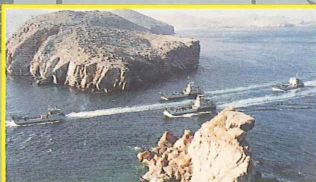
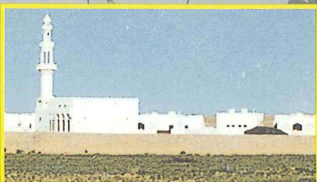
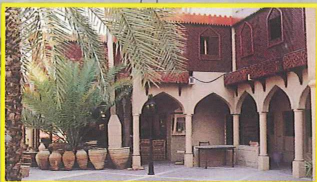
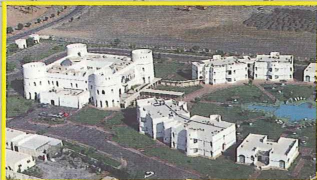
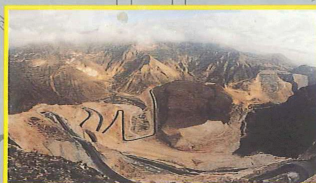
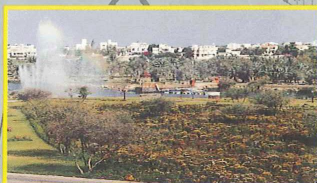
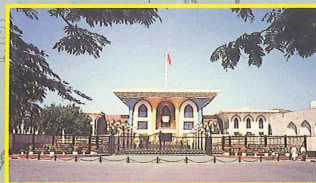


