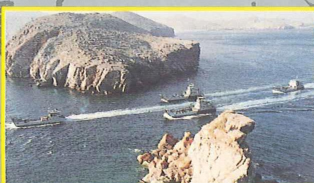
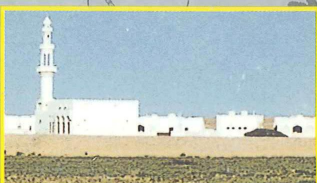
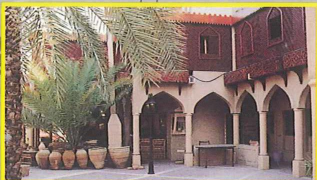
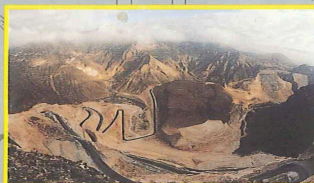
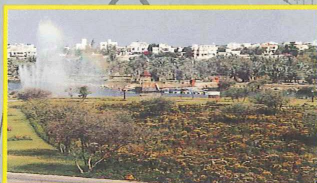
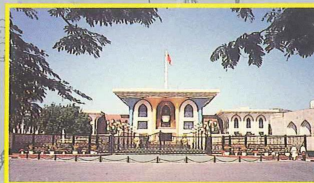


Sultanate
of Oman

Years of Endeavour and Achievement



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Years of Endeavour and Achievement



Al Batinah



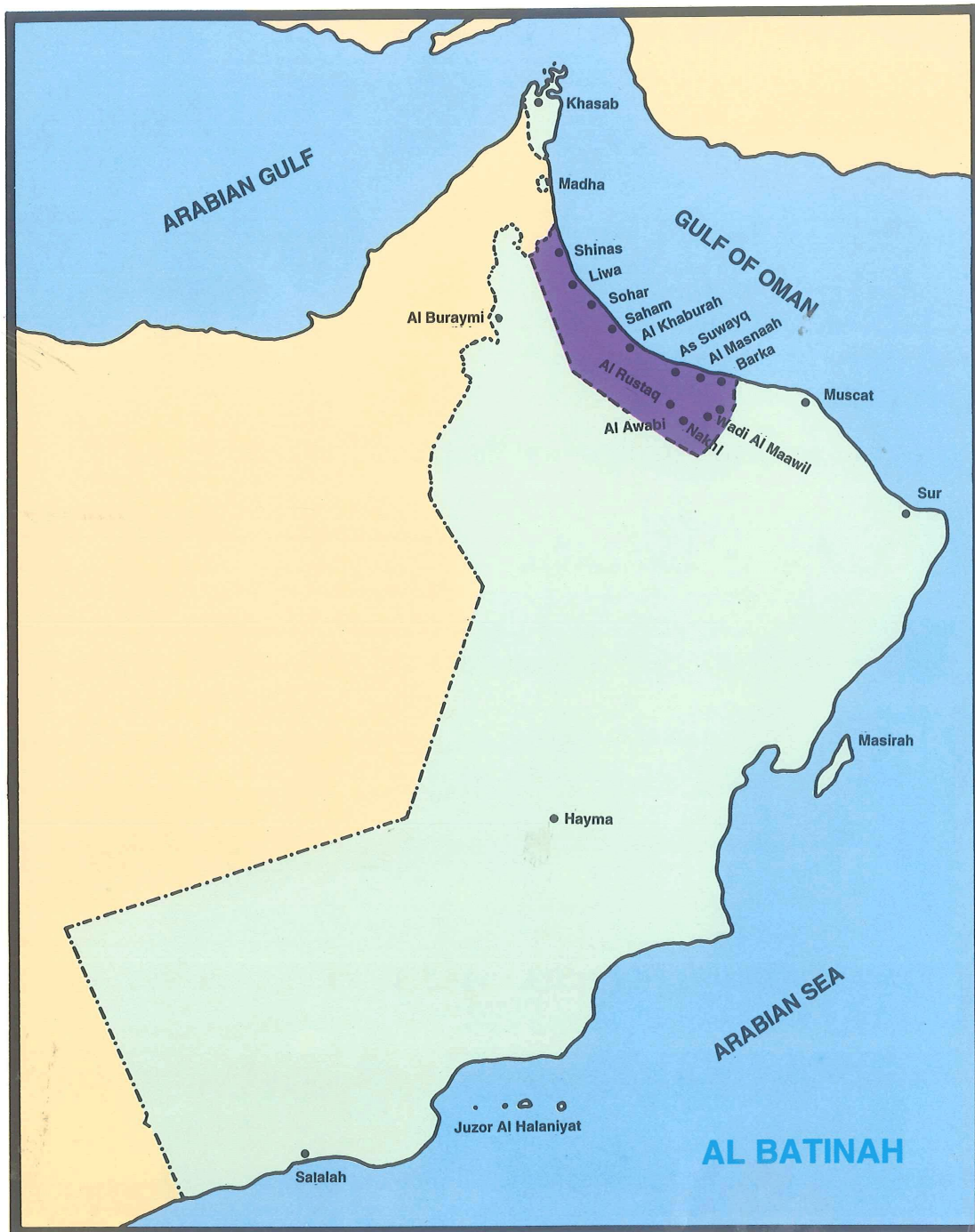
PROLOGUE

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.

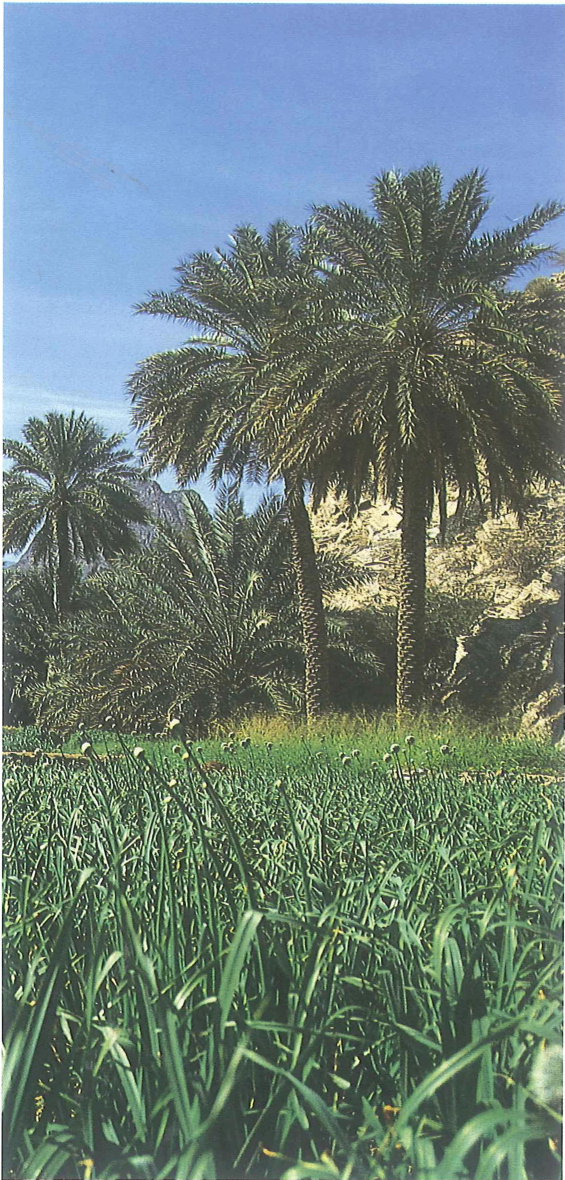
Efficient development is directly related to and subject to the level of economic activity. To expect otherwise or to attempt to purchase it by going into debt would not only fail, but would lead to disaster.



The Foundations for the Launch of Future Industry



The beauty of nature



The Batinah region is a prime area for investment. It has achieved much over the past 25 years.

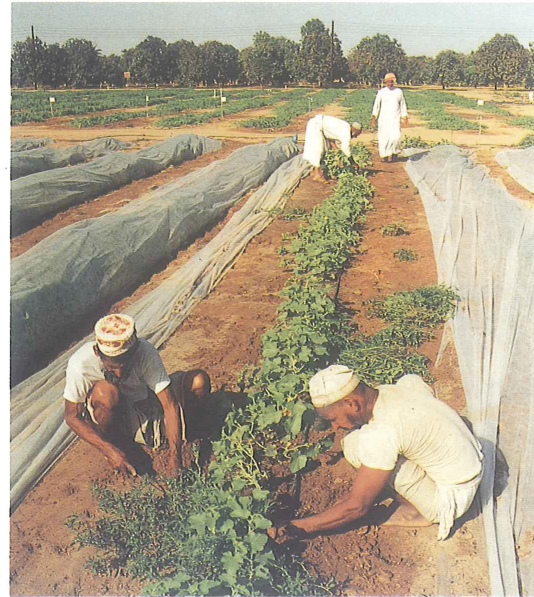


The Batinah coast runs from Khatma Al Malaha, in the Wilayat of Shinas, in the north, to Ras Al Hamra in the Governorate of Muscat, in the south. The coastal plain is about 25 kilometres wide and lies between the Gulf of Oman in the east and the foot of the Western Hajr mountains in the west. This is the most densely inhabited area, after the Governorate of Muscat, and has witnessed much activity and growth.

The four characteristics of the area are: It is the best agricultural area in the Sultanate of Oman, with high quality soil and a good terrain. It has been cultivated for many years. There are three sections, in one of the major farms: one for cattle rearing and animal products, one for agricultural production and one for dairy products. All these depend on the most modern technology. Drip irrigation, using special machines, each of them irrigating 51 hectares of agricultural land is an example. This operation helps prevent water wastage, spraying the plants with the carefully calculated amount of water, mixed with fertilizer. Besides economizing on the consumption of water, it helps produce an abundance of high quality crops. The story of agriculture in the Batinah in the past few years, however, has become affected by strong water salinity due to high consumption of underground water. As a result sea water has impeded the agricultural programmes. This has led to a decline of about 246 million cubic metres a year in fresh water (1993 estimates).

To answer this problem, the Ministry of Water Resources adopted a number of strict measures to limit the damage and restore the situation.

The Ministry ceased issuing permits for new wells, or for deepening existing ones, and also prohibited the increased extraction of water from



Citizens engaged in farming

them.. The government also took steps to organise the system of modern irrigation, with measured support and encouragement for farmers. It undertook to transfer the cultivation of fodder to the desert from the coastal area in order to conserve the large resources.

The Sultan gave a lead by re-locating the Cultivation of fodder from his own farm on the Batinah.

The Ministry has continued its search for new water resources, these efforts met with success in the discovery of subterranean water in the south of the Batinah. All this has been supported by the awareness of the citizens regarding the need to conserve water consumption. Farmers have been provided with government support, the value of loans given by the Omani Bank for Agriculture and Fisheries, to develop existing farms, was 977,000 Omani Riyals in 1994, with the allocation of 157,000



Omani Riyals for the purchase of modern agricultural machinery. The annual average of these types of loans has increased to one million Riyals for more than 200 projects. The second characteristic of the Batinah is that it is a vital land bridge for trade between the Sultanate and neighbouring Arab Gulf countries.

This bridge has been established by the construction of a macadamized road network, built in accordance with the highest international specifications. It runs the length of the Batinah coast between Muscat and the U.A.E., having numerous rest places and necessary service stations.

The project of the new port to be built at Sohar at a cost of 120 million Riyals, in the near future and which takes advantage of the unique geographical location of that region and of the city of Sohar in particular, reviving its maritime history of trade with countries located on the Indian Ocean and especially China, India, Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, will consolidate the Batinah as an important trade bridge.

The third characteristic of the Batinah is its natural, historic role to play an active part in the service of the Omani industrial economy.

The results of research which geologists and archaeologists have carried out in the region confirm that Oman practiced mining operations 5000 years ago. It was the first Arab state to extract copper. In the Wilayat of Sohar there are three copper mines: Al Asile, 'Arja and Bayda. There are more than 18 million tons of deposits, with the possibility of increasing this through continuing exploratory operations.

The Sohar Mining and Refining Complex began operating in 1983 at a cost of 150 million US dollars

and, in October of the same year, the Oman Mining Company was established.

The Sohar Mining Complex is located to the west of Sohar in the direction of the Wilayat of Buraimi. It operates to a production level of 20,000 tons a year with a purity of product of 99.8%. Beside this complex, a number of subsidiary establishments have been set up. The most important of these is an electricity generating station with output of 54 megawatts. There is also a gas subsidiary pipe line from the Marirat region across the Batinah coast to the complex. In addition there is a new housing estate for a 1000 workers which cost 11 million Omani Riyals. Also, 35 kilometre water pipeline, has been installed to service the complex.



The Sohar Industrial Estate opened in November 1992. It has a total area of 3,300,000 square metres. The first part of the first stage has now been developed: 266,000 square metres including an administrative complex, a road network, a water treatment plant and eight operational factories. More land has been reserved for 47 industrial projects covering an area of 325,865 square metres.

The fourth characteristic is its archaeological features, whether on the coastal plain or at the foot of the Western Hajar mountains. These, together with its beautiful clean beaches offers a superb attraction for tourists. At the beginning of the 1970's there were no paved roads in the Batinah, now there are more than 350 kilometres along its coast from Muscat to the U.A.E. It is part of the motorway, which runs 1020 kilometres south to Salalah. Other roads link the Wilayats located on the coast and those of the Western Hajar. At the beginning of the 1970's and until 1976 there were no telephone lines, whilst now there are more than 31,444.

Health services, which were lacking at the beginning of the 1970's, now cover all the Wilayats of the Batinah. Ten hospitals with 475 beds, 11 health centres without beds, 3 health centres with beds, and 4 health complexes in addition to a large referral hospital still under construction in Sohar. There are also electricity and water services, which were completely absent at the beginning of the 1970's. The Batinah region has now completed its basic infrastructure and is now intent on attracting investors from both Oman and abroad, and the private sector in this high-potential area.

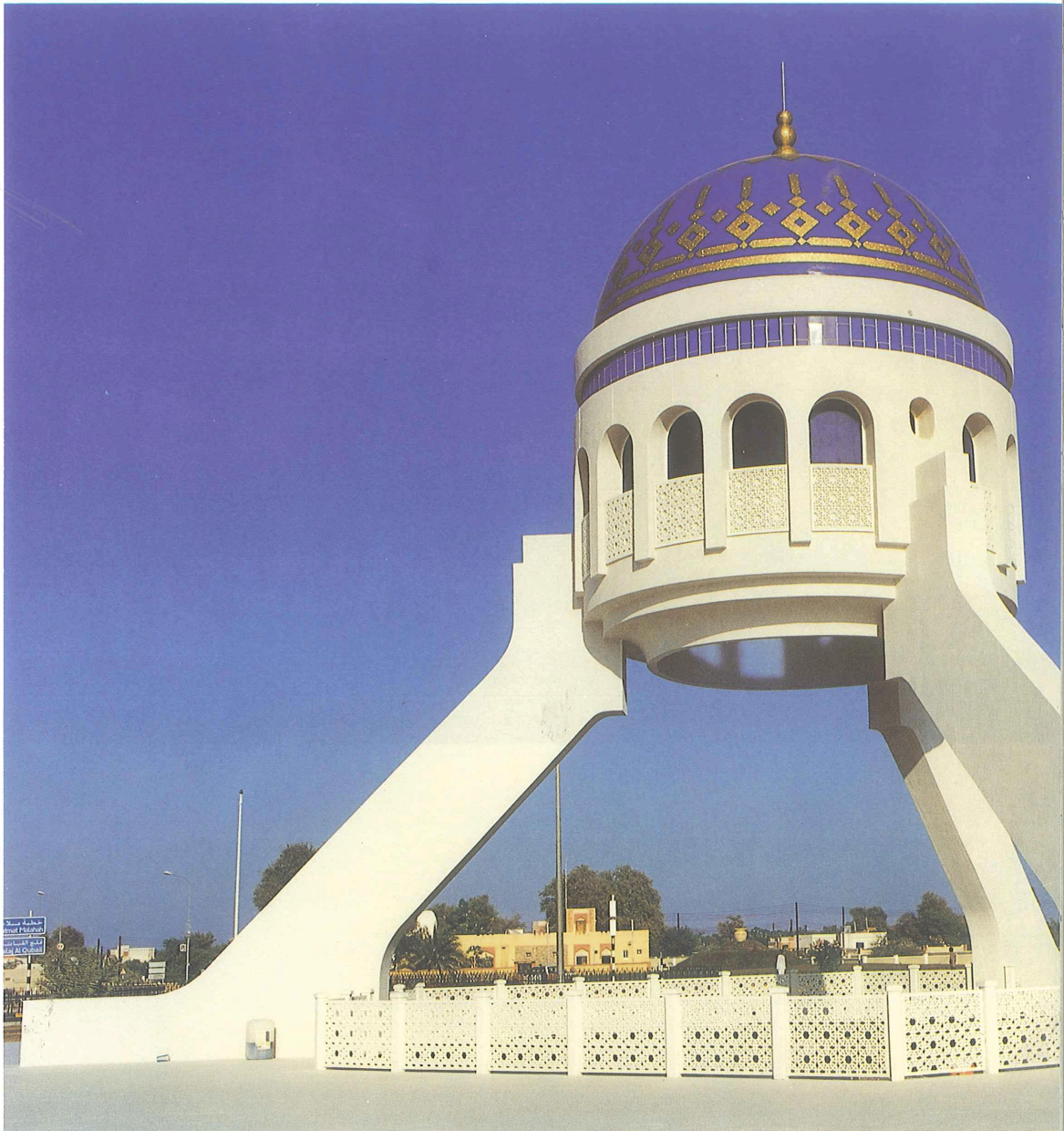


Reflections of the Renaissance





The Wilayats



The islamic heritage



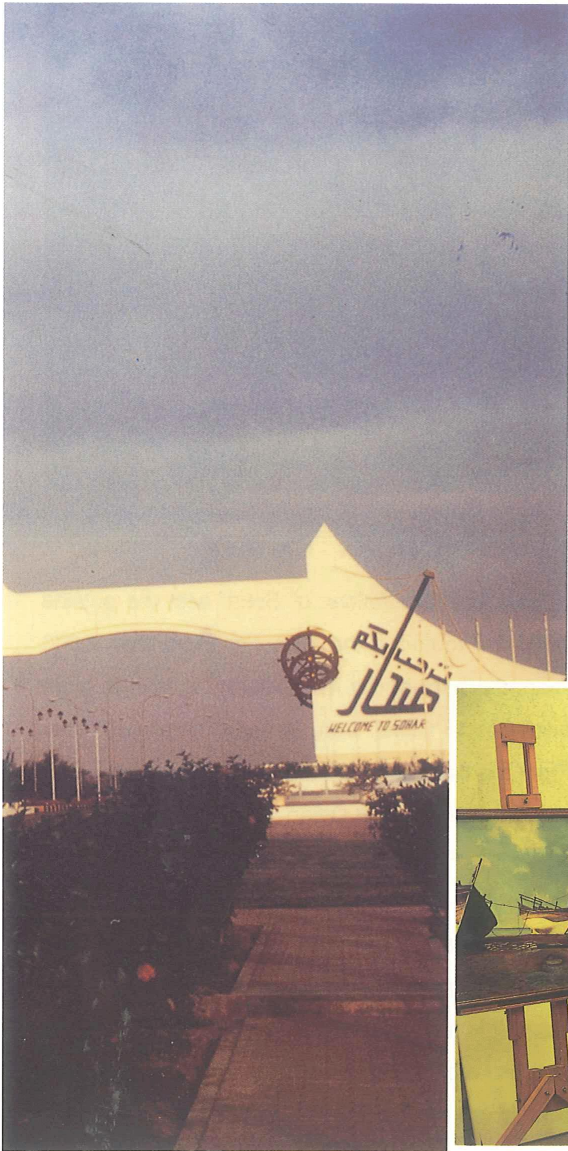
The Batinah is made up of 12 Wilayats some located on the coast and others located at the foot of the Western Hajr Mountains.



Wilayat Sohar



The entrance gate of Wilayat Sohar





A view of the public procession

It is situated between the two Wilayats of Liwa in the north and Saham in the south, to the west of the Gulf of Oman and to the east of the Wilayat of Buraimi, part of the Dhahira. The number of inhabitants is over 90,809. living in about 100 villages.

It was known by a number of different names in the past, such as Majan in the second half of 3000 B.C. and Mazoon, which was used in many Persian and Chinese texts for a number of centuries. The well known historian Yaqt Al Hamawi refers to a third name, that of one of the descendants of Noah - Sohar Bin Adam Bin Sam Bin Noah. The Arabic Islamic sources used this name - Sohar - in the 6th century AH only, when 'Amr Bin Al A'as arrived carrying the letter of the Prophet which invited the people of Oman to embrace Islam.

The trading relations of Sohar with the outside world are rooted in the past. For more than 4,000 years the ancient city has exported copper in large quantities to China, Iran, Iraq and other countries. From the first century to the 13th century AD Sohar was the richest city in Oman.

When the Palestinian Arab scholar Muqadisi visited it in the 10th century AD he described it as "the gateway to the East" and said that "it is a flourishing city with a large number of people living there. It is a beautiful city with a comfortable life, its houses are along the shore and its mosque overlooks the sea, the minarets are lofty and the Mihrab (which indicates the direction for prayers) changes colour because it was covered with copper."

Sohar boasts a number of archaeological



features. The most outstanding is Sohar Fort, which is one of the most important castles and forts in the Batinah, in regard to its position and the important role it has played throughout the centuries. It dates back to the end of the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th century AD. Discoveries around the castle in 1980 revealed that it dates to the 14th century AD on the south side of the city. The "Emirs of Hormuz" built the fort in the era of the kings of Bani Nabhaan.

There is a tunnel from inside the fort, which runs for a distance of 10 kms to the west, to the Wilayat of Buraimi. It was used as a route for reinforcements and supplies when the castle was under siege in times of war. Inside the Fort there are a number of wells for drinking water, some towers, which were used for surveillance and defence of the city and, on the ground floor, the tomb of Al Sayid Thuwani Bin Sa'id Bin Sultan.

Sohar is characterized by its wadis of running water, the most famous are Wadi Hibi about 60 kilometres from the centre of the city, Wadi Ahin and Wadi Al Jizzi. There are also nature parks which have been developed over the past 25 years. Within the framework of the renaissance of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, Sohar has flourished with hotels and peaceful leisure locations. Its wide modern streets which are lined with palms and other trees, its fountains and other features make it a tourist attraction for travellers from both the Sultanate and abroad.

The people of the Wilayat of Sohar have their own occupations, industries and traditional songs. The occupations are fishing and related industries, production of Omani sweets, silver-working, blacksmithery, weaving palm leaves, pasturage and

agriculture. The most important products are dates, citrus fruits, herbs, fruit, animal fodder, sugar cane and vegetables.

The traditional songs are the Razha, Wahabia, Al Mawlid, Liwa, Bedouin songs and the Dan Dan.

Due to its historical importance, it has received its share of the accomplishments which Oman has witnessed during the renaissance led by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos. Before 1972 the historical city - the ancient capital - had no health services. Now, there is Sohar Hospital with about 200 beds; in 1991 a Nursing Institute was opened, and in 1993 Wadi Hibi Hospital and the health centre in Wadi 'Ahin were established. Last year, an agreement was signed to establish a specialist hospital with 391 beds which will cost 18 million Omani Riyals and work has now commenced. It will be the official referral hospital for the north of the Batinah, provided with the latest equipment and established in accordance with the most modern international standards.

Before 1970 there were no modern schools, as was the case in most of the Sultanate, now, however, there are 38 schools, for boys and girls throughout the Wilayat for the different stages of education, primary, preparatory and secondary.

Sohar Industrial Estate was opened in 1992, covering a total area of 3,300,000 square metres. The first part of the first stage has been completed, an area of 266,000 square metres, comprising an administrative complex, road network, water treatment plant for sewage, and 50 pieces of industrial land comprising 8 equipped factories. In addition, to date, 78 pieces of land have been reserved for 49 various industrial projects on an area covering 325,825 square metres.



