weaving



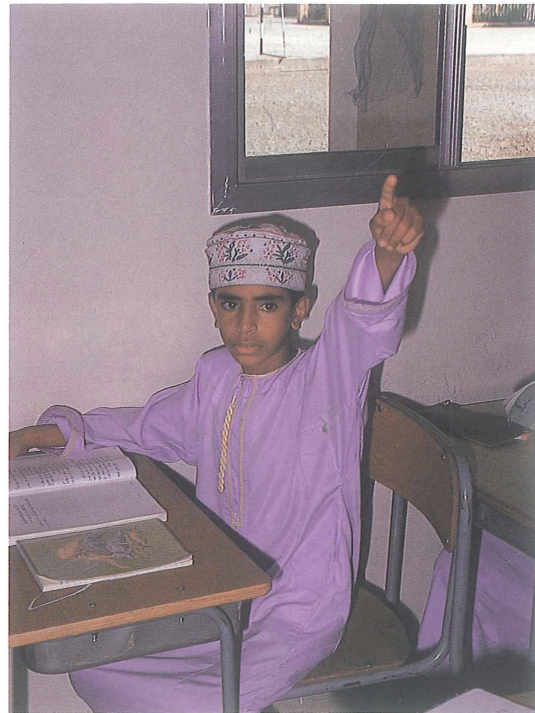
mango, banana, grapes, dates and vegetables.

The Wilayat of Ibra has also gained its fair share of modern developments and services. There is a central hospital with departments for: surgery, children, internal diseases, eyes, mental illnesses, diabetes, teeth, natural remedies, women and childbirth; also a laborites, departments kidney dialysis, and x-rays, in addition to a programme of health for mother and child - breast feeding and maternity department, innoculations, and a contagious diseases department, especially for children. There are 108 beds in Ibra Hospital.

There are 11 schools for boys and girls, covering the three stages of education, primary, preparatory



Hobbies are encouraged



A keen pupil

and secondary.

There are a number of directorates and government departments in the Wilayat, which provide services for the citizens. The most important of the general directorates are: Agriculture and Animal Resources, regional and environmental municipalities, health services, and the General Telecommunications Organization.

The departments are: Education and Training, Waqf and Islamic Affairs, Housing, Water Resources, Trade and Industry and Ibra Municipality.

The offices are for: the Development of Local Associations, Roads, Social Affairs, two centres for marketing agricultural products and development of agriculture and the Labour Office. There is also a



branch of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Omani Women's Association, the Passport Office for the Sharqiya, the Ibra Police Unit, the Industrial College of Oman, Ibra Sharia' Law Court and the Wali's Office.

The Sharqiya now has five Women's Associations. The total number of active members is about 521. In addition, there are four centres for qualifying women, which train about 102 women a year. No social security system existed in the Sultanate before 1970.



In the health service Omani pharmacists issue medicines



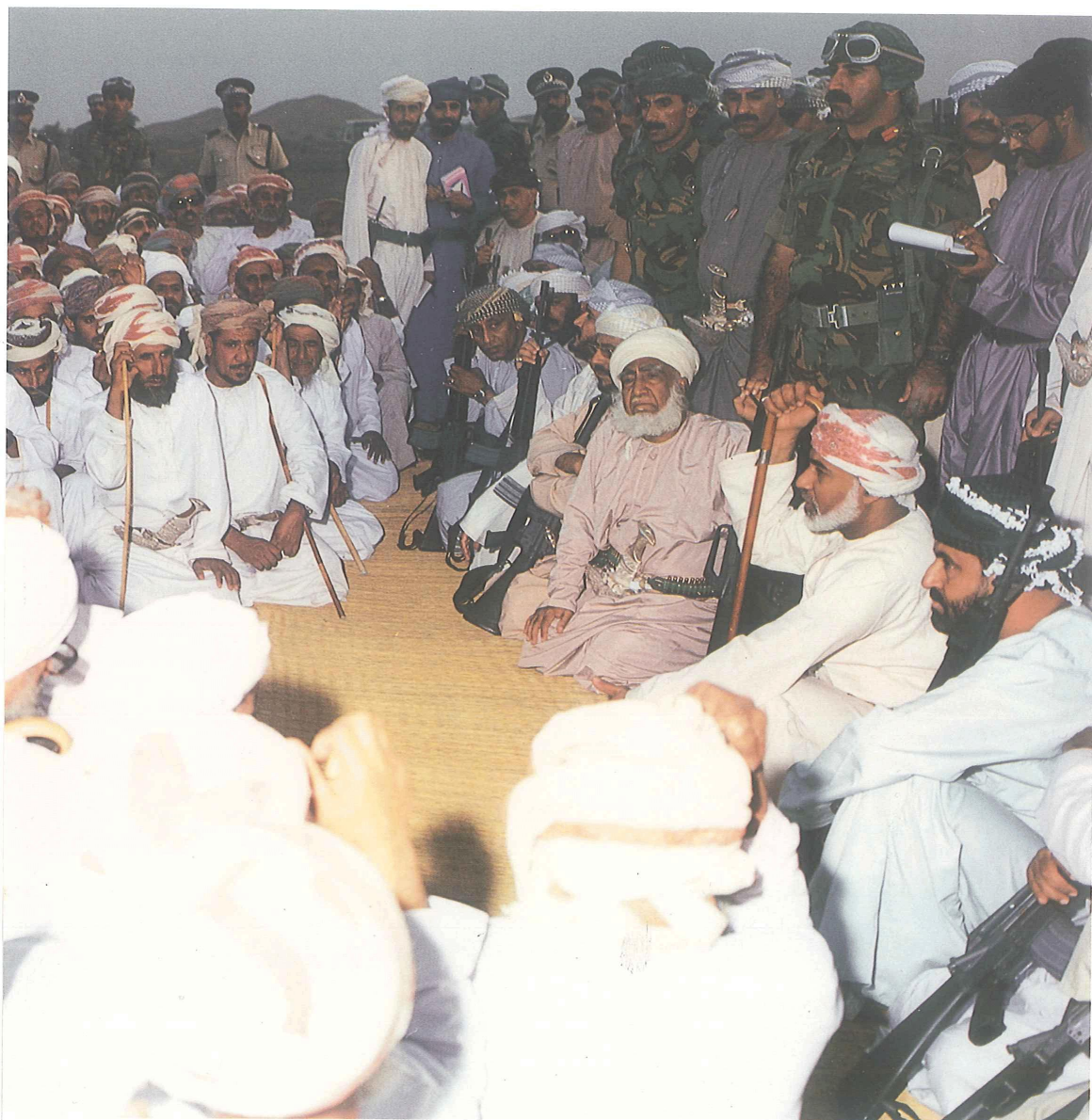
His Majesty listens and discusses local issues with his people at Seih Al Yahmadi

Seih Al Yahmadi

This is an important region in Wilayat Ibra: Here His Majesty The Sultan meets Sheikhs, dignitaries and citizens of Al Sharqiya every year during his annual "meet the people" to discuss various

aspects and national issues.

Other important centres in Wilayat of Ja'alan Bani Bu Ali, Seih Al Aula and Seih Al Hassanat in Wilayat Sur.

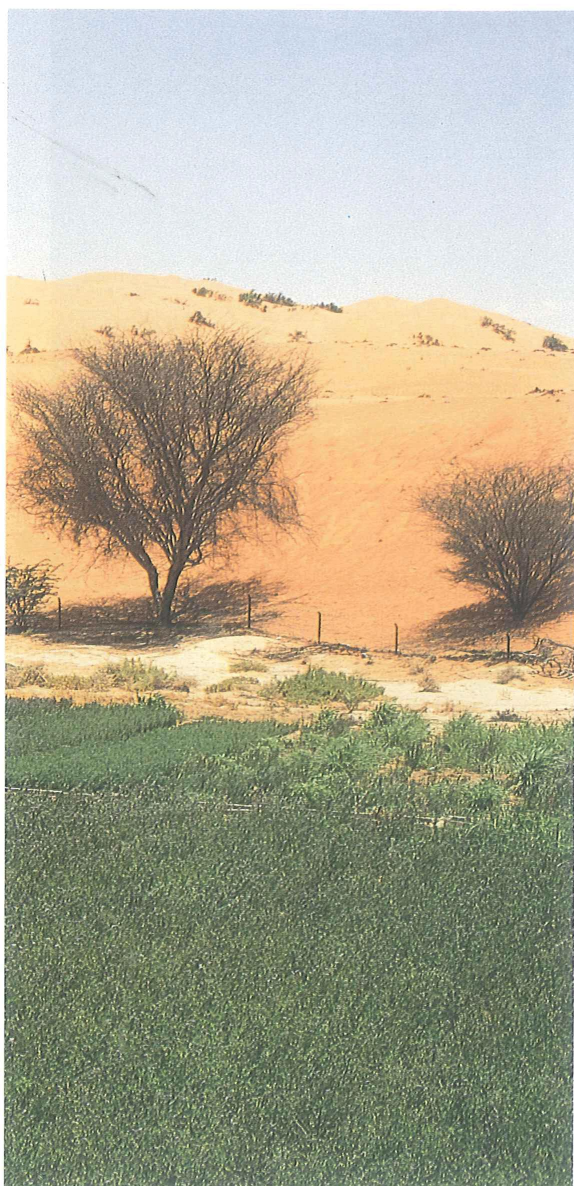




Wilayat Bidiya



Crops flourish in Wilayat Bidiya

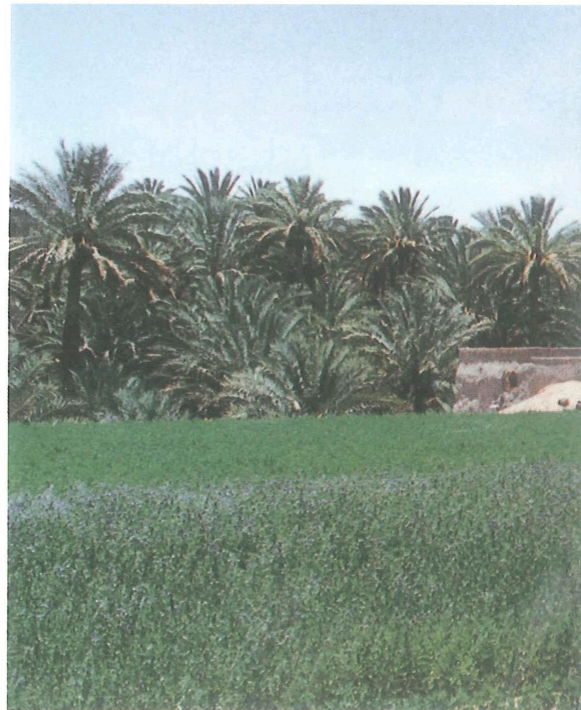


In 1970 there were no hospitals, or centres, or any kind of health services in the Sharqiya. In the eleven Wilayats of the Sharqiya there are currently 10 hospitals and 18 health centres. Altogether 608 beds are available for in - patients.



One of the most important sites, in the Wilayat of Badiya is the fort which the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture restored recently. It is the fort of Al Mintarib. There is also the fortress of Al Wasil. This is surrounded by four towers, in addition to three other forts, which are called Al Shaariq, Al Hawiya and Al Ghabi.

Added to the tourist attractions of the Wilayat are the falaj, springs and other pleasant places. The most important falaj are Al Mintarib, Al Shariq, Hatwah, Al Qa'a, Al Jahas, Dibeek, Al Raka, Shaahik, Al Heeli, Al Hawiya, Al Dhaahir, Al Mutaaw'a and Al Ghabee. The most important springs, famous in the Dhahir area are: 'Ain Yaya, Habseen, Abu Saheela, Abu Sareema, Abu Ghafa and 'Ain Al Tamr.



Importance is attached to agriculture



This Wilayat is almost in the middle of the Sharqiya, north of it is the Wilayat of Al Qabil and in the east it neighbours the Wilayats of Al Kamil and Al Wafi and Wadi Bani Khalid. The number of inhabitants is about 15,136, living in 15 villages. Story tellers relate that it was established when the Hajjaris (who are the majority of the inhabitants) arrived there. That was in 1008 A.H. They built castles and forts, and they made a number of falaj, before which the Wilayat was reliant on wells. This stage "the descending of the Hajjaris" was considered the beginning of its prosperity and so they called it "Badiya" (the beginning) - thus relate the story tellers



Water is the essence of life





In addition to all this, nature plays a beautiful role in the Wilayat of Badiya. The environment differs between sand and mountains, the coast and green oases. The Wilayat is famous for Arabian horse and camel racing which takes place at the end of each week. Many enthusiasts from both inside and outside the Sultanate, watch these races.

Agriculture is the main occupation for most people in the Wilayat. The most important of its crops are fruit and vegetables and animal fodder. They also cultivate grazing and animal husbandry. The traditional industries are : gold and silver working - jewellery, Khanjars and swords, and special tools such as the "Makharif" which is used to collect dates from date palms and also the "Dharuf"



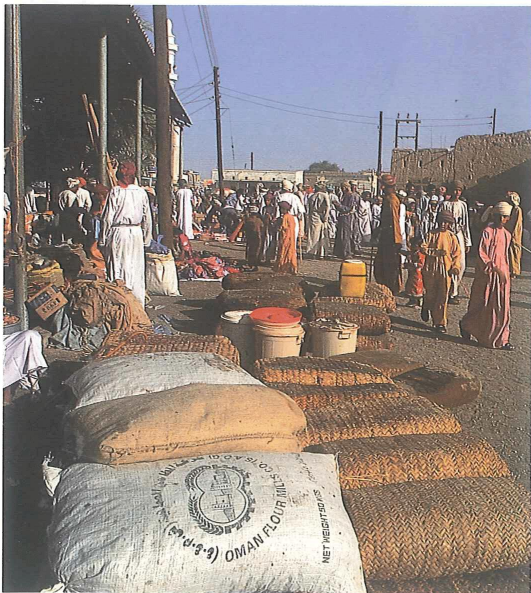
Modern buildings serve the people



used for storing dates -, leather tanning for Khanjar belts, sword scabbards and weaving with leaves, mainly ropes. As for the traditional arts of Wilayat Bidiya the most important are "Al Razha", "Al Azi", "Al Tagroud", "Al Hambal", "Al Karnota", "Al Middan" and "Al Muzifina". It is one of the Wilayats that has radically developed in the renaissance brought about by His Majesty the Sultan.

In the field of health-care there is a hospital in Badiya with various departments which provide medical services for the people of the Wilayat. There are currently 13 schools, for boys and girls, in the three stages, primary, preparatory and secondary.

Roads have been made, joining the different parts of the Wilayat and connecting the Wilayat to neighbouring ones. Likewise telephone, electricity and drinking water services have been developed.



A traditional market

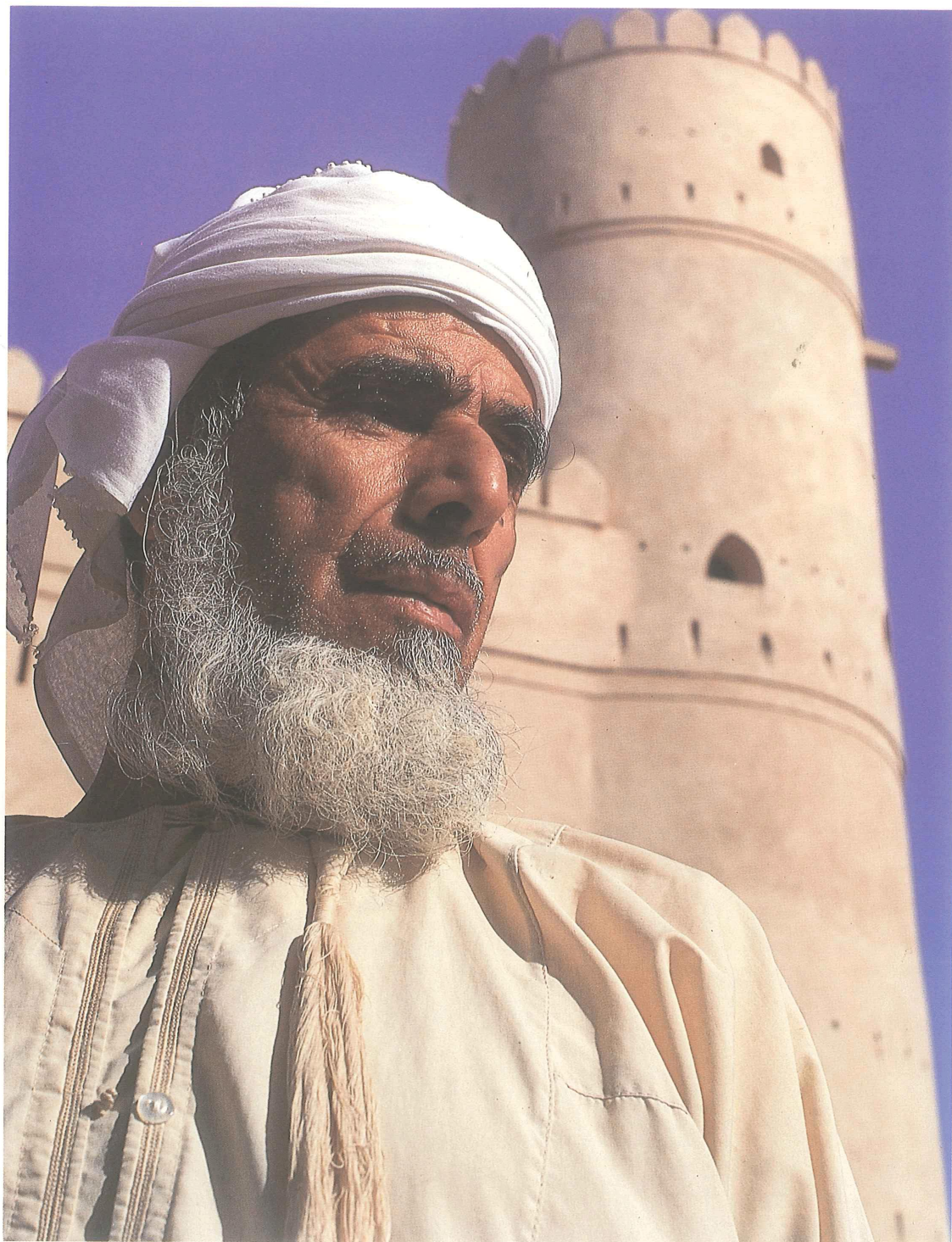


Municipality services

There are numerous government offices, working in the service of the people. The most important of these are : the Labour and Social Affairs Office, the Post Office, a number of branches of trade banks, the Sharia' Law Court and the Wali's Office.