Sultanate
of Oman

Years of Endeavour and Achievement

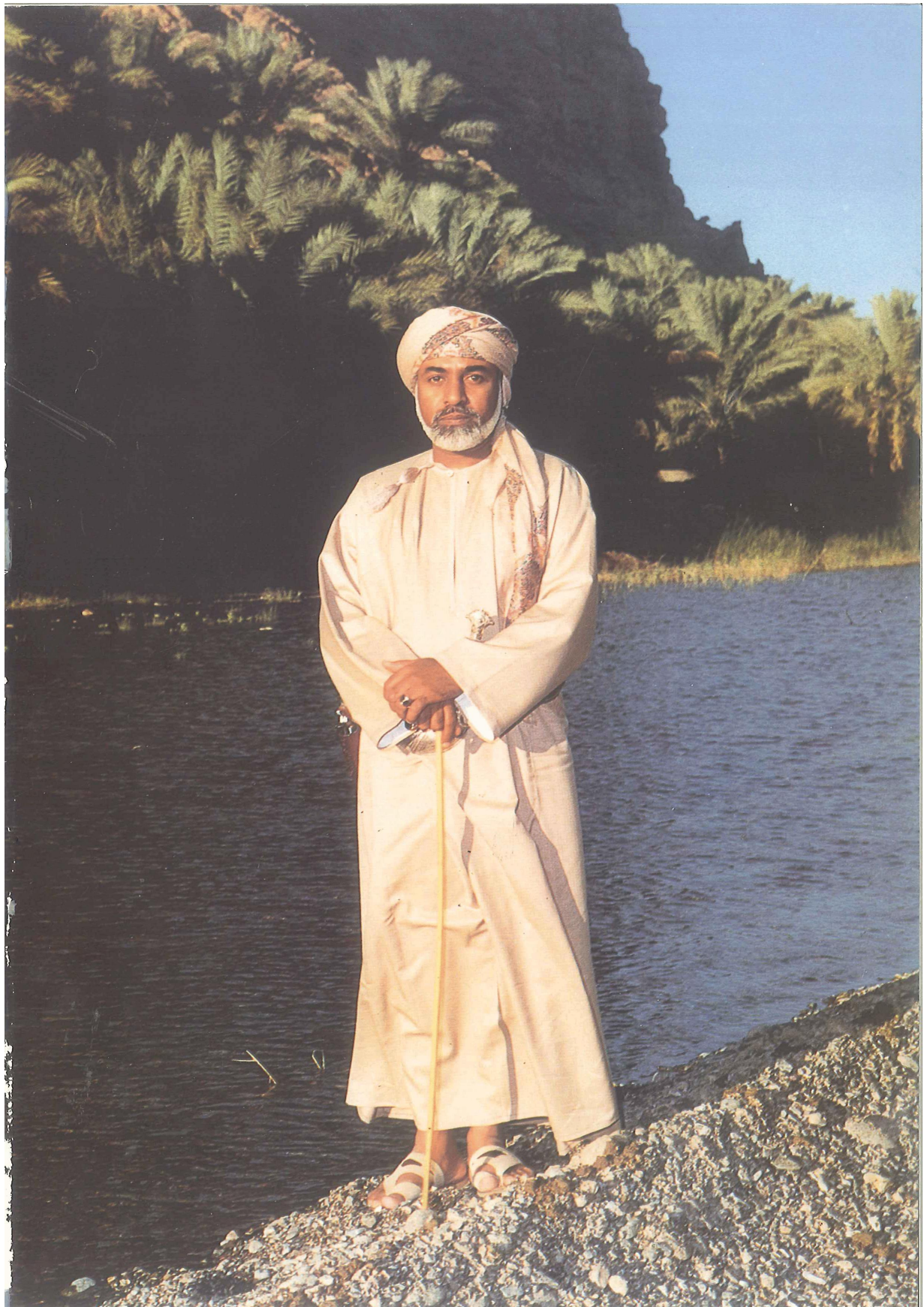


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Years of Endeavour and Achievement