There are numerous government offices in the Wilayat of Sohar, all working to provide services to the citizens in various fields. The most important is Sohar Development Office, which was established on 22 August 1985 by Royal Decree. By placing this office under the supervision of the Diwan of the Royal Court, it confirmed the special importance that His Majesty Sultan Qaboos attaches to the development of this ancient city. It has the following departments: the municipality department, the water department, the technical affairs department, the transport department, the department of quantity surveying, the department of administrative affairs, the department of registering real estate, the land department and the financial affairs department, in addition to other technical departments and committees which serve the same ends - to develop

the city. One important achievement has been the construction of more than 60 kilometres of roads linking Wadi Hibi to the city of Sohar, linking all the villages located in the wadi and the surrounding areas.

The most important dams established in the Wilayat are the Halti Al Salahi Dam, which was built in 1985, the Wadi Jizzi Dam built in 1989 and the Wadi Hibi Dam built in 1995.

In the city of Sohar are a number of General Directorates, departments, and various government offices. Such as: the General Directorate of Health Services, the General Directorate of Education and Training, the General Directorate of Agriculture and Fishery Resources, the General Directorate of Municipalities, Regions and the Environment, the Department of Water Resources, the Trade and



A mixed classroom



Future nurses in a practical class

Industry Department, a branch of the Omani Chamber of Trade and Industry, the Housing Department, the Department of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, the Sultan Qaboos Institute for Islamic Studies, the Department for Developing Local Organizations, a branch of the Central Bank of Oman, the Department of Public Organization for Sport and Cultural Activities, the office of the General Organization for Post and Telecommunications, a youth complex, the Omani Women's Association, the Police Headquarters for the Batinah region, a criminal court, a Sharia' court, the Wali's office and Sohar Sports Club.

The outstanding Islamic feature of the city is the Mosque of Sultan Qaboos, which is characterized by its superb architecture and elegant design. Its Minbar (pulpit) and Mihrab (niche in wall to indicate direction of prayer) are decorated with Islamic

inscriptions in a wonderful design, its towering minarets have superb Islamic inscriptions and its dome is inlaid with mosaics. The mosque is located on an area of 16,992 square metres near the famous historic fort of Sohar, beside the beach. It was established within the framework of a project for beautifying this ancient city. The area of the main prayer hall inside is about 1394 square metres and can hold 2091 people. It has a library with reference books on various sciences and Islamic subjects, all the necessary amenities and a garden of 12,515 square metres around it.

This spot was chosen because on the same spot was the mosque of Husn, which dated to the beginnings of Islam in Oman. In addition to the Sultan Qaboos Mosque, is the Masjid Al Jam'ia in Wadi Al Jizzi near the border post in the west



leading to the Wilayat of Buraimi. It can be reached by a branch road from the main Muscat road along the Batinah coast. The Masjid Al Jam'ia was also built on an area of 2914 square metres within the framework of the beautification project for the city. It can hold 500 people in its prayer hall which covers an area of 200 square metres. Its area is 2284 square metres and includes a special place for women to pray, covering 29 square metres. It also includes housing for the Imam, his deputy and for the workers, all the necessary amenities, and an Islamic library.

There are many important projects in the Wilayat of Sohar which have been established over the years of the modern renaissance led by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos. The Youth Complex is a sports stadium used by the youth of the whole Batinah region. It was opened on 22 November 1988. It includes among its sports facilities a football pitch, a

grandstand for about 7,500 spectators, a six lane track for track and field events and a gymnasium for athletics, a squash court, a half size Olympic swimming pool, and other amenities, such as a library, a store, accommodation for sports teams and visitors with a canteen, and halls for lectures and seminars.



The beach road, Sohar



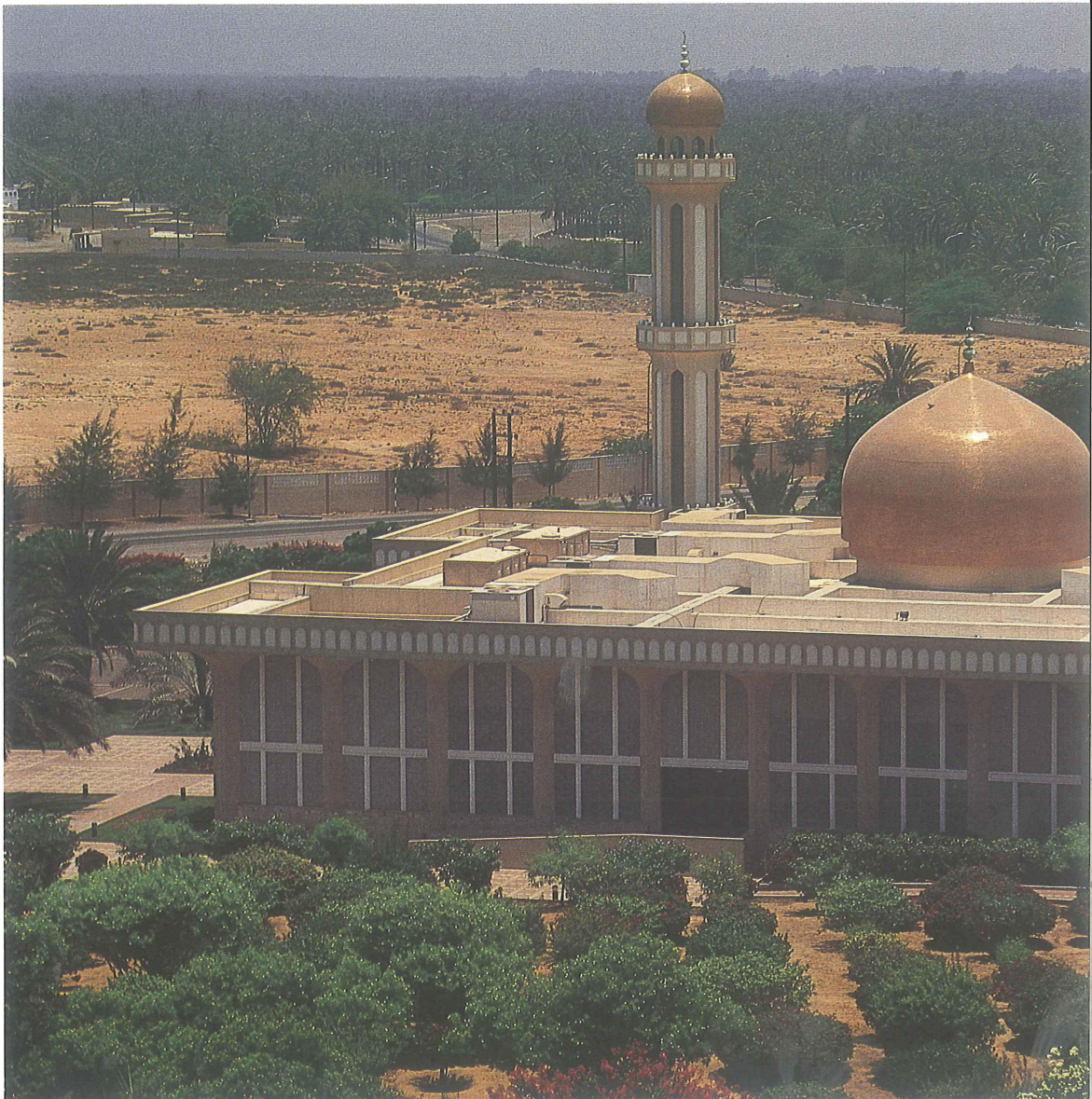
Sohar industrial estate



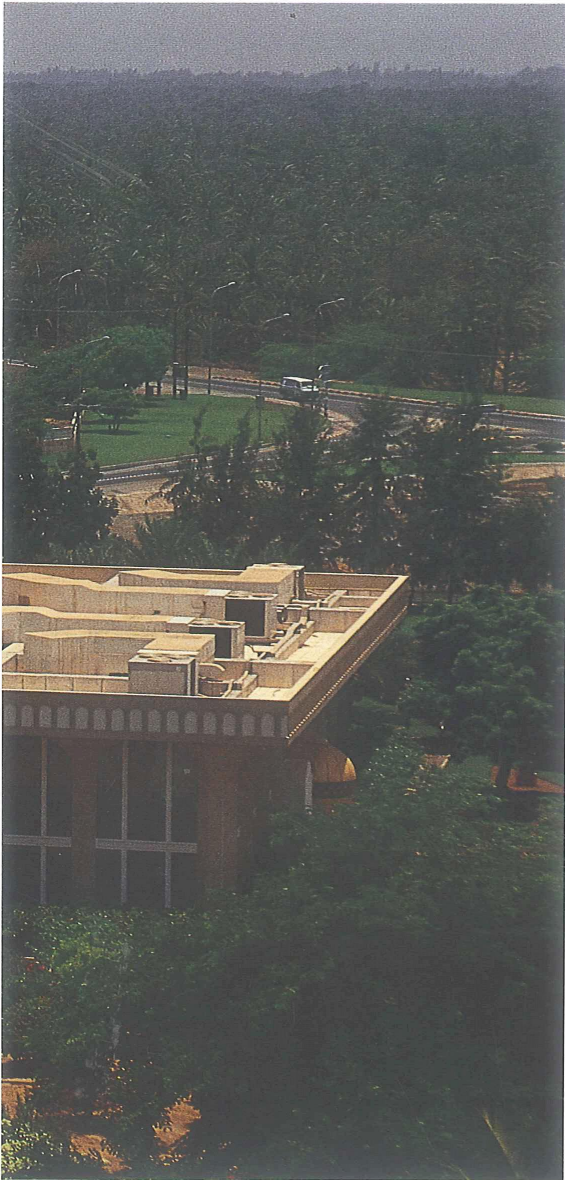
Sohar youth complex



The Historic Capital of Oman (1)



Sultan Qaboos Mosque, Sohar



The history of Islam in Oman started here.

Sohar has always been of geographical, historical and political importance, a centre of defence against foreign invaders.



The first letter to the people of Oman from the Prophet was sent to this coastal city, which was the political capital at that period in Oman's long history.

Omani sources say that two letters were sent by the Prophet, one to all the people of Oman and the other to Abd and Jaifar, the two sons of Al Jalanda who had spread their power over the regions of Oman at that time.

The role of Sohar as capital of Oman at that time?

Location

Three factors made the city suitable to be the capital of Oman. The first of these factors is its geographical position on the coast, about 200 kilometres north west of Muscat. This contributed to it having an important trading role with India and East Africa during various periods of ancient Omani history. Produce from the east, west and north was gathered here before being exported to trade centres throughout the world. Its location also made it specially important for the defence of Oman and as the point from which other areas of the country were liberated.

Agriculture

The second factor was its agricultural wealth, and it is still one of the most important agricultural areas, producing vegetables and fruit. In the book "Ahsan Al Taqasim fi m'arafat Al Akalim" by Muqadasi, there is a description of the ancient city of Sohar. He says "Sohar is a city with good weather and with many good things and fruits; it is vast. There is nothing like it in this area, it is the bread basket of Oman, a flourishing town, with prosperity and trade, wondrous markets, and a

mosque on the coast with a good minaret. The town has fresh water wells and beautiful channels, and its people have an abundance of all things".

Copper

The third feature was the abundance of copper near Sohar which it extracted and exported 3000 years BC. Archaeological remains which have been discovered in the region confirm this, pointing to small settlements at the beginning of 3000 BC which carried out mining. The raw material was extracted from mines, and smelted in simple copper smelters. This is described in a study published by the two authors Costa and Wilkinson "Factual Evidence Behind Sohar", which presents a clear picture of the mining, agricultural and trade operations of the area, the origins of which date back to remote ancient times and which continued to the Islamic period.

Ancient Mesopotamian sources refer: documents called "The Annals of the Kings of Sumar and Akkad", from the period of the Sharukin to the period of the descendent of Naramsin, to the period of Ur-Namu, between 2350 and 2094 BC. The Sumerian and Arkadian documents mention "mines" with its name connected to "trade of copper and palm trees".

The texts of Larsen also, are a valuable source; they study economic relations between Mesopotamia and neighbouring countries in the Babylonian period at the beginning of 2000 BC. One of these texts mentions the mines under the name of "Majan Al Kubra" (the big mines) or "Balad Al Manajim" (the land of the mines).

Al Mas'oudi the historian also mentions, in the 10th century AD, copper mines in Oman.



Sohar copper factory

These mining operations can still be found today in the same area in Sohar, where the ships of Mesopotamia - Sumar and Akkad - used to anchor off the shores, 5000 years ago, to carry Omani copper back to Iraq, as well as other various goods.

These factors gave Sohar and the surrounding areas a civilization role.

Confirmation of these two letters can be found in the book "The Conquests of Countries" by Baladhari and the book "The Biography of the Prophet" by Ibn Hisham, which both agree that Islam appeared in Oman under the rule of 'Abd and Jaifar, the sons of Jalanda. The Bani Jalanda were the kings of Oman " after the children of Malik" meaning Malik Bin Fahm Al Azadi Al 'Omani.

The Prophet sent a letter to the people of Oman saying " From Mohammed the Prophet of God to

the people of Oman, recite the shahada (doctrinal formula of the Muslim belief), there is no God but God and I, Mohammed am the Prophet of God, carry out prayers, give Zakat(alms), build mosques and renounce your raids ".

The second letter sent to 'Abd and Jaifar said " From Mohammed the Prophet of God to 'Abd and Jaifar the sons of Jalanda, peace on those who observe the true religion. I call on you to embrace Islam, I am the Prophet of God to all people to warn the unbelievers that you and your kingdom should embrace Islam, if you want to keep it."

The Prophet dictated the letter, closed it and affixed his seal, which was inscribed with "There is no God but God and Mohammed is His Prophet", and he sent it with 'Amr Bin Al 'Aas.

Omani story tellers say that 'Amr Bin Al 'Aas



gave the Prophet's letter to 'Abd and Jaifar. The first place where 'Amr Bin Al 'Aas alighted was "Dastajard" i.e. the city of Sohar, he alighted there at noon and searched for the sons of Jalanda, and they were in the desert of Oman. The first one he met was 'Abd who accompanied 'Amr to his brother Jaifar and he gave him the letter. Jaifar broke the seal then handed it to his brother 'Abd who read it and then turned to 'Amr and said " This thing which you have brought to us is not a small matter, I must think on it and let you know".

Omani storytellers say that Jaifar summoned all the Azd and they sent to Ka'ab Bin Barsha Al Oudi asking him about the affair of the Prophet. Ka'ab was a man of science and learning, and he answered them saying, "Indeed he is a prophet, I know his distinguishing mark, he will appear to the Arabs and the Persians". After that Ka'ab Bin Barsha Al 'Oudi embraced Islam, as did 'Abd and Jaifar and they sent out to the people and they paid homage to the Prophet and entered into his religion, and Jaifar made them give alms and ordered 'Amr Bin Al 'Aas to take the alms from them in the way the Prophet ordered. Amr Bin Al 'Aas witnessed the goodness of their conversion to Islam and their co-operation with the Prophet and their work to establish the pillars of Islam in Oman. The son of Al 'Aas said about 'Abd and Jaifar, the sons of Jalanda, "He answered the call of Islam, he and his brother believed in the Prophet and gave me, the truth and wisdom a free hand amongst them, I had their support behind me, and I took alms from their rich people and gave them to their poor. I did not cease to reside with them until the death of the Prophet."

Finally he said, about the two brother rulers of

Oman at that time, " 'Abd and Jaifar the sons of Al Jalanda became Muslims and their people followed them. However, the Persians who were living in Oman at that time refused to embrace Islam, so a war ensued which ended with their defeat and expulsion from the country."

The rulers, who the Prophet singled out, lived in Sohar which points to it being the capital at that time. In Sohar also the inauguration of the Imam Al Jalanda Bin Mas'aud in 132 A.H., the first Imam of Oman was held.

Centre for Defence

Sohar remained to face its geographical, political and historical destiny. It was a defensive centre against raids from various quarters and by various nationalities.

After Vasco de Gama sailed round Africa and discovered what he called the Cape of Good Hope, which enabled trade with the east by sea, the land - sea route was broken. This led the Portuguese to set up centres for supplies and to guard the route. They occupied a number of important coastal areas in Oman, Sur, Quriyat, Muscat and Sohar. In 1507 A.D., their leader destroyed the Omani fleet, and established castles to strengthen their rule in this strategic area.

The Omanis, however, did not submit to the attacks of the colonists, and in 1650 the Imam Sultan Bin Saif Al Ya'rubi was able to liberate Muscat. It was he who united the country, before going to Sohar to fight the powerful Portuguese forces, returning to the Omanis their freedom after long years of struggle.

From the coastal city of Sohar the Imam Sultan Bin Saif launched his attacks on the Portuguese in Sur and Quriyat, and forced them to leave.

The siege and the folk hero



At the end of the reign of the Al Ya'ruba, and after the settling of the situation in favour of the founder of the Al Busa'id state, Ahmad Bin Sa'id, Sohar was the political seat for his government and his rulers. However, the situation was not stable and things were not easy for the Imam Ahmad Bin Sa'id. At the end of the era of the Al Ya'ruba state, discord sprang up between the Al Ya'ruba themselves, and Persian forces advanced towards the south of the Batinah region. They attacked Sohar, where the Imam Ahmad Bin Sa'id undertook the defence of its castle. He was able to resist the Persians; however, they redoubled their efforts to seize Sohar, after they conquered Muscat and Mutrah. The Imam Ahmad organized attacks on them almost daily, despite his lack of supplies and provisions.

Saif Al Ya'rubi, co-operated with the Persians against Sultan Bin Murshid Al Ya'rubi, and at the death of the Imam Sultan Bin Murshid Al Ya'rubi in 1743 AD, was dismayed when the Persians refused to hand over the castles of Muscat and Mutrah. They had perpetrated an obvious conspiracy to occupy Oman and Saif realized that he had been nothing but a pawn.

It was regrettable that Saif was on the side of the Persians during their siege of Sohar. Ahmad Bin Sa'id, however, defended it with rare courage. Saif withdrew to Hazm Fort after the collapse of his dreams, where he died.

After that no one from the Ya'ruba family ascended to the leadership. With the death of Sultan and Saif, Imam Ahmad Bin Sa'id continued to fight the Persians, who persisted with the siege of Sohar for 9 months. Following an agreement with the Imam Ahmad Bin Sa'id, they withdrew from Sohar to Muscat. This was his opportunity to renew pressure on them again, and he devised a secret plan.

Imam Ahmad's Stratagem

Barka had a flourishing market, trading between the interior and Muscat. Imam Ahmad was resolute to be rid of the Persians. He invited them to a great celebration in Barka, he made great preparations and spent money to such a degree that he aroused the displeasure of the people who did not know that the time of the Persians had come and that their end was near.

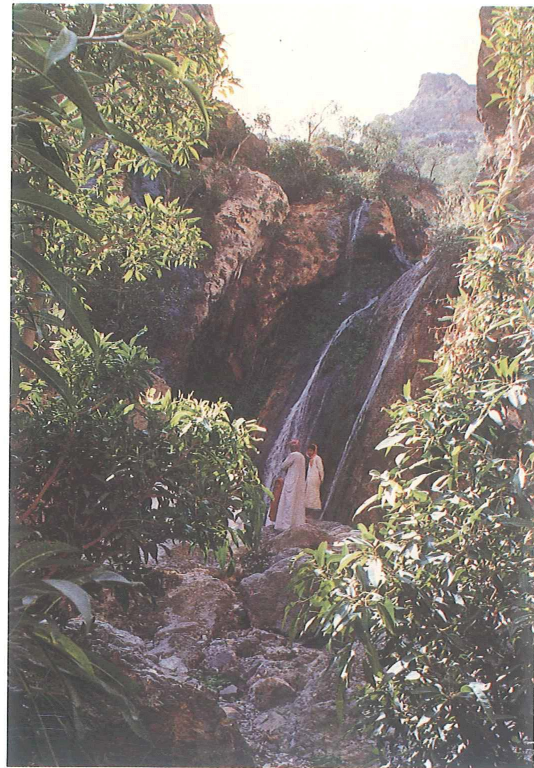
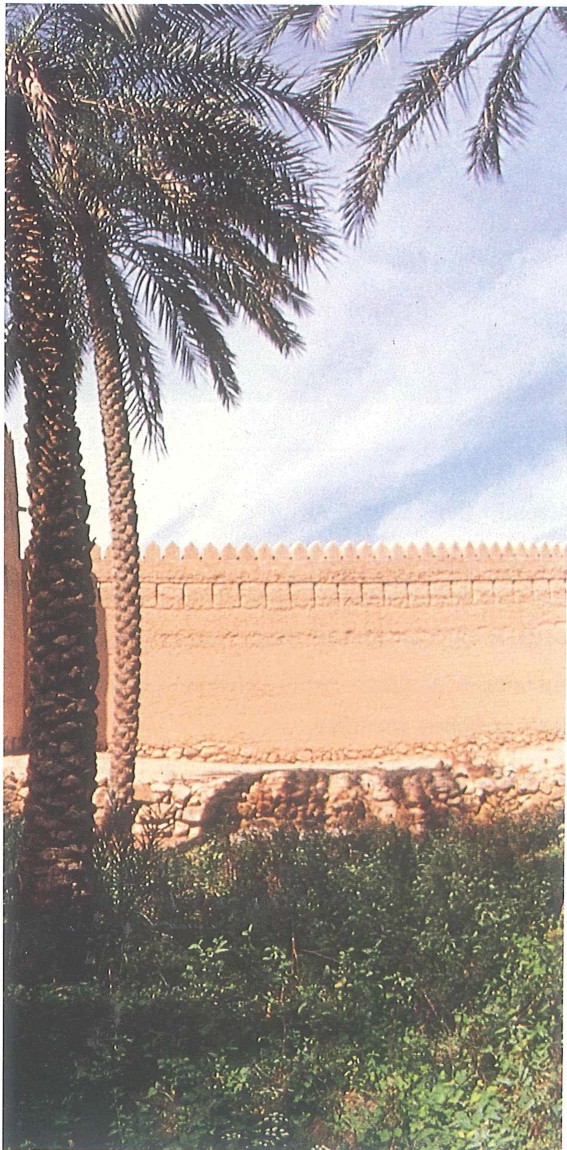
Vast trays of meat were sent to the camp the Persians had erected on the coastal plain of Barka, and 50 officers were invited to the banquet which Imam Ahmad Bin Sa'id held for them. Whilst the guests (the invaders) were eating dinner the drums of the castle sounded and a crier shouted "Whoever has suffered injustice at the hands of the Persians let him now be revenged". This cry was the declaration of a massacre from which only about 200 Persian soldiers survived. This was the end of the Persian incursions, Ahmad Bin Sa'id became a folk hero and was inaugurated as Imam.



Wilayat Al Rustaq



Al Rustaq fort



Extraction of palm tree seedling



Sultan Qaboos at Friday prayers in Sultan Qaboos Mosque, Rustaq

This is one of the Wilayats of the Western Hajr in the south of the Batinah. In the east is the Wilayat of 'Awabi, in the west the Wilayat of 'Ibri, part of the Dhahira region, in the south the locality (Niyaba) of Jabal Al Akhdar and the Wilayat of Nizwa, part of the Dakhaliya region, in the north the Wilayat of Masn'a and the Wilayat of Suwaiq in the north west. There are over 61,984 inhabitants living in 170 villages.

There are five main wadis, Wadi Bani Ghafar, Bani 'Auf, Bani Hini, Al Himali and Wadi Al Sahtan. There are also five mountains in the Wilayat, Jabal Al Tala', Al Marat, Dhuwi, Jabal Al Shams and Jabal Al Akhdar.

Rustaq was the capital of the country in the era of the Imam Nasir Bin Murshid Al Ya'rubi and in the era of the founder of the Al Busa'idi state, the Imam

Ahmad Bin Sa'id. At the forefront of its archaeological features is Rustaq Fort which was built four centuries before Islam. It has two floors in addition to the ground floor, with houses, an armoury, a reception room, gateways, a mosque, wells and other amenities.

It has four towers, the first, Al Ahmar Tower has a height of more than 16 metres and a diameter of 9 and a half metres. The second, Al Rih Tower was built by the Imam Saif Bin Sultan Al Ya'rubi whose tomb can be seen in the western corner of the fort. It is 12 metres high and has a diameter of 12 metres as well, and around the walls are a hundred decorative triangles.