A traditional way of grinding



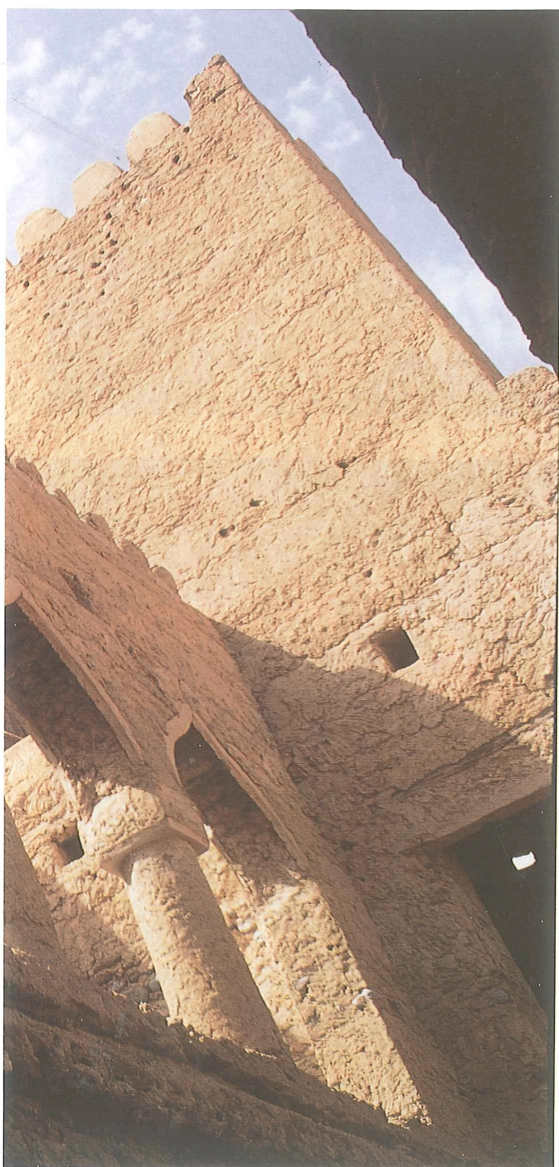
Heritage and Man



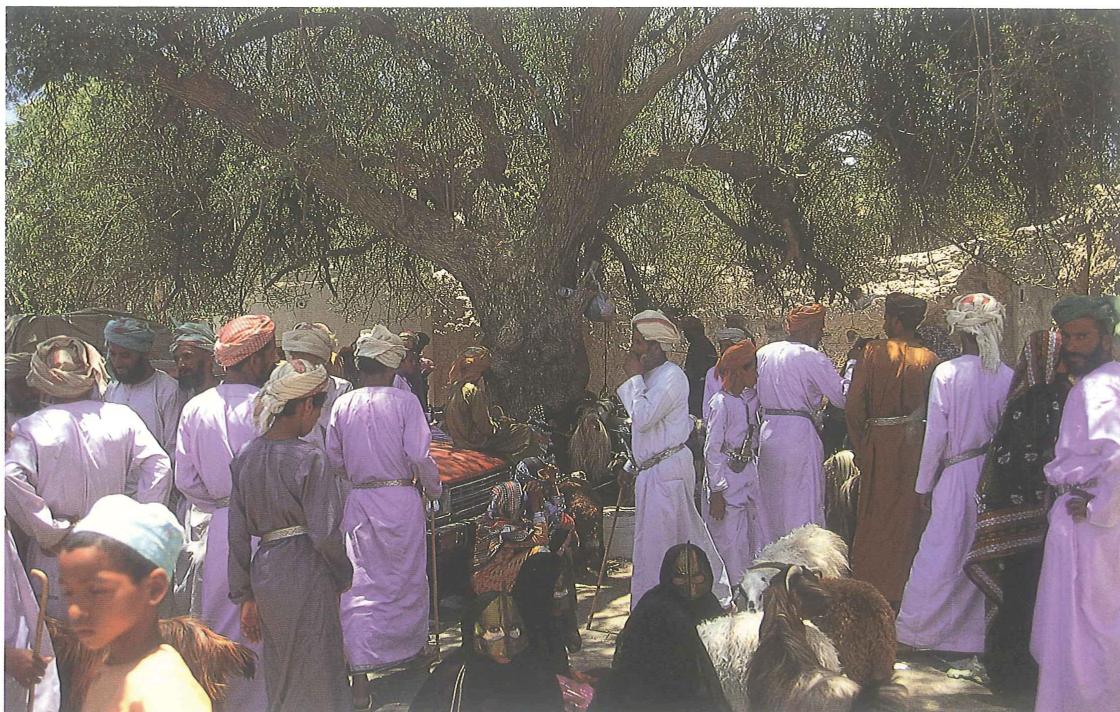
Wilayat Al Qabil



Beautiful arches in the Wilayat of Al Qabil



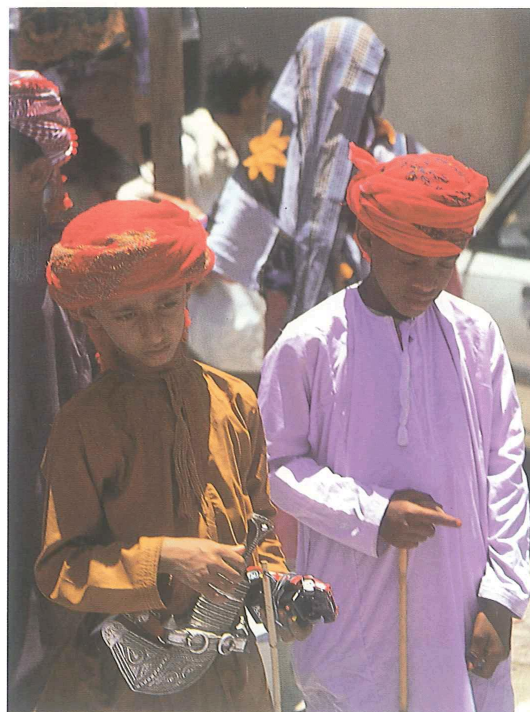
The amount of loans which the Bank of Agriculture and Fisheries Wealth offered was about 323,000 million Riyals during 1994. This bank did not exist in 1970.



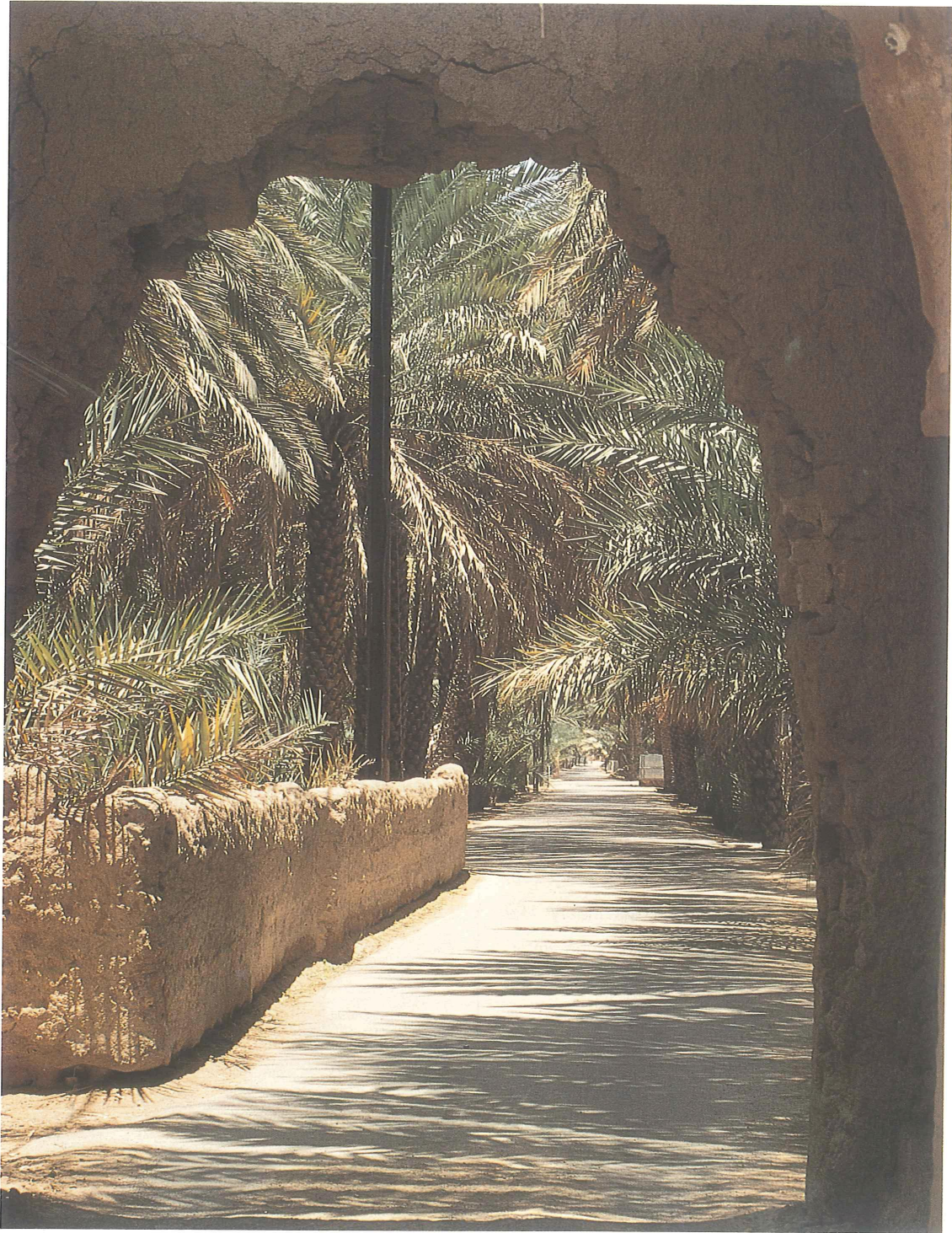
A traditional market in Wilayat Al Qabil

In the north is the Wilayat of Ibra, to the south the Wilayat of Badiya, in the north east it neighbours the Wilayat of Dima and Al Taaiyin, in the south east Wadi Bani Khalid and in the west the Wilayat of Al Mudaibi. The number of inhabitants, living in about 21 villages, is 12,112. There are about 69 archaeological sites, the most important being two forts, one of them in Al Qabil and the other in Al Mudirab.

There are about 50 falaj, the most important being: Al Mudirab, Al Qabil, Al Direez and Al Nabaa. It is also famous for a number of villages which are located between the high, golden sand dunes. The most important of these villages are Al Sakaa, Al 'Aqida, Al Kharis and Al Jufaa. There are also a number of springs in the Wilayat. The most important are: 'Ain Marzuk, known for its mineral



A khanjar and a stick, symbols of Manhead



Shady lanes between date plantations



water, 'Ain Wadi Barka and 'Ain Al Washal. The falaj, springs and villages located in the middle of the sand dunes are tourist attractions.

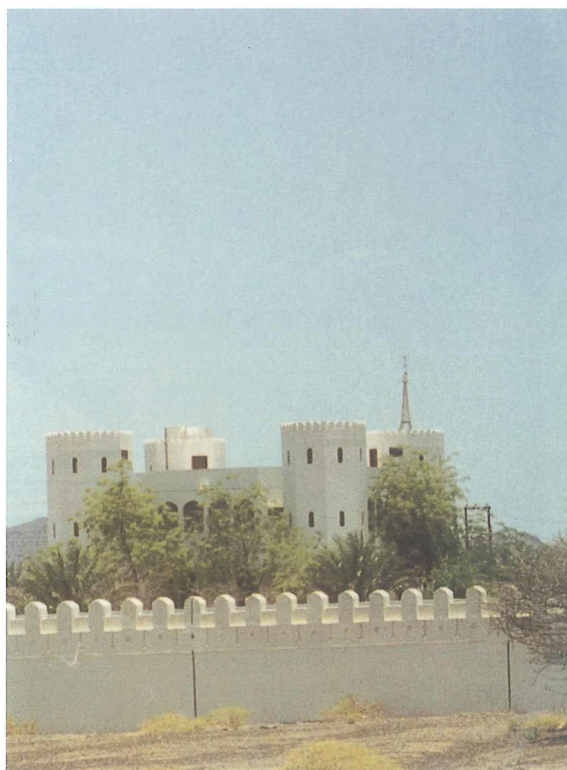
The people of the Wilayat are famous for a number of occupations, industries and traditional songs. Agriculture is their main occupation. The most important products are : dates, various kinds of seasonal crops, and citrus fruit. The people also spin and weave, make specialized handicrafts from the leaves of palm trees, raise livestock - especially camels and horses - work as blacksmiths and manufacture embellishments for camels and horses. The people of the Wilayat of Al Qabil also follow traditional industries such as silver working to make Khanjars and jewellery, sweet-making, making pottery in the town of Al Mongara'd, in Wadi Naam, and also in mining Omani gypsum.

Al Razha, Al 'Aazi and Al Hambal together with some women's songs are among the traditional songs of the Wilayat.

The Wilayat of Al Qabil has had its share of "Gifts" from the "March of Prosperity", led by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos. There are health centres, and educational services are provided by 6 schools for boys and girls, serving the three stages of education, primary, preparatory and secondary. The inhabitants of the Wilayat now have drinking water, electricity, the telephone and post. Moreover, the cities and towns are linked with a complete network of paved roads. There are also a number of government offices which provide necessary services to the citizens. The most important of these offices are : the Electricity Office, Water, the Municipality, the Sharia' Law Court and the Wali's Office.



The rest house in Wilayat Al Qabil



Modern buildings have traditional architecture



An administrative building





Wilayat Al Mudaibi



A good date harvest



In 1970 there were no schools at all in the Al Sharqiya.

In the academic year 1994/95 the number of government schools in the Sharqiya was 154. Of these, 58 are primary schools, 71 preparatory schools.

During the academic year 1994/95 the total number of male and female students in schools in the Sharqiya, in all three stages, was 67,439. Of these 35,799 were male and 31,640 female.

In the academic year 1994/95 the total number of centres for eradicating illiteracy in the area was 36.

During the academic year 1994/95 the number of centres for adult education in the Sharqiya was 33.



Time to begin the harvest

In the north it neighbours the Wilayats of Bidbid and Sumail, which are part of the Dakhaliya region, and Ibra and Al Qabil which are part of the Sharqiya region, in the south the Wilayat of Mahut, which is part of the Wusta region, in the east the Wilayats of Badiya and Ja'alaan Bani Bu Hasan and Ja'alan Bani Bu 'Ali, and in the west the Wilayats of Izki and Adam, which are part of the Dhakaliya region. There are about 90 villages with 50,696 inhabitants. Its history goes back thousands of years, according to what archaeologists have discovered in Samad Al Shaan.

Some of its archeological features are: the castle of Al Jawabir in the town of Al Rawdha, the two forts Kabeeb and Khazam in Samad Al Shaan, the fort of Al 'Aqir, the castle of Al Busa'idi in the town of Al



A scene in the Wilayat of Al Mudaibi



Akhdar, and Burj Warid and the houses of Mutowa where the Wilayat meets the Wilayat of Ibra. The most outstanding mosques of the Wilayat are Al Sawar in Al Mudaibi, and the Al Jam'aa Mosque in Samad Al Shaan.

There are a number of tourist attractions, natural springs, falaj, caves and modern places of amusement. The most important spring is 'Ain Al Harid, which is famous for curing various contagious diseases. The two most important falaj are Al Farsakhi and Bumanin.

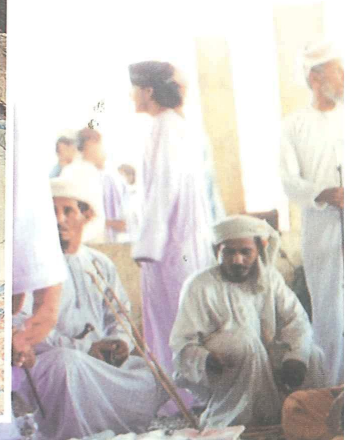
There are caves throughout the mountains of Al Rawdha and Jabal Madar. One of the modern amusement spots is in the Al Fasha'iya area in Wadi 'Andaam, and others in the towns of Al Sahili, Wadi Daqiq and Wadi Da'ada'.

There are various occupations, industries and traditional songs in the Wilayat. Agriculture is the



A legacy of forefathers





main occupation, famous products being: palm trees, lemons, clover and vegetables, grazing and raising camels are also practiced. Spinning and weaving textiles, weaving palm leaves, bee keeping, making agricultural tools, especially ploughs and spades, making Omani sweets and mats.

The most important of the traditional songs are: Al Razha, Al 'Aazi, Hambal Al Bush, a song performed by the contestants whilst on the back of race-horses, in addition to two types of women's songs - Al Tashahshah and Abu Zalaf.

The Wilayat has developed enormously since His Majesty Sultan Qaboos came to power.

There are two hospitals, one in the subsidiary district of Sinaaw, and the other in the subsidiary district of Samad Al Shaan, in addition to 4 health

Traditions

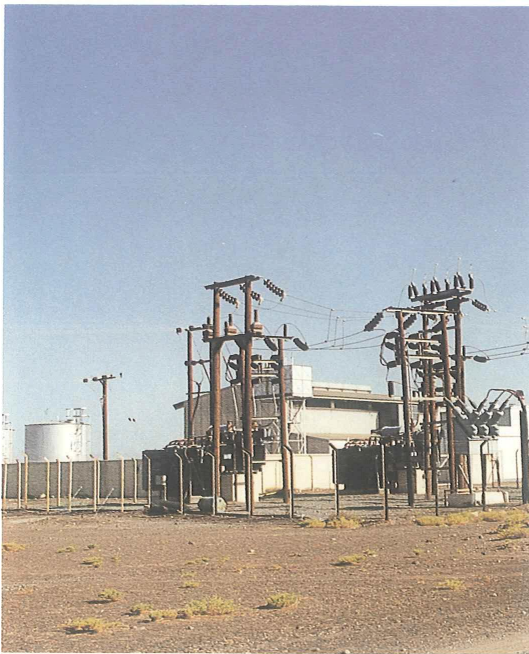


centres in Al Mudaibi, Al "Ayun, Al Aflaj and Wadi 'Andaam. There are two centres for public health, one in Sinaaw and the other in Samad Al Shaan and two maternity centres. There are 33 schools for boys & girls covering the three stages of education.

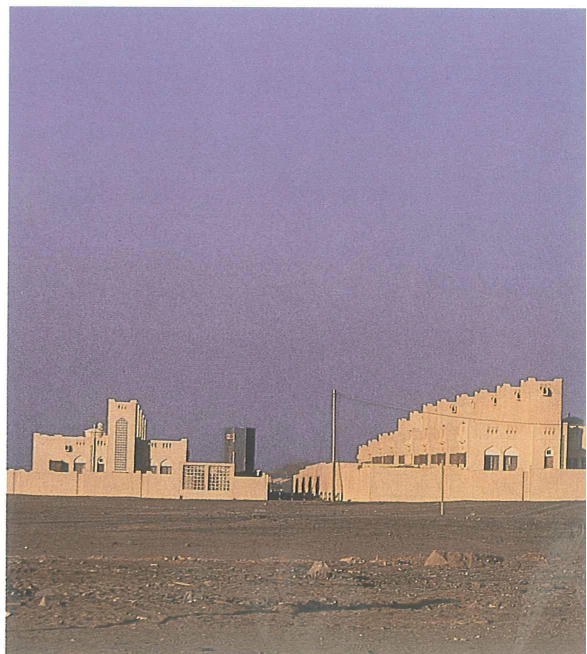




Health services are available for all, and telephone boxes are widespread



Electricity now goes to most homes

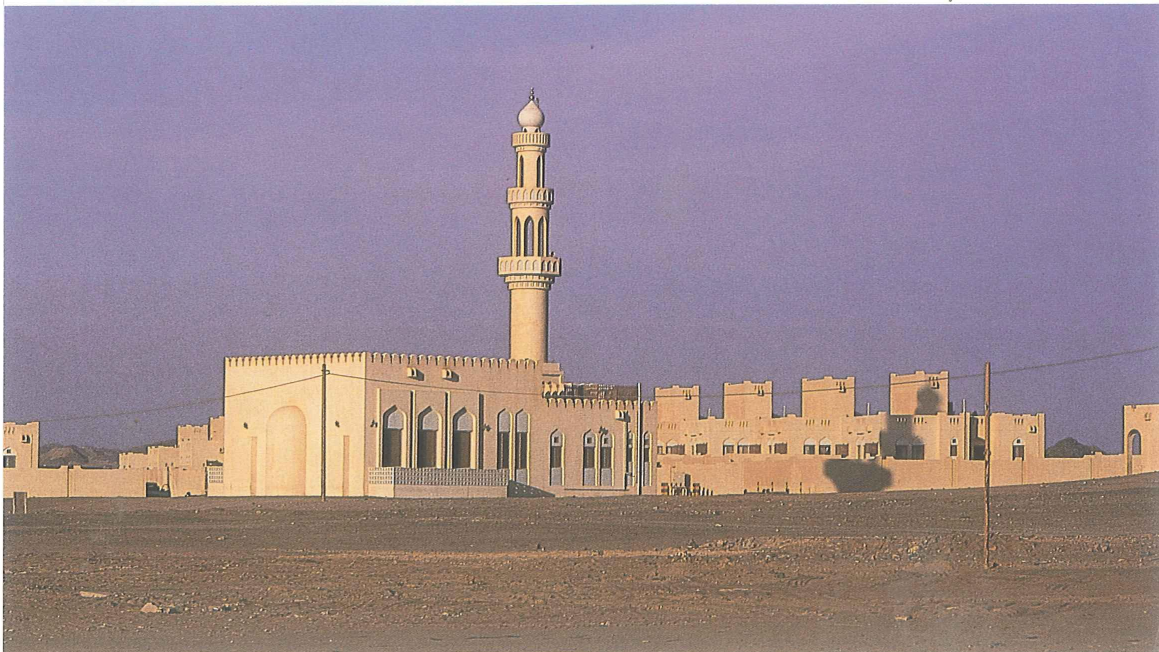


Modern housing



A secondary school

There are also some government offices to help provide necessary services to the people of the area. The most important are : the Municipality, Agriculture, Housing, Electricity, Training and Education, Health, Water, Post, Labour and Social Affairs, the Law Court and offices for the subsidiary districts of Sinaaw and Samad Al Shaan, and the Wali's office in Al Mudaibi.





Wilayat Dima and Al Taaiyin



After the rain in the Wilayat of Dima and Al Taaiyin

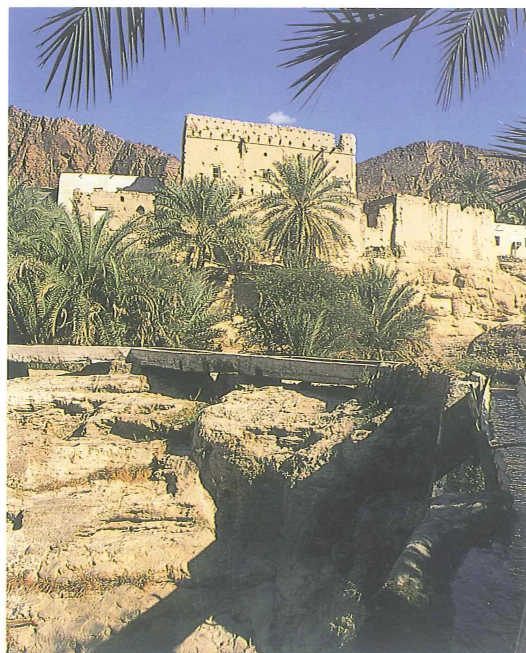


During 1994 the expenditure on people benefiting from social security in the Sharqiya was 4,311,400 Omani Riyals. The annual average number of citizens benefiting is 8,438.



In the north it neighbours the Wilayat of Quriyat, which is part of the Governorate of Muscat, in the south the Wilayat of Ibra, in the east the Wilayats of Al Qabil and Badiya and in the the west the Wilayats of Al Mudaibi and Bidbid, which is part of the Dakhaliya. There are 14,429 inhabitants, living in 51 villages. The story-tellers say the people of the area once reared Arab horses and exported them to markets in India, by sea. They also traded them internally to other parts of the Sultanate and other areas thus the story-tellers relate.