A'Dhahira



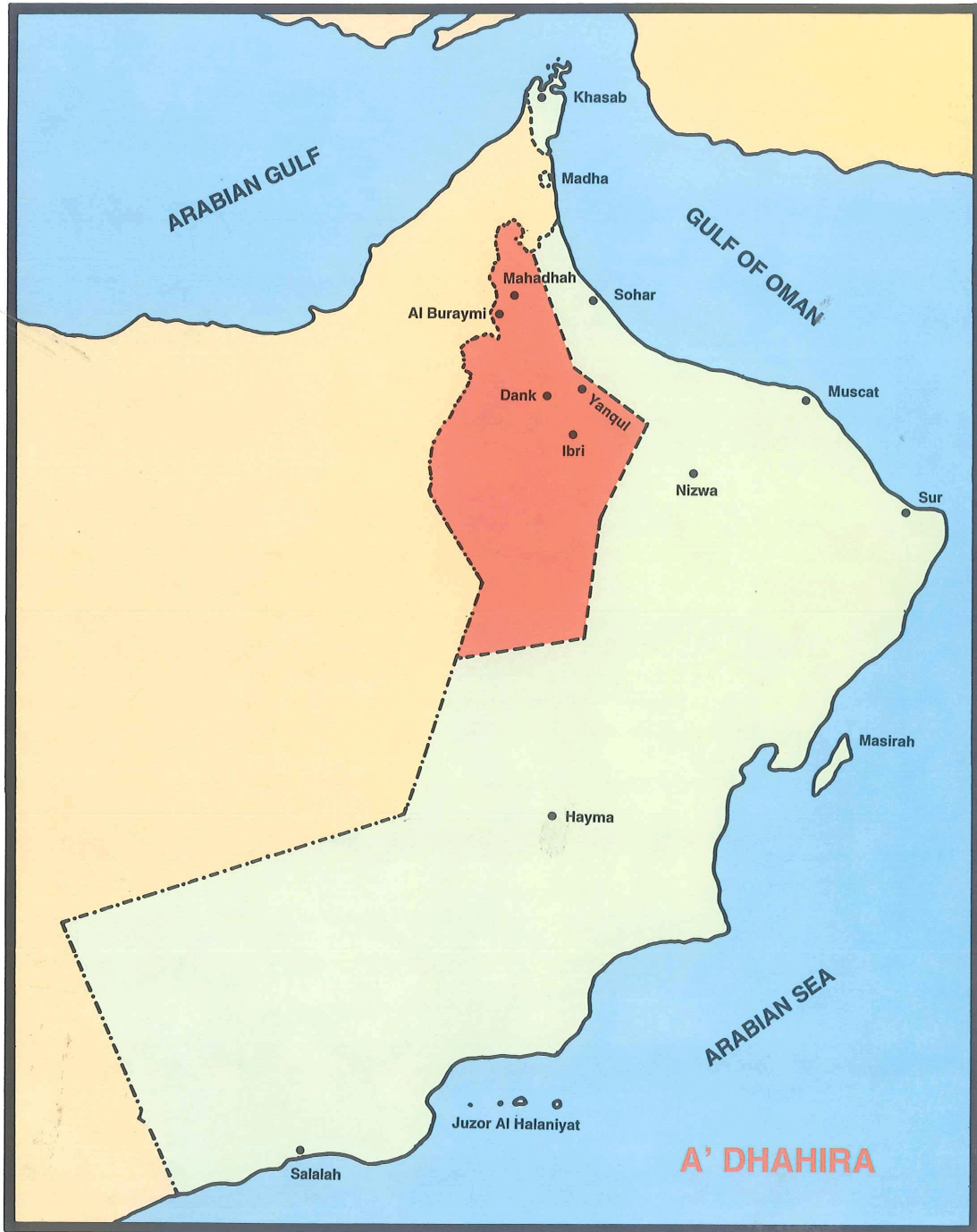
PROLOGUE

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.

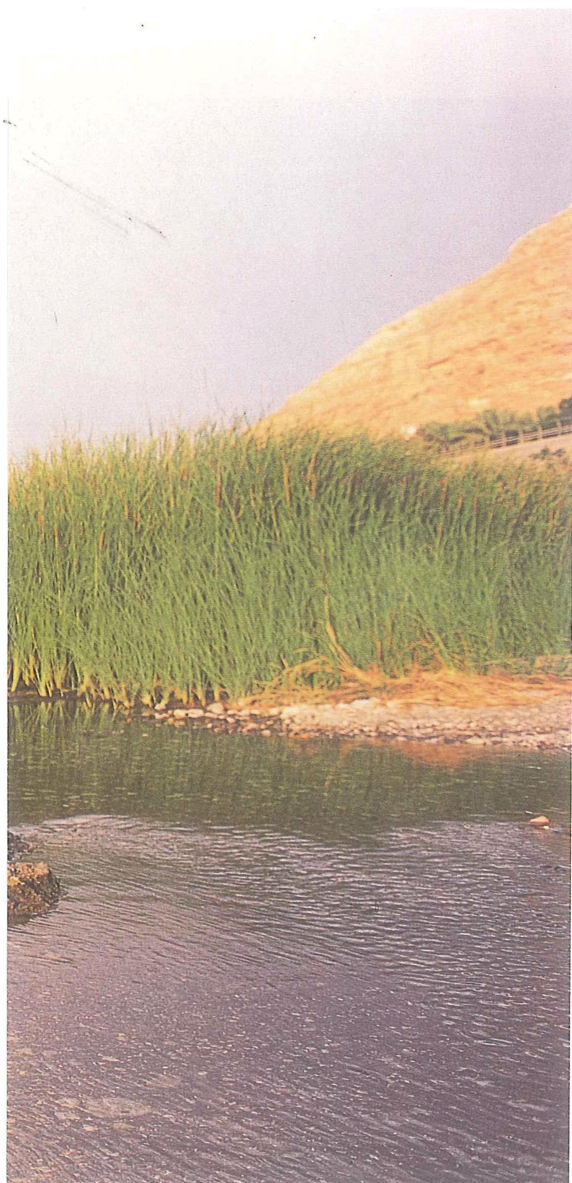
Efficient development is directly related to and subject to the level of economic activity. To expect otherwise or to attempt to purchase it by going into debt would not only fail, but would lead to disaster.