The third is Al Shiatin Tower, which was built by the Imam Saif Bin Sultan Al Ya'rubi, known as Qid Al Ard, as well. It is 18 and a half metres high, and



has a diameter of about six metres, around the walls are 5 decorative triangles. The fourth is Al Hadith Tower, which was built in the era of the Imam Ahmad Bin Sa'id, its height is 11 and a half metres and around it are eighty decorative triangles.

In Rustaq Fort are ten cannons, four of them in Al Hadith Tower, three in Al Rih Tower and three others at the foot of the castle. There are also four gateways, Al Ya'ruba, Al 'Al'al, Al Wasta and Al Sarhah.

There are other archaeological features such as Hazm Fort, a magnificent example of Omani Islamic architecture, which was built in 1711 A.D. by the Imam Sultan Bin Saif Bin Sultan Al Ya'rubi who was the son of the Imam Qid Al Ard. From an architectural point of view the fort is characterized by the lack of any wood in its roof, which is built on columns, and the strength of its walls which are not less than three metres thick. The fort also has a number of huge doors leading to passageways, with Portuguese and Spanish cannons. Inside there are also a number of steps for mounting horses, in addition to secret passageways, with a width and height of two metres. These passageways can be found in all parts of the fort. There are also a number of rooms which were used for studying the Quran, and the sciences. A falaj passes through the fort.

There were also a number of underground wells which could be used if the enemy succeeded in cutting off the water of the falaj.

The Fort of Al Hawqin, which dates back to the year 1722 AD, was built of clay and is the third most important archaeological feature of the Wilayat.

There are also a number of small forts, the most outstanding are Al Ghathib, Al Washl, Al Wasta, Al

Lamaki, Al Sharq, Al Sabra and Al Kasfa.

In addition to this, there are 22 towers, the most important are, Al Saighi, Dars, Al Hajar, Al 'Ali, Huwil, Al Majaz, 'Ar'ar, Al Sa'idi, Al Kahaf, Sana', Al Muhib, Al Kabeel and Al Kasafa.

The most outstanding mosque is Al Biyada mosque which is located on the ground floor of Rustaq Fort, from which a number of Omani Islamic jurists and scholars graduated.

The Wilayat has other important tourist features; the most notable are 'Ain Al Kasafa which has water with a temperature of 45 degrees celsius. The warm water runs into a number of streams and irrigates the gardens, and is also regarded as a cure for rheumatism because of its sulphurous nature, as well as skin diseases. It is located about a kilometre from the centre of the Wilayat.

'Ain Al Huwit is located in Wadi Bani 'Auf and is a water hole with a width of about 60 centimetres.

The third spring is 'Ain Al Khudra which is situated in Wadi Al Sahtan, which is also a water hole surrounded by palms and other trees.

The fourth spring is 'Ain Al Zarqa in the locality (Niyaba) of Al Hawqin. There are also a number of waterfalls, some in Al Hawqin and others in Wadi Al Sahtan.

There are three wadis which are beautiful tourist spots, Wadi Bani Ghafar, Wadi Al Sahtan, and Wadi Bani Auf. There are about 200 falaj, the most outstanding are Al Saighi, Al Hamam, Al Ta'ani, Al Kamil, Al Tiyyar and Abu Tha'lab. In addition there is a collection of caves with running water, the most important being Al Sanaqha Cave and the most important dam, Wadi Fara' Dam.

The occupations in the Wilayat are bee- keeping and pasturage. Industries include making the



well-known Rustaq khanjars, weaving handicrafts and making sweets. The traditional songs are the Mathnia, Razha, Marzaqa, 'Azi, Tariq, Hambal, Wanna, Tamina, Tahlawa, Zafa Al Kidha, Dan Dan and Al Hina art.

The Wilayat cultivates various types of palm tree, the most important are Saba' Al 'Arus, Al Zabad, Al Khalas, Al Hilali, and Abu Suwih, it is also famous for its citrus fruit.

Currently several beautification projects are being developed. In the field of health care there are three hospitals and three health centres. The new Rustaq Hospital was opened at the end of 1994 at a cost of 13 million Omani Riyals. It is equipped with the most modern medical equipment. It has 239 beds, and includes an accident and emergency department, a cardiology and other departments.

There are 40 schools for the various stages of education for both sexes and a teacher training college.

The Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Environment has also undertaken various projects to establish the Wilayat of Rustaq as one of the best tourist areas in the Sultanate.

The first stage of the three stage project cost 4 million Omani Riyals and includes widening the Rustaq - Hazm crossroads - Wali's Office road. It is 16.2 kilometres long and includes building three new roundabouts, a distribution network to channel and preserve rain water, several car parks in trading areas, making junctions on the widened road, erecting lights, making pedestrian crossings, altering the entrance of Hazm roundabout and carrying out protective work for the falaj on the widened road.

On the 10th of April in 1994, the second stage

began at a cost of 4,297,000 Omani Riyals. It is estimated that this stage will take 548 days to complete. Its work includes the widening of the main road from Al Marba roundabout to the old hospital, building 6 kilometres of road, a service road of 3 kilometres, erecting lighting, and planting gardens along all the roads inside the city, making 1000 car parking places, improving and adding to the current municipal market, and changing the electricity lines to underground.

The third stage is still being studied by the authorities concerned.

The most outstanding of the tourist places to be developed in the Wilayat are, 'Ain Al Kasfa region, Al Hazm area and the area near Rustaq Fort, including the renovation of the old market and planting flowers and trees in public areas.

There are 24 organizations and government departments which provide central services to the citizens. The most important are, the Department of Education and Training for the south of the Batinah region, the Department of Social Affairs, the Labour Office, the Department of Developing Local Organizations, the Post Office, the Municipality, the Public Organization of Transport, a centre for marketing agricultural produce, a centre for developing the countryside, a centre for bee keeping research, a police unit, a Sharia' law court and the Wali's Office.

Within the framework of establishing mosques for the teaching of the Islamic religion, an important, modern mosque has been built in the Wilayat of Rustaq, covering a total area of 31,250 square metres, with the building covering 2400 square metres with more than 1500 places for prayer. The work on this mosque, which was recently opened by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, took about a year and a



half. The mosque has two minarets rising to a height of 55 and a half metres and the building itself is 9 metres high. Its interior walls are covered with mosaics and inscriptions of Quranic verses.



Education



A doctor attends a patient



The Historic Capital of Oman - 2



A view from Al Rustaq



The city of the fortress and the hot spring. The State Council occupied one of the most important parts of the fortress, and here, at times of crisis, the influential people gathered.



Rustaq was the ancient capital of Oman at the time of the internal struggles of the Al Ya'ruba family, witnessing its last days when one of its members was strengthened by a neighbouring regional force. This individual was Saif Bin Sultan, who asked for support, in good faith, from the king of the Persians, who saw in this request a golden opportunity to achieve his own personal desires and those of his people, to rule over Oman.

A Man of Politics and War

This city, Rustaq, saw the beginning of the rule of the Al Ya'ruba in Oman, when the Imam Nasir Bin Murshid took control in 1624 AD, adopting it as his capital. It was the spring-board for unifying Oman, which was occupied by the Portuguese and Persians. He went to war against the invaders, achieving great victories.

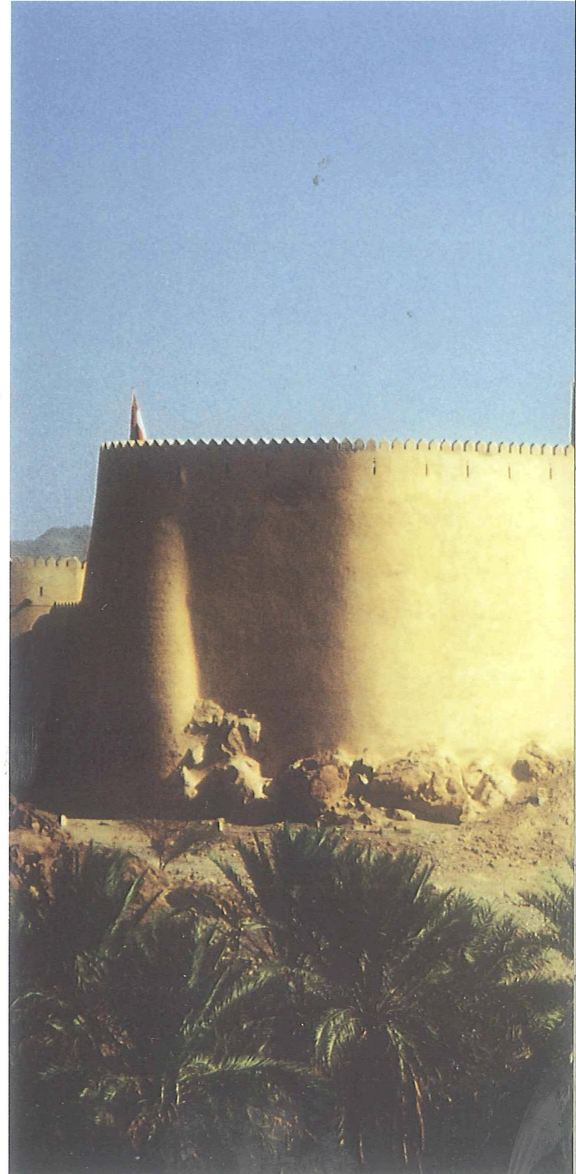
However, the last years of the Al Ya'ruba era were a disaster. In 1737 AD Rustaq witnessed a struggle between the members of the Al Ya'ruba family and outsiders. When one of the rival regional forces, together with some members of his family, triumphed, Saif Bin Sultan Bin Saif Al Ya'rubi fled to the king of the Persians - Nadarshah, seeking aid. Nadarshah saw in this request a golden opportunity to achieve his personal desire to rule over Oman.

At that time Saif Bin Sultan believed that the king of the Persians was helping him, but in reality he was working on his own and his people's account, an end which he achieved. By the time when the last Imam of the Al Ya'ruba died, the Persians were occupying several areas of Oman including Muscat.

However, Rustaq witnessed the inauguration of a new ruler in 1744 AD, and it became famous because of this man of politics and war, the Imam

Ahmad Bin Sa'id, who was the founder of the Al Busa'idi family which still rules Oman today.

The Imam Ahmad Bin Sa'id was able to triumph in the war that he launched against the Persian colonists and freed Oman from further invasions.

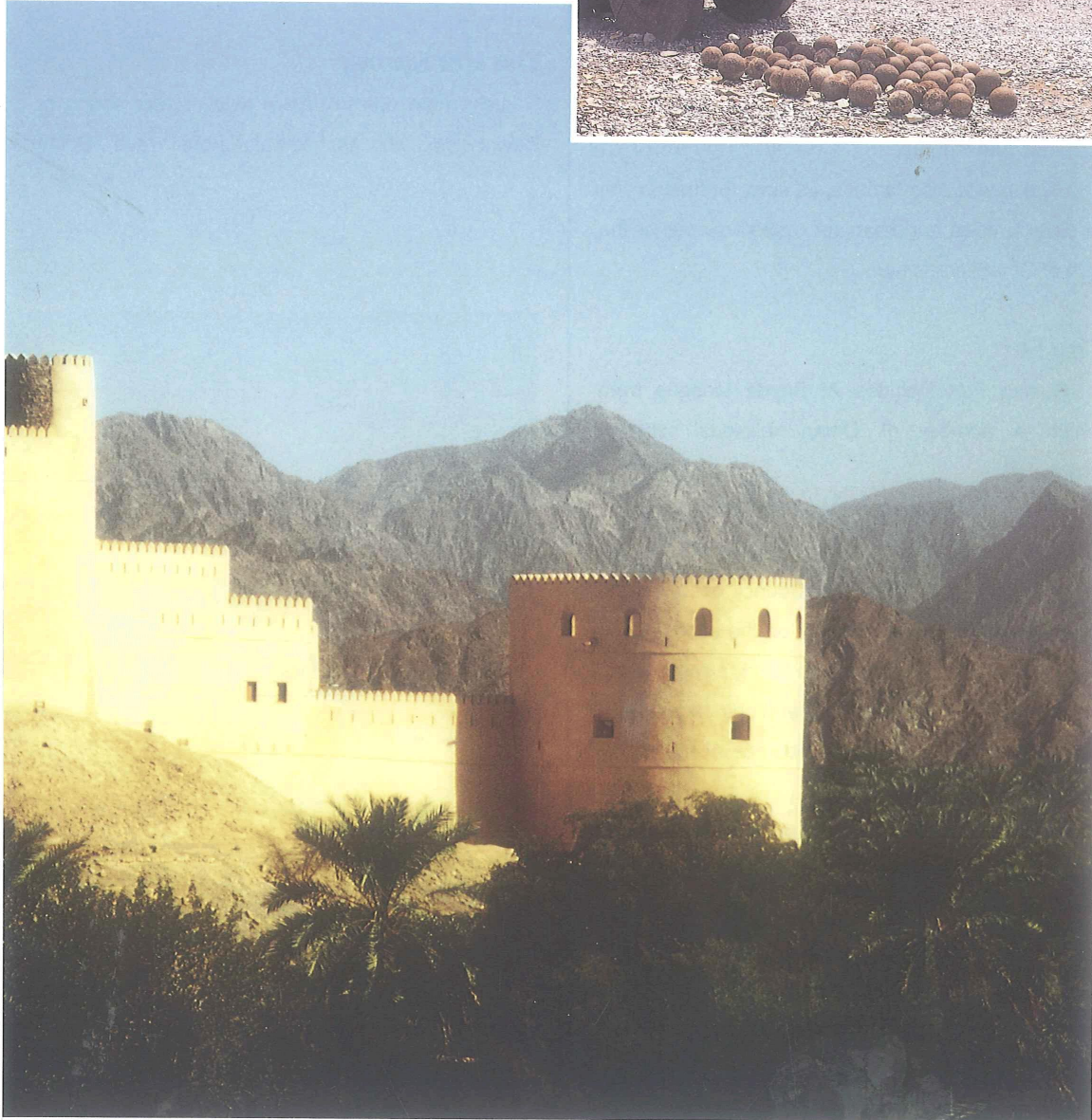
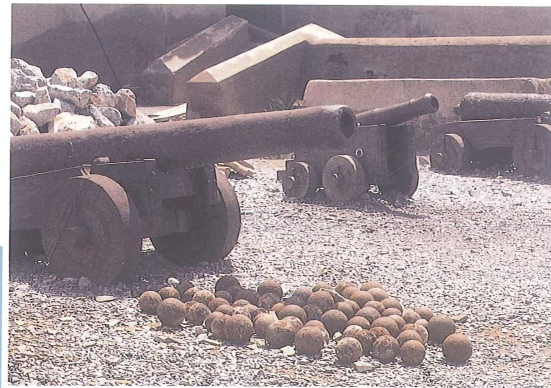


Restoration of heritage sites



Imam Ahmad also worked to increase trade and financial prosperity. He established a balance between the coast and the interior of Oman and succeeded in achieving security and stability for the country.

Cannons at Rustaq fort





Rustaq remained the capital of Oman until after the death of the Imam Ahmad Bin Sa'id, when Sa'id Bin Ahmad assumed power. He retained it as the capital for a period before transferring it to Sohar.

Rustaq was an important trade centre for the produce of the Jabal Al Akhdar with crops such as apricots, pomegranates, plums and grapes. Likewise the people of the coastal region of the Batinah brought the produce from their areas: fish, bananas and lemons.

Rustaq was also famous, as now, for the making of silver articles and khanjars - masterpieces of the skill of Omani craftsmen.

The Fort

Rustaq Fort includes Al Bayda Mosque from which a number of Oman religious scholars graduated.

On the ground floor, on the right of the entrance, is a guardroom, and on the same floor were prison cells for criminals. The State Council occupied the most important place in the fort, on the second floor, where the Imam consulted with them, a room which today would be called the operations room. Here plans were drawn up for the defence of the region and the fort.

The Imam's room was guarded by openings from which honey mixed with boiling oil could be dropped on the heads of the enemy. There were also manganoles, weapons which fired something resembling a napalm bomb.

On part of the third floor is a weapon and ammunition store which covers an area of about 40 metres long by 7 metres wide, and inside are openings which are not more than a metre long leading to a secret tunnel providing a means of

escape should it become necessary.

What else can be found in the ancient capital of Oman ? ...

There were also a number of underground wells which could be used if the enemy succeeded in cutting off the water of the falaj.

The Hot Spring

Less than one kilometre away is the spring of Dawuwadia, with its hot sulphurous water. Some



"Kasfa Spring" water temperature is up to 45 degrees and is used to cure skin diseases



people think it is a blessed spring that can cure disease, sick people go there to be treated, especially for acne. It is situated in an area that is quiet.

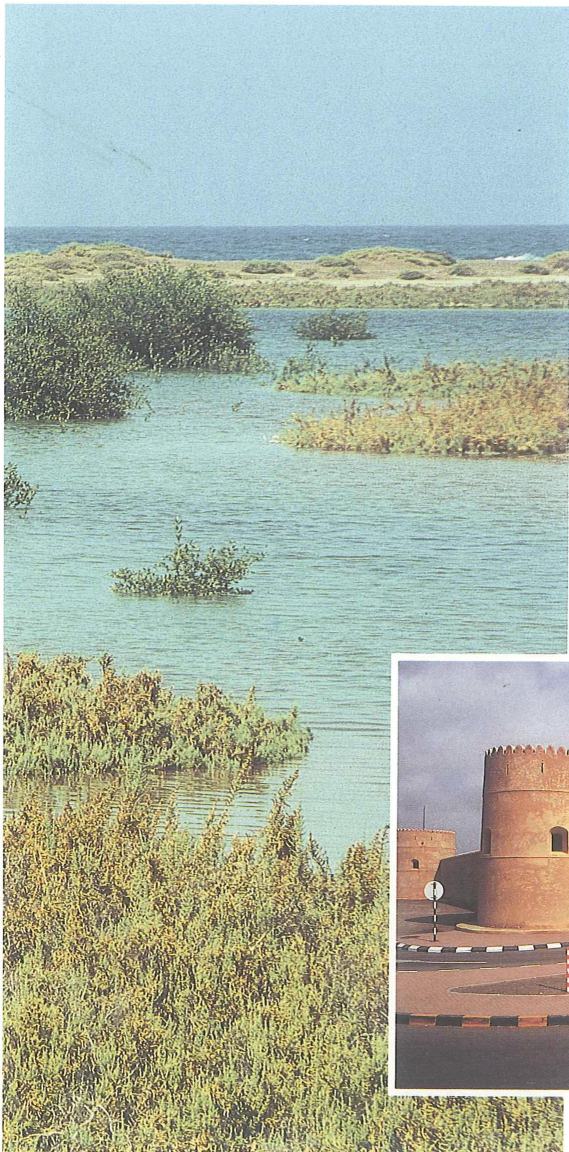




Wilayat Shinas



Nature and heritage in the Wilayat of Shinas





The spread of education

Shinas is located in the far north of the Batinah. It is bordered by the Wilayat of Mahdha in the west, the Gulf of Oman in the east, the Wilayat of Liwa in the south and the U.A.E. in the north. There are 44,308 inhabitants living in about 45 villages between the coast and the mountains.

There are a number of castles, forts and towers of archaeological interest. The most important of the forts is Shinas Fort, and of the castles Rasa Al Malah, Khadrawin, 'Ajib, and Asrar of which only a little remains. There are about 35 towers in the Wilayat, among them Marir which is located on the beach and Aswad.

The tourist features of the Wilayat include Shinas Park, densely covered with the "Qarm " tree; Wadi Al Ghaliliya and Wadi Al Aswad have also been developed into beautiful tourist attractions.



Telecommunications office



The statistics for the school year 1994/95, however, show that there are now 248 schools for the various stages of education, primary, preparatory and secondary. 112 for boys, 105 for girls and 31 mixed, with a total number of students of 155,646, 80,777 boys and 74,869 girls.

In the school year 1994/95 there were 45 centres for adult education.

There were also 95 courses for eradicating illiteracy.



The fishing industry



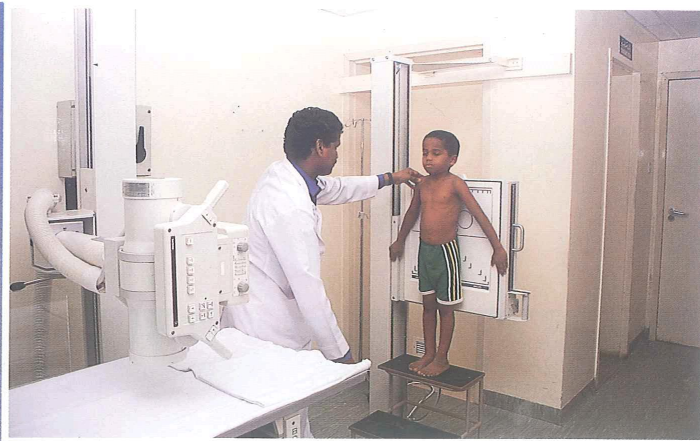
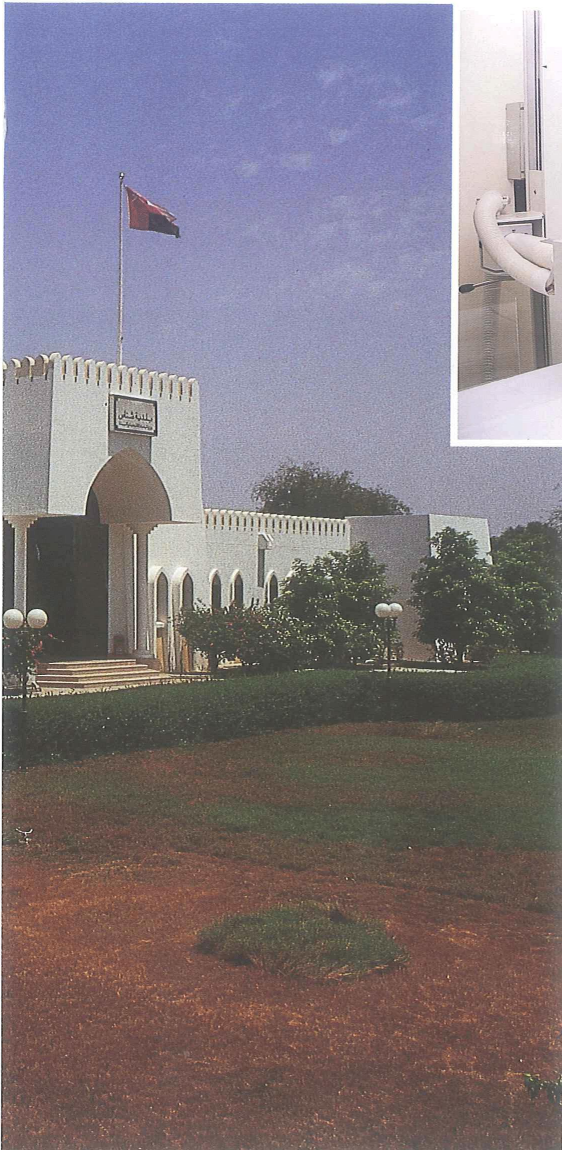
The Shinas regional municipality office

The occupations of the Wilayat are ship building, weaving palm leaves, making nets, carpentry, blacksmithery, fishing, pasturage and animal husbandry. Among the traditional songs are the Razha, the Razfa Al Bedawia, the Mawlid and the Taimina.

Agricultural produce are tomatoes, lemons,

mangos, figs, pomegranates, bananas and animal fodder.