The name Wadi Taaiyin goes back to the time of the collapse of the Ma'rab Dam in the Yemen, when the Arab tribes fled to various places. The Ta'a tribe, part of the Al Qahtaina tribe descended through Wadi Sma'il then came out to Wadi Al Taaiyin, where they settled. Some of the Al 'Udnaaniya tribe



Preservation of heritage



Modernity and history



also reached the wadi which is named for them.

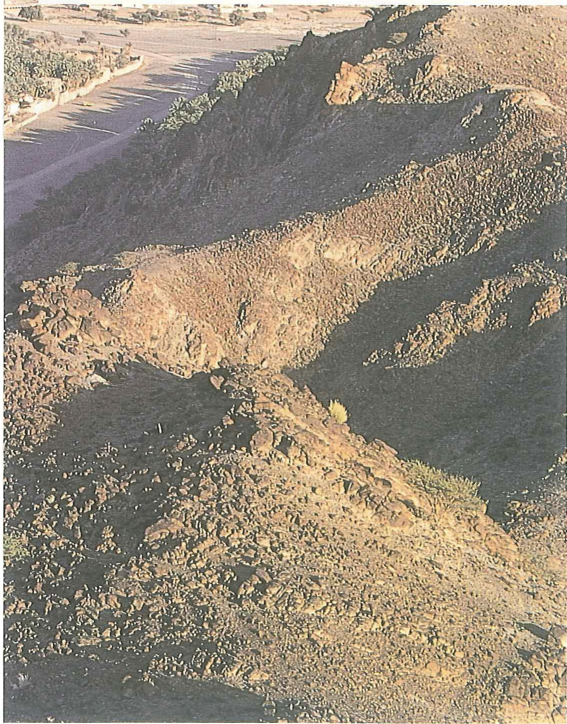
What about the name "Wadi Dima" ?

The story-tellers say that the Wadi witnessed many local wars, which shed much blood (dima) and that the name of the Wadi goes back to those

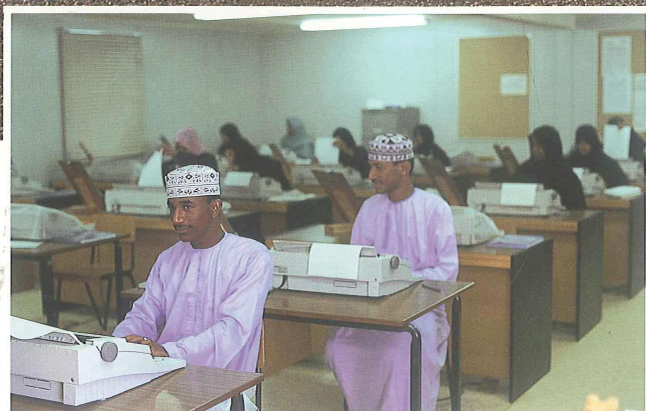
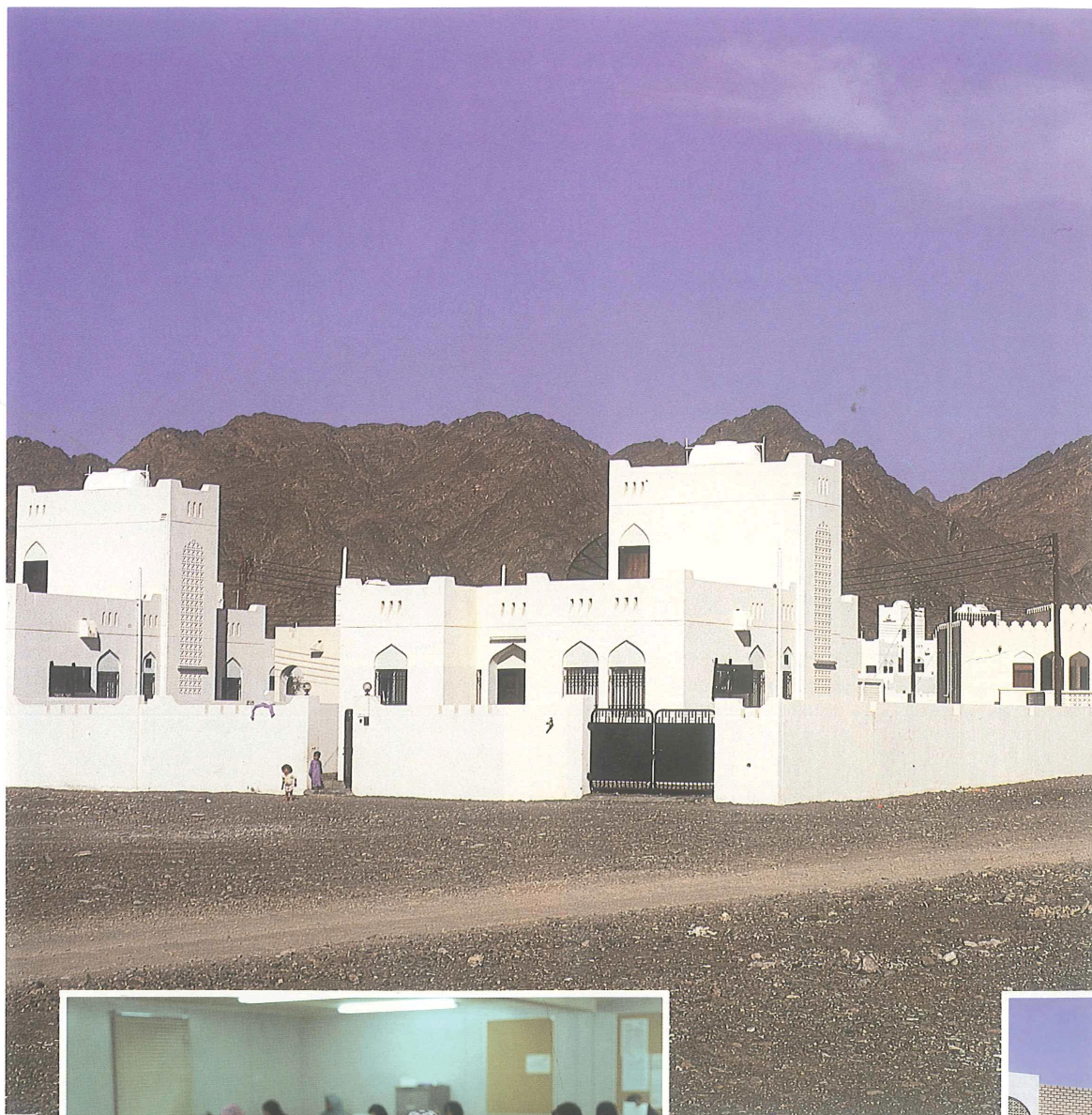
events. The Wilayat of Dima and Taaiyin has many archeological features - forts, towers and old mosques. There are castles in Al Hamaam, Khabah and Al Husun. There are also 87 towers distributed among various areas of the Wilayat, in addition to



A fertile oases



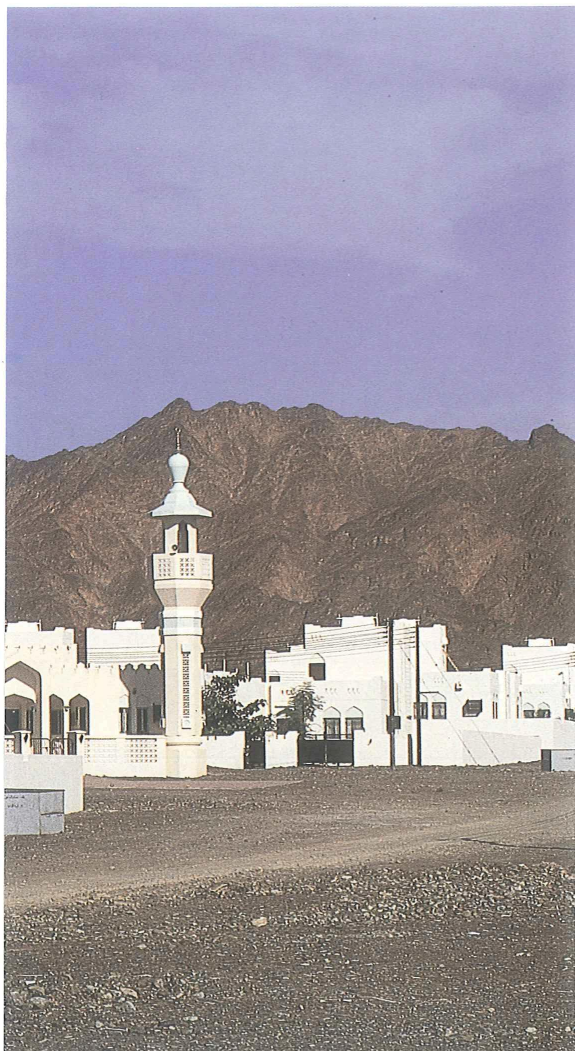
A Mosque



Education is available for all



Transport



provided to school children

an old mosque, which has recently been renovated. The springs, falaj and caves in the Wilayat of Dima and Taaiyin are outstanding tourist attractions, 'Ain Falaj Al Mamar, 'Ain Falaj Al Sakhana, 'Ain Al Masafaa and 'ain Al Sakhana being the most important ones. Al 'Aqadaani, Al Qaria, Al Luwyaili, Al 'Ain, Al Taht and Falaj Qir are some of the most important afalaj. The number of 'hot' afalaj is almost 200. There is one cave, Ghar Abu Habaan. Wadi Daiqah is also another tourist attraction.

The Wilayat of Dima and Al Taaiyin is famous for agriculture and animal husbandry. Much of the agricultural area has good grazing so animal resources have grown. It is the main income for the citizens of the Wilayat. In addition there are various agricultural products, such as several kinds of



The importance of health is recognized



dates, which ripen early (about a month before any other Wilayats in the Sultanate) The early marketing of these dates is extremely lucrative for the farm owners. Khanjar making, weaving, jewellery making and blacksmithery are some of the important traditional industries.

Some of the traditional folk songs are Al Razha, Al Azi and Al Zaffa.

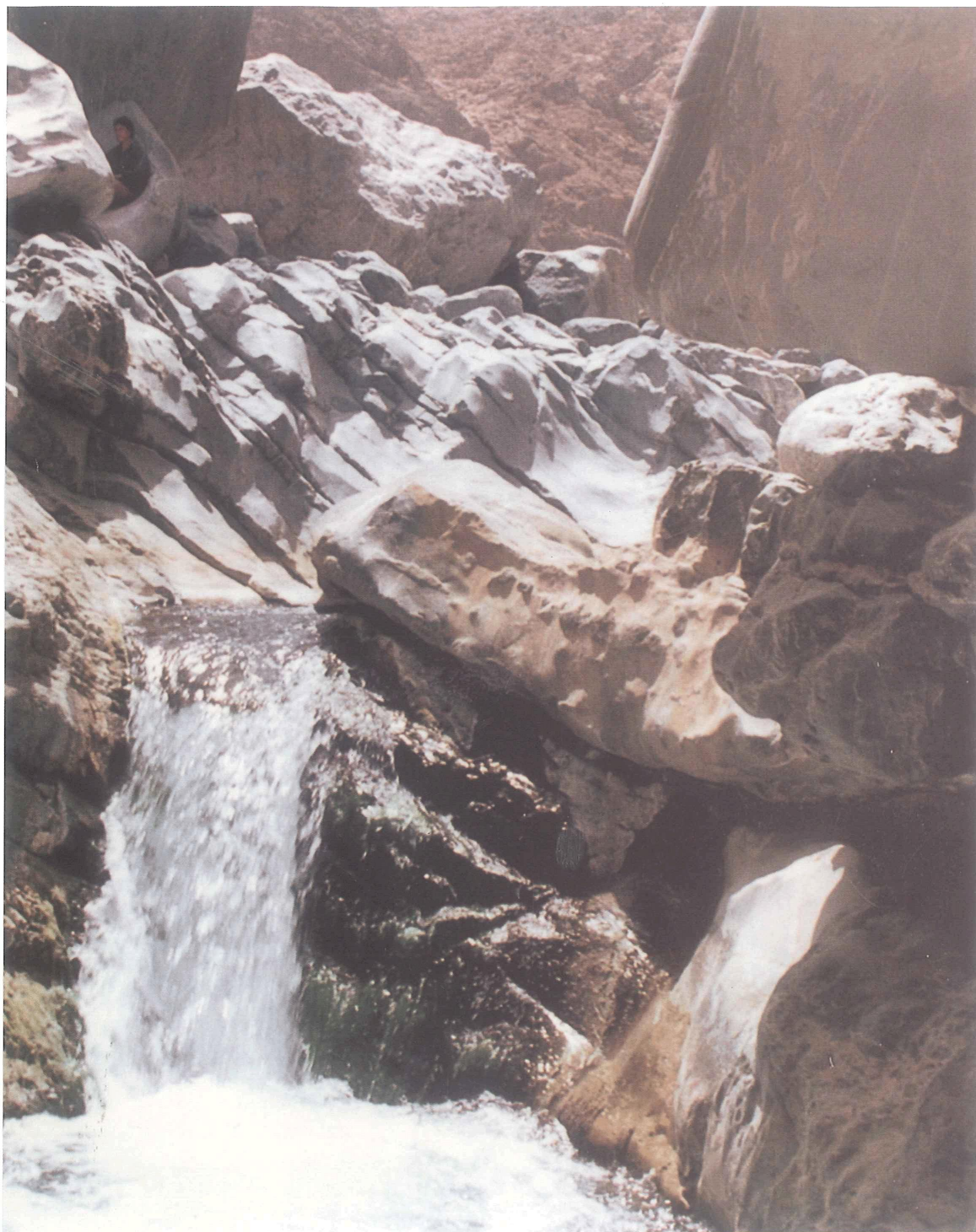
The Wilayat of Dima and Al Taaiyin has progressed with all modern services during the last 25 years of the Renaissance of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos. For health care, there is the Dima and Al Taaiyin Hospital, with various departments, which offers medical services to the citizens of the Wilayat.

In the field of educational services there are 7 schools for boys and girls, for the three stages of education, primary, preparatory and secondary.

The Wilayat also has a number of government offices and centres which offer the necessary services to its citizens . The most important are: the Office for the Development of Local Associations, the Electricity Office, the Roads Centre, the Post Office, the Municipality, the Office for the Development of Agriculture, the Sharia' Law Court, the Wali's Office and another in the subsidiary district of Dima.

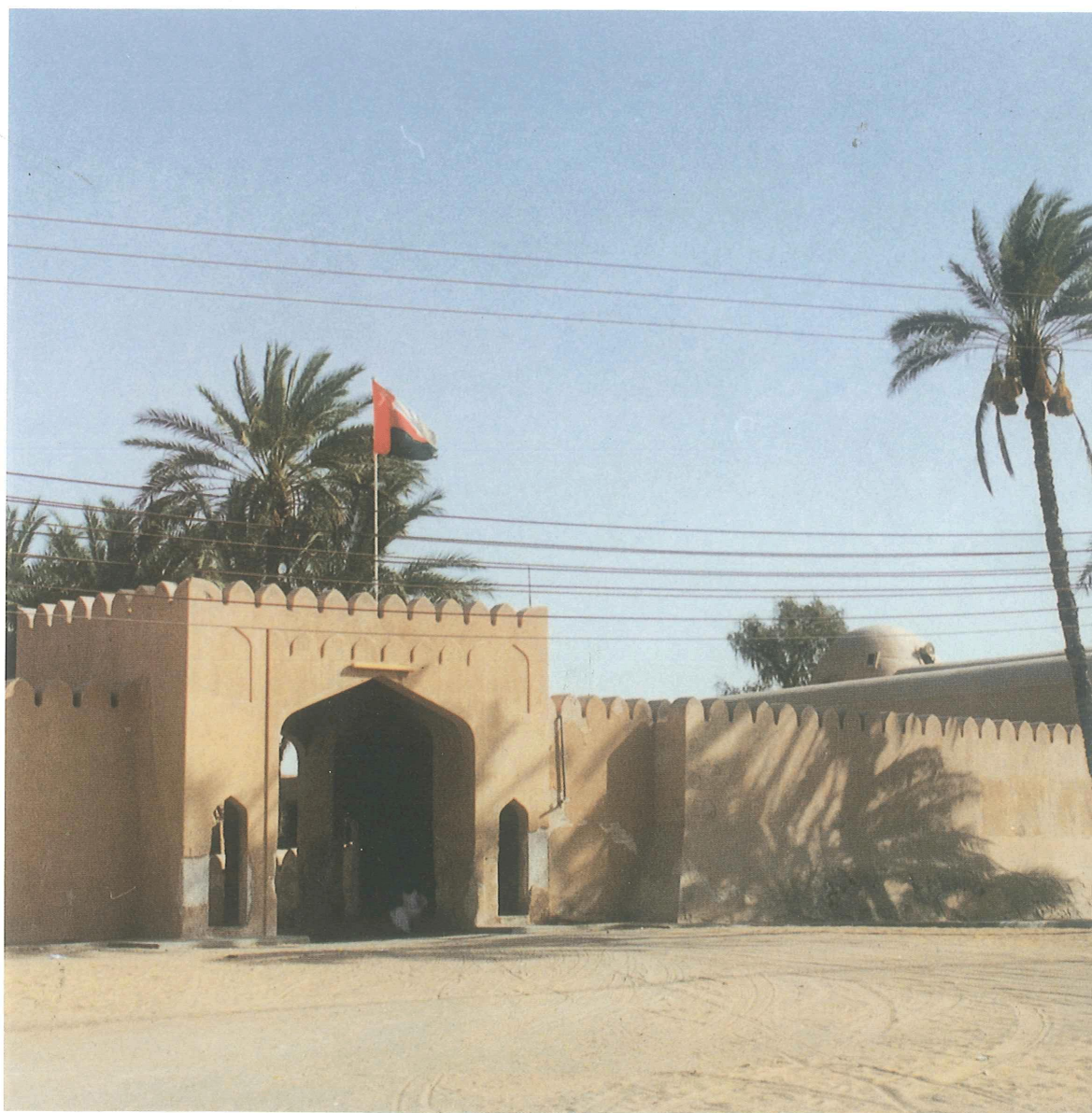


A popular tourist attraction

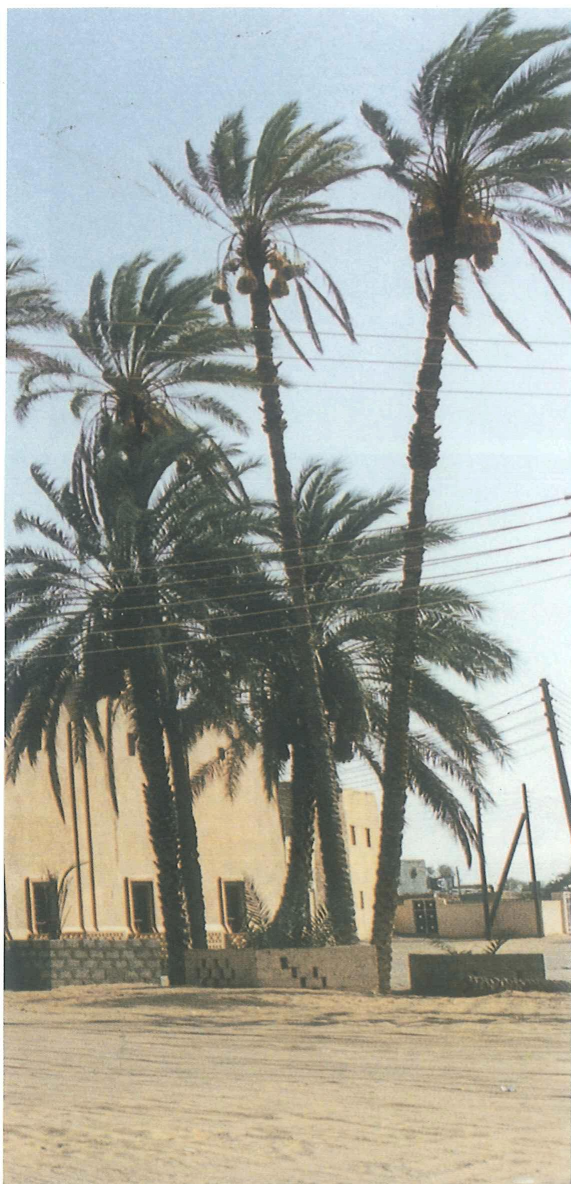




Wilayat Al Kamil and Al Waafi



Palm trees provide shade in Wilayat Al Kamal and Al Wafi



In 1970 there were no telephone lines and no postal services. At the end of 1994 there were 12,044 telephone lines operating in the Sharqiya. There were 15 Post Offices, 25 delivery agencies and 6,850 private post boxes.



Mother and child care

In the north it neighbours the Wilayat of Wadi Bani Khalid, in the west the Wilayat of Badiya in the south the Wilayat of Ja'alan Bani Bu Hasan and in the east the Wilayat of Sur. It has a population of 16,712 people, living in about 40 villages and towns.

There are about 80 castles. The most outstanding mosques are the Al Jam'aa Mosque, in the village of Al Waafi, and Al Shariya Mosque in Al Kamil, which was built by the Ministry of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. In addition there is the mosque in the villages of Saiq and a number of other mosques in various parts of the Wilayat.