The Cradle of Civilization and Trading Bridge



Treasures of Nature





The second place in Oman to be listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site - after Bahla Fort in the Dakhiliyah Region - was the ruined settlement of Bat in the Wilayat of Ibri (the administrative capital of the Dhahirah Region). This site confirms that the tombs and settlements of the Umm al Nar civilization are all part of a historic whole; traces of the Umm al Nar civilization are known to exist in the Dhahirah Region and the neighbouring territories of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and possibly Qatar as well.

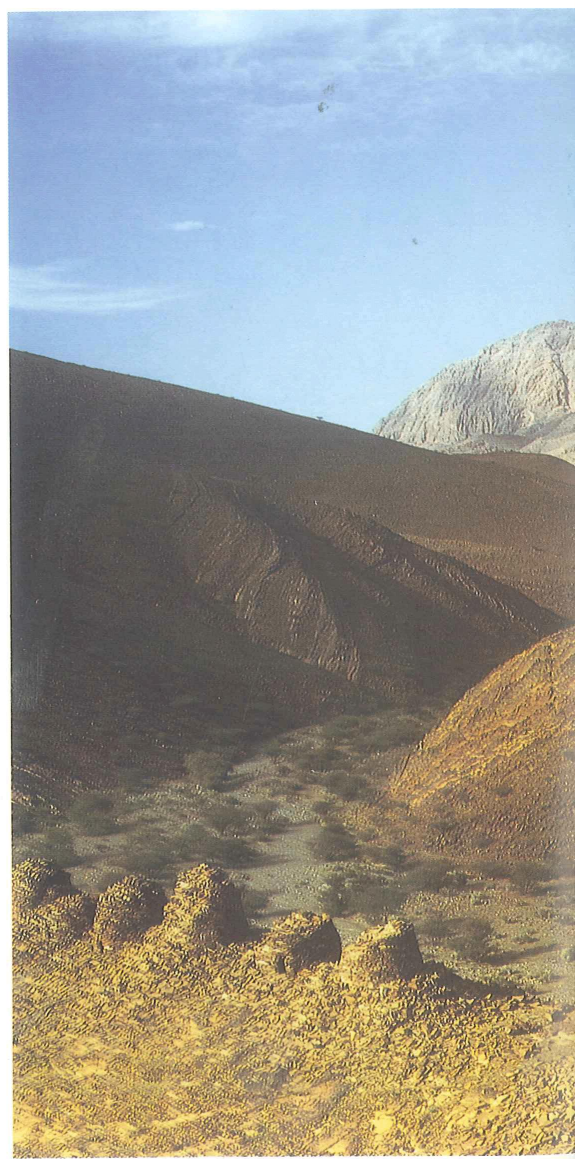
Bat's historical significance is due to the fact that it lies at the crossroads of the old trade routes. Caravans used to pass through this area laden with goods destined for Oman and elsewhere.

Archaeological discoveries in the area prove that ancient land routes used to pass through Buraimi, Ibri, Wadi al Jizzi and al Hawasnah on their way to the northern Omani coasts. These routes were linked to the heart of the Arabian Peninsula.

Geographically speaking, the Dhahirah Region is a desert plain which extends from the southern foothills of the Western Hajar mountains towards the Empty Quarter. To the east it is separated from the Dakhiliyah Region by Jabal al Kawr, while its other borders are with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

However, despite its historical and geographical significance as a border area, the Dhahirah Region was ignored while those of its inhabitants who remained lived forgotten and neglected among the tombs and scattered potsherds of Umm al Nar, tormented by the summer heat and the winter cold and blasted by the north-westerly winds that blew from the Empty Quarter throughout the year. The people of the Dhahirah Region knew nothing of modern life or the modern world, and modern services were totally unknown to them.

What is the situation today, twenty-five years after the accession of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos? What of the deserts and mountains that were so bleak and desolate before the 1970s?