There are now 14 schools for the various stages of education, a health complex, 4 health centres, and a quarantine station at the land border post of Wajaja. A number of government offices provide services to the citizens: the Municipality, a centre for



Medical care for the young

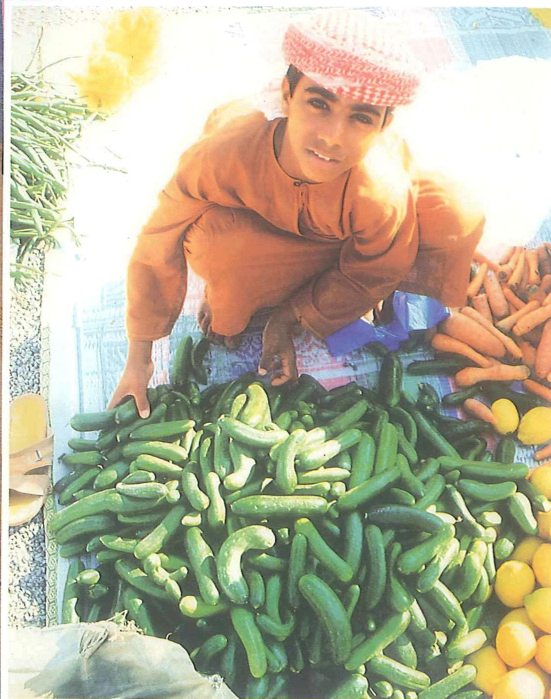
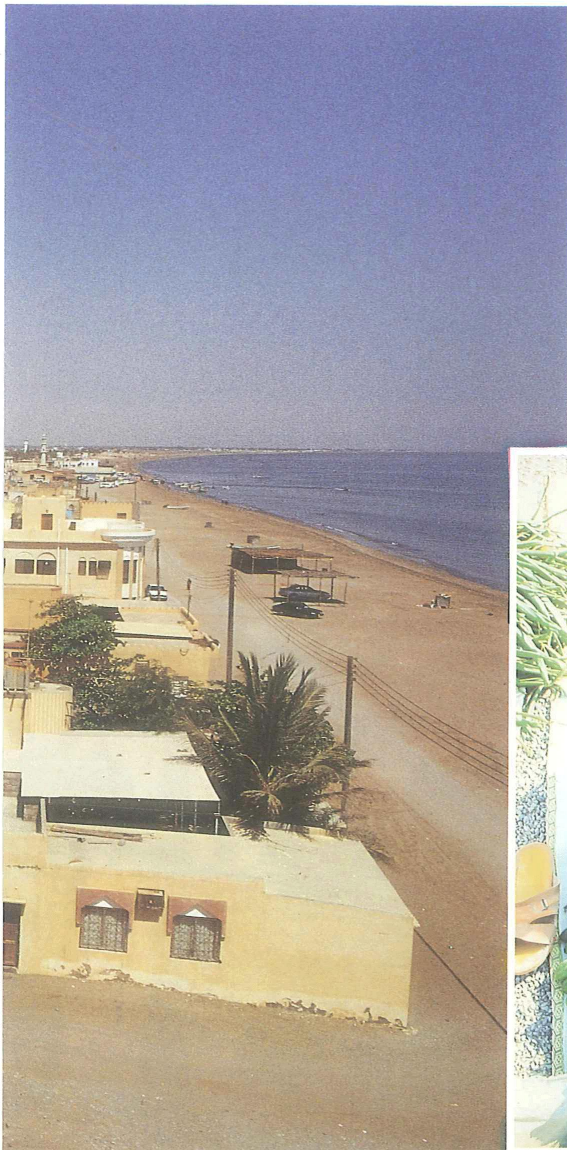
developing agriculture, a post office, an electricity office, a maritime workshop, the Public Organization for Marketing Agriculture, a Sharia' law court and the Wali's Office.



Wilayat Liwa



Signs of the Renaissance in Liwa





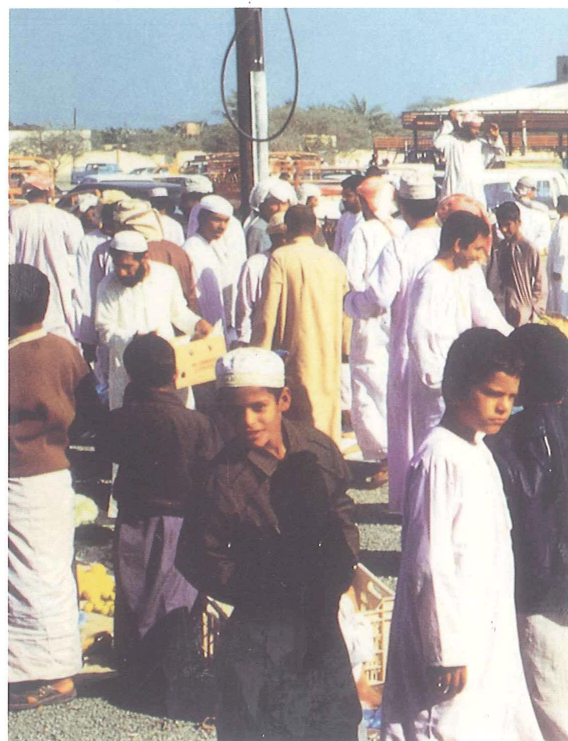
The fish market

Liwa has a population of 21,667 people, living in 58 villages, it is neighboured in the south by the Wilayat of Sohar, in the north by the Wilayat of Shinas, in the west by the Wilayat of Mihda and in the east by the Gulf of Oman.

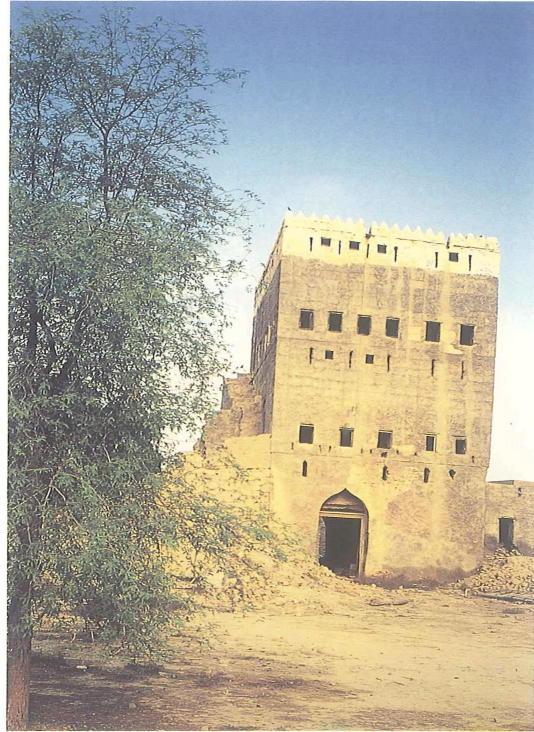
There are a number of forts, castles and towers: the fort of Liwa has three main towers strengthening the surrounding wall, and Fazah Fort which reaches a height of almost 100 metres.

The fortress of Awlad Ya'rab is made of white clay and is situated on the beach in the Harmul area. The region also has a number of towers situated on the mountain tops.

There are several ancient mosques; the mosque of the Imam Al Rabia' Bin Habib, one of the religious scholars of Oman, which is in the village of Ghadhfan.

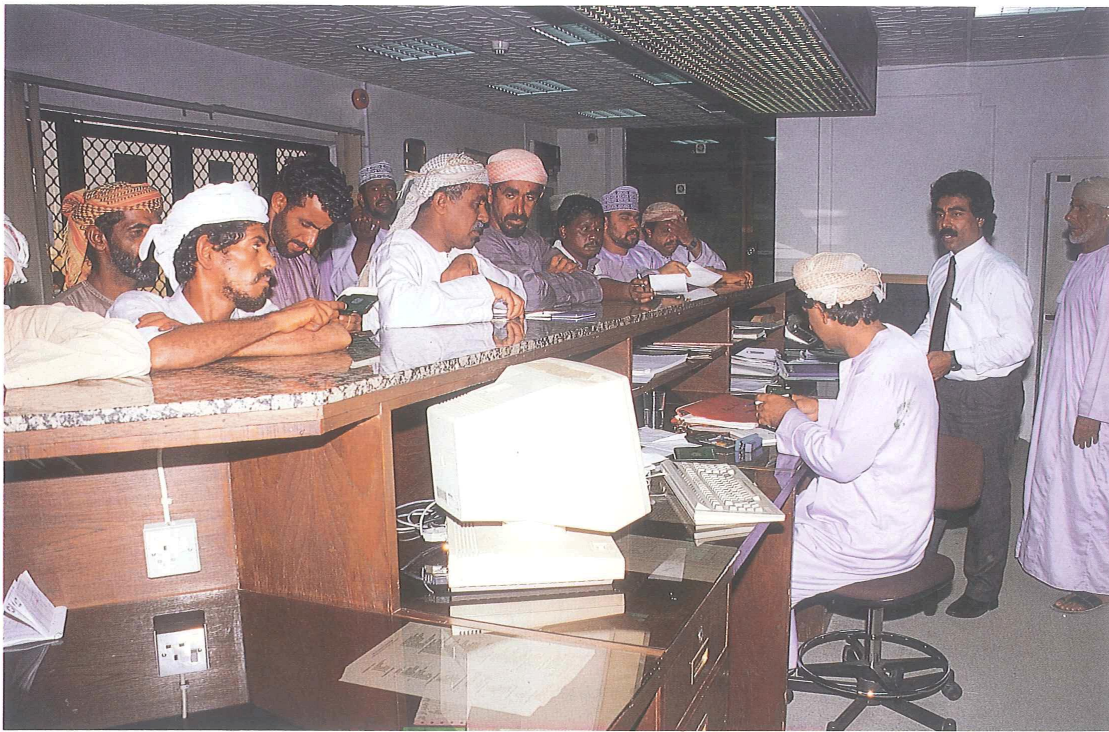


The market place in Wilayat Liwa



An old building





Services for the citizens

There are other tourist features as well, including a number of springs, falaj and caves, such as 'Ain Al 'Azam, which faces the creek and is surrounded by Qarm trees, and Jabal Abu Kahif, where the most famous caves in the Wilayat can be found. There are also about 20 falaj.

Traditional occupations in the Wilayat are, making mats, spinning and textiles, and making traditional tools. The most important agricultural produce are, dates, citrus fruit, mangos, vegetables and animal fodder.

The traditional songs are the Razha, Raqsat Al Bahar, Fan Al Balush, Al Midan and Al Liwa.

The March of Prosperity has reached this Wilayat, as others, and has developed modern services there. There are 10 schools for the various stages of education, a health centre, and a number



Encouragement of personal hobbies



of government offices which provide these services.

The government offices are: the Municipality of Liwa, a centre for developing agriculture, a centre for agricultural research, an office for postal services, a Sharia' law court and the Wali's Office.





Wilayat Saham



A view from Wilayat Saham

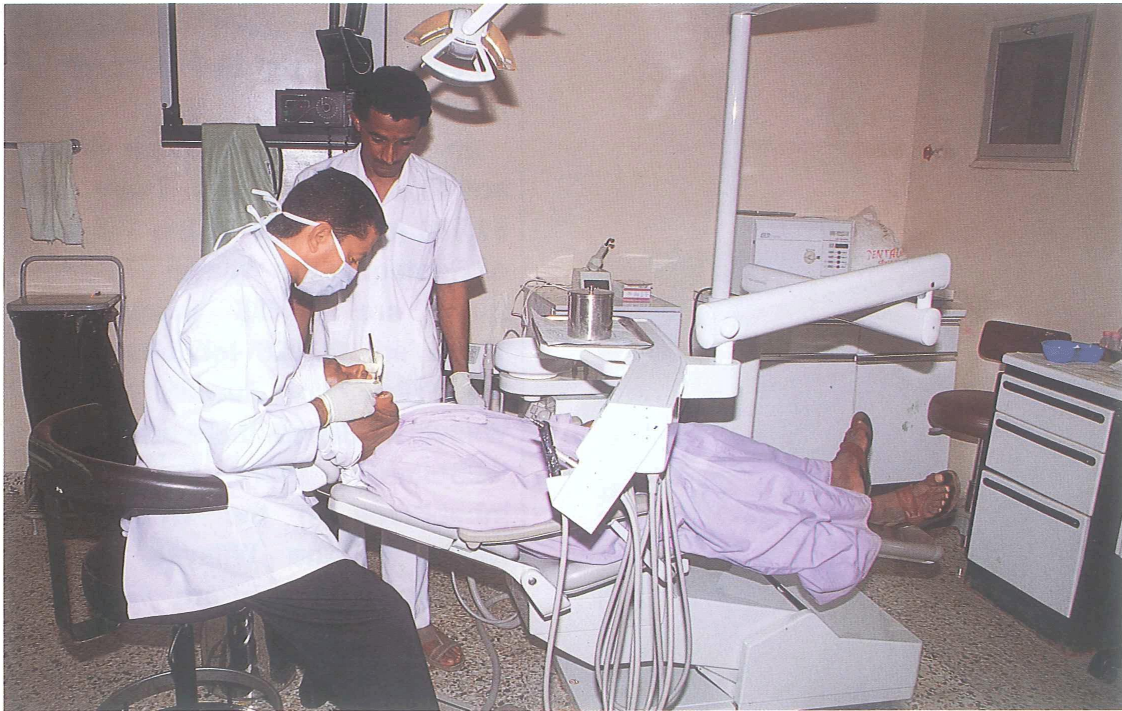


The total present number of inhabitants in the Batinah region is 564,677.

In the Wilayat of Sohar there are 90,809 inhabitants. There are 61,984 inhabitants in the Wilayat of Rustaq. In the Wilayat of Barka there are 64,526 inhabitants. There are 85,025 inhabitants in the Wilayat of Suwaiq. In the Wilayat of Saham there are 74,904 inhabitants. There are 13,080 inhabitants in the Wilayat of Nakhl. In the Wilayat of Al Khabura there are 40,760 inhabitants. There are 44,308 inhabitants in the Wilayat of Shinas. In the Wilayat of Wadi Ma'awal there are 10,423 inhabitants. There are 8,626 inhabitants in the Wilayat of Al 'Awabi. In the Wilayat of Masana'a there are 47,560 inhabitants. There are 21,667 inhabitants in the Wilayat of Liwa.



Boats



Dental care

To the east is the Gulf of Oman, in the west is the Dhahira region, to the north the Wilayat of Sohar and in the south Al Khabura. There are about 74,904 inhabitants in 82 villages and towns. The Wilayat of Saham is located between the coast and the mountains, with fresh running water and magnificent natural scenery.

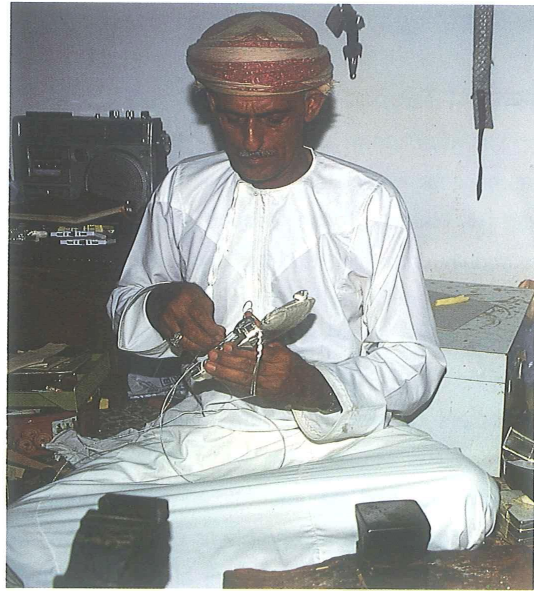
There are a large number of irrigation afalaj in areas such as Falaj Wadi Bani 'Amr, Al Falij, Al Rudha, Mahab and Shida. There are also a number of wadis, the most important being Wadi 'Ahan, Al Mahmum, Al Sarimi, Shafan and Khur Al Malah.

The Suq Fort was the seat of the Wali and judge of the Wilayat before the establishment of the modern building.

There are numerous industries: making khanjars, swords, silver articles, belts, woven palm handicrafts, doors, wooden poles, and sweets. The

occupations are agriculture, pasturage, animal husbandry, fishing, blacksmithery and carpentry. The traditional songs are the Razha, 'Azi, songs of the sea, the Hambal, Wanna and women's songs. Saham is also famous for horse and camel racing.

The Wilayat has witnessed many accomplishments over the years of the era of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos. There are now 27 schools for the various stages of education, Saham Hospital and a number of government offices which help to provide various services to the citizens. There is the Water Department, a road centre, the Municipality, electricity, telecommunications, the post office, an office for developing agriculture, a workshop for the fishing industry, a vocational training centre, an Office of Social Affairs, the Boy Scout Movement, the Omani Women's Association, a Civil Defence Centre, the Awqaf Office, a police station, Saham



Khanjar making



A vocational training centre



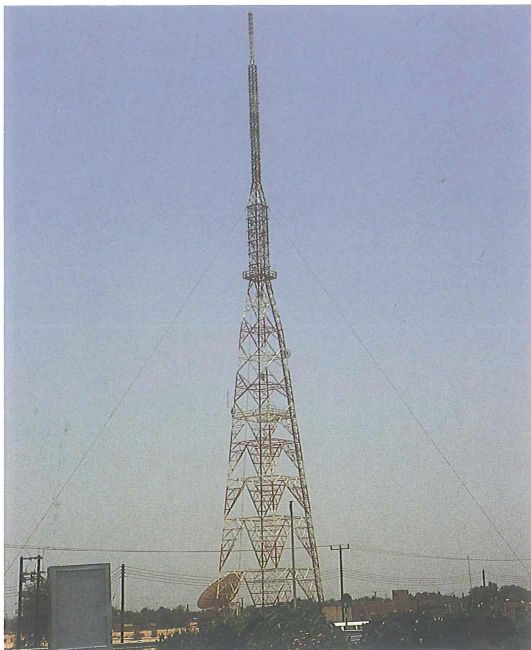
the Sharia' law court and the Wali's Office.

Seih Al Taybat

The area known as Seih Al Taybat, a name that has become associated in the minds of the Omanis with His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, and his policy of personally consulting and advising his people. It is the location of one of the royal camps used by His Majesty whilst on his annual inspection tour of the Wilayats of the Sultanate. Here the session of open parliament convenes, where there is dialogue between His Majesty and his citizens - with no impediments and no intermediaries. His Majesty listens to the cares and problems of the citizens in their daily lives in precise detail and they work to immediately find solutions in the light of what is possible and available. The citizens on their side listen to the directives of His Majesty which serve

the national aims.

The open sessions of H.M's "meet the people tour" which convened at the beginning of last year, 1994, are typical. His Majesty met with important sheikhs, nobles and notables of the Batinah and the Governorate of Muscat and called for more



Modern technology



His Majesty Sultan Qaboos confers with his people

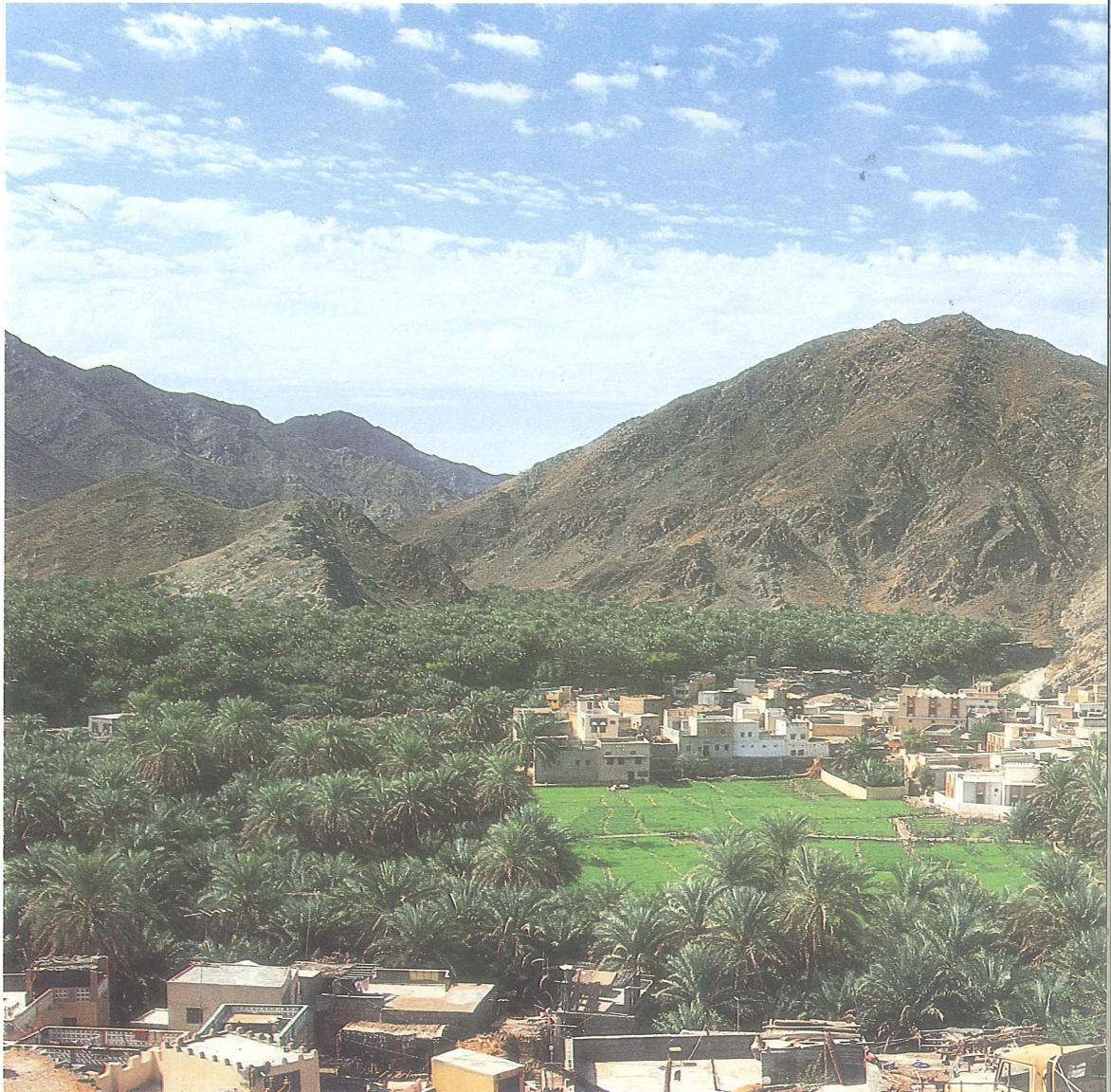


co-operation for the success of the programmes of preserving water resources and guidance in water consumption. Likewise he stressed the importance of preparing a social plan in the light of the high birth rate in the Sultanate (3.8%), compatible with Islamic law.

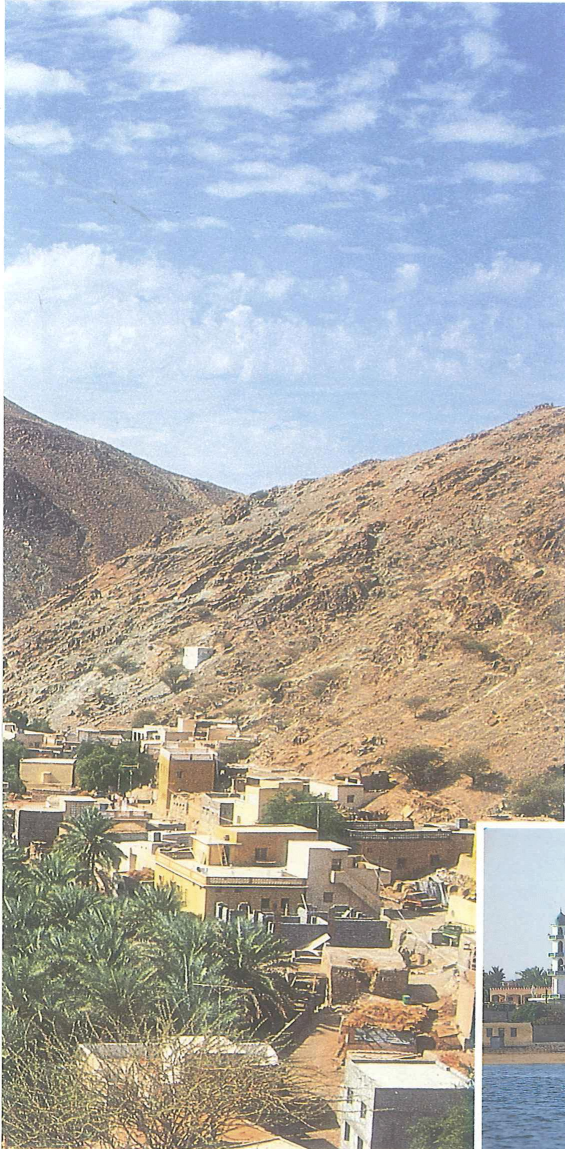




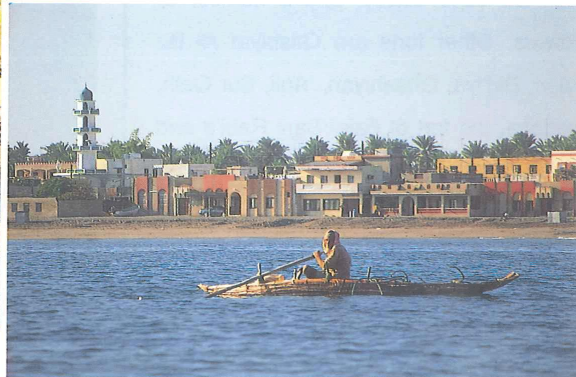
Wilayat Al Khaboura



A view from Wilayat Al Khaboura



There are 39 branches of local banks as well as 5 special banks and two foreign banks.