The Wilayat of Al Kamil and Al Waafi has a number of natural areas with running water which are important tourist attractions. Among them are the village of Saiq, Al Baatin, Mazra', Tahuh and Wadi Laa. Natural springs, and among them 'Ain Al

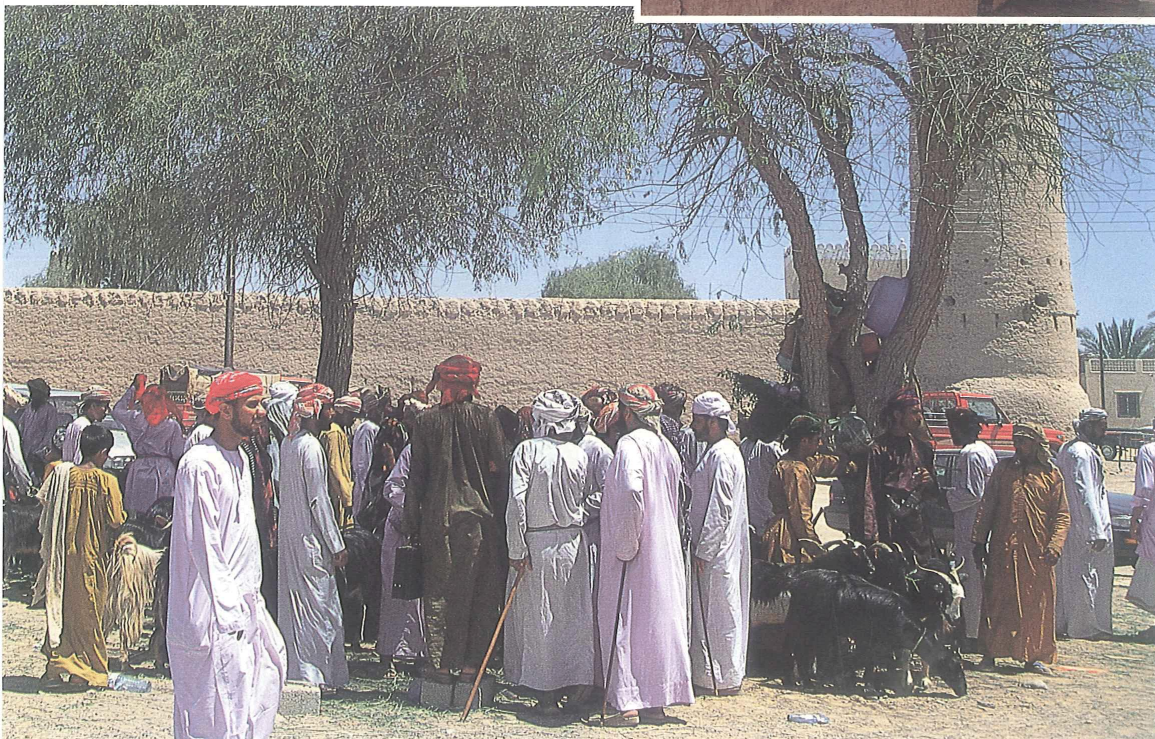
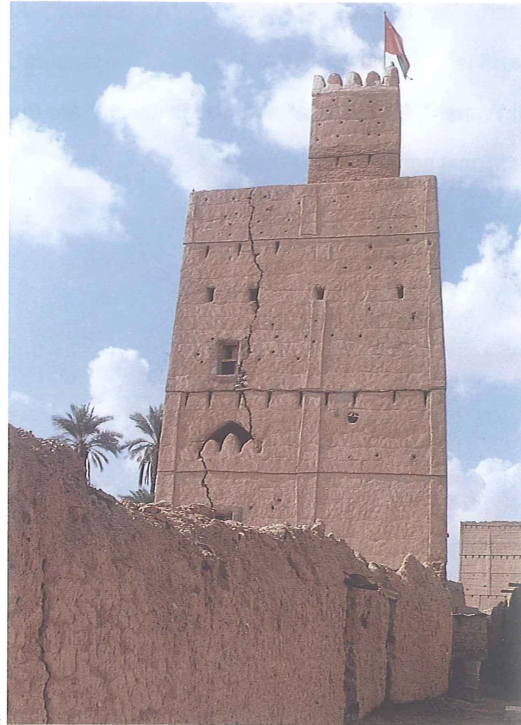


A traditional market



Rasa, 'Ain Falaj Yastan, and 'Ain Falaj Simoud are also considered tourist attractions. There are other springs that only flow when there has been much rain.

A number of occupations, industries and traditional songs are practised here. The occupations are: spinning, weaving clothes, making horse saddles and embellishments for camels, belts, making khanjars and swords, animal husbandry and grazing. The industries are: making wooden doors, windows, minbars, wardrobes and beds. Aside from these pottery is made. There are woven goods such as horse and camel saddles, men's and women's clothes, and handkerchiefs. Bricks are also made. "Al Razha", "Al Hambal", "Al





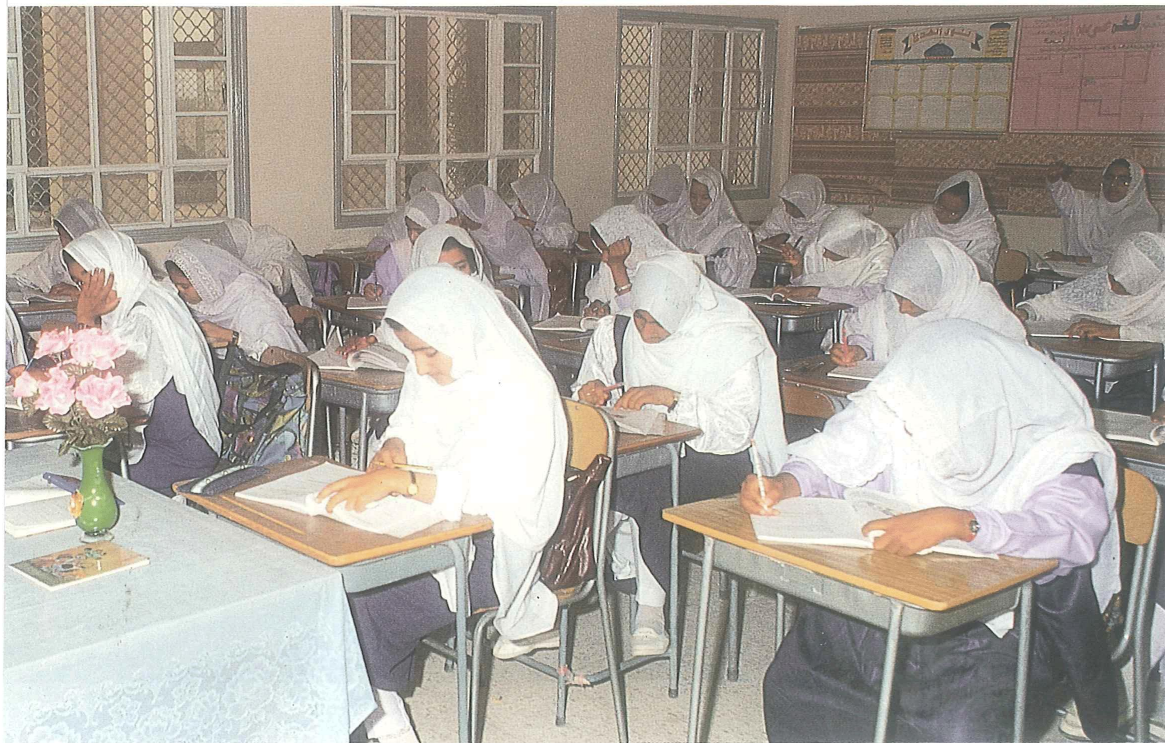
'Aazi", "Al Taghrud", "Al Tarik", "Al Sharah", Al Mazifina", "Tashashah", "Al Midaan", "Al Hanbura", "Al Wanah", "Al Madima" and "Al Makuwara" are the traditional songs of this Wilayat.



Students are keen to learn

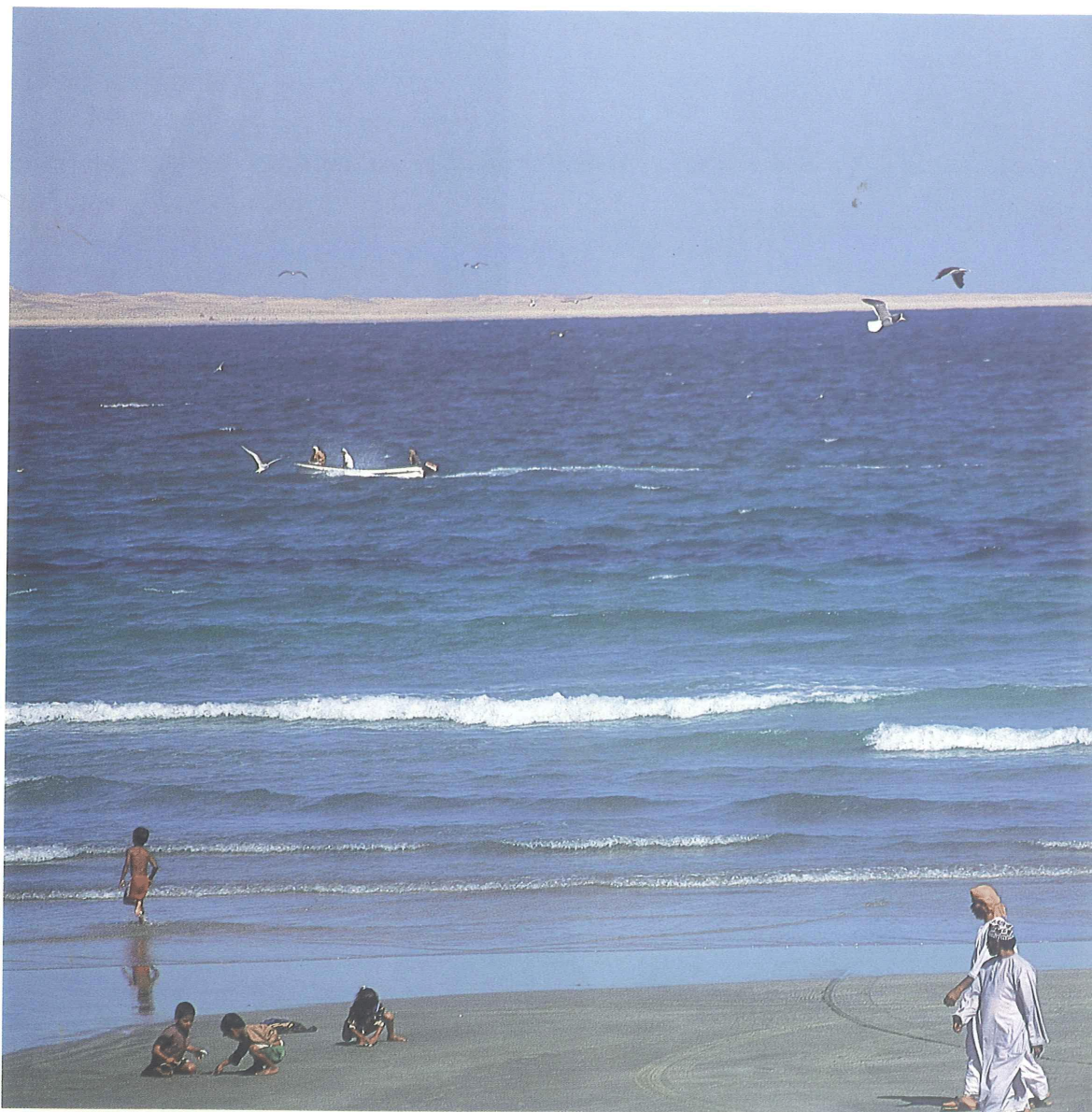


A falaj

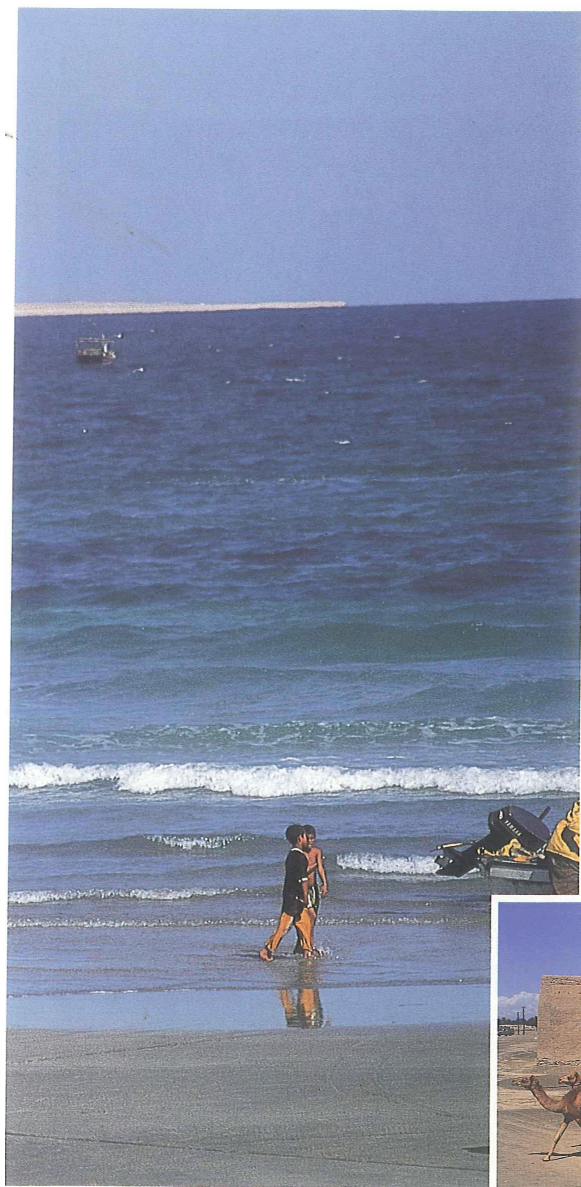


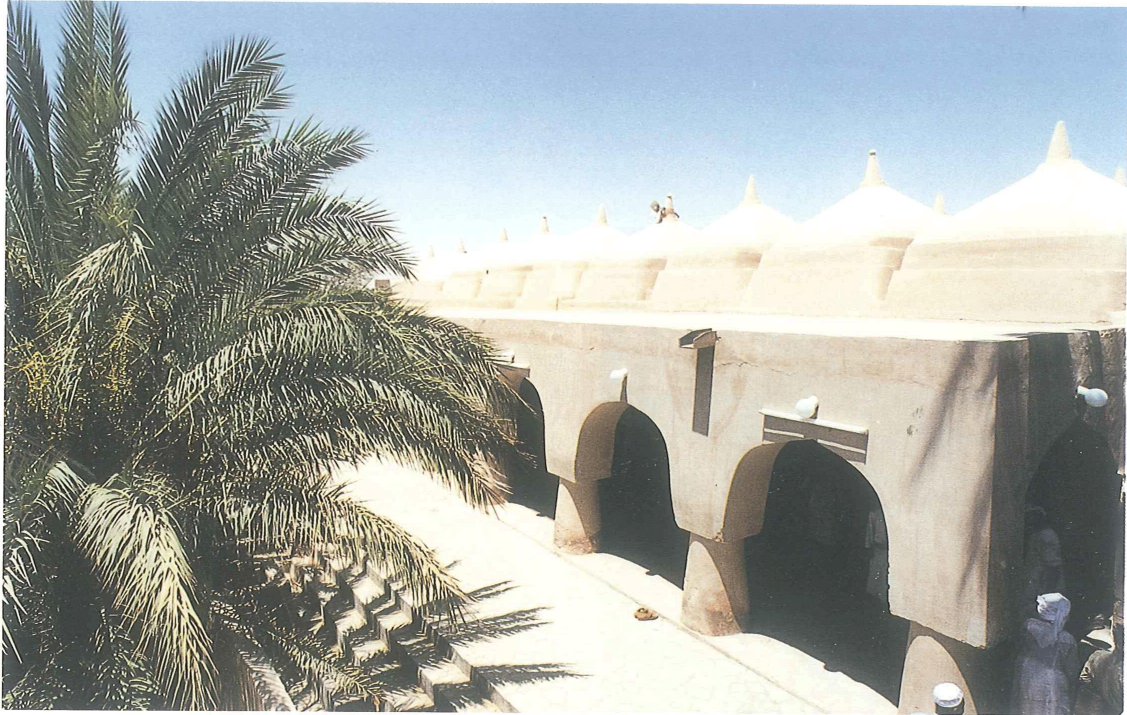


Wilayat Ja'alan Bani Bu 'Ali



On the beach in Wilayat Ja'alan Bani Bu Ali





Al Jam'aa mosque

It is located in the south east part of the Sultanate and is one of the biggest Wilayats. It is a mix of three different geographical environments. What are they ? The first is the coastal area of the Wilayat, the second, the desert area and the third, the agricultural area. This mix of environments provides the inhabitants with a variety of incomes. The number of inhabitants is 39,715 , living in 137 villages. The coast stretches more than 170 kilometres, from Ras Al Hadd in the north to Ras Al Ruwais in the south; and scattered throughout are inhabited areas. The Wilayat also includes the desert, so that it is made up of pasture, sand dunes and wadis.

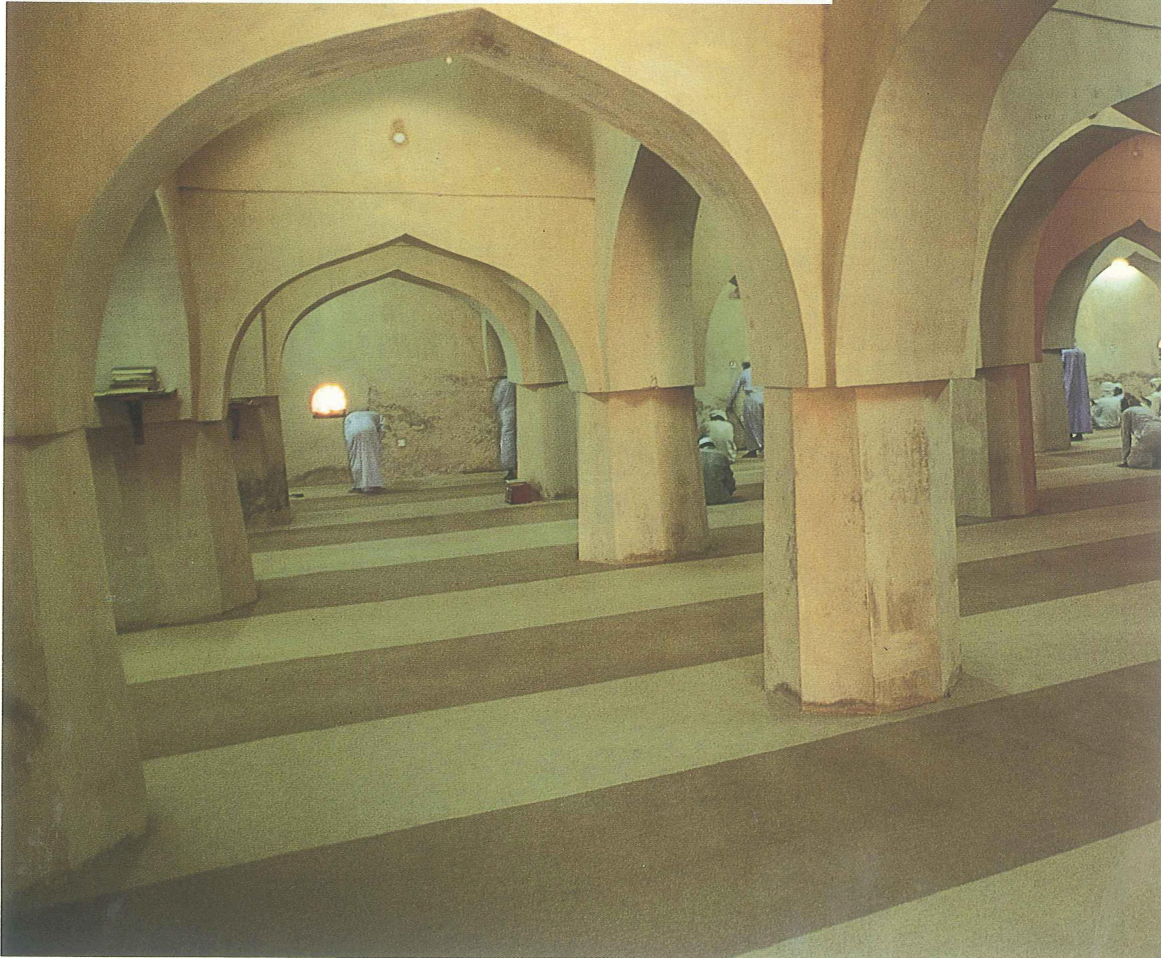
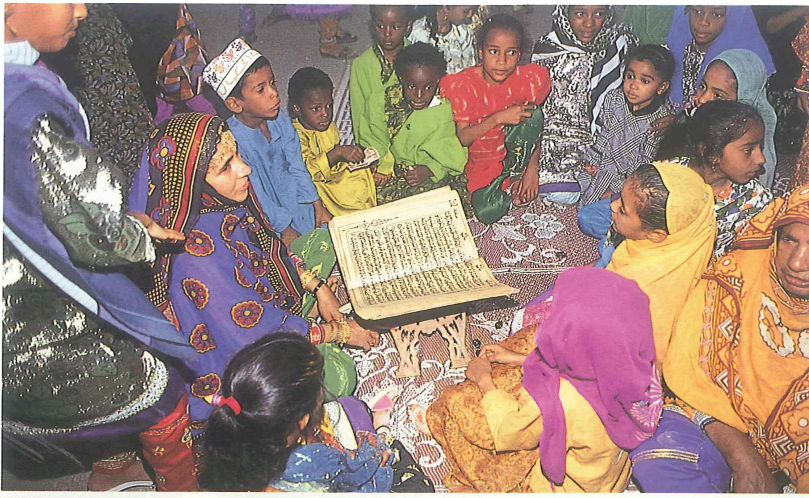
Most of the people are Bedouin, but nowadays they are nearly all settled in their areas. In addition, there is the urban environment where the