Cradle of civilization. Bat tombs listed by UNESCO in its index of the World's Cultural Heritage





Today there are four hospitals and eleven health centres all offering specialist medical treatment and equipped with qualified technical staff and the most up-to-date facilities. These establishments contain 290 beds for in-patient treatment; the average occupancy rate over the year is 55 per cent.

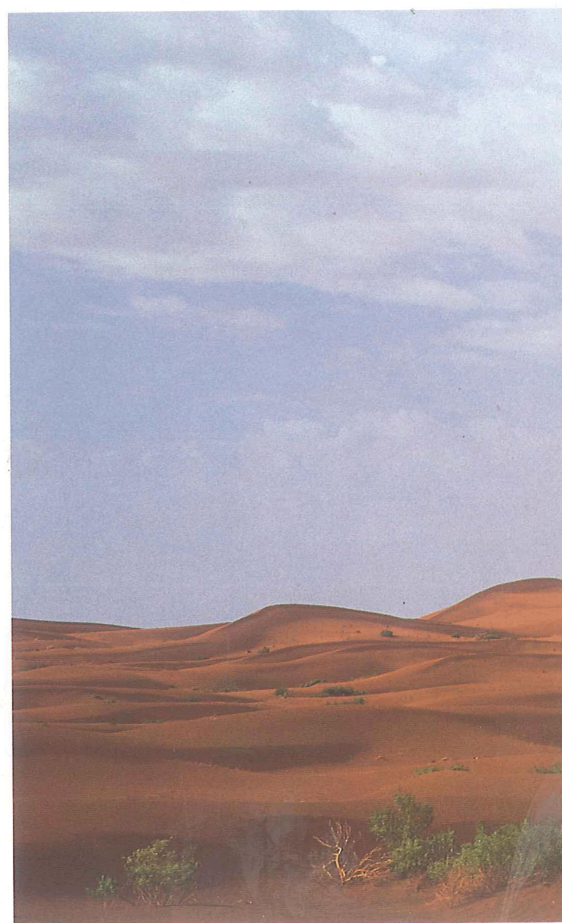
Over 25,000 inoculations are given every year to children and expectant mothers in the region, which has a total population of 181,224.

These figures reflect the government's commitment to providing citizens with the health care they need. They also indicate that the health services can still handle 45 per cent more cases before they become stretched to the limit.