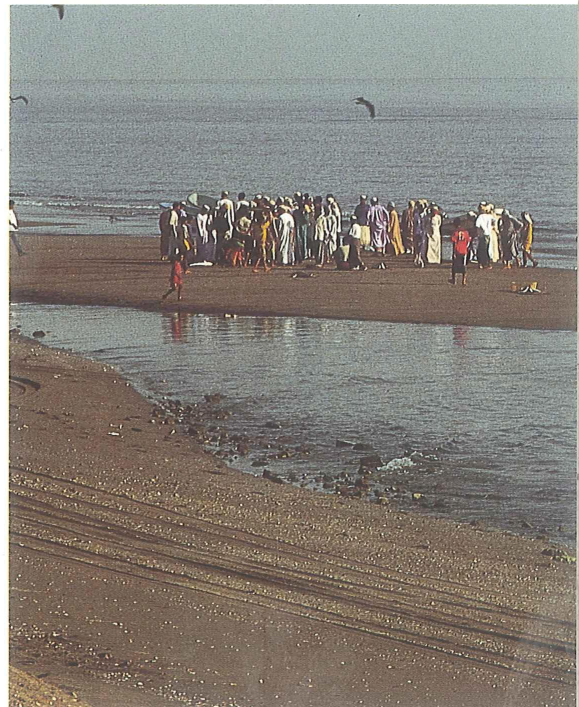


A power station

In the south east is the Wilayat of Suwaiq, in the south west the Wilayat of 'Ibri, part of the Dhahira region, in the north west the Wilayats of Saham and Sohar and in the north east is the Gulf of Oman. There are 40,760 inhabitants living in 76 villages.

There are a number of castles, the most important, the Bu Sa'id Castle, and a number of forts and towers. Other forts are Qasbiyat Al Bu Sa'id, Al Hajari, Bid'iya, Ghashiyan, 'Aqli, Sur Qatit, Sur Al Dawahana, the fort of Falaj Bani Rabi'a and the fort of Khabat (Al 'Ain). The towers are Khawirat, Radida, Khur Rasal, Qasibat Al Hawasana and the tower of Sur Qatit.

There are about 150 falaj, the most important are Qasaf and Naba'an. The mountains are honeycombed with caves, but do not have specific names.



The beach in Al khaboura



There are a number of occupations, industries and traditional songs. The occupations are animal pasturage, tanning leather, weaving palm leaves, making textiles, fishing and agriculture. The industries are making khanjars, Shash boat building, baskets for fish and sweets.

The traditional songs are the Razha, Qasafi and Wahabi, Gharud, Tariq, Sha'r and 'Azi, Wanna, and Midan.

The agricultural products are sugar cane, wheat, dates, lemons, animal fodder and cotton.

The Wilayat has benefited greatly from the renaissance, there are now 17 schools for the various stages of education, two industrial areas in Sarhat and Barik, a health centre and a hospital in Wadi Al Hawsna.

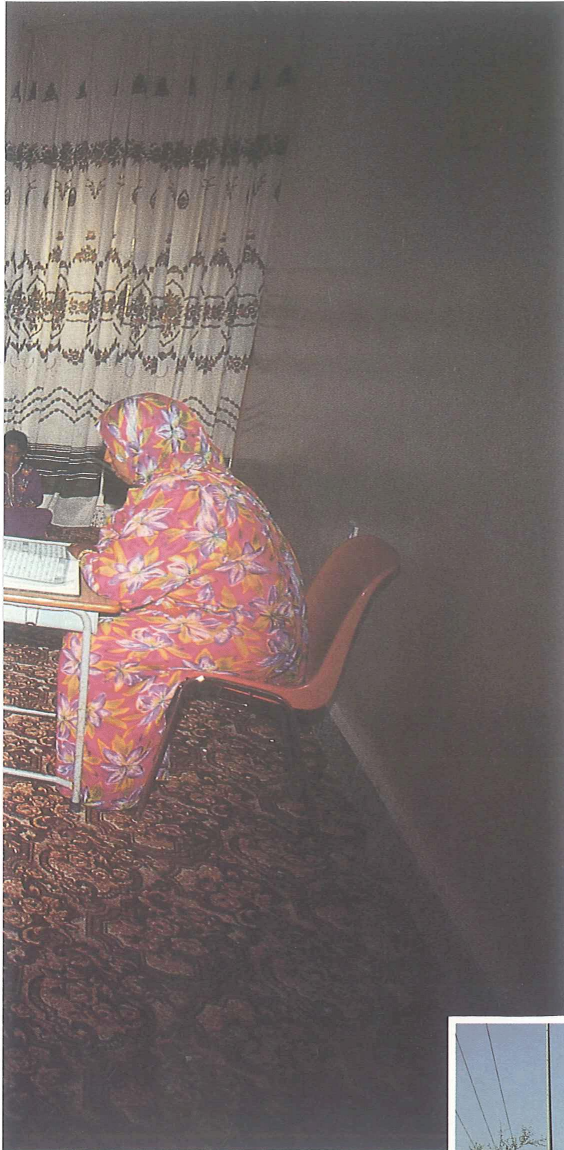
During the years - 1990, 91 and 92 - the value of social housing in the Batinah was 10,317,000 Omani Riyals. During 1991, 92 and 93 housing loans for people of low income amounted to approximately 2,700,00 Omani Riyals, benefiting 178 cases.





The participation of women in teaching

The government offices in the Wilayat provide services to the citizens, the Office for Developing Local Organizations, an office for marketing agricultural produce, the post office, the municipality, electricity and water, water resources, a police station, a Sharia' law court and the Wali's Office.



Bank service



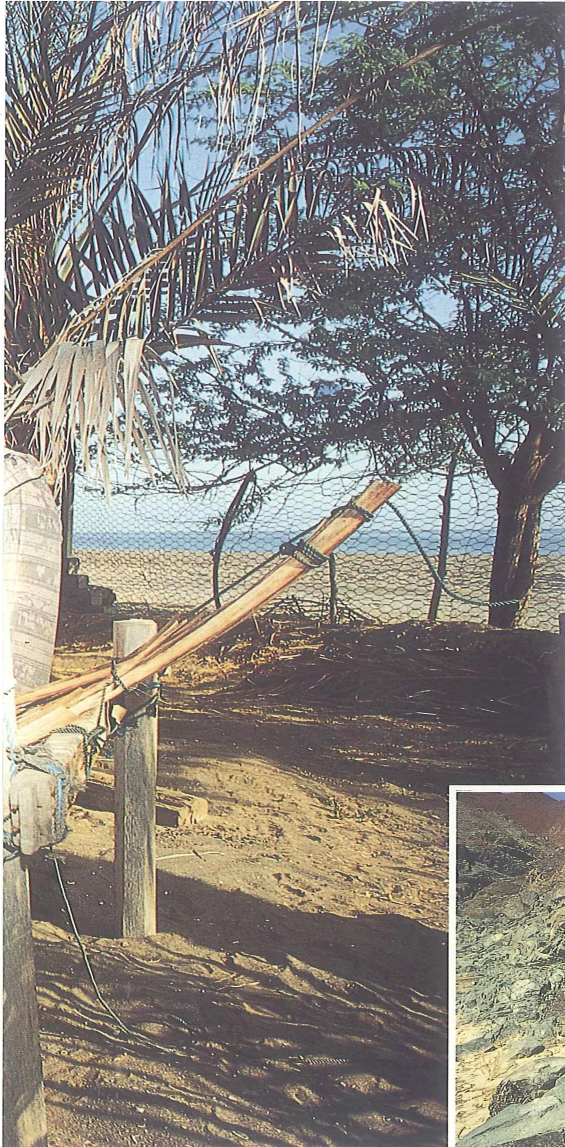
A paved road



Wilayat Al Suwaiq



Views from Wilayat Al Suwaiq



There were more than 15,000 companies and establishments in the private sector in the Batinah with a capital of between 5,000 and 5 million Riyals at the end of 1994. Before 1970 trade activity was centred around Muscat and Mutrah only, where there were no more than 10 merchants.





A fishermen

In the east is the Wilayat of Masna'a, in the west the Wilayat of Khabura, in the north the Gulf of Oman, and in the south the locality (Niyaba) of Hawqin, part of the Wilayat of Rustaq. There are over 85,025 inhabitants living in 101 villages.

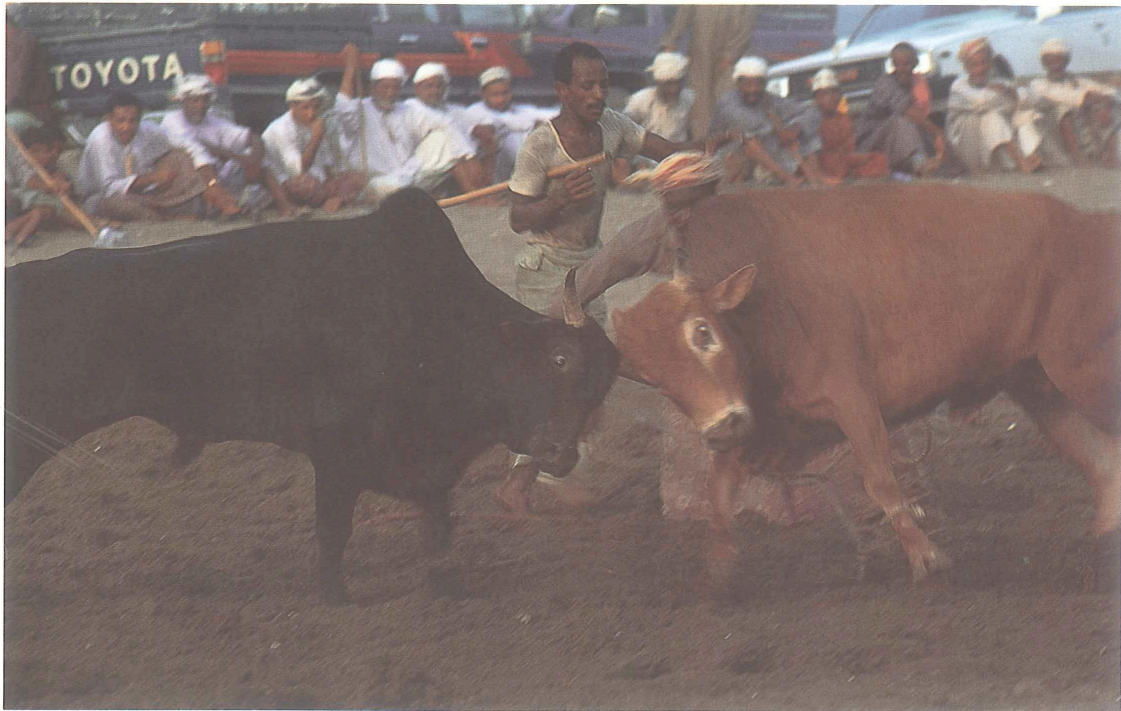
There are 20 walls, 4 towers, and a number of castles and forts throughout the villages. The most important forts are Suwaiq, Tharmad, Al Hilal, Maghabasha and Al Burshid.

There are also about 31 afalaj, among them being Balada Mashaiq, Mabrah, and Al Hilane as well as four springs. One of them is in the region of Dhian'Al Bu Sa'id, and the others in Al Hujoor in the area of Wadi Al Jahawar, which has beautiful gardens with trees and running water.

Occupations are fishing, which is the main one, sweet-making, working gold and silver, manufacture of khanjars, blacksmithery, carpentry, palm weaving, making textiles, tanning leather, and animal husbandry.



Al Suwaiq fort



Bull fighting



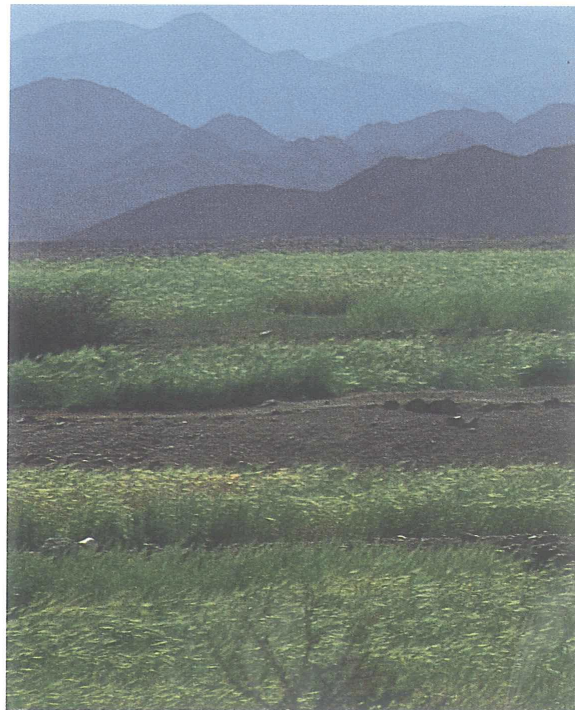


A school

The most outstanding traditional songs are the Razha, 'Ayala, Qasafi, Tash shah, Al Mawlid and Dan Dan. The Wilayat is also famous for horse, camel and boat racing and bull fighting like the other coastal regions of the Batinah.

The Wilayat of Suwaiq is characterized by widespread agriculture on its fertile land. It has an abundance of fresh water which makes the area suitable to produce various crops, the most important being, herbs, vegetables, and fruit, especially bananas, mangos and citrus fruit.

The renaissance has blessed the area with three health establishments to serve the citizens, 29 schools for the various stages of education and a number of government offices working for the inhabitants in the fields of communication, post, electricity, roads, developing agriculture, a unit for collecting and ripening bananas, the municipality, a labour office, social affairs office, a police station, Suwaiq club, a Sharia' law court and the Wali's Office.



Farming

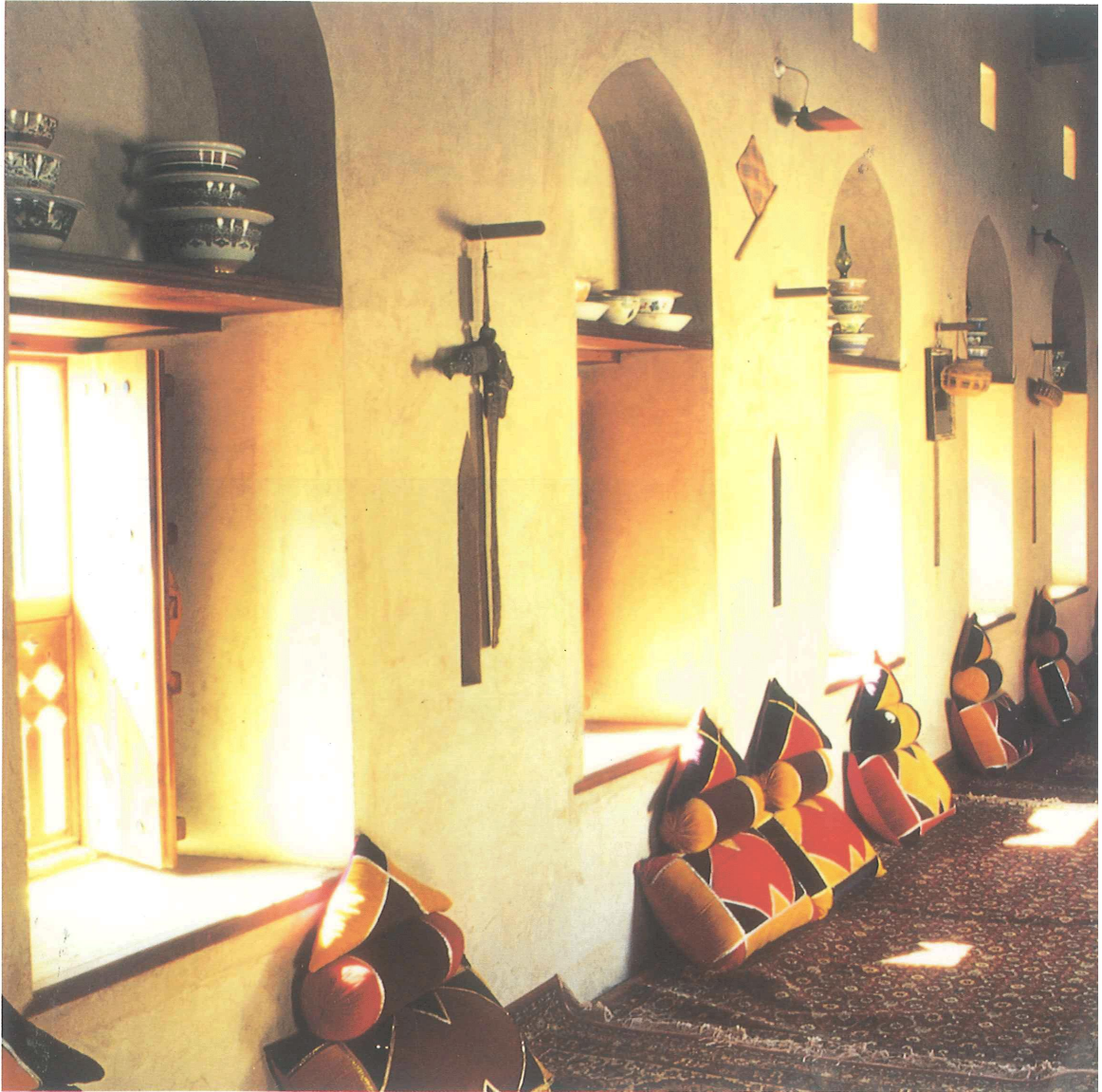


Child care

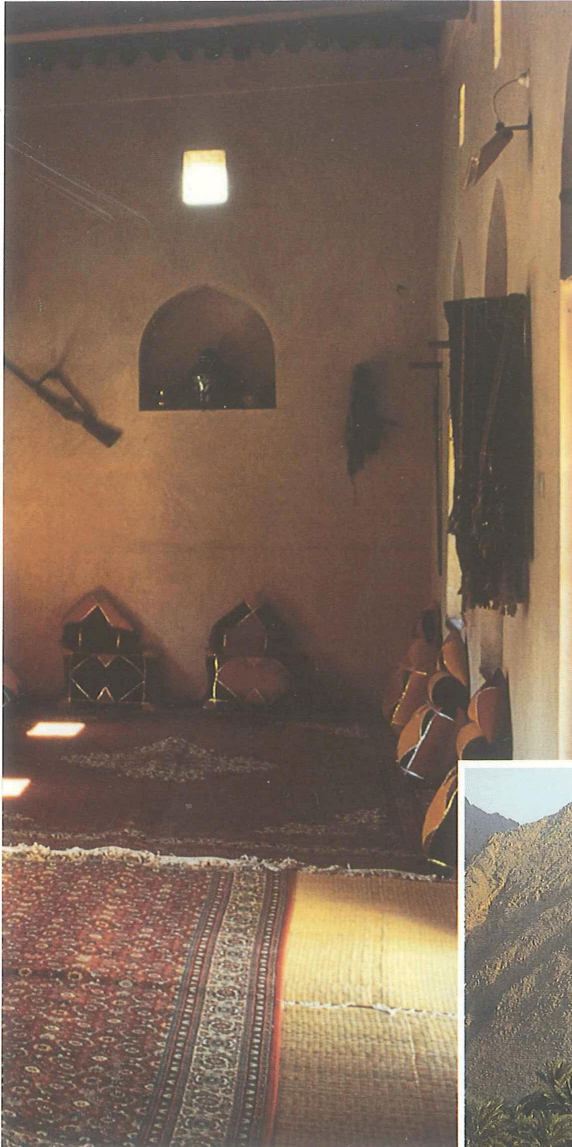




Wilayat Nakhl



Nakhl fort



At the end of 1994 loans worth 977,000 Omani Riyals were extended by the Omani Bank for Agriculture and Fisheries to develop existing farms, 157,000 Riyals for agricultural machinery, 81,000 Riyals for boats and machinery, 101,000 Riyals for transportation of fish, and 90,000 for ploughs. A total value of 977,000 Riyals in loans was used for 300 agricultural and fishery projects.

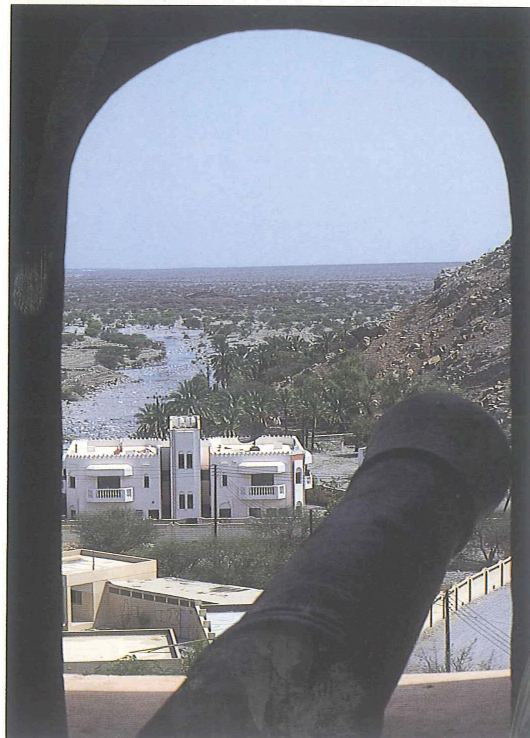




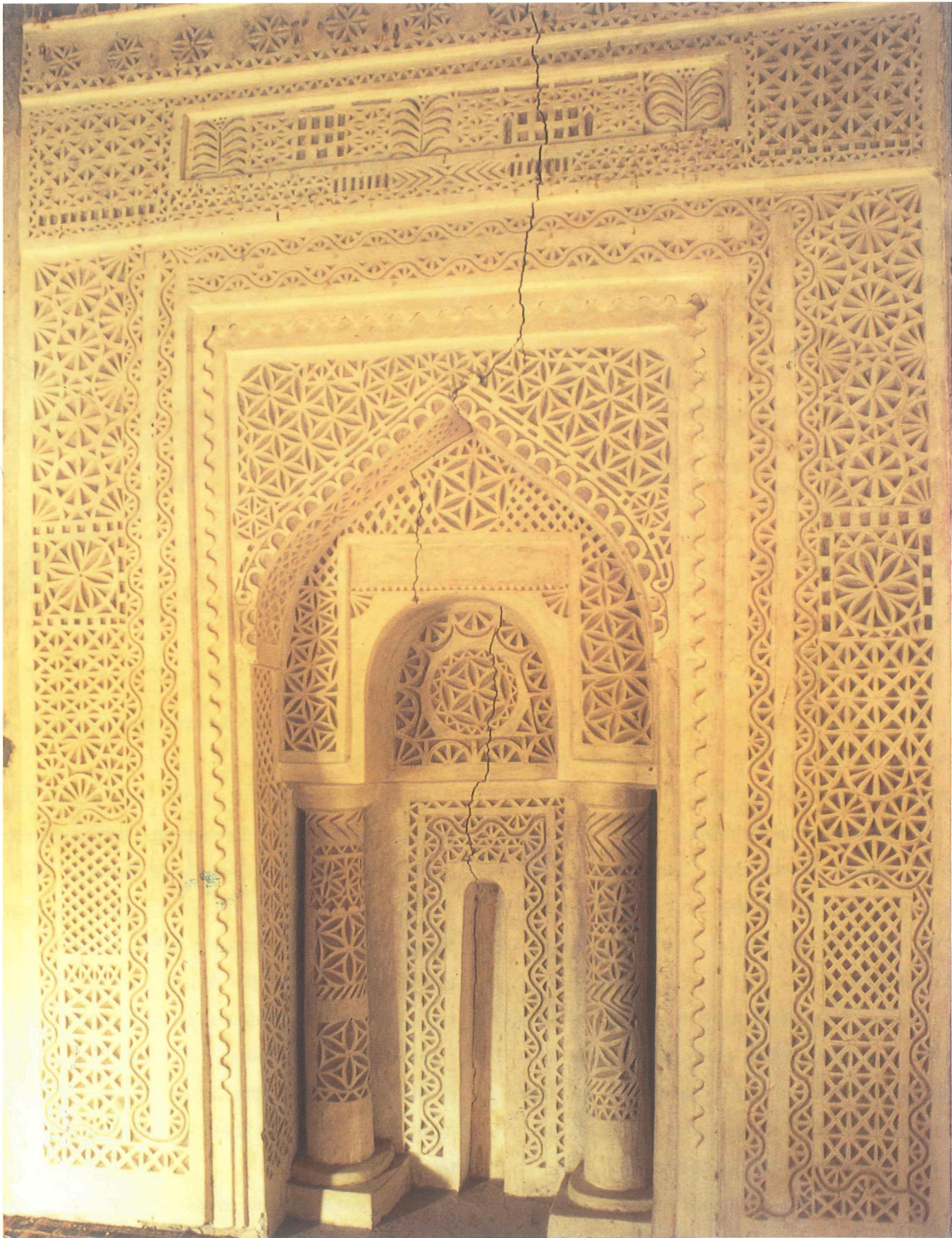
Market bargaining

This is one of the Wilayats located in the south of the Batinah, in the Western Hajr mountains at the foot of Jabal Al Akhdar. To the north are the Wilayats of Ma'awal and Barka, to the south the Wilayat of Nizwa, part of the Dakhaliya region, to the east the Wilayat of Seeb, part of the Governorate of Muscat, and Sumail, part of the Dakhaliya, and bordering it in the west the Wilayat of 'Awabi. There are 13,080 inhabitants living in 37 villages.