A peaceful scene



Seabirds are common on the beach of Al Sharqiya

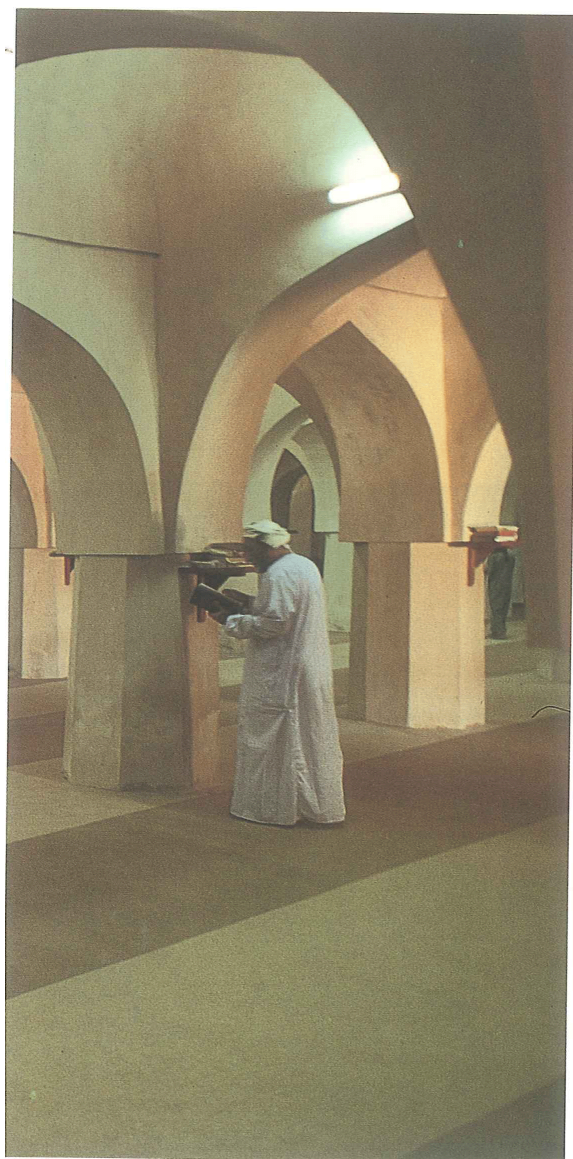


Al Jam'aa mosque built in the 11th century Hijri



inhabitants practice agriculture and trade.

In the Wilayat Ja'alan Bani Bu 'Ali there are castles, forts, towers and old mosques. One of the most important castles is that of "Al Hamouda" which was built at the beginning of the 11th century A.H. There are also some ruined houses which



have been taken over by the Organization of Castles and Forts. One of the principal forts of the Wilayat is located in the Badi'ya area, and bears the same name. "Husn Al Badi'ya". It was built about 250 years ago. Some other forts are: Haasad, Al Lawiya, Jaabiya, Jaabiya 'Ayun, Al Qatitra, Jaabiya Balidah, and two other forts, one in the Shariy'a area and another in Kaabid. There are also 13 towers in various areas.

The Al Jam'aa Mosque was built in the 11th century A.H., it is unique in form and design and it is made up of 52 cupolas in a wonderful feat of engineering, in that its roof is also covered with cupolas. These allow light and air into the mosque. His Majesty Sultan Qaboos had it restored at his own expense. The Wilayat of Ja'alan Bani Bu 'Ali has a moderate climate throughout most of the year, because of the winds that blow on to its shores from the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, carrying clouds, drizzle and rain. One of the most important of these winds is called "Riyah Al Kawus", which is particularly characteristic of the Al Ashkara area. This climate induces many Omanis and people from neighbouring Gulf states to visit the area during the summer months, and is considered a tourist attraction for the Wilayat. It is not the only attraction, however ! There are wadis with very luxuriant tree growth, the most important of which are: Wadi Saal, Wadi Al Rawdha, Wadi Abu Fashigha, Wadi Al Labida, and Wadi Jarif.

There are a number of afalaj: Abu Al Hees, Al Dhahir, Al Seih, Hamad, Ziyad, Al Jidar, Al Faleej, Al Rahyaan, Al Jadid, Ghadiraan, Zawid and Bahbouh. There are also about 52 springs used for irrigating the fields, which have a special system for distributing the water, similar to that of the falaj.



The Wilayat is famous for a number of occupations, industries and traditional songs. Fishing is the main income for the people who live in the coastal area, with grazing and animal husbandry for the people of the desert, and agriculture and trade for the people of the urban areas of the Wilayat. Ship building is one of the most important traditional industries, especially in Al Ashkhara, together with the making of gold and silver jewellery.

The most important songs are Al Razha, Al Taariq, Al Wanah, Al Taghrud, Al Mazifina and also various songs of the sea.

On the shores, where the Arabian Sea meets the waters of the Indian Ocean, the accomplishments of the March of Prosperity of Sultan Qaboos shine. These accomplishments have, over the last twenty five years, provided the citizens in the Wilayat, like other Wilayats and areas of the Sultanate, with most modern services, making them content with their lives in the desert, in the urban areas and on the coast. In the field of health care, there is a referral hospital which has seventy beds and a number of different departments, and specialized clinics with wards for in-patients.

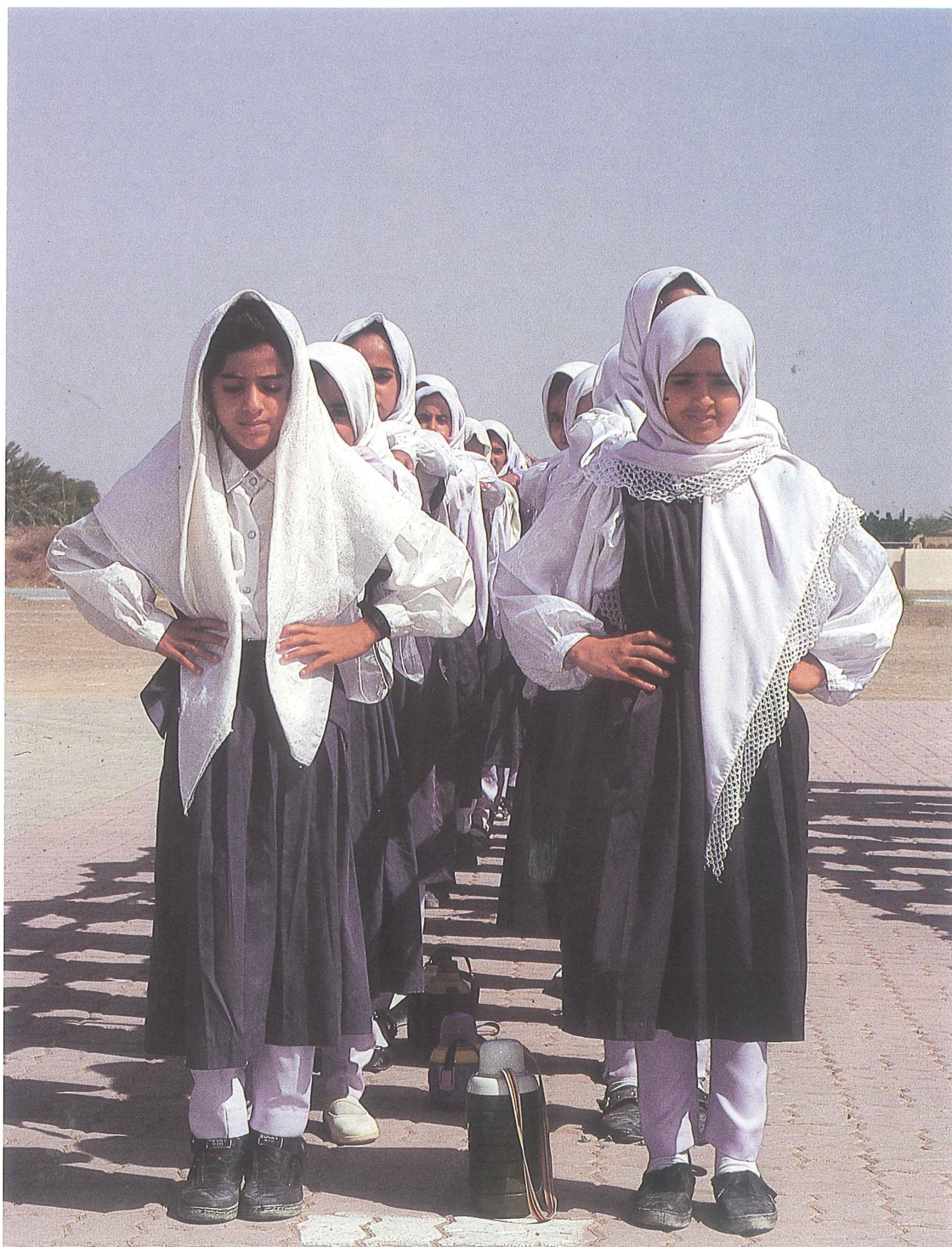
As for educational services, there are 32 schools for boys and girls, throughout the Wilayat, which offer the three stages of education: primary, preparatory and secondary.

In addition, there are government offices working to provide all central services to the citizens, wherever they are. The most important are: the Office for the Development of Local Associations, the Municipality, the Telephone Office, the Centre for Agricultural Guidance, the Centre for Collecting Fish, a centre for roads, a water purification plant,

an electricity station, the Social Affairs Office, a police station, a sports club, the Shar'ia Law Court and the Wali's Office.



An administrative building



The youth of today



Procession in honour of H. M. the Sultan, Wilayat Ja'alan Bani Bu Ali

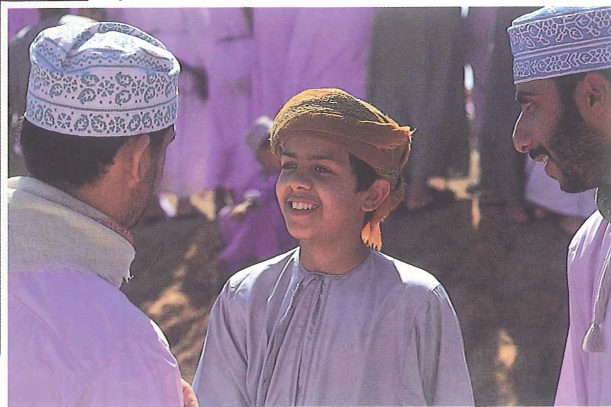
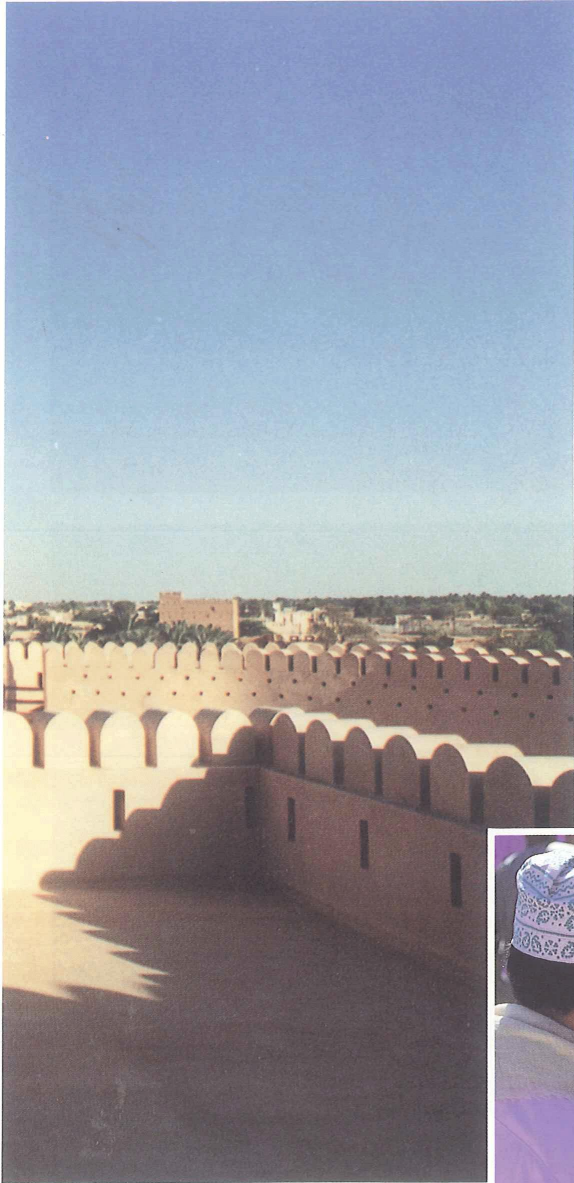




Wilayat Ja'alan Bani Bu Hasan



Old buildings have been restored to their former splendour



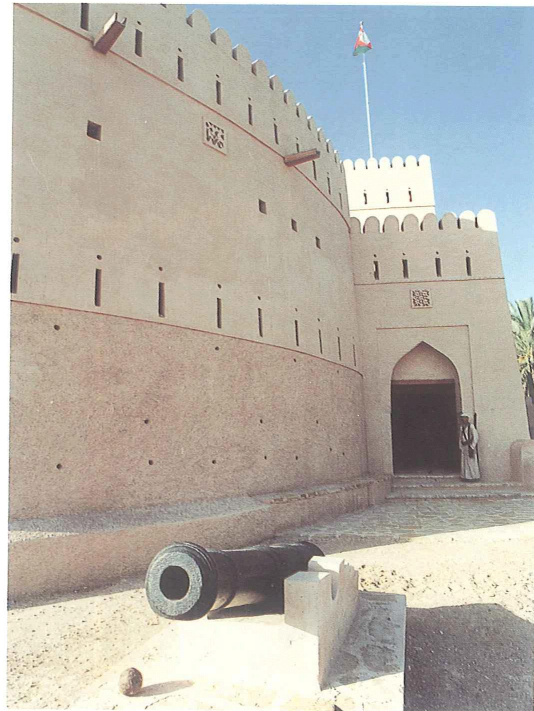
A promising future



Dates are harvested once a year

To the east is the Wilayat of Sur, to the west the Rimal Aal Wahiba and the Wilayat of Al Mudaibi, to the north the Wilayat of Al Kamil and Al Waafi and to the south the Wilayat of Ja'alan Bani Bu 'Ali. It also stretches south to the coast of the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. There are about 160 villages with 21,878 inhabitants. The Wilayat chose two crossed spears as its emblem which indicates the bravery and courage of its citizens.

There is a collection of archaeological sites in the Wilayat. There are 15 castles, the most important being: the castle of Awlaad Murshid in the Al Manjarad area and the castle of Faleej. Al Mahiyul is considered the best fort in the Wilayat, which also has 13 other forts. This shows that, previously, it was a centre of local government. The most important of the 60 towers are: Al Safara, Al



A restored fort



Water supplies are strictly controlled



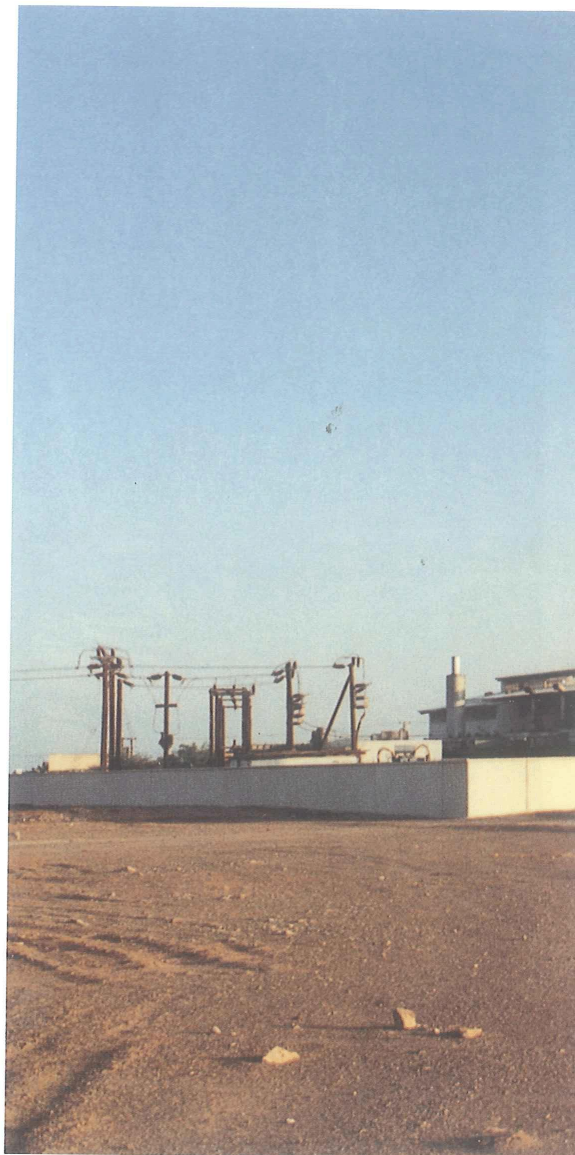
Mursid, and Burj Al Saqata. The Wilayat also has 40 ancient mosques.

Springs, falaj and caves make up the tourist attractions of this Wilayat. There are about 15 springs, the most important being : Jabal Qahwan, Al Khatam, Al Balida, Dima, Al 'Aqba and 'Ain Um Al Baqr. The most important falaj are: Al Manjarad, Al Buirad, Al Mahiyul, Al 'Aquiriya, Al Sharqi, Al 'Ais, Hilal and Falaj Al Mashaaikh. There are a number of caves in Jabal Qahwan, which the inhabitants used to live in, to protect themselves and their animals from the fierce winds and rain. The most important of these caves are : Mataab, Al Halifa, Wadi Al Marish, Matira and Wadi Al 'Atan.

There are many traditional occupations in the Wilayat, but most of the population are involved with agriculture, which is the main source of income. The soil is very fertile and is suitable for many crops. For irrigation they depend on falaj and wells. The most important agricultural products are: various types of dates, vegetables, and fruit, especially mango. The most important types of date are "Al Khalaas", "Al Madluki" and "Abu Naaranja". The people also graze goats and camels, as the area has a particularly suitable type of grass.

In the coastal part of the Wilayat of Ja'alan Bani Bu Hasan, from Bandar Al Saklaa to Bandar Al Jueera, most of the people are fishermen, and this is the main income of the area. Some inhabitants are blacksmiths, making spears and swords and agricultural tools. They also polish and maintain bronze pots, eliminating the toxic sediment from cooking pots, and making them shiny and clean again. In the desert people spin and weave goats hair and so fulfill their needs for woollen items.

The "Shamaara" makes leather handicrafts such



A modern plant





as scabbards for swords, belts and holsters for rifles. Gold and silver working is also practised, making jewellery and khanjars. Many people in the Wilayat also make woven or earthenware pots (Fakhaar), to such an extent that the wadis in the west of the Wilayat are known as "Khaam Al Fakhaar". There are also some modern industries in the Wilayat which have developed during the Renaissance of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos. The most important of these are dairy products, ice and brick manufacture.

There are many traditional songs in the Wilayat, but the most important are: Al Razha, Al 'Aazi, Al Midaan, Al Sharah, Al Magaid, Al Tashhasha, Al Shaa'at Al Raaiyuh, Abu Zalaf aw 'Ilm Daani and Al

Madima.

The Renaissance of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos has succeeded in providing all types of modern services to the inhabitants of the Wilayat, whether they be on the coast, in the urban areas or in the desert.

There are now 7 schools for the three stages of education - primary, preparatory and secondary. In addition there is an Institute of Islamic Studies.

There is the Ja'alan Bani Bu Hasan Hospital, together with two health centres, a public health unit and a unit for preventative medicine. There are a number of governmental offices, which provide or facilitate the provision of services. The most important are: Housing, the Centre for Developing



Government subsidized housing project



Agriculture, which offers advisory services to farmers in order to raise production and improve produce, a Veterinary Centre to care for and improve types of animal and livestock, and to treat them when necessary, the Post Office, Electricity and Water, the General Telecommunications Organization, a branch of the Municipality, the Office for Labour and Social Affairs, the Sharia' Law Court and the Wali's Office.