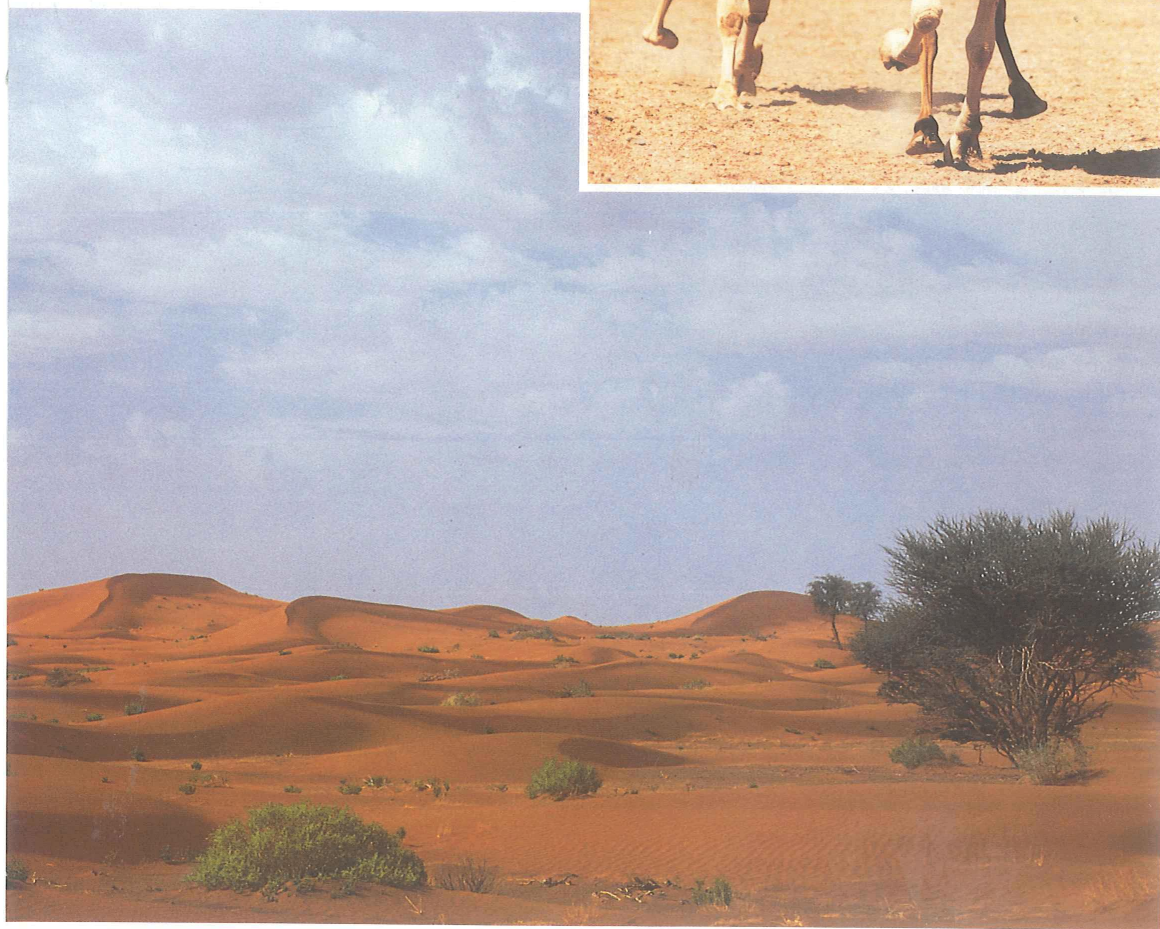
There are 111 boys' and girls' schools with 46,177 pupils.

There are 22 literacy centres and fifteen adult education centre for those who had no opportunity to obtain an education in the past.

By the end of 1994 there were 8,905 functioning telephone lines.