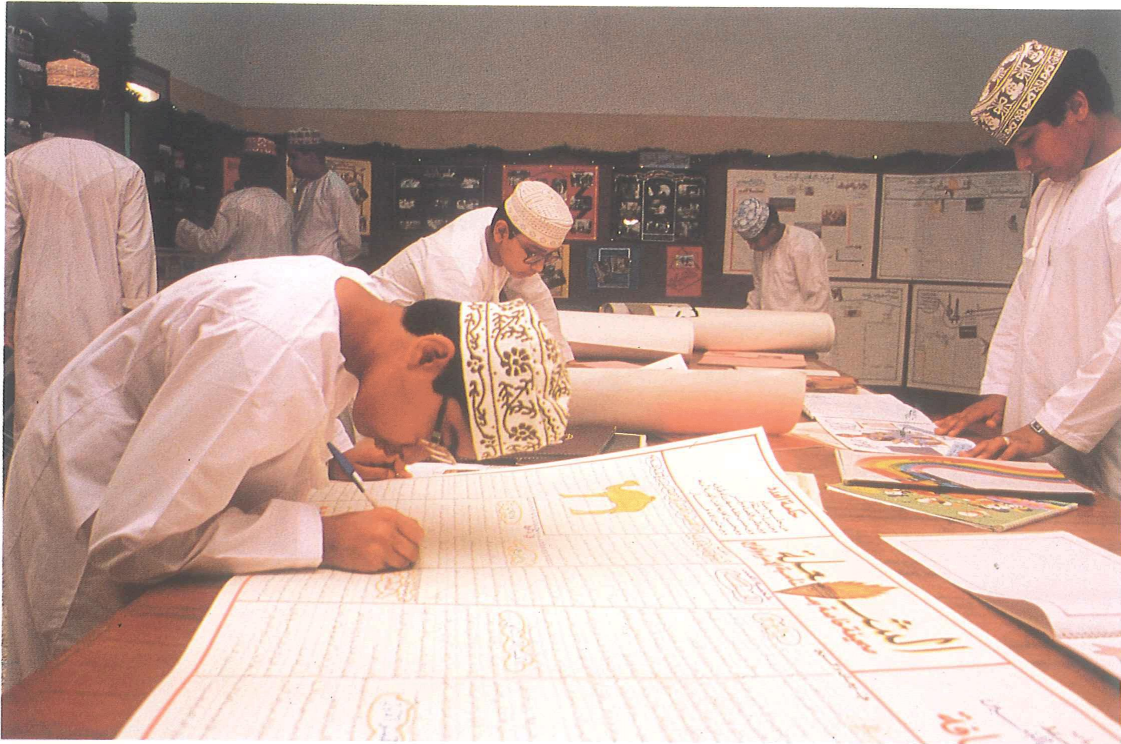
Nakhl Fort is the most outstanding archaeological feature of the Wilayat. It is located on a craggy hill about 200 feet high. It is strongly built, with a number of towers. The east, west and middle towers are the most famous, there are two wells inside. The Fort was restored and some fortifications were added by the Imam Al Salat Bin



View from Nakhl fort



Islamic architecture in Nakhl



Enthusiastic students

Malik Al Kharusi in 170 AH. It was later added to by the Banu Nabhan, with some retouching and renovation in 200AH. In 1000 AH the Ya'rubia state renovated the building and made some additions to it. In 1250AH Sultan Sa'id Bin Sultan built the wall with the door in the middle, and in 1990 (1411) His Majesty Sultan Qaboos restored it completely.

Besides Nakhl Fort there is the fort of Janah which is located in the 'Alaiya area, close to the mosque of the same name:- Janah Mosque. There are also a number of other forts in the villages of Abyad, Tu, Halian and Wadi Mistal.

There are also numerous castles, including Muswar in Gharabi of 'Alaiya Nakhl, and Qarin in the the area of Sa'ba Al Kubra. There are also a

number of towers in the Wilayat, the most famous are 'Aqum and Tabatub.

It is estimated that there are about 350 mosques, four of outstanding archaeological importance. They are Gharidh, Al Mukabar, 'Alaa, and Sarir. 'Ain Thuara, which springs from Jabal Salad, with its warm running water is one of the tourist attractions of the Wilayat. It runs for 300 metres before it divides into two parts, one of them Falaj Kabah and the other Falaj Saruj. The Wilayat of Nakhl depends on this spring - Thuara - and its tributaries for irrigating about 90% of its agricultural land.

There are numerous tourist attractions in Wadi Mistal, the most famous are Qura, Hadash, Hajar-Al Khadra, Aqba and Khadad. In all these places there



is flourishing agriculture, producing pomegranates, plums, grapes, apricots, almonds and quince.

Wadi Al Abyad is a beautiful place with gardens on both banks of the Wadi.

The Wilayat of Nakhl has a number of occupations, industries and traditional songs. Agriculture is the basic occupation, producing dates, lemons, and other fruit, besides seasonal crops. The industries are working silver, weaving palm leaves, making Omani sweets and Omani bricks, "Saruj". The traditional songs are the 'Azi, and Razha which are performed at festivals and weddings.

Nakhl, as other Wilayats, has enjoyed the benefits of the past 25 years. There are now five schools for the various stages of education, a health clinic, a medical centre, Nakhl Municipality, a post office, a roads centre, electricity and telephone services, a factory for "Saruj" the production of which is used in restoring castles and forts in various parts of the country, the Sharia' law court and the Wali's Office.



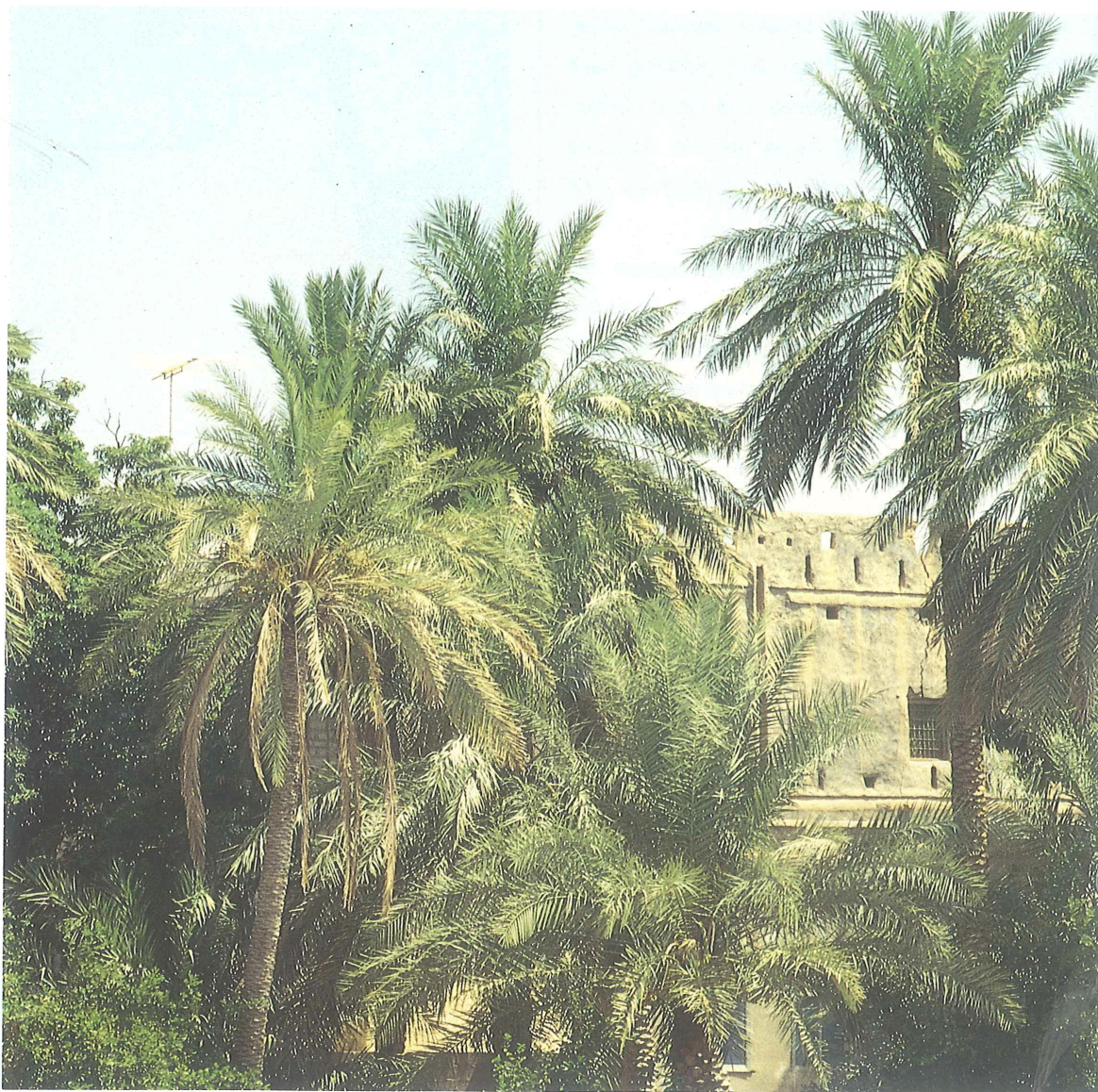
A doctor examining a young boy



Future nurses



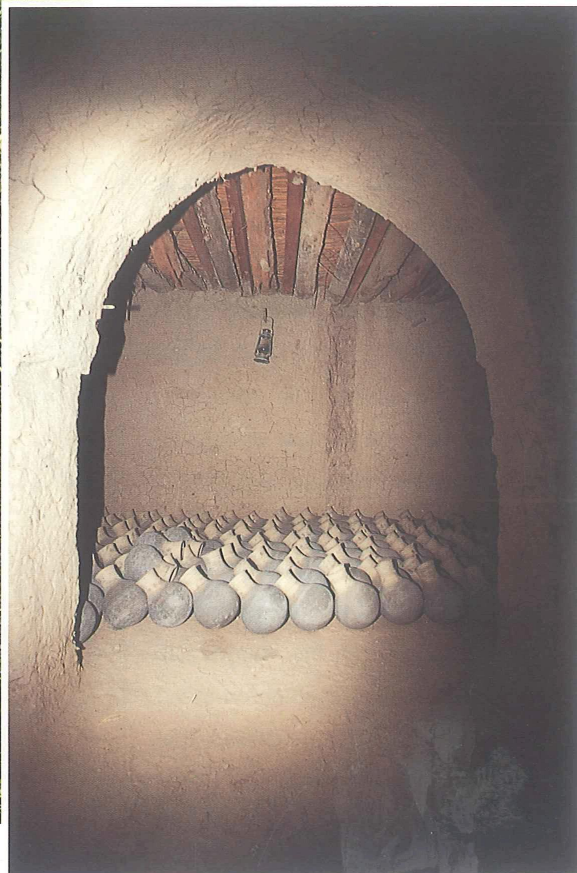
Wilayat Wadi Al Ma'awal



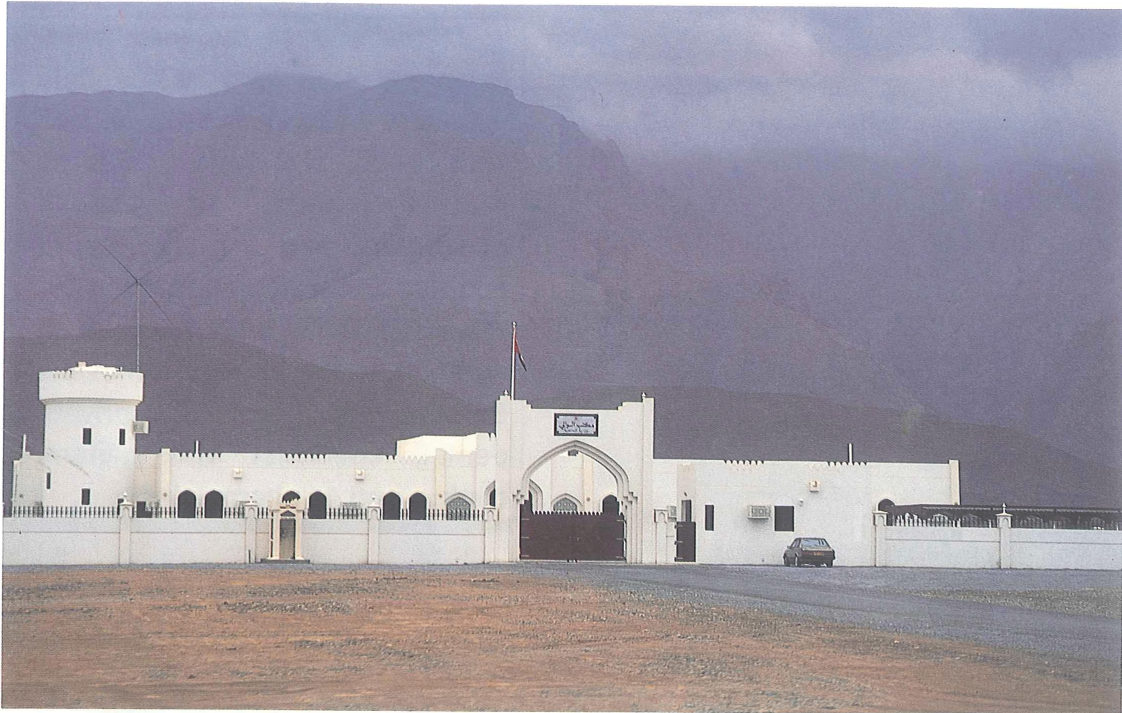
A view from Wilayat Wadi Al Ma'awal



At the end of the year 1994, however, there were 10 hospitals with 598 beds, 3 health centres with beds, 11 health centres without beds, 4 health complexes, and a huge referral hospital under construction in the Wilayat of Sohar with 400 beds. In addition, in the 12 Wilayats of the Batinah, there are 142 private dental, specialist and general clinics, and 47 pharmacies.



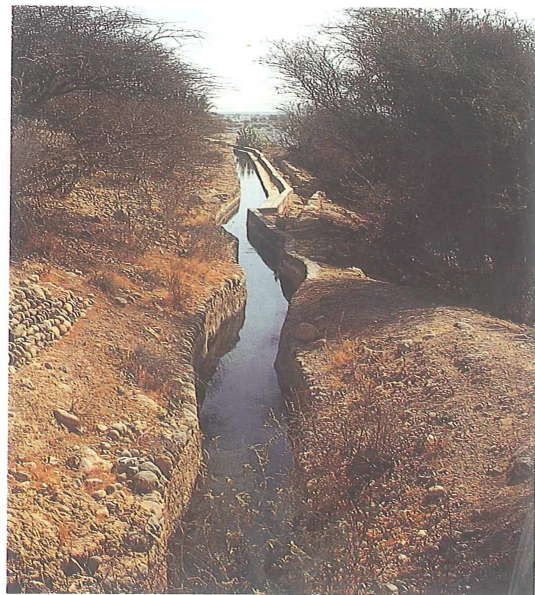
Local pottery



The Wali's office

Located between the Gulf of Oman and Jabal Al Akhdar it is one of the Wilayats of the Western Hajr in the south of the Batinah, about 30 kilometres to the south of the Gulf of Oman and bordered in the north by the Wialaya of Barka, in the south by the Wilayat of 'Awabi, in the east by the Wilayat of Nakhl and in the west by the Wilayat of Rustaq. There are about 10,423 inhabitants living in 7 villages.

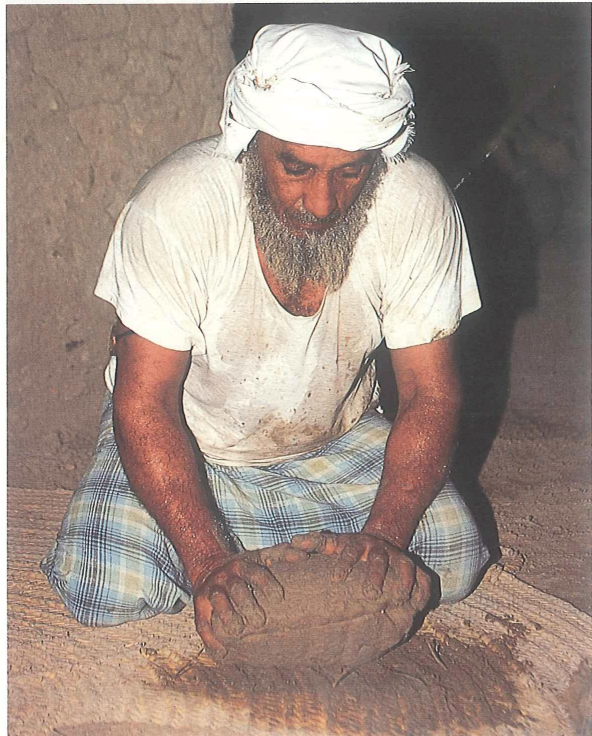
The Wilayat has a number of castles, forts and towers. The most important fort is Safala, which is located in the town of Afi, which the Wilayat has adopted as its emblem. There is another fort in the town of Maslamat, and there are three castles, Bait Matma', 'Alaiya, and Habra. There are seven towers, Hajra, 'Auwaina, Shamas, Zahir, 'Aiun and Lajal.



A falaj



A fort



Busy at work

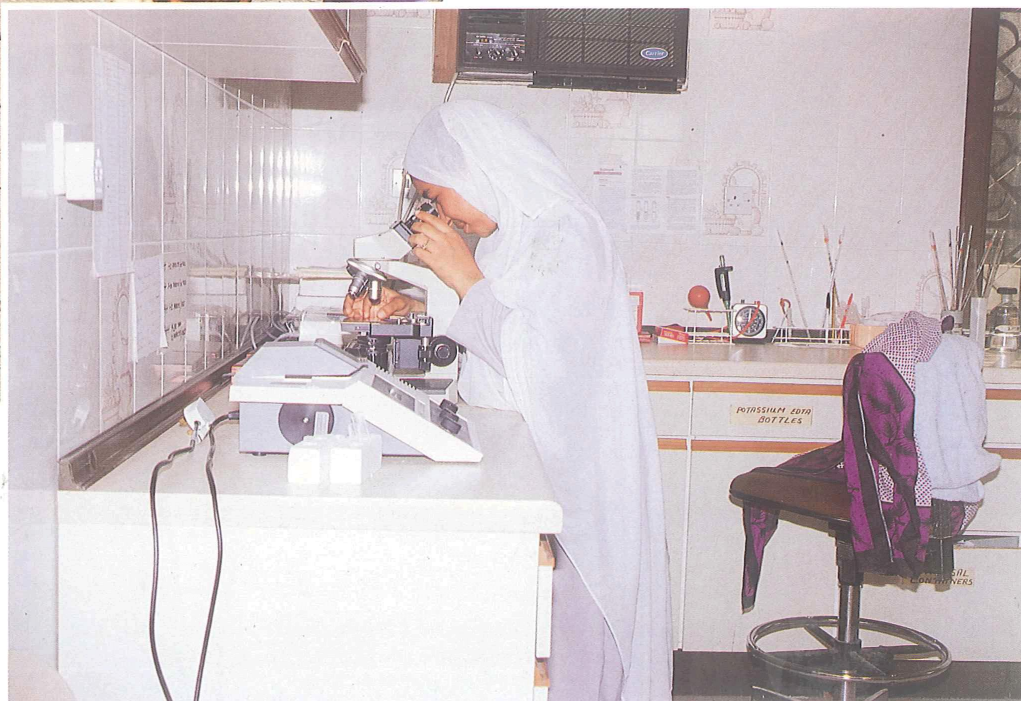


Merry pupils going to school

There are 22 falaj distributed throughout the Wilayat, Al-Hadith, Washi, Abu Hilfa, and Zawradi, in addition to 'Ain Al Shali in the town of Afi.

Making pottery is one of the traditional industries of the people of Wadi Ma'awal, together with weaving handicrafts from palm leaves, the most outstanding articles being fans.

The Razha and Hambal are among the folkloric or popular songs of the Wilayat. There are now five schools for the various stages of education, a health centre, and a number of government offices, such as the Wali's Office, the Sharia' law court, the Awqaf office and the municipality.



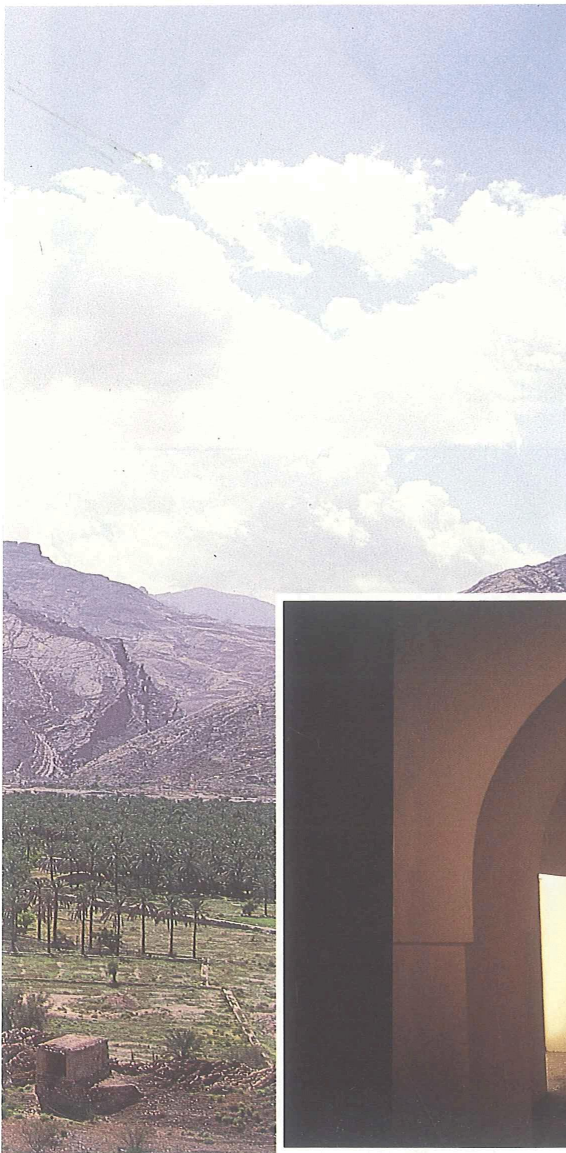
A student in a laboratory



Wilayat Al 'Awabi



A view from Al 'Awabi



At the end of 1994, the electricity output of the Batinah was 938,700,000 kilowatts per hour and consumption 931,600,000 kilowatts per hour. There were 56,981 electrical connections.

None of the foregoing services were provided before 1970.