Sultan Qaboos institute for Islamic studies

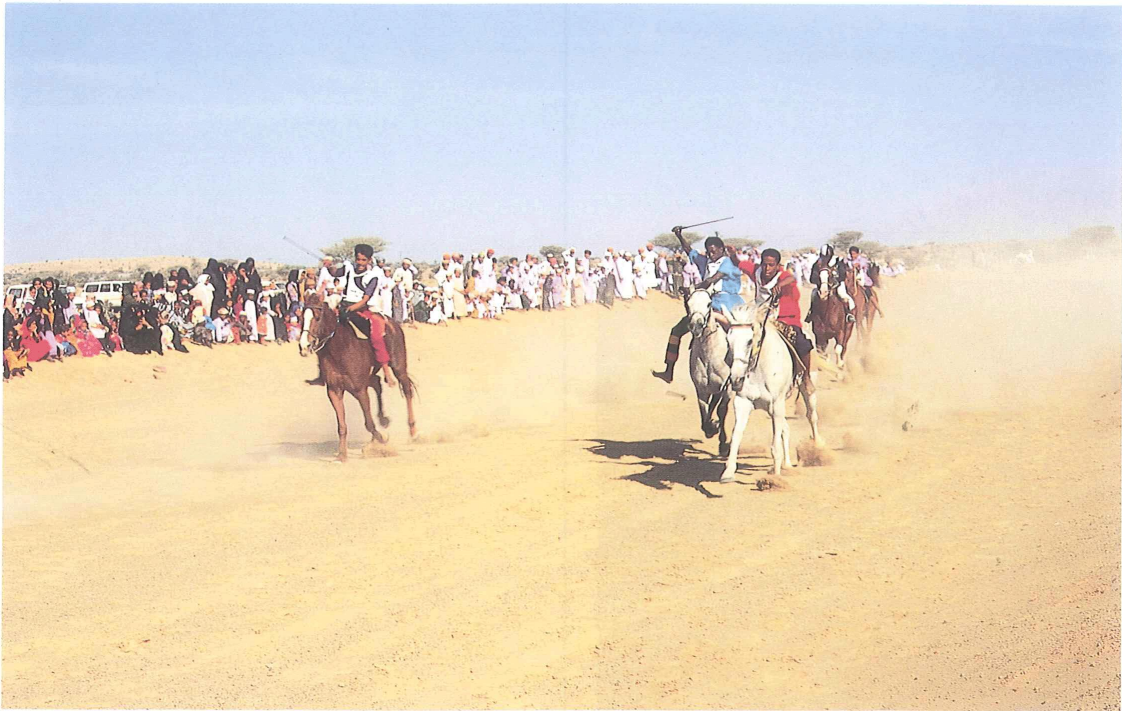


Wilayat Wadi Bani Khalid



There is always water in Wadi Bani Khalid





The sports of our forefathers are still alive

In the west it neighbours the Wilayats of Badiya and Al Qabil, in the east the Wilayat of Sur, in the south the Wilayat of Al Kamil and Al Waafi, and in the north the Wilayat Dima and Al Taaiyin. 5,877 people live in about 30 villages. It is famous for a number of archaeological sites. There are some forts, the most important being: Hasan Al Muwalik in the village of Al 'Awina, which dates back to the 4th century A.H., the biggest fort in the Wilayat and in the past was the base of the Wali and the Judge, the fort of Al 'Adafin in the village of Qaswah, and the fort of Al Raziqiyeen in the village of Al Husun. All in addition to other forts of which only ruins remain. There are also 9 towers.

The Wilayat has many tourist features. The main one is the cave of Maqal, where water falls from holes, then bursts out with a gurgling sound into a



Camping is relaxing



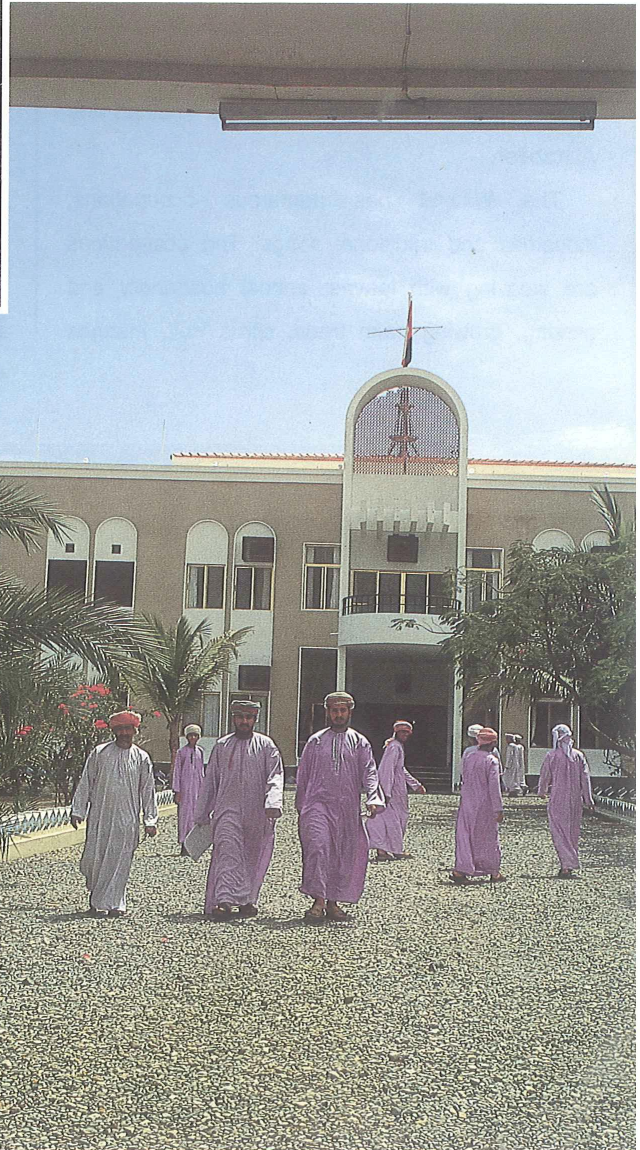
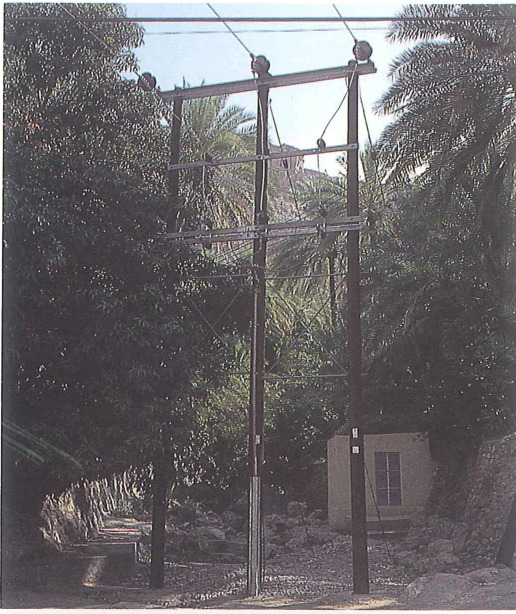
pool. It disappears again and finally collects into lakes which the people distribute into three falaj. The Wilayat chose this cave as its emblem. Other tourist attractions are the springs, of which the most important are: 'Ain Duwah, Al Lathab, Al Kabira', Al Haajir, Al Kanara, Al Makhdah, Al Hawiya, Al Jabiyat Al khamra, Al Montajir, Al Halka, Al Ithnain and "Ain Ghalaala. In addition there are 56 falaj, the most important being: Al Hili, Al Fardhah, Abu Ba'rah, Al Saaruj, Al Garbi, Falaj Abu Khulaan and Al Kabeer.

The Wilayat has numerous occupations, industries and traditional songs. The occupations are weaving with leaves, animal husbandry and grazing, growing palm trees, citrus fruit, mangos



A farmer inspects his date crops





Services for the citizens



and bananas, and producing local folk remedies for mending broken bones and cauterization. The industries are gold and silver working, weaving and blacksmithery.

Al Razha, Al Sharah, Al Midaan, Abu Zalaf and the Al 'Aazi are some of the traditional songs.

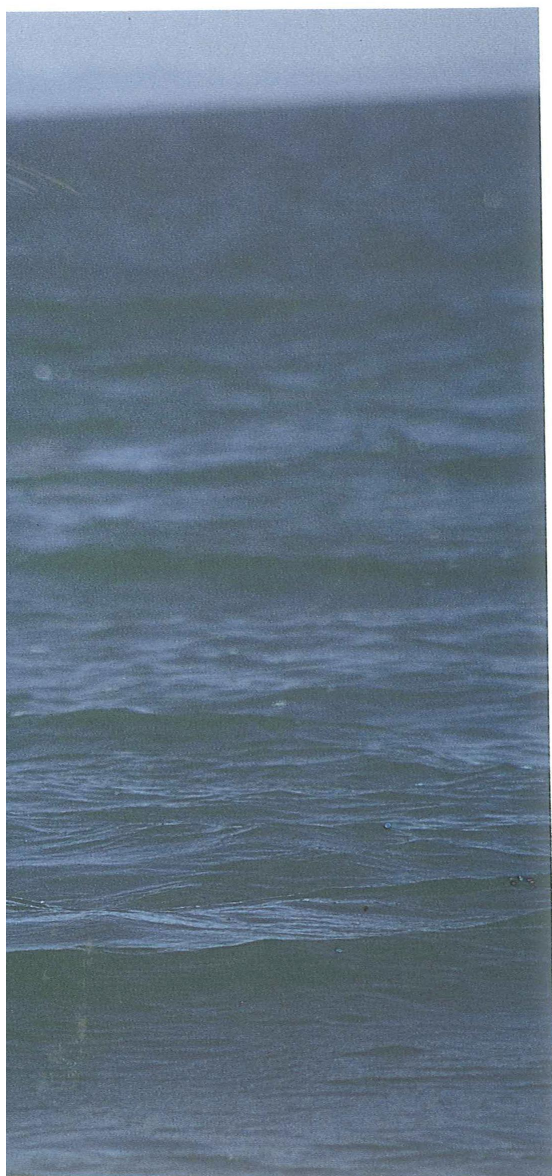
The Wilayat has benefited greatly from the Renaissance of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos. The needs of the citizens have been addressed, despite the difficulties presented by the terrain. There are now government offices and centres working to provide the citizens with necessary services. The most important are : Post Office, Electricity, the Municipality, the Centre for Development of Local Organizations, the Centre for Developing Agriculture, a road-making unit, a public health unit, the Sharia' law court and the Wali's office. There is a hospital with various departments, which takes care of the citizens health needs. There are a number of schools for boys and girls, covering the three stages of education. The Wilayat also has an adequate telephone service, and the government has dug arterial wells to provide drinking water.

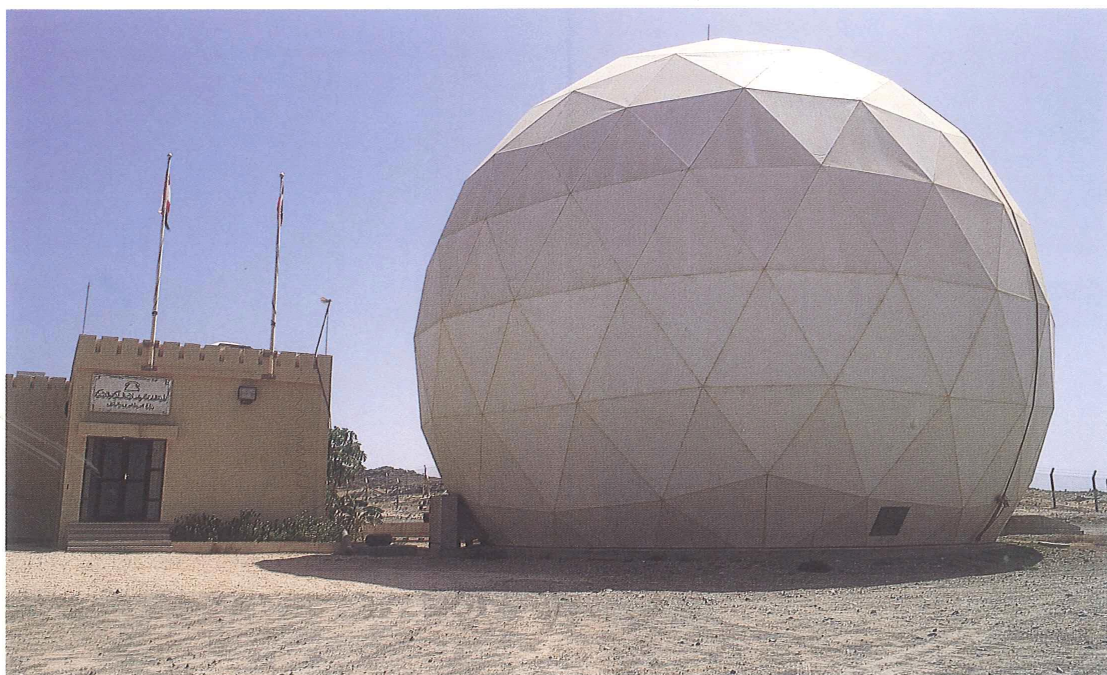


Wilayat Masira



Dolphins abound in the waters of Masira Island



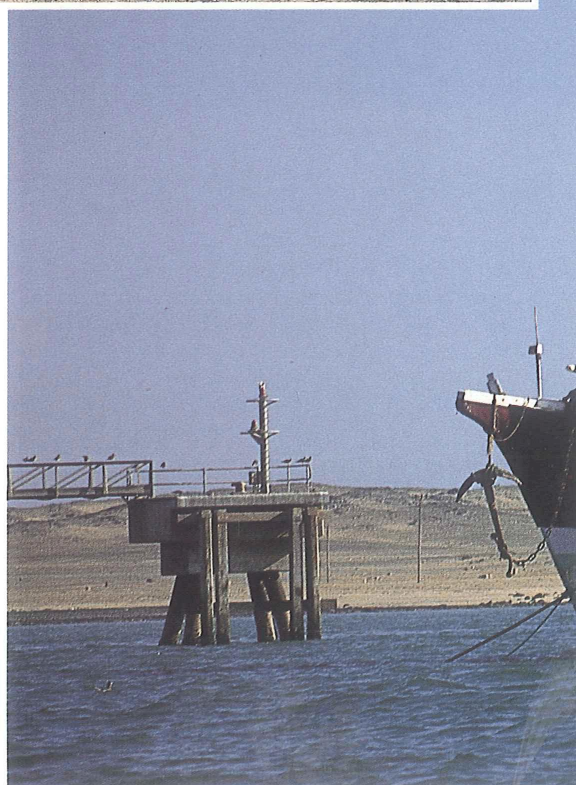


Communications are up to date

This is an island located in the south east of the Sultanate, administratively it is part of the Sharqiya. Around it are a number of other islands the most important of which are Marsis, Sha'anzi and Kalbaan. In the Wilayat of Masira are a number of villages: Dafiyaan, Al Samar, Duwah Mashqaf, Marsis, Sur Masira, Haqal, 'Amaq, Maaghah, Raasa Sha'ah, Al 'Aija, and Wadi Al Maqar. The population is 8,299.

Masira which is located in the Arabian Sea was a rest station for ships anchored off its shores, to get sweet water. Alexander the Great made it his base and called it Serepsis. Its beaches are a tourist attraction by themselves and in addition there are a number of springs on the island. The most important are: Al Qatara, Wadi Bilad and others near Jabal Al Hulm in the south of the Wilayat.

The island has no falaj. A number of ancient



Man and Sea



forts are found on the island, the 2 most important being Marsis and Dafiya.

Weaving is one of the most important traditional occupations. Masira was famous for building types of ships which are rarely found now. However the island is still famous for making fishing nets.

The traditional songs are songs of the sea and particularly the "Al Masubal", which is performed by fishermen when they raise their nets from the sea and when they clean their boats.

"Al Maghaaidh" is performed by women at



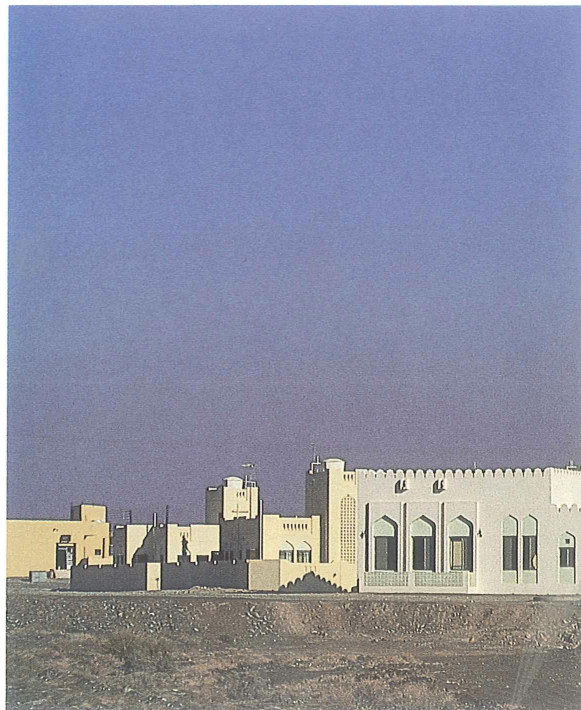


weddings. However the "Razha" remains the principal folk song in the Wilayat, as well as the "Taghrud" and the "Hambal", Beduin songs which are performed during camel races.

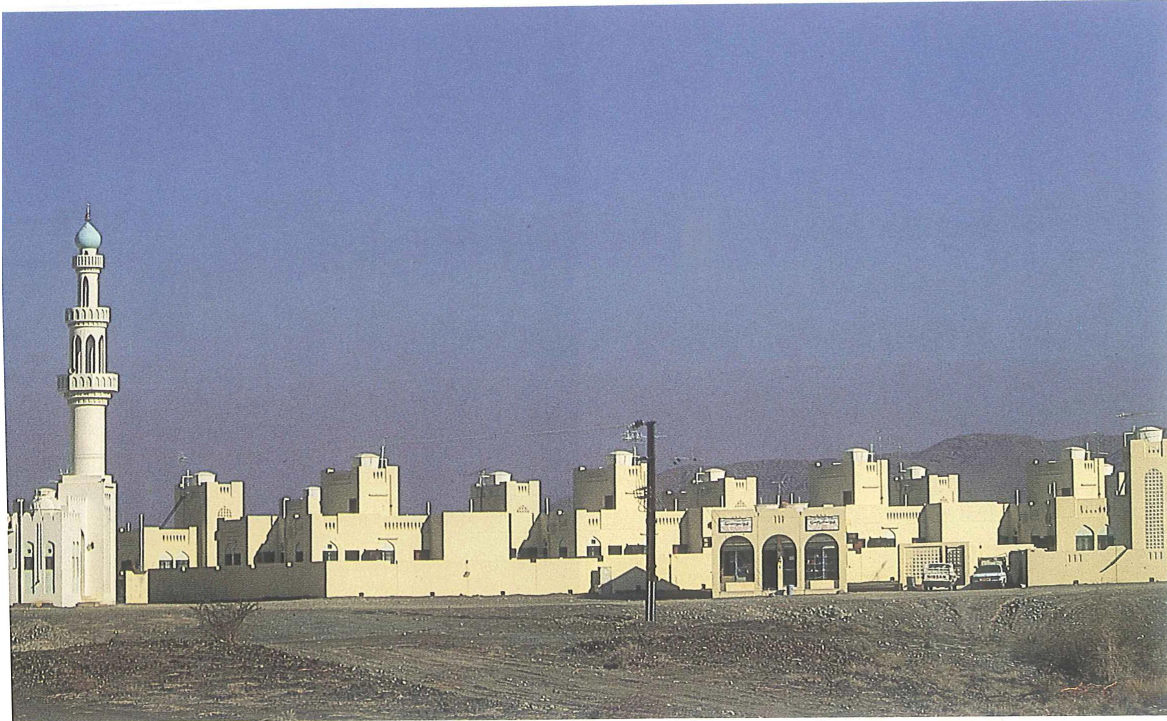
The most important agricultural products are the date palm, mango, olives and pomegranates.

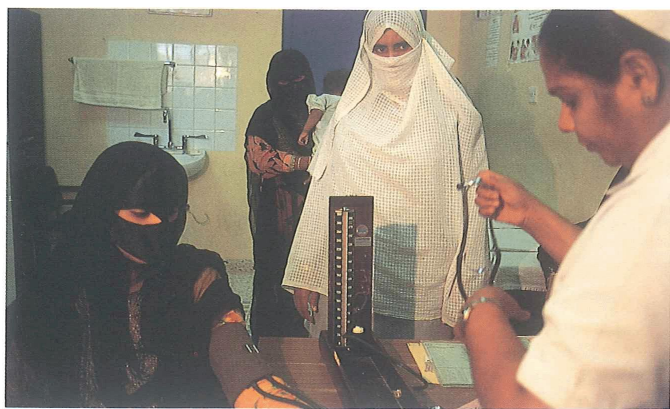
The March of Prosperity of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos did not stop at the shores of mainland Oman, rather the citizens living on the Island of Masira, in the middle of the waters of the Arabian Sea, have benefited with all kinds of services.

There is a hospital for health care and four schools covering the three stages of education. About 720 social housing units have been built, together with a market and a water desalination plant. On the island there are a number of government offices, which provide services to the citizens. The most important are: the Housing Office, Post Office, Agricultural Development Office, Social Affairs Office, the Municipality, Roads, Water, Police station, Sharia' Law Court and the Wali's Office.