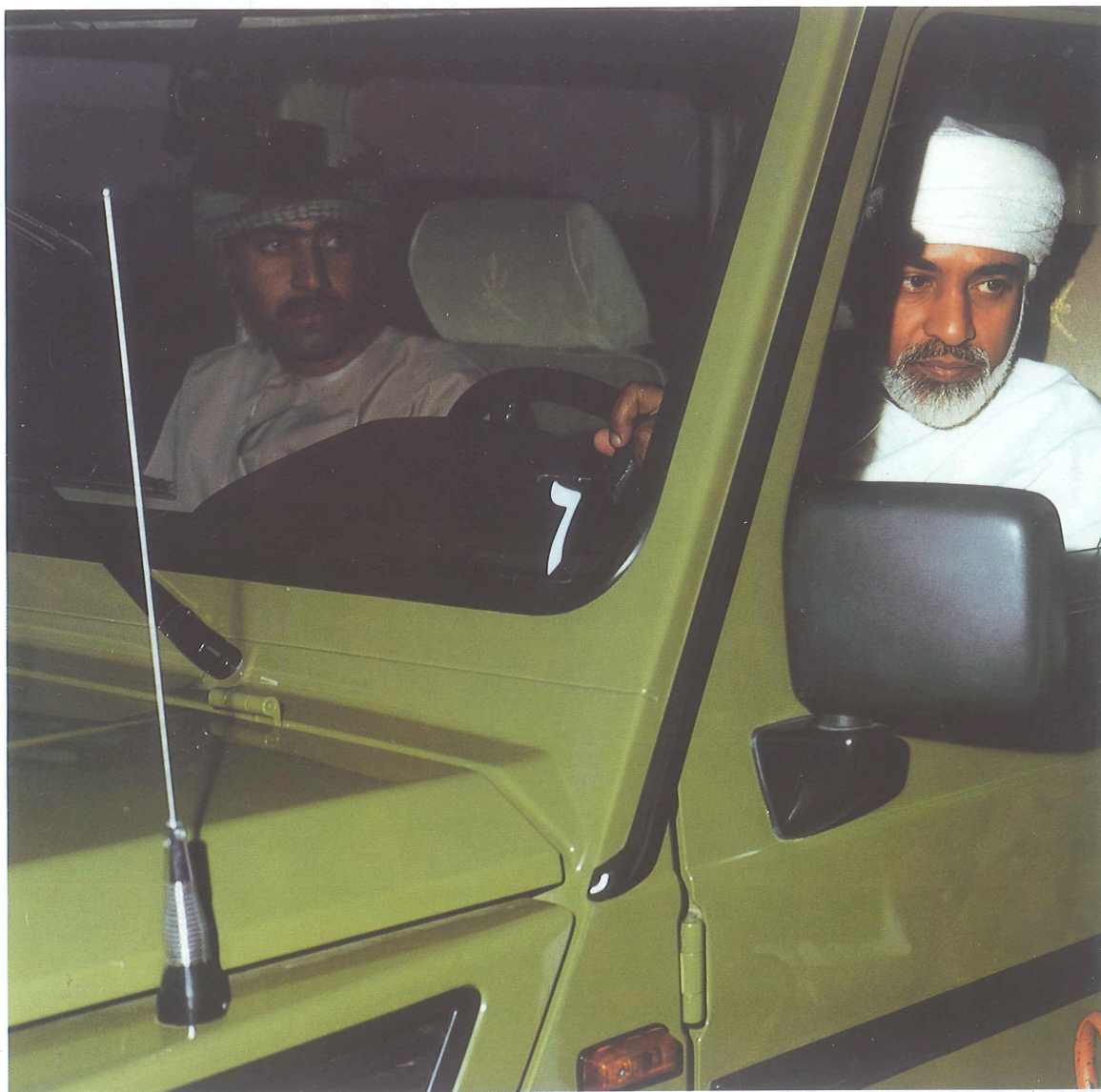


Followers of a famous tradition





The Wilayats



His Majesty listens intently to one of His people



The path of prosperity stretches from the deserts of the Empty Quarter to the sands of Buraimi, and from the mountains of al Hawra to the tombs of Umm al Nar, bringing modern life to the remotest border areas.



Wilayat Al Buraimi



The Royal Guard of Oman on parade



According to the census, the Dhahirah Region has 181,224 inhabitants, of whom 75 percent of the total population of the region.

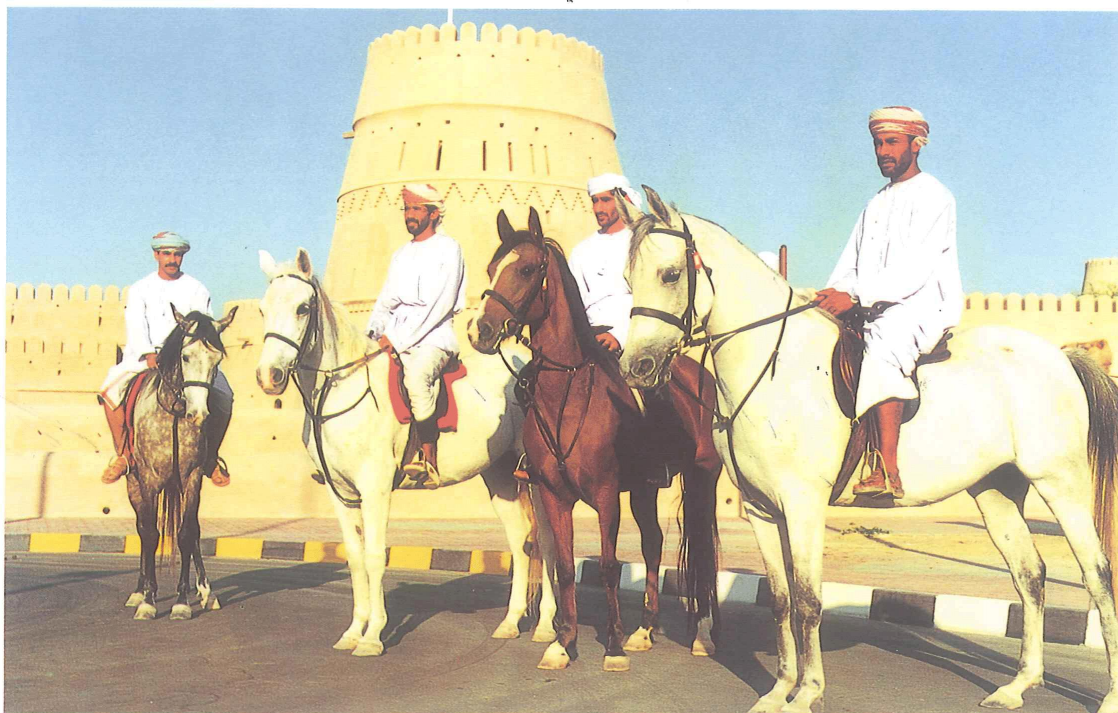
The Wilayat of Ibri has a population of 93,475.