Islamic architecture



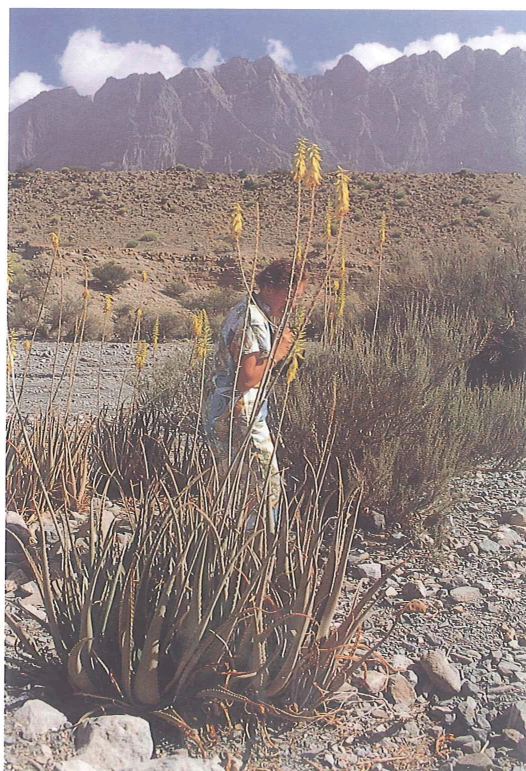
Honey collection

In the north and west it is bordered by the Wilayat of Rustaq, in the east by the Wilayat of Nakhl, and in the south by the locality (Niyaba) of Jabal Al Akhdar, part of the Wilayat of Nizwa in the Dakhaliya region. There are 8,626 inhabitants, living in 32 villages. It is a place of eminent learning, where many scholars, poets and men of literature were born.

There are a number of forts, towers and ancient houses in the Wilayat. There are the forts of 'Awabi, Rami, and Salut, and the towers of Sad and Najur, and the houses of Saruj, Misfa, and Walija.

Other tourist features include the 'Aliya region, which has captivating natural scenery, with lofty trees and towering mountains, the 'Aja region which has a number of huge rocks with passageways and caves with ancient writing and engraving on the walls, and the Sabikha region which has towering mountains and many trees.

The traditional occupations are working in gold



Hiking



Driving in a Wadi



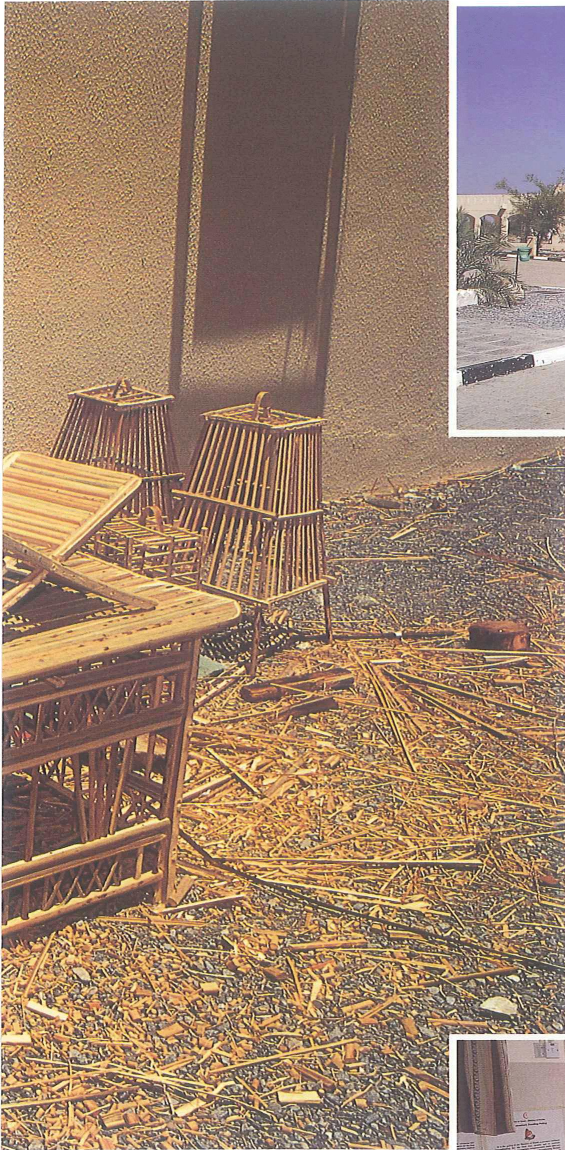
Handicrafts

and silver, textiles, spinning and weaving palm leaves. The Razhat, Ahazij and the 'Azi are the traditional songs found here. Agricultural produce includes various types of date palms, lemons, herbs, vegetables, animal fodder and wheat.

The Wilayat now has many modern features: there are seven schools for the three stages of education, primary, preparatory and secondary, as

well as 'Awabi Health Centre and Wadi Bani Khurus Hospital.

There are also a number of government offices providing services in various fields: a post office, an office for developing local organizations, an office for social affairs, electricity, water, housing and transport offices, a police station, the municipality, a Sharia' law court and the Wali's office.



A girl's school



Medical service



Wilayat Al Masn'a



A view from Wilayat Al Masn'a



At the end of 1994 10,798 people were benefiting from social security in the Batinah, out of a total of 472,065 Omani inhabitants. Annually the state expends 5,720,200 Omani Riyals on social security.

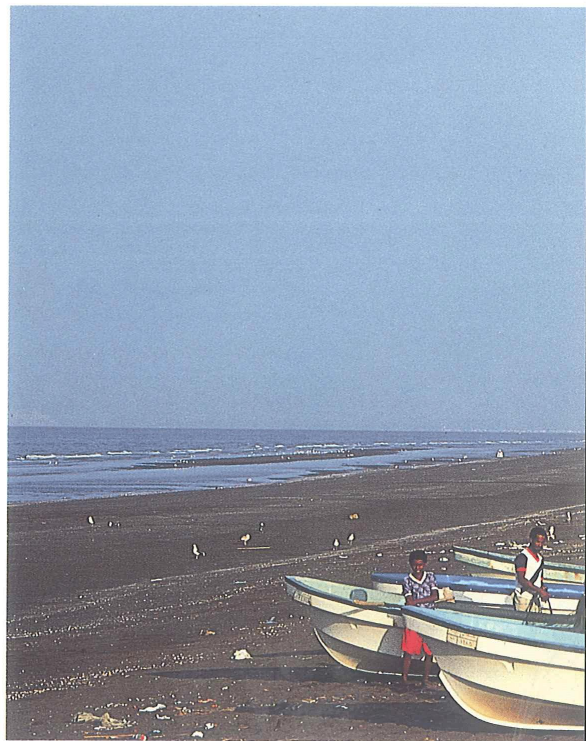


Al Tharmad Fort

The Wilayat of Masn'a is located on the rich fertile plane of the Batinah coast, with abundant fresh water and agriculture. It is bordered in the south by the Wilayat of Barka, in the north by the Wilayat of Suwaiq, and in the west by the Wilayat of Rustaq. It lies on the Gulf of Oman and has a population of over 47,560 inhabitants, living in 30 villages.

In the past it was a popular market, supplying neighbouring Wilayats and even those far away with various types of goods and commodities. The reason for its flourishing trade dates back to its having many industries, from this "Sana' " (industry) the Wilayat took its name "Masn'a".

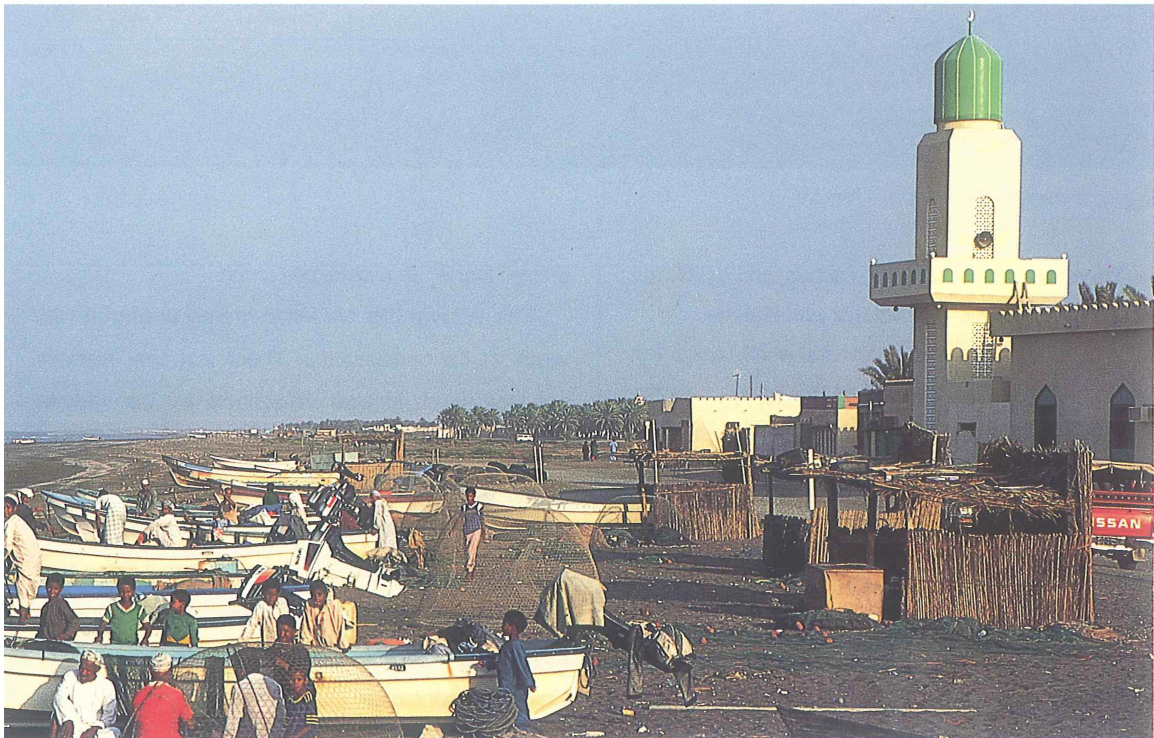
The most outstanding of its industries are, the dying of women's clothes with the blue indigo plant, making red sugar, ship and boat building, making swords, and textiles.



The beach in Al Masn'a



The technical college in Al Masn'a





Regional municipality services - Masn'a

There are about 15 forts, castles and walls, the most important forts are Walaiya and Malada.

It is one of the rare Wilayats which does not have springs, unlike the rest of the Wilayats of the Sultanate. There are only traces of an ancient falaj which was dug in the era of the Imam Sultan Bin Saif Al Yar'ubi.

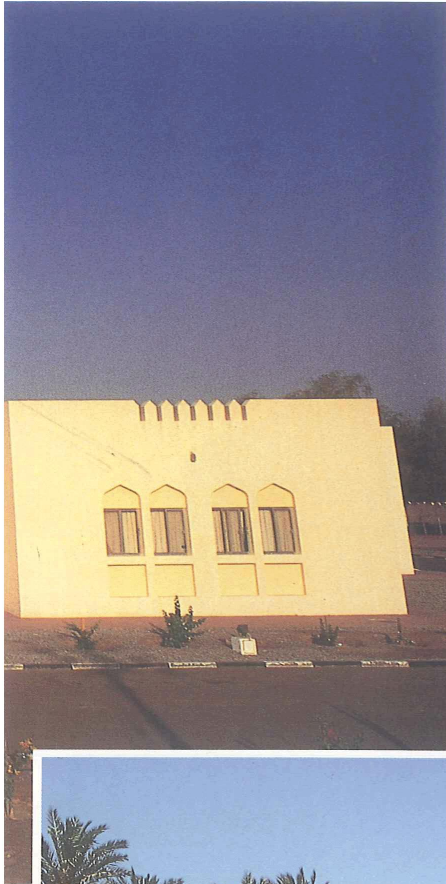
The traditional occupations are, making textiles and Omani sweets, ship and boat (Shash) building, weaving handicrafts, making doors, pasturage of cattle, and making embellishments for camels.

The traditional songs are the Razha, Taghrud, Lulam, Midan, Zamat and Huwalis.

Agricultural produce is, various types of dates,

animal fodder, and seasonal crops.

The Wilayat has benefited greatly during the 25 years of the renaissance. There are now modern services which include 21 schools for the various stages of education, an industrial technical college, a health centre, a malaria unit, as well as a number of government offices which provide these services to the citizens of the Wilayat. The most important are the municipality, a roads centre, a centre for developing agriculture, a post office, the Bank of Oman for Agriculture and Fisheries, an office of the Department of Housing, a police station, the Wali's office and a Sharia' law court.



Medical care



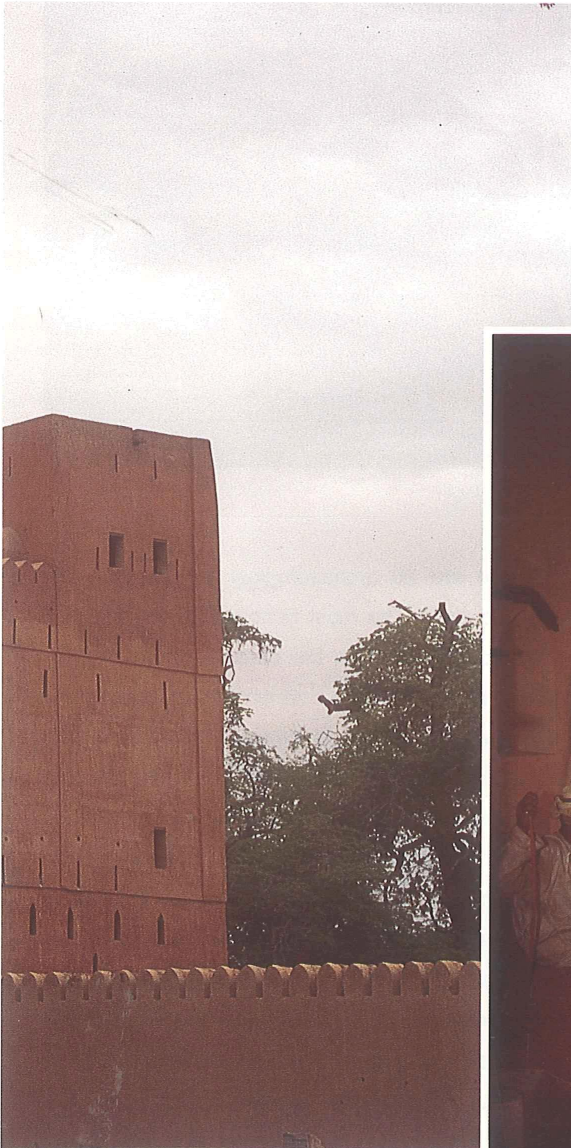
A general view in the area



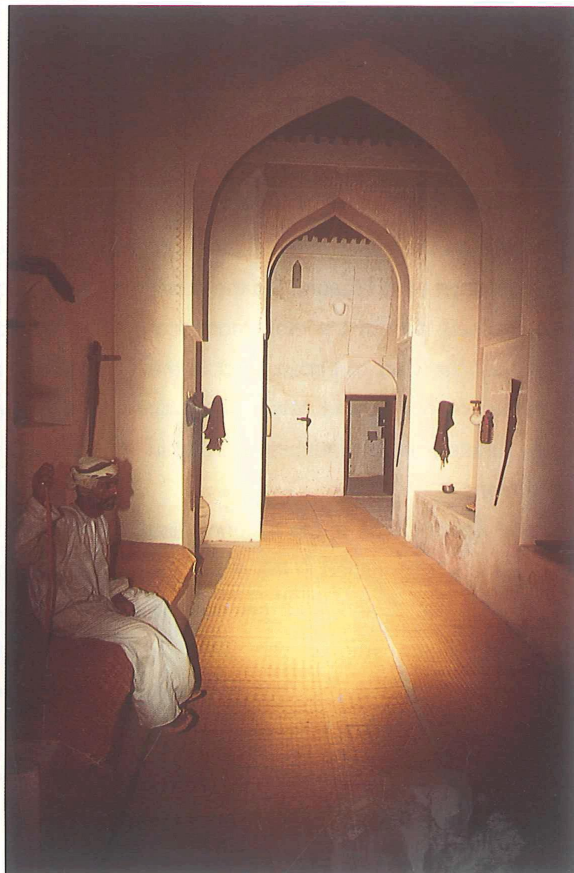
Wilayat Barka



Barka fort



**At the end of 1994, there were
32,818 public telephone lines.**





Modern parks

Barka is located on the coast of the Batinah, to the north is the Wilaya of Al Masana', to the south is the Wilayat of Seeb, part of the Governorate of Muscat, in the east the Gulf of Oman, and in the west the Wilayats of Nakhl and Wadi Ma'awal. There are approximately 64,526 inhabitants living in 63 villages and towns.

The Wilayat of Barka is one of the historic cities on the coast of Oman. It flourished in the era of the Yar'uba and the Bu Sa'id and was one of the strongholds of the Imam Ahmad Bin Sa'id. It witnessed great trade activity during these periods. It received the produce of various Wilayats, such as dates, dried lemons, and herbs, and exported it to India, Basra, the countries of east Africa and elsewhere. It also imported consumer goods from abroad and dispatched them to various Wilayats of the Sultanate.

There are 20 archaeological features, towers, forts and walls. The most famous fort was the seat of the ruler located on the coast neighbouring the market, and Al Na'man Fort which was built by the Imam Saif Bin Sultan Al Ya'rubi (Qid Al Ard) who planted around it 30,000 palm trees and coconut trees. There is also Bait Al Falij which was built by Al Sayid Sultan Bin Ahmad. In the Sawadi peninsula region there is an area distinguished by the beauty of its beaches and captivating views, much favoured by tourists. The Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Environment has built a number of attractive rest areas and planted trees which have added to the beauty of the area. In addition there are two islands, the islands of Dimaniyat and Jun where many sea birds and turtles live.

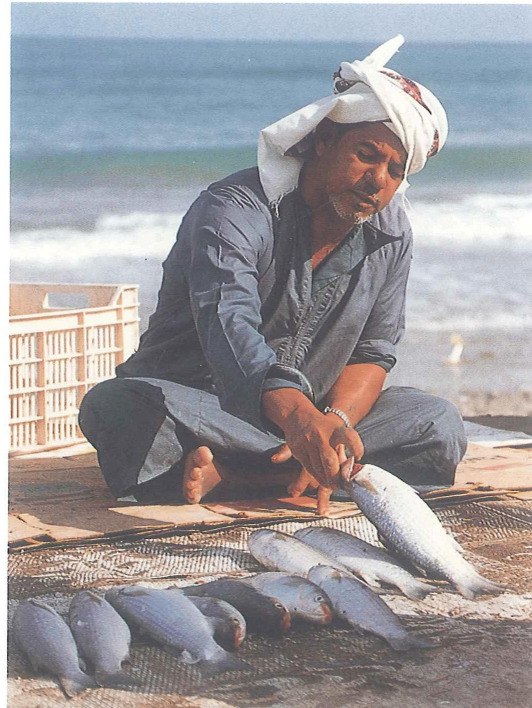
The famous Nasim Park is equipped with children's facilities as well as a health centre and a



mosque.

The Wilayat of Barka has various occupations, industries and traditional songs. Its occupations are fishing, which is practised by a large number of the inhabitants and is the main source of income, agriculture producing dates, lemons, vegetables and herbs, as well as animal husbandry and trade in goats, cattle, camels and horses. The industries are weaving palm leaves, work in gold and silver, sweet-making, textiles, rope-making, carpentry, blacksmithery, and leather-tanning.

The traditional songs are the Razha, Maqsaf, Qasafi, 'Azi, Zafat Al 'Arus, Al Mawlid, Al Liwa, Al



Fishing



A women at work

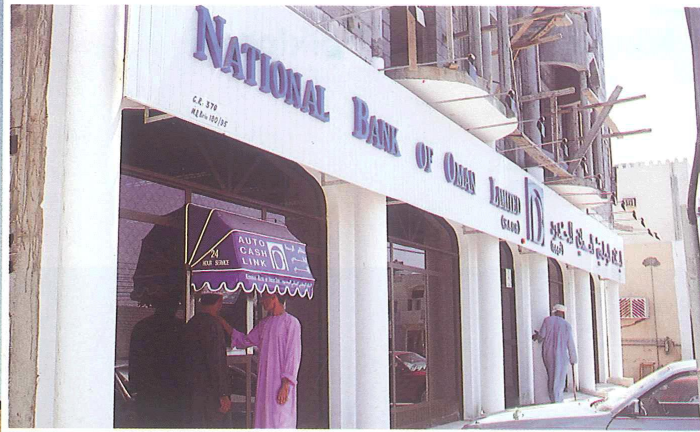


Agriculture research centre

Midan, Al Sharh, Suma', Suria, Zamat, and Dan. Camel and horse racing and bull fighting are also found here.

Under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos the area has benefited greatly. There are now 21 schools for the various stages of education, the Wilayat of Barka Health Complex, the Public

Health Centre, the Office of Social Affairs, a centre for transporting fruit, a veterinary department, an office of the Department for Agricultural Research, the Agricultural Department for the south of the Batinah, a police station, Barka Club, a Sharia' law court and the Wali's Office.



National bank of Oman



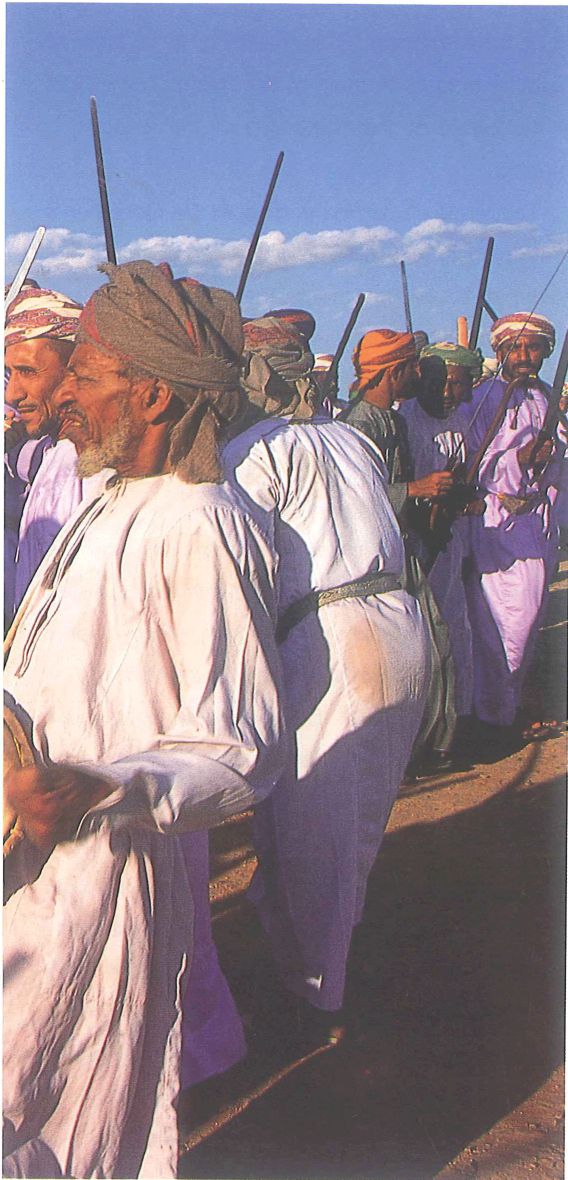
Telecommunications



Folk Arts **A Mirror Reflecting Folklore**



Folk dancing



Some of the songs which the citizens of the coastal area sing are about their struggle with the sea, sometimes bringing good and at others, disaster.



The traditional songs of the Batinah are a mirror reflecting all Omani folklore, besides being an embodiment of cultural heritage of all types, rooted in the depths of Omani soil.

The people also recall their links with the desert despite its harshness, the poets give praise to the 'ships of the desert' - the camel - and enumerate their praiseworthy attributes in the harmonious Taghrud.

The third type are those which indicate Omani generosity and courage in the Razha which is a blend of zeal for war but also conciliation and peace.

The fourth type describes required social behaviour: responsibility, courtesy, and community spirit.

Songs from outside the area are rarely performed.

The Razha

This type is characterized by the sword and the poetic exchange.

Long ago it was the way for the group to express the needs of the people and the Imams of the Wilayat. It was also a way to announce war, gather troops, or mediation between the warring parties for a settlement between them.