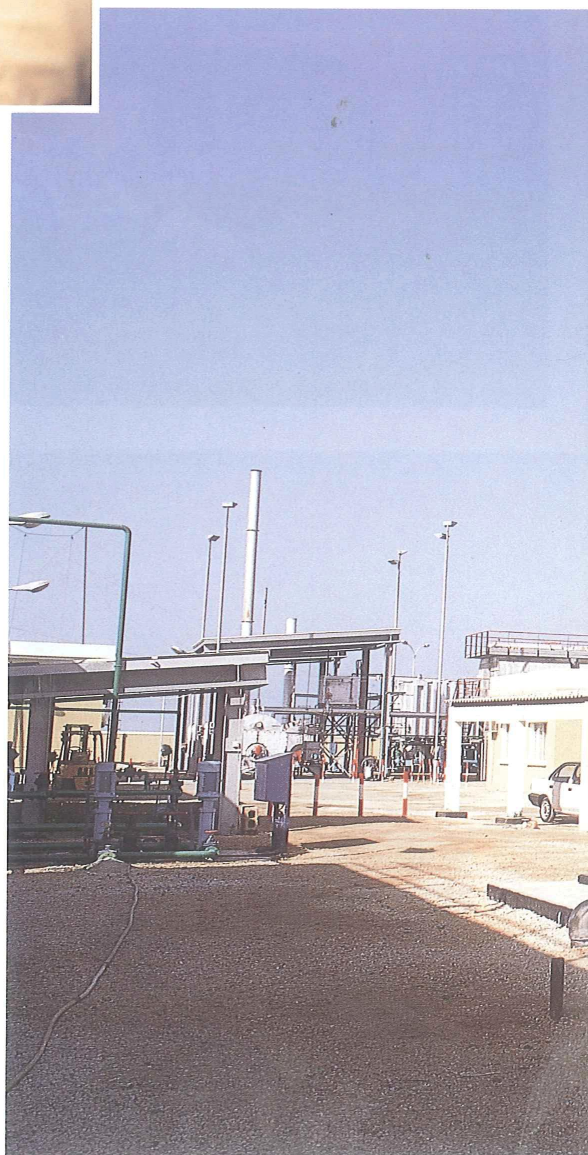


Renaissance everywhere





The health service reaches all



Services for the citizens

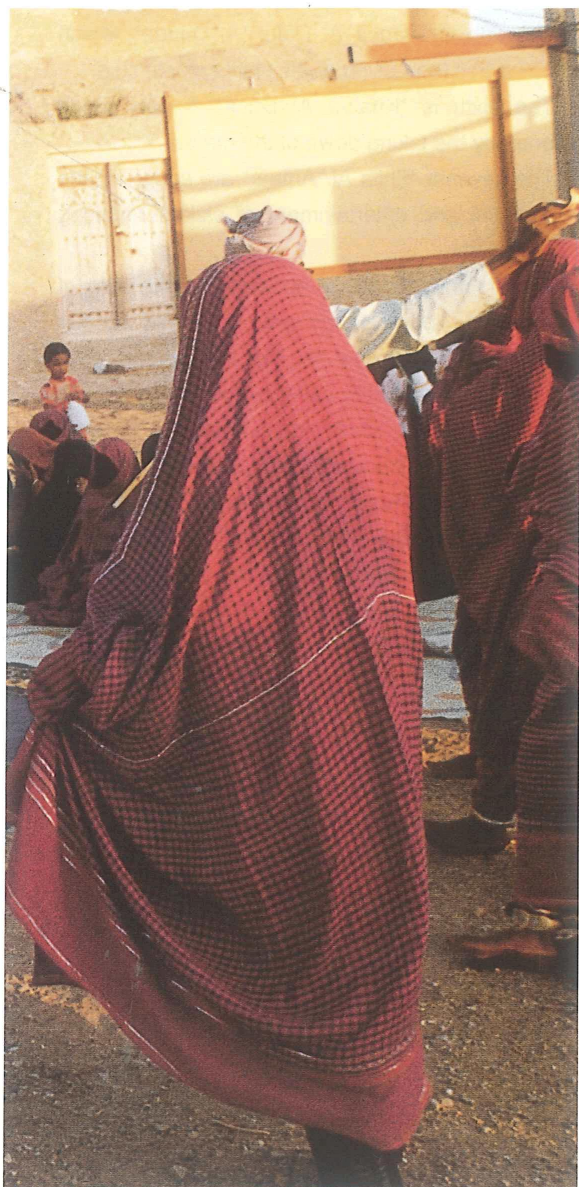




Folk Arts - Three types of traditional songs and dances



Al "Midan Dance"



Traditional songs - or folk songs - reflect their environment. The following collection is from the Sharqiya area of the Sultanate, where three types of environment blend together. This is a rather exceptional circumstance, and occurs because they all meet each other and so affect each other. The songs fall into the three categories: of the sea, the desert and the urban areas.



Songs of the Sea

The following is a collection of the types of songs which reflect the tasks the sailors carry out while preparing the ship to sail, during the voyage and on their return. Each type of song has a special poetic verse which accompanies the task, and each one is set to the rhythm of the task. The songs of the sea are formed from three sources: The first is designed to be played with the drum, which is usually found on Omani trading ships; the sailors exchange beats of the drum between them as they work together.

The second type is accompanied by clapping, in which sailors encourage the rest of their colleagues who are carrying out a particular task.

The third type relates to the movement of the oars, especially in small boats, like the "Masaashwa" and the "Sambuk".

There are eight types of sea songs. The first is the "Shillat Al Hamool" (the song of the porters). It is performed whilst lifting goods onto the deck of the ships. It is about the desire of the sailors for the voyage, the call to God to keep them safe during their coming voyage, and the desire for their friends and loved ones in the ports to which their voyage will take them.

The second is the "Shillat Al Naazal" (The song of the setting down). This song is performed while the goods are being lowered from the deck of the ship. Most of them are about thanking God for the safe arrival in the port, for the danger and accidents which they avoided, and the welcome they expect to find among the people of the country in which they have just arrived. If they arrive in Oman or on the coast of Africa, which was previously governed by Oman, the poetry and the song is joyous at the thought of meeting family, children and friends.

The third is "Jarat Al Maashwa" or "Taihat Al Bahar" or "Diqa Al Bahar" (Ring of the Sea) or "Jara Al Sambuk". The sailors perform this song to the rhythm of the oars of the boat which takes them from the ship, at anchor far away, to the shore. They chant to the rhythm as the oars slice through the

water. Most of these song are in praise of God, thanking Him for their safe return and for calming the raging seas and the lashing storms.

The fourth is the "Naza' Al Sharaa" (Raising the sails). These songs accompany the raising of the various sails on the ship. Each sail has its own song which differs from the others in speed and text according to which sail is being raised.

The fifth is "Saqba Al Dajul (Al Daqul)", which accompanies the raising of the ship's masts ship.

The sixth is "Khazra Al Dajul". These songs accompany the taking down of the masts.

The seventh "Shila Al "Amaar" are songs for the amusement and entertainment of sailors repairing ropes at night.

The eighth is the "Shila Al Baawara" (the song of the anchor) These songs are performed by the sailors whilst they are raising the anchor. The anchor is heavy and the sailor needs to raise it with a number of tugs, so the rhythm of the "Shila Al Baawara" is, by necessity, synchronized to each pull on the chain which is fastened to the anchor. The "Shillat Al Baawara" are accompanied by the clapping of the sailors who are not participating in raising the anchor, whilst the "Nahaam", or solo singer, and the sailors who are lifting it perform the song.

Al Midan

A tradition of music and poetry which is performed for entertainment, as a competition, or as part of a medical practice. Al Midan consists of four chapters (adwar) and a zaffah.

- Prayer chapter
- Sunnah chapter
- Salam chapter
- G'abbashi chapter
- Zaffah (a) zaffah al basitah; (b) zaffat al dhibah

Al Midan owes its name to an old tradition of ceremonies held on social occasions such as weddings and the circumcision of the children, or for



the purposes of popular medicine, or to fulfill a vow.

When Al Midan is held on a social occasion, the ceremony usually lasts for a day, or at least for an evening. When it is held for popular medicine, it lasts three days. Three drums are played in the Al Midan the Kasir, Rahmani, and Waqif together with the Barghum.

The Madima

This is a type of song for the amusement of the sailors, whether they are on the deck of the ship or on the shore. They display their skill in accordance with the principles, traditions and rules handed down for its performance. In this type of song the sailors form a circle, hitting the "Masandu" the "Kaasir" and the "Rahmaani" drums. The captain raises his voice in a song which is a mixture of Swahili and Arabic, and the group of sailors reply to him, clapping their hands in various rhythms. The song begins when the captain points at a sailor to leave the row, which he does with numerous agile jumps, then he returns to his place. The captain then points at another sailor who tries to out-do the one who preceded him in the dance movement. And so on until the song ends.

The dance of the "Madima" needs a great amount of skill on the part of the sailor to keep his balance, as they are performed on the wooden deck of the ship or on the sand on the shore, which buries the sailor's feet when he is jumping. The rhythm of the "Madima" has three parts. One is the "Rahmaani" drum, which is embellished by the high pitched "Kaasir" drum, and the deep tones of the African "Masandu" drum which changes the beat. The sailors are experts in the types of clapping, especially when divided into two groups. Each of them claps at different times to the other side. Then the clapping blends into a crescendo, exciting the participants, who voice their excitement with long joyful cries.

"Al Shawbaani"

This is also a sailors song, which they perform

for both work and amusement, when the ship stops in a port. The drum cries out in three fast, brisk rhythms and the sailors move with a splendid light swaying movement, whilst some of them work to unload the goods from the deck of the ship: goods including ivory and rare tree trunks, or ships masts, if the ship is now to make its return trip home. The song is sung by the captain, and the group of sailors reply to him, and with them are the people welcoming them, who carry flowering branches. They join the sailors in the procession and dance on the 'spot of celebration' before going off in a singing, dancing march, rejoicing.

The "Ashawbaani" is now performed by a group in a singing march beating traditional drums - the "Kaasir" and the "Rahmani" and the "Masandu". The



Al Tanbura musical instrument



participants are in short parallel rows and a kind of "Naghar" is blown. They carry flowering branches sing songs of welcome or congratulation on religious, folk or national occasions. They also carry flags until they arrive at the place of celebration.

"Al Wanna"

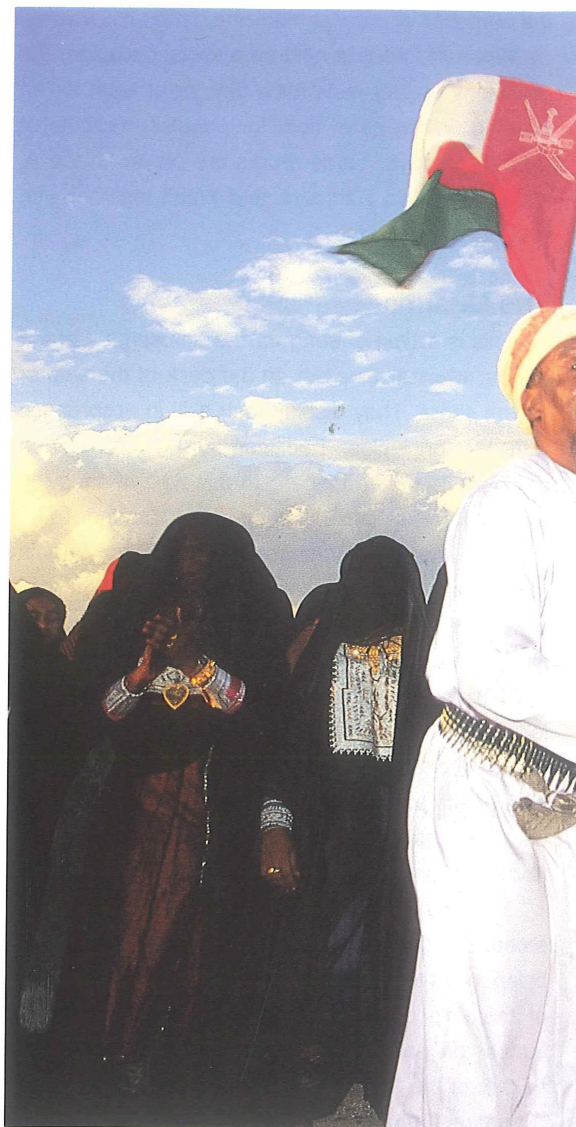
This is a song of recollections which the Beduin perform individually to amuse themselves whilst riding their she camels on a long journey. Thus it was in olden times, of course !

Now, however, the singer performs it with one of his hands on his side and he closes his eyes during the song. The Beduin form a circle around him, sitting on the ground. Then another Beduin participates with another song taking up the theme, in the last verse, repeating the song of his companion.

Most of the poetry of "Al Wanna" is love poetry and recollections, and a few are in praise of the camel. Sometimes it is called "Al Nawaha" (the professional mourner) because of its sorrowful character.

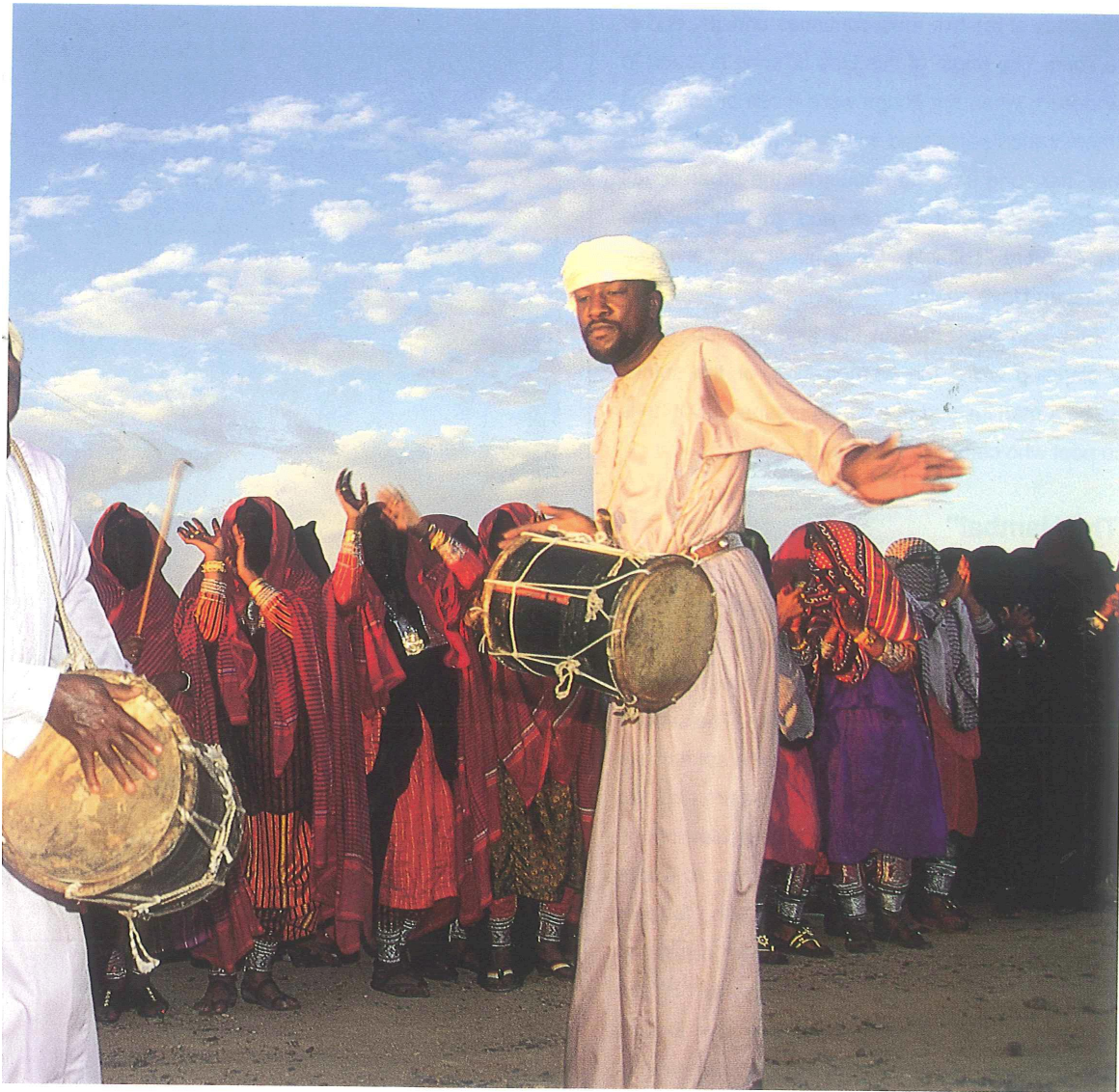
"Al Tashah Shah"

This is performed by women on happy occasions, such as engagements, weddings, birth of children and other social events. It is often performed by professional groups, who are invited by the people celebrating. The guests pay them by throwing money into metal pots, which the group place mid-way between themselves and the audience. The singing is done by individuals; for the most part, by the leader of the group. A young man performs in some groups. The singing is, essentially, in praise of the people giving the party, and their goodness. The type of verse is in pentameters, hexameters or septameters. The



Traditional art "Al Tashah Shah" performed on happy occasions by professional groups

singing is accompanied by clapping by the group of backing women and the drum. Either the lead singer or the men beat the "Kaasir " and the "Rahmaani" drums, whilst a young boy or girl beats a small tambourine and the "Tawus" and the "Sahaal" if it is used. It is performed in two groups, the names explain their nature - the "Waaqa" (the standing)



and the "Jaalis" (the sitting). The "Tashah Shah Al Jaalis" has no movement in it. The women sit facing in two rows with between them a display row, made up of the leader of the group, the old women, the two drummers, and the people with the tambourine and the "Sahaal"(Tawus). In the "Tashash Shah Al Waaqif" the women line up in two close parallel

rows. Between them stands the lead singer, together with those who support her in the individual singing, the drummers and the players of the other musical instruments. One of the two rows moves towards the other in time with the rhythm. Then it returns to its place, whilst the other row then performs the same dance movement. The



interaction of the two rows continues until the end of the song. The origin of this type of song is found in the desert, when the songs were those of sorrowful remembrance performed with a slow rhythm. Then when the song became popular in the urban areas its theme changed. Words and rhythm became faster, more suitable for amusement, evening parties and love poetry.

Men can participate in this kind of song, either by clapping whilst the women sing, or the soloist can be a man instead of a woman, especially if he is the poet who composed the song.

"The Hambal"

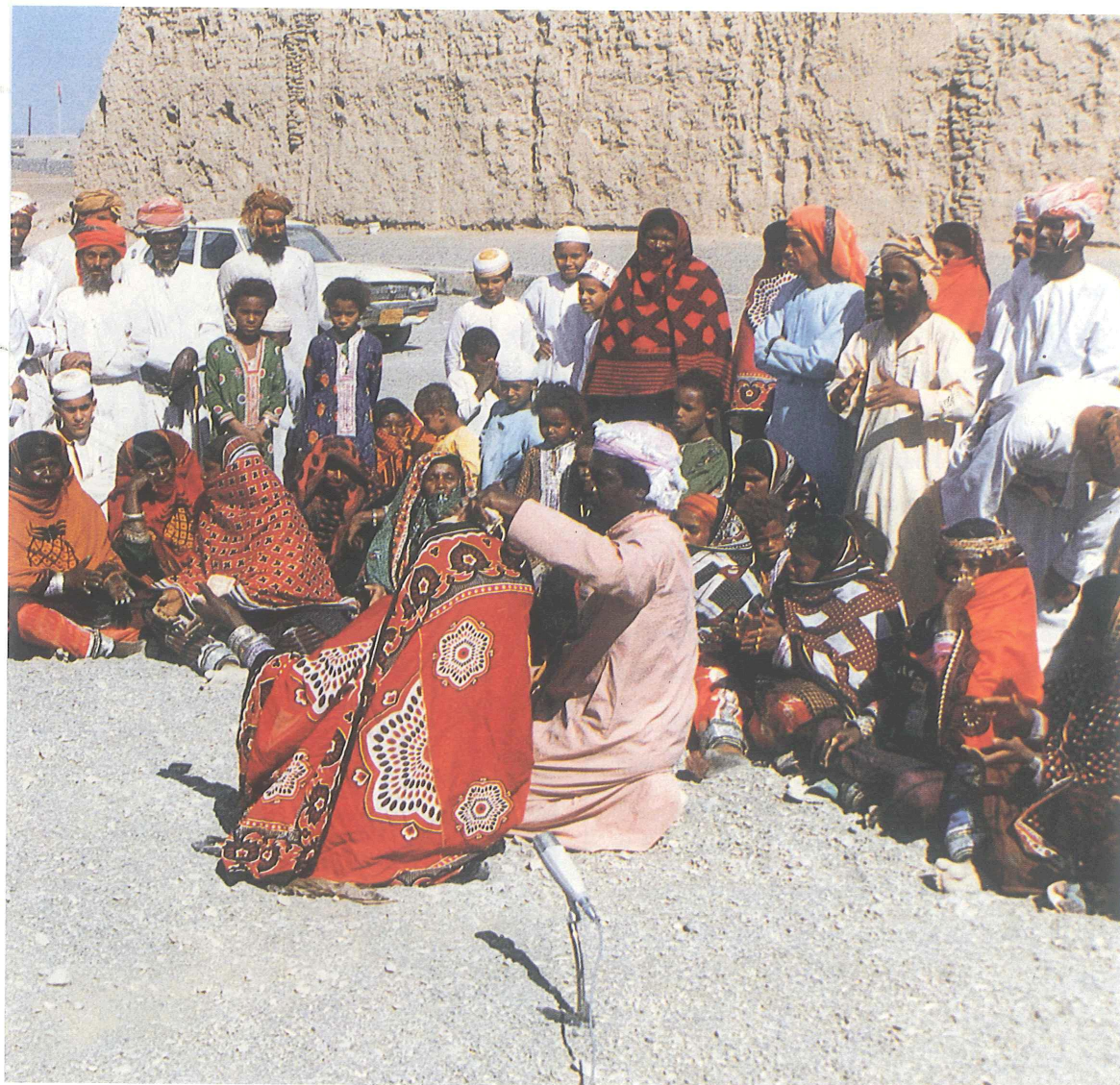
This is the singing march which the sailors perform whilst on their way to the place where the "Razha" is performed. The name, "Hambal" indicates its moving form. It is also called "Zaamal Al Rijaa" explaining why it was created. The second rhythm is a brisk melody suitable for the spirit of the march. Two drummers beat the "Kaasir" and the "Rahmaani" drums, together with one blowing on the "Barghaam" and uttering sharp cries to excite the people accompanying them and calling to them to join the "Hambal". The two drummers at the beginning of the "Hambal", like the rest of the participants, face the front. Then they turn to face the individuals of the march, walking backwards. The participants in the "Hambal" are in parallel rows, made up of a small number of individuals. Between each row there is quite some distance, so that each person can carry his rifle or sword. This is held slanting forwards to indicate courage and bravery. The "Hambal" is only for men, but if the occasion of the march allows women to participate, such as the celebration of a new birth, then they can march with their children after the last row of men and in the final march.