The Razha starts with the sound of the drums, calling on the men to gather, a poet from every tribe recites some verses or Qasidas, explaining the event for which they have assembled.

The men of the Razha also come 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, satire, riddles

and conundrums.

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 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.

The forms of the Razha differ in the movements of the participants, the type and speed of the rhythm governing these movements, the poetic metre which form the singing of its verses, and the subject which the poet extemporizes on. 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 Kasir and the Rahmani. Each of them is beaten with a raised stick from both sides. When the row has recited a verse poetically and melodiously, the drum of that row begins with its beat. The two drummers move between the two close parallel rows until the song ends. When the drums of this side fall silent, the drums of the other side 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.

There are five different names for the Razha, each one indicating one of its attributes. Either the poetry, or the movement, or its connection to a certain place.

The first is the Razha Mashuba which is love



poetry or eulogies.

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

The third is the Razha Al Hawaama one of the rows remains stationary while the other makes a complete circle about the square, parallel, for a short time, with the stationary row. They continue round until they stop opposite the stationary row, which in turn then makes a similar circling movement.

The fourth, the Razha Al Khaalidiya which is special to the Wilayat of Wadi Bani Khalid in the Sharqiya.

The fifth, the Razha Al Naahiya which changes the Hambal, or the march, to one display row, divided in the middle into two parts. Each of them stands at the side (Naahiya) of the square, opposite each other, or the other side. These days the Razha is performed at evening parties, for amusement, at celebrations for national festivals, at 'Eid Al Fitr and 'Eid Al Adha (after the Haj) at weddings and to welcome official guests or other important visitors.

The Razha is formed of the three following types:

Al Razha Al Kabira

Described as "Kabira" (big) because it is the Razha of the adults, the fighters with swords, and "Kibar" (important) poets who expostulate verses and Qasidas in riddles and conundrums. They also call it the Lal Al 'Aud. It is characterised by its solemnity, which is in keeping with the movements of the participants.

The poet of one of the approaching rows recites the text of the verse - poetically and harmoniously - after singing the word "Laal".

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 shield 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.

The aim of all the fighters is to hit the opponent on his left thumb, with which he holds his sword, so he drops his defence. 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.

Often, according to the basic rules, 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 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 considered a school where the youths study the origins of the art of Razha and practice it. The rhythm is simple, its poetry has a short metre, and it is mostly description, chaste love poetry or other youth subjects.

In the verses of the Qassaafiya the song begins by singing the word "Laal". It has no meaning but of its three letters, the middle one is a long vowel



which allows singing on the same level of the poetry which will be sung in the Qassafiyah. This is the reason it is sometimes known as the "Laal Al Qassafi", "Lal Al 'Oud" or the "Razha Al Kabira".

The Hambal

A song which sailors perform whilst on their way to the place where the Razha is to take place. It is also called Zaal Al Rijal indicating why it was created. Two drummers beat the Kaasir and the Rahmaani drums, together with a musician playing the "Barghaam" and uttering sharp cries to excite the people accompanying them and calling to them to join in. The two drummers at the beginning of the Hambal face the front. Then they turn to face the marchers, walking backwards. The participants in the Hambal are in rows, made up of a small number of individuals, these short rows are parallel. Between each row there is quite some distance, so that each person can carry his rifle or sword. This is placed 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 Hambal or march.

Al 'Azi

This is a song of glory and praise, where the poet recites without any chanting or singing. It is performed by an individual outstanding poet or story teller.

The poet of Al 'Azi comes out from his group, grasping his sword and his shield. 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 short cries in the traditional manner.

There is not always a march of poetic recitation in the 'Azi, in the Wilayat of Dama and Taiyiin; in the Sharqiya, it is performed in a long display row. The poet stands in the middle and recites his Qasida and the men around him reply with the traditional 'Azi replies.

There are three kinds of Al 'Azi poetry. The "Al Alifiya" where the poetry is formed with letters of the alphabet, each verse begins with the letter "Alif" (A), until the letter "Al Yay" (Z). The number of letters differs in the Al Alifiya according to whether the poet can use them all.

The second type is the "Al 'Adadiya". Here the first three verses 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 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 creativity.

The "Qasida Al 'Azi" begins, usually, with "In the name of God" and ends with a prayer and peace on the Prophet of God. There precedes the Al 'Azi (or follows it) what is called the "Al Ta'iyuta" or "Al Ta'eeyeta", especially in the Wilayat of Al Hamra and Bahla in the Dakhaliya, and Yanqal and 'Ibri in the Dhahira, and Rustaq in the Batinah.

The Ta'iyuta is a picture of glory, it begins with the word "Sud" and is followed by "Al M'aeet" (the shouter) proclaiming the name of the person who he wishes to praise. The participants in "Al Ta'iyuta" reply and with one resounding voice shout the word "Sud", "Al M'aeet" then repeats the names of those whom he intends to praise.

The "Al Ta'eeyuta" ends with "Al M'aeet" (the



Al'Azi folklore

shouter) saying "Al Muslimeen Takbir" and the participants reply altogether with "Allah Akbar".

Often the Al'Azi poetry, now, is to praise His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, and the merits of his era.

The songs of the Bedouin are formed of the three following types.

Al Wanna

This is a song of recollections which the Bedouin perform to amuse themselves and to keep themselves awake on long night journeys whilst on the back of their she camels. This was the origin of the song, now, however, it is performed sitting on the ground with the Bedouin in a circle around the solo singer. The solo singer performs it with one of his hands on his side and he closes his eyes during the song. Then another Bedouin participates with another rhyme taking over the song from him.

In the Wilayat of Sohar this type of song is called

Bait Al 'Arab, and in the Wilayat of Buraimi, in the Dhahira region, it is called Walad Al 'Arab.

Most of the poetry of Al Wanna is love poetry and recollections, and sometimes it is in praise of the camel. Occasionally it is called "Al Nawaha" (the professional mourner) because of its sorrowful character, particularly for the songs of recollection. This is so also in the Wilayat of Sohar.

Al Taariq

This is a Bedouin 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 song at the end of the verse.

The song in Al Taariq does not change from one singer to another, from one Wilayat to another or from one region to another.

Most of them are love poetry or recollections or in praise of the she-camel.



In the Wilayat of Liwa, in the Batinah, it is called Al Radha, and also in the Wilayat of Dank and Mahda in the Dhahira. It is also called Al Tawariq and Al Tawarij.

Al Taariq differs from Al Taghrud in that it is performed during the slow walk of the camel, whilst Al Taghrud is performed during the quick pace of the camel.

Al Taghrud

This song is sung on the back of camels or horses, either to encourage them or their riders.

The Taghrud Al Bush (of the camel) is called the "Razha Al Bedu" or "Razfa Al Bedu".

It is a group song which does not change from one place to another. It is characterized by a lengthening of the long vowels, making an audible picture of the movement of the mount.

The Taghrud Al Khail (of the horse) is a song permeated by shouts to encourage the horse. It is a song of praise with the words enumerating the horse's merits. Usually the "Taghrud Al Khail" is performed by riders preparing to race. The poetry of "Taghrud Al Khail" is characterized by bravery, courage, gallantry and helping the weak. It is a type of song which is becoming rarer. In the Wilayat of Al Khaboura it is called Al Tashulib.

Al Wahabia

This is a song of encouragement, in which the participants stand in two parallel rows facing each other. In an exchange of singing the poetic verse, the rows reply to each other one after the other, until the verses of the Qasida are completed.

The movement and rhythm are usually slow, and the instruments used differ from one area to another. In the Dhahira the rhythm is performed on five instruments, the flat Kasir drum, covered with leather on both sides, which is hit with a heavy stick on one side, the Rahmani drum, which is struck by

the hand on both sides, the Rannah drum, which is of a size between the Kasir and the Rahmani drum and is struck by the hand on the upper side, the tambourine or "Tar" or "Sama", which is covered on one side with goats skin and is struck with the palm of the hand, the Tasa or Sahal, which consists of two flat brass bowls, one of which is struck by the other to emit a metallic jingling sound. The Tawus replaces the Aiala in some areas of the Dhahira.

In the Batinah the instruments of the Al Wahabia are those of the Razha, the usual Kasir and Rahmani drum and also the Tar, Sama and Tawus are used in the Wahabia in some Wilayats of the Batinah such as Khabura and Shinas.

In the Wahabia there are two kinds of movement, that of the participants in the row and of those between the two rows. The participants hold their neighbour by the wrist, so the row becomes connected. They hold a bamboo stick in their other hands which they move to the rhythm. They dance to the music.

Those who are between the two rows are made up of a group carrying rifles, swords, khanjars and sticks. Those carrying sticks throw them high in the air then skillfully catch them again. Those carrying rifles pass them from hand to hand in a complete circle in the air, and those carrying sticks carry out the same movement.

They dance to the beat of the rhythm, together with the drummers and the tambourine and tawus players.

Songs of Work

The songs of the fishermen

These songs are still found along the Batinah coast, as in other coastal areas of the Sultanate, from Musandam, in the north, to Dalalkut, in the south. They differ only in the poetry and the accent. The type of singing is linked to the task the fishermen carry out. One song is performed whilst



Al Wahabia folklore

raising the nets, another whilst throwing them into the water, a third type whilst pulling them out of the water, full of fish, a fourth whilst taking the fish out of the net, and lastly whilst unloading the fishing nets from the boats. There is also a special song which is performed whilst repairing the nets. These different songs have parts which are common to all, full of praise for God who has brought them bounty, and thanking Him for their livelihood.

For the most part the songs are performed by a solo singer and the rest of the fishermen reply to him in a rhythm dictated by the type of work they are doing. The singing is permeated with short strong blasts on the Bargham.

Tasiif and Duasa

This is a type of song which is almost extinct, however there are some who still know it in the north of the Batinah and especially in Falaj Al Qalnal

in the Wilayat of Sohar. The Tasiif accompanies the harvesting of the wheat, grain and barley. Someone with a beautiful voice leads the song and after him, all those gathered to cooperate in this seasonal work, reply. The poetry of Tasiif is characterized by the speed of the rhythm, full of thanks to God for his grace and for what He has bestowed on His servants.

This type of song, from the Batinah, is sung when the stems of wheat and barley are put on the ground. The men stand in front of it in a row, all carrying a thick stick or the branches of the palm, then they hit the ears of wheat in a strong unified circular movement capturing the rhythm. They reply to the singing of the solo performer and continue the recitation and the replies and the beating until the grain is separated from the ears and can be collected.



Folk Songs

The Qarnaqshuh

This is a song which is specially for the children celebrating on the night half way through Ramadan. They go around the streets of their area, moving from house to house, stopping in front of them, singing and asking for sweets. They beat a simple rhythm to the expression "Qarnaqshuh, qarnaqshuh give us some sweets."

In the Batinah region, the children make the rhythm to this song by knocking together two shells from the sea shore., and it gets its name "Qarnaqshuh" from the sound of the friction of the outside surface of these shells. However, in the Wilayat of the Dakhaliya the children perform the same song but to the rhythm of two pieces of stone, which make the sound "tuq tuq", hence its name there.

The song changes according to the reply of the people in the house. If the people of the house give the children sweets, they praise them but if they do not they satirize them.

Al Taimina

This is performed at celebrations when a child completes the learning of the Quran by heart. The children gather together in the school (boys and girls) in a procession headed by the teacher of the Quran who reads a Qasida of a religious nature. At the end of each verse the children reply in a strong unified voice with the word "Amin".

A woman in the service of the father of the boy honoured participates in the procession. She walks in the middle of the children carrying a basket covered with a green scarf. Inside the basket is a gift from the father of the boy to the Quran teacher (often an article of clothing).

There are numerous names and pronunciations for this song in the Wilayats of Oman. In the Wilayat of Quriyat, part of the Governorate of Musandam, it

is called Al Khitma (the recital of the entire Quran), whilst in the Wilayat of Masn'a, part of the Batinah, it is called Al Wahiba ("hiba" meaning "gift") indicating what the family of the boy gives to the teacher.

Tahlula

This is performed on the first nine days of the month of Dhu Al Hijja near the festival of the blessed Haj. There is a reciter who reads in a loud voice verses of Islamic poetry, one each day. The youths of the Quran school, and others, walk behind him shouting at the end of each verse the invocation "Allah Akbar" and "Allah Al Hamd" or "Subhan Allah la Allah illa Allah". The Tahlula is still known in the Wilayats of the Dakhaliya.

Al Tashah Shah

This is performed by women on happy occasions, such as engagements, weddings, births etc. 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 them and the audience.

The singing is done by individuals, for the most part, by the leader of the group. Young men perform in some groups. The singing is, essentially, in praise of the people giving the party. The singing is accompanied by clapping by a group of women and by drums. Either the leading singer or the men beat the "Kaasir" and the "Rahmaani" drums, whilst a young boy or girl beats a small tambourine and the "Tawus". It is performed in two groups, the names explain their nature - the "Waaqaf" (the standing) and the "Jaalis" (the sitting).

The "Tashah shah Al Jaalis" has no movement in it. The women sit in two facing rows and 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).

The "Tashash Shah Al Waaqif" is where the women line up in two close parallel rows. Between them stands the lead singer, together with those who help her in the individual singing, the drummers and the players of the other musical instruments. One of the two rows moves towards the other row, at the sound of the singing and the rhythm. Then it returns to its place, whilst the other row carries out the same dance movement. The movement of the two rows continues until the end of the song.

The originators of this type of song were the Bedouin, when they sang songs of remembrance characterized by sorrow. However, when the Bedouin became more settled its aims changed. Its poetry and rhythm became faster, more suitable for amusement, evening parties and love poetry.

Men can participate in this kind of song, sometimes the soloist can be a man instead of the usual woman, or men clap whilst the women sing.

Al Zafa

This is a magnificent procession, a march celebrating joyous occasions. There are four types.

The first, Zafa Sabaha Al Ma'aras, has almost died out as these days the groom does not consider it necessary to bathe in the falaj, however, it is still one of the songs of popular heritage.

The family of the groom organized the Zafa Sabaha in the past when they prepared the new wedding clothes. A woman carried them in a new basket covered with a new green shawl. She walked with the groom in the procession with his friends and a group of professional wedding singers. They all went to the well or falaj where the groom washed whilst the women sang and the men beat drums. On the return the groom is greeted with another type of Zafa.

Zafat Al Thur

This is performed on the day before the Zafa Al Ma'aras or 'Arus. The procession is headed by the bull which will be eaten by the guests of the bride and groom and their families the following day. The bull and the friends of the groom walk in the procession to the house of the groom or bride to the voices of the women and the beat of the drums and the Zamr (a wind instrument resembling an oboe). The Wilayat of Barka specializes in this type of Zafa.

Zafat Al Ma'ras or Zafat Al 'Arus

This is a procession of the family and friends and the groom, whose face is covered with a cloth - usually of auspicious green. (Sometimes the groom is totally covered) All the participants in the procession sing, led by a professional group to which they reply with a special type of song which is called Al Mabruka. It contains expressions of best wishes and happiness for the bridal couple and many mention the holy places.

Zafat Al Makhtun

This is performed at circumcisions. Its songs are congratulations for the occasion and praise for the family of the boy and his tribe. It is accompanied by the Kasir and Rahmani drums and the singing of men and women. The most important thing which characterizes it is the Raiya, the garment worn by the mother of the boy, or one of his female relatives. It is weighed down with silver and gold jewelry and has a small mirror on the front and back. This beautifully decorated dress is placed on a wooden carrier and the woman raises it up high in a dance movement in time with the beat of the drum and the melody of the song.

The procession winds through the streets of the area, one of the male relatives carrying the circumcised boy in his hands or on his shoulder. His head and forehead are covered with the splendid



dress, a symbol of the compassion of the mother. The procession stops before the door of every relative and neighbour who participate in the celebration by giving money - each one according to his means.

Al Mawlid

This is a song of celebration on the birthday of the Prophet, and at weddings, at the curing of the sick, on moving to a new house or on other happy occasions. It is mostly performed, however, on a Friday night.

The "Qara" (reciter) of the Mawlid is a scholar based on the stories of the noble Prophet and a memorizer of eulogies. The participants are called "Al Huwima".

The celebration of Mawlid is carried out with the aid of a famous book, kept by the people who perform this type of song. It is called "Mawlid Sharaf Al Anam" but is commonly known as "Al Barzanji". There are three editions, one is Syrian and is full of "tawasih" - a post - classical form of Arab poetry arranged in stanzas -, the second is Pakistani and is very pure in its language, and the third is Indian, which is the most common and widespread.

Al Razfa Al Badawia

This is a traditional song which the people of the deserts of Oman perform on various occasions such as weddings, circumcisions, at 'Eid Al Adha, 'Eid Al Fitr etc. It is performed only by men. It is the same type of song as the Razha.

The men gather to perform it in two parallel rows, standing opposite each other. A poet starts by instructing one of the rows in the verse; then they take it up, repeating it poetically and harmoniously. The other row then repeats it and thus the singing goes from row to row. This continues until the verse is finished, then there is a pause before another

verse begins.

The movement is of two types: the movement of the participants in the two rows and that of the people between the two rows. The participants hold a bamboo stick, a rifle or a sword while they perform the dance.

The people between the two rows move around in the square between the two rows, each one carrying his sword, rifle or khanjar. They exhibit their bravery and skill with weapons in fixed steps. Some throw their sword or rifle high in the air, catching it again before it falls to the ground. Some raise their rifles on high, turning them between their hands, making a complete circle in the air. They also carry out other displays with their weapons.

The Razfa Al Badawia, like other Bedouin songs, is performed without the accompaniment of musical instruments. The singing, however, has a tuneful rhythm and the movement of the participants is slow and solemn.

The poetry in the Razfa Al Badawia deals with a number of topics, most of them are about love, wisdom, praise and recollection. The poetic metre is short. Its poets are specialists in this type of poetry. This is an example of the Razfa Al Badawia: "Bringing understanding and bringing death God is the knower of the right way, For bringing all the understanding understand to give the answer" Al Kawasa - Wayliya Al Rijal

This is a song of entertainment for the men in the northern region of the Batinah. It is called Al Kawasa in Sohar and Saham, whilst it is called Al Wayliya in Liwa and Shinas, and Dan Dan Al Rijal in Barka.

This type of song is like the Razha. Two lines form opposite each other and 2 or 3 drummers and those performing the solo dances move between them. An individual goes out from one of the two rows to take his turn at the dance, then he returns to his place and another one goes out from the



opposite row. The rhythm in this type of song is fast. The singing is for entertainment, light poetry with three verses on one rhythm, followed by three on another rhythm, with the seventh verse on the same rhythm as the first.

Songs of the Sea Al Shawbaani

One of the traditional songs of the Batinah, which is also a sailors song. They perform it for both work and amusement, when the ship arrives in a port. The drum is beaten in a fast, brisk rhythm and the sailors move to it with a light swaying movement, whilst some of them work to unload the goods from the deck of the ship or rig the ships masts. The song is sung solely by the captain, and the group of sailors reply to him, together with the people welcoming them, who carry flowering branches in their hands. They join the sailors in the

procession before going away in a singing, dancing march. The Al Shawbaani is performed by a group in a singing march beating traditional drums - the "Kaasir" and the "Rahmani" and the "Masandu". The participants are in short parallel rows and a kind of "Naghar" is blown. They carry flowering branches and flags whilst singing songs of welcome or congratulation on religious or national occasions.

Al Qil Qul

This is a song for entertainment and celebration on happy occasions. It is performed by professional groups, which are made up of women from one family.

The solo singer is a young boy, he is accompanied by the Kasir and Rahmani drums and the women clap. Two women go out of the row to perform the dance movement, one opposite the other, then they return to their place and two others



Zafat Al'Arus (the procession of the bride)



go out, and so on. This type of song is common in the Wilayat of Barka in the Batinah.

Al Konzak

This is a Baluchi song. It is divided into two parts, one sitting and one standing. In the sitting part the female singers are organized in a circle. They sing and clap whilst two women carry out the dance movements in the middle of the square, then they change places with two other women. The drummers and the Zamr players kneel at the front.

In the standing part, the singers, drummers and the Zamr players all stand. The drummers move in a graceful way complementing the dance of the women. The spectators throw money at the Zamr players and the drummers.

Al Baqat

This is a song of the Al Ajam tribe in the Wilayats of Sohar and Saham. It is divided into two parts. In the first the men assemble. They sit in a circle with the leader of the singing, the Kasir and Rahmani drummers and those beating the small tambourine with bells and a metallic tray, beaten with two fine sticks in front.

In the middle of the circle, sitting on the ground, is a person covered in a black cloth. He holds two wooden glove puppets. Usually one of these dolls is a man and the other a woman. The person conducts a conversation between them, sometimes about love and sometimes a fight. The song is a mixture of Arabic and distorted Persian, which is the result of it being passed by word of mouth over the generations. The participants reply to the singing and clap.

In the second type, Baqit Tamthil, a number of

men dress as wild animals and birds, such as the tiger "Balank" and the raven "Abu Manqar", and also in the form of trees or human characters, such as hunchbacked men or as women.

They form in a circle, with the lead singer and the drummers at the front. Then the actors come together, each forming a group of animals, trees or human characters in accordance with the requirements of the amusing story. The actors move to the rhythm of the singing. This continues until the end of the story, when good vanquishes evil and the human mind triumphs over that of the wild beast.

Al Liwa

This was first performed on the shore of the east African coast, which is a cultural extension of Oman, it was then carried back to the mother country. The word "liwa" in Swahili means "drinking" and it was used by the indigenous people of eastern Africa to invite each other to partake of their fermented African drinks, before this ancient dance was invented.

The pronunciation of this invitation to drink in Swahili was "ki liwa" but with the passing of time, the first word has been dropped.

The singing is accompanied by the Mizmar - a reed pipe of the naghar type-, the standing Masandu drum, the Kasir and Rahmani drums and the Tanak (similar to a drum). The song is a mix of Swahili and Arabic and most of the poetry is about the coast and the sea.

The movement in the Liwa is of two parts, one is a circular movement of all its participants and the other is the movement of a solo performer.

At the beginning the circle moves in an anti-clockwise direction around the group of



drummers sitting in the centre under the flag (the flag of the Sultanate).

The Zamar players move inside the circle between the players and the drummers and beaters of the Tank. They play a complete musical phrase and the participants reply. The Zamar and singing exchange continues, with the verses changing whenever the Zamar changes the musical phrase.

In the second type of movement, the solo one, there is a slight bending of the shoulders with a side movement of the arms. The performers hold a bamboo stick in their right hands and turn their bodies completely.

In the Wilayat of Suwaiq, in the Batinah region, women participate in the performance.

Laru - Raqs Al Balush

This song in the Baluchi dialect is composed of three rhythms. It is accompanied by the Rahmani and Kasir drums and a single Zamar of the Naghar type or two of the Maqrun type.

During the performance the participants stand in a circle with the drummers and Zamar player in the middle. A solo singer leads the singing and the participants reply to him. The dance movement is made up of three parts. The first is the bending of the torso and the knees to reach the ground. The second is a side movement of the arms and torso, the performers holding sticks. The third is a group movement of all the participants to the right, during the two previous parts. During all this solo movements take place consisting of a graceful shaking of the shoulders with the arms stretched to the side, accompanied by ululating cries.

During the performance the lead singer skirmishes with the leader of the musical

instruments, shaking his stick from time to time to encourage the players, displaying a spirit of joy and jubilation.

At the beginning of the Raqs Al Balush the rhythm is solemn, it gradually increases speed until the end of the performance which is concluded by a long cry from the participants.

In the Wilayat of Shinas, in the Batinah, women participate with the men.

Al Sirwan

This is a "Aswia (Wafida) " song which is sung for amusement without any accompanying movement. It is a mix of Arabic and Persian. In this type of song the participants sit in a circle with the leading singer, Kasir and Rahmani drummers, the small tambourine player and the player of the Tank, at the front.

The participants reply to the singer and clap. Most of this type of singing is about love. The 'Ajam tribe in the Wilayat of Sohar specialize in the Sirwan, which differs from that found in other Wilayats such as Barka. In Sohar it is performed without the Zamar, whilst in Barka it is performed with it, in Sohar women do not participate, but in Barka they sing and clap.

In Barka the Baluchis specialize in the Sirwan.



Sohar





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