"Al Hambura" folk art

"Al Hambura"

This is performed by women and is particular to the Sharqiya. It is characterized by the women squatting, then moving forward in distinct jumps, resembling the leaping of a frog. The dancer rests the palm of her left hand on the floor, to steady himself. One of its traditions is for the two dancers



to approach each other, both in the squatting position. One of them touches the other with her forehead, the two foreheads are so close together that they are as one body. Each of them presses on the head of the other with her forehead, moving as one. Young girls distinguish themselves in this dance because of their light, graceful movements.

The "Hambura" and its dance movements is accompanied by the rhythm of the two drums, the "Rahmaani" and the "Kaasir", which are beaten by two men who are also squatting. They move on the dance floor in separate movements.



"Bin 'Abadi"

This is one of the women's songs in the Sharqiya. It is found particularly in the Wilayats of Sur, Wadi Bani Khalid and J'alan Bani Bu Hasan. Six special groups perform this type of song in the port of Sur, and each of them has one or more poets or poetesses who write the poetry of the songs. The rhythm of the "Bin 'Abadi is a quatrain. The first part is a heavy passage on the "Qurhaaf" or the "Kawus" or the "Na'aal". Then there follows a quiet period of three passages.

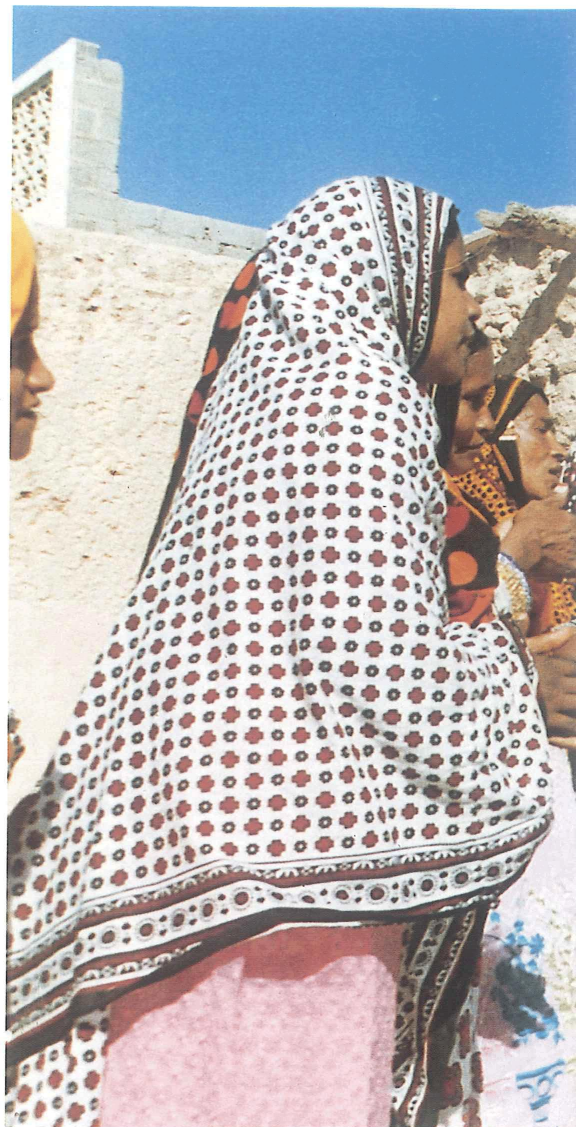
There are three types of "Bin 'Abaadi", identical in both the song and the rhythm but differing in the lyrics. They are: "Bin 'Abadi 'Aaluh", "Bin 'Abadi ya Salam" and "Bin 'Abadi Daman". The singing begins with the expression "Yaudan Yaudan", then the singing of the lyrics follows. It is a song for amusement and for weddings. Previously, it was sung at the return of a ship from a long voyage.

In the Wilayat of J'alan Bani Bu Hasan it is known by the name "Al Sharah" and the Wilayats of Al Wafi, Wadi Bani Khalid know it as "Sharah Al Wadi".

"Al Tanbura"

This is an African song which, before the beginning of the 1970's, was a type of folk remedy set to music, singing it made them feel better. Later on, however, it became a song just for amusement. "Al Tanbura" is the name of an African musical instrument, of the same name originally used in performing this type of song.

An "Al Tanbura" is actually a harp, a Phoenician instrument, which is still played in Nubia. This song



Al Dan-Dan

is also called "Al Nubiaan". The "Al Tanbura" has five strings on a circular box. Each of the strings is called a "Kheet" and for this reason it is generally known by the people who perform it as "Al Keet". The strings of the "Al Tanbura" are played with the rounded tip of a bull's horn. The "Al Tanbura" has a religious connotation. Swahili and Arabic words



occur in it. Most of these songs deal with recollections of the African coast. They are ancient hereditary songs.

The "Kaasir" and the "Rahmaani" drums accompany the "Al Tanbura". However, indicating its African origin, the drums have a conical form, strengthened on the wider side by a covering of

bulls hide. The singing is carried out by a solo singer "Abu Al Tanbura", and a group of men and women take up the reply to him. The drum accompanies the singing. The solitary rhythmical movement is performed by a youth with a belt of cloth with many dried goats hooves and bells tied around his waist. This belt is called "Al Hazam



Bilmanjur", which gives out a rhythmical sound like "Kharkharsh".

Spectators - both men and women - may participate in the dance if they wish.

"Um Bum"

This is a song for evening parties and for amusement. The singing is accompanied by dance movements which are performed by women in line. The rhythm of the song and dance in "Um Bum" is composed of two halves. They are followed by a dividing period, then three passages. Alternatively, the three passages are followed by one dividing period, then come the former two 'halves'. This rhythm is performed by a group of women singing and clapping accompanied by the "Kaasir" and "Rahmaani" drums. The two drummers are men. In the movements the women dance with bent knees in the passage that is divided by the two parts of the rhythm.

The "Um Bum" only has this name in the Wilayats of the Sharqiya, whilst in the Wilayats of Al Qabil it is known as "Al Karnuta".

"Al Mazifina"

This is performed by two groups standing opposite each other, each of them, in most cases, of young boys and girls. Each group is of two boys or two girls, or of two boys with a girl between them, or of two girls with a boy between them. Generally, this song has a melody which does not change. The dance movement is a jump, either with two feet or one. One of the two groups walks towards the other, whilst the latter group moves backwards. There is a



Al Qassaafiya

short distance between them and this distance remains the same during the dance. When the groups reach the end of the dance floor the group that is singing the verse turns about. When the groups reverse direction the verse is taken up by the group that is now facing forwards.

The "Mazifina" is performed in a area, lined by



spectators who do not participate. It is characterized by the rhythm of its dance movement and the creativity of the poetry of the song. It can also be performed without drums. It is one of the songs of the Beduin of the Sharqiya.

The "Qassaafiya"

This is a "Razha" with a fast rhythm. When people meet for the "Razha" the proceedings begin with it. The youths of the tribe perform it in preparation for the "Razha" of the adults. The "Qassaafiya" is performed at the school where the youths study the origins of the art of "Razha" The



rhythm is simple, either duos or trios. Its poetry has a short metre. Its purpose is light - descriptive or chaste love poetry or other interests of youth. Usually the "Qassafiya" does not last long, until the square has emptied for the "Nazha" of the adults. In the verses of the "Qassafiya" the song begins by singing the word "Laal". It has a long central vowel which allows singing on the same level of the poetry which will be sung in the "Qassafiyah". For this reason it is sometimes known as the "Laal Al Qassafi", "Lal Al 'Aud" or the "Razha Al Kabir".

"Al 'Aazi"

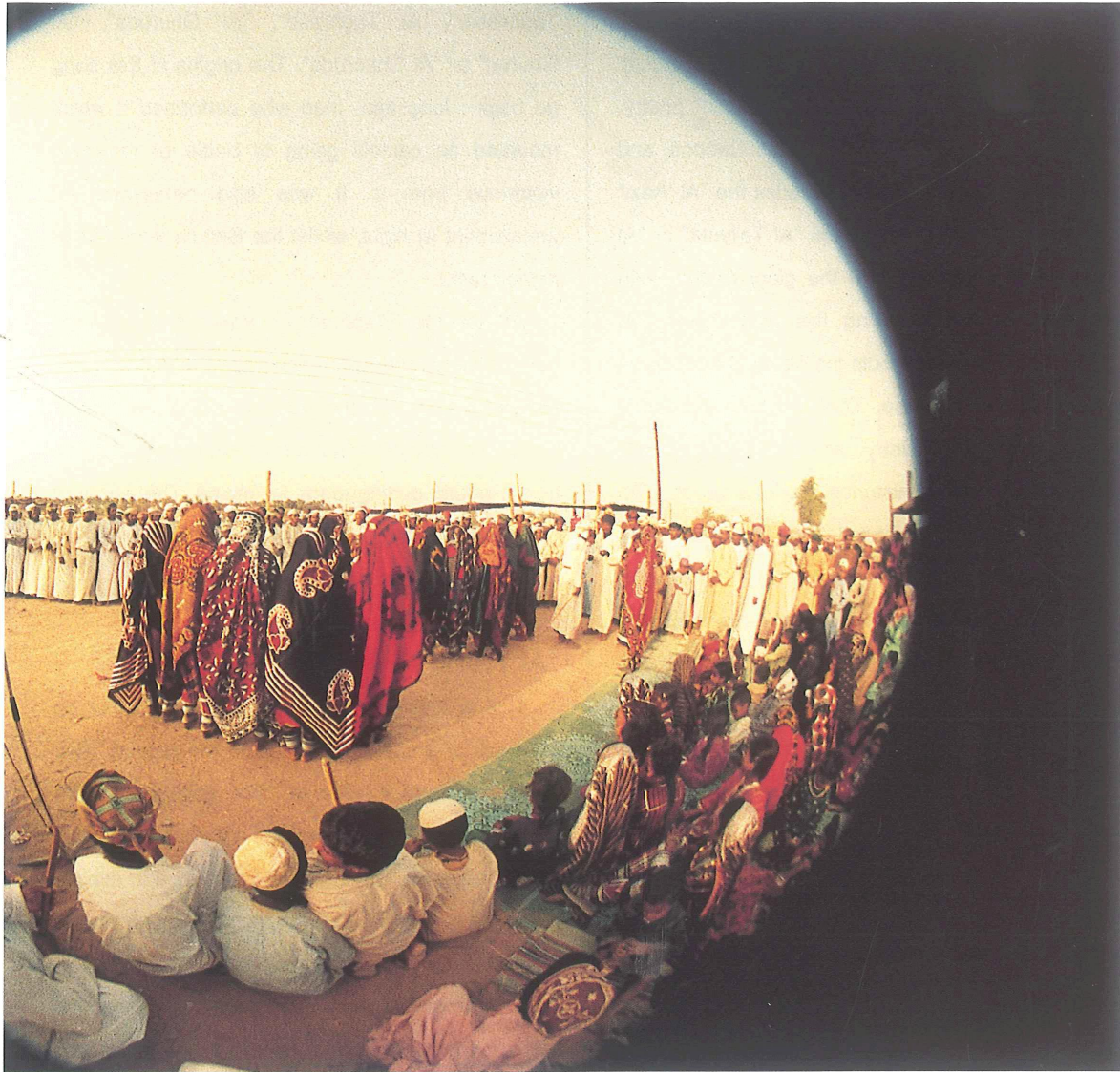
This is poetic recitation without any chanting or singing. It is performed by an individual outstanding poet or story teller. The poet of "Al 'Aazi" comes out from his group, grasping his sword and his rifle. As he walks slowly he recites poetry of glory and praise. He shakes his sword to show all those present at the meeting and this shaking makes the blade tremble. Behind the poet the group of men participate. They turn in the square between the two rows of "Razha", who gather to form a circle around the poet and his followers. They reply with a number of short cries in the traditional manner, like the short loud shouts of the word "Wasalamat", which in olden times was accompanied by the shooting of a bullet from a rifle. The participants still cock their rifles with a penetrating sound, which can be heard at the same time as these shouts which usually follow the first scanned verse which the poet recites. There is another shout "Al Mulak Lil Allah Yadoom" (The reign of God is everlasting) and the participants prolong the letter "Alif" in expression of



"Al Sharah" art

the sublimity of the cry- and they repeat it again at the end of the poetic verse which the poet of "Al 'Aazi" recites.

There are three kinds of "Al 'Aazi" poetry. The first - the "Al Alifiya" where each verse begins with the letter "Alif" (A), from which the name is derived. The verses continue until the letter "Al Yay" (Z)



Except for a number of the letters, satirical poetry is used in the "Alifiya". The length differs according to whether the poet can use all the letters

The second type is the "Al 'Adadiya". Here the first three verses, at least, begin with a numerical formula. The poet says the first, then there is a poetic verse, then he says the second, another

verse follows and so on. The length depends, here, on the ability of the poet and the length of his poetical repertoire.

The third kind is the "Al Mutlaqa". Here the poetry is free and not linked to an order of letters or numbers, rather its verses depend on the quality of the poet and his creativeness. The "Qasida Al 'Aazi"



begins, usually, with "In the name of God" and ends with a prayer and peace on the Prophet of God. One of the important aims of the "Al'Aazi" poetry, now, is to praise His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, and the merits of his era. There precedes the "Al 'Aazi" (or follows it) what is called the "Al Ta'iyuta" or "Al Ta'eeyeta" which is about the glory of Sur, with men and women shouting the word "Sur". "Al M'aeet" (the shouter) shouts the name of the person who he wants to praise. Then he talks about his Wilayat and his country and its great Sultan, together with various historical glorious deeds. The participants in "Al Ta'iyuta" reply and with one resounding voice shout the word "Sur", "Al M'aeet" then repeats the names of those who he intends to praise or who they are proud of. The "Al Ta'eeyuta" ends with the saying "Al M'aeet" (the shouter) and the expression "Al Muslimeen Takbir".

"Al Taghrud"

This song is sung on the back of camels or horses, either to encourage them or their riders. The "Taghrud Al Bush" is called the "Razha Al Bedu" or "Razfa Al Bedu". It is a group song with a fixed chant which does not change from place to place. It is characterized by a lengthening of the long vowels in a marvellous guided singing. It makes an audible picture of the movement of the mount. The "Al Taghrud" is sometimes called "Shila Al Rukaab" (the song of the riders). It is also called "Hambal Al Rukaab". In both cases there is only one singer, he is called "Museera Al Rijaal". Because of the musical character of the "Al Taghrud Al Bush" it is referred to as "Al Gheerud", "Al Ghaarud", Al

Taghreera", Al Taghreed", "Al Ghuruda", "Al Ghurud" or "Al Ghaaruda". The origins of this song go back , long ago, men who performed it whilst mounted on camels going to battle or returning victorious from it. It was also performed for amusement at night, whilst the Beduin were sitting in their tents.

As for the "Taghrud Al Khail" it is a song permeated by shouts to encourage the horse. It is a song of praise, with the words extolling the horses' merits. Usually the "Taghrud Al Khail" is performed by the riders, getting ready for racing. The words of "Taghrud Al Khail" are characterized by the theme of bravery and courage and helping the weak.

"Al Taariq"

This is a Beduin song which is sung either on the back of a camel or sitting on the ground. Two singers perform it. One of them begins then the other takes over the poetry and the song at the end of the verse. He repeats his performance in exactly the same way as the performance of the first singer. The chant of the song does not change - in "Al Taariq" - from one poem to another, it is also almost the same from one singer to another and from one Wilayat to another. The song of "Al Taariq" deals with a number of aims of poetry and song. Most of them are love poetry or recollections or in praise of the she-camel and her merits. "Al Taariq" is performed during the slow walk of the camel and so the rhythm of the singing in it differs from the singing of the "Al Taghrud" which is performed during the quick pace of the camel.

The names of the "Al Taariq" differ between the



areas of the Sultanate. In the Wilayat of Sur in the Sharqiya it is called "Al Tawareeq" which is pronounced "Al Tawareej".

The "Razha"

This type is characterized by the sword and the poetic exchange. The name "Razha" indicates the dance of swords, with the man collapsing beneath the weight of the sword, he has to carry this weight during his high jumps in the air and land standing firmly on his feet, without trembling or falling. The tradition still exists of throwing the sword in the air and catching it again as it comes down. This catching is a kind of boasting among the men of the "Razha" The weight of the sword or the sharpness

of the weapon is important. Long ago this was the way for the group to express the needs of the people of the Wilayat. It was also a way to announce war, gather troops, announce victory or mediation between the warring parties for a settlement between them. The men of the "Razha" gather together for amusement and to display their skill in swordsmanship and combat with swords and shields. The poets of the tribes vie with one another with their skill in love poetry, eulogies, riddles and conundrums. This is the literary picture of the combat with swords.

The "Razha" starts with the sound of the drums, so that the men gather together to work out their affair, a poet from every tribe extemporizes ,



Al Shawbani dance



explaining the event for which they have gathered. The forms of the "Razha" differ in the movements of the participants, the type and speed of the rhythm governing the movements, the poetic metres which form the singing of its verses, and the subject which the poet extemporizes on. The different kinds of "Razha" have names, each one indicating one of its attributes - either the poetry, or the movement, or its connection to a certain place. Of the best known of these is the "Razha Mashuba" which is love poetry or eulogies.

The "Razha Al Harbiyaat" is war poetry, whether for or against raids for water, or for announcing victories, or settling a dispute between the warring parties.

The "Razha Al Hawaama". Here one of the rows remains fixed, and often the row is wide, while the other row turns a complete circle about the square, parallel, for a short time, with the fixed row. They continue round until they stop opposite the fixed row, which in turn then begins a similar circle.

The "Razha Al Khaalidiya" which is special to the Wilayat of Wadi Bani Khalid in the Sharqiya is sometimes called the "Qasaafiya", or the "Razha Al Shabaab"

The "Razha Al Naahiya" which changes the group of the "Hambal" to one display row, divided in the middle into two parts. Each of them stands opposite one another at the side (naahiya) of the square. When two tribes meet in the "Razha" each of them is accompanied by its special drums. These drums are often passed down from generation to generation

The "Razha" has two drums the "Kaasir" and the

"Rahmaani". Each of them is beaten with a stick on both sides. To the beat of the drum, the side which is to begin starts the song, singing the text poetically and melodiously. The two drummers move between the two close parallel rows until the song ends. When the drums of one side fall silent, the drums of the other start with a new verse. Often this is a reply to the first verse. Then there follow poetic verses and singing, exchanging between the rows until the "Razha" achieves the aims for which it was convened.

The "Razha Al Kabira"

"Kabir" (big) because it is the "Razha" of the adults, the fighters with swords. The poets of the adult "Razha" expostulate poetry in riddles and conundrums. Long ago, it was the "Razha" of war, peace and mediation between the warring parties. Now, it is the "Razha" of welcome and celebration and eulogy of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos and the glory of his blessed era. It has three slow rhythms, characterised by their solemnity, which is in keeping with the movements of the participants. The poet of one of the approaching rows dictates the text of the verse - poetically and harmoniously - after singing the word "Laal" in the same balanced rhythm of praise and poetic song. No sooner is the sound of the drum of one of the two sides (which has the first verse) heard, than the display of courage with sword and rifle begins. The fighters with swords have a tradition and rules which no one is allowed to break. The adults precede the young for their turn. There has to be equality in the skill of the game of swords, among the fighters, so that one sword is not sharper



than the other. The aim of all the fighters is to hit the opponent on his left thumb, with which he holds his rifle, to defeat him. When the two sides fulfill the aims of their fight, they stop. However, if no one side is the clear winner then a third man enters between them, cutting the air between their swords with his sword, this immediately stops the battle. The rules in these situations are well-known. An old man or one of rank, or both, terminates the fight between the two sides, stopping them by cutting the air between their swords with his sword.



*The Hambal is only for men
but also women participate in the march*



Girls on the beach





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