The Wilayat of Buraimi has a population of 48,237.

The Wilayat of Dhank has a population of 16,181 of whom 13,677.

The Wilayat of Yanqul has a population of 14,950.

The Wilayat of Mahdhah has a population of 8,331.



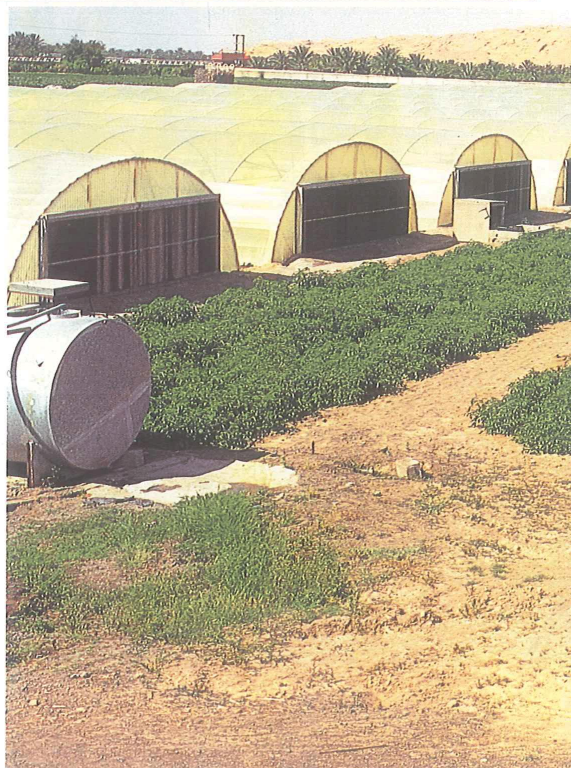
Arabian horses have a special place in Omani hearts

The Wilayat of Buraimi is in the north-west corner of the Sultanate. Its neighbours are the Wilayats of Mahdhah, Dhank and Sohar, and the city of al Ain in the United Arab Emirates. It has 48,287 inhabitants and approximately 49 villages.

The Wilayat of Buraimi has a number of historic forts and houses. Its main forts are al Khandaq, which has been adopted as the emblem of the Wilayat, and al Hillah Fort. Both these forts have recently been restored by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture. There are also several other forts, including the forts of al Fayyadh, Hafeet and Wadi al Jizzi. The most famous historic house in the Wilayat is Bait Bahr.

Buraimi's villages are watered by 49 falajes. Much of the rest of the Wilayat is sandy desert. Buraimi is an attractive region for tourists.

Farming is one of the Wilayat's chief occupations. The farms depend on wells and falajes for their water and grow mainly dates, limes and other fruits, and



A farmer checks his crops for harvesting



Today the Dhahirah Region's five Wilayats have four hospitals and eleven health centres, with a total of 290 beds for in-patient treatment.





animal fodder. Some of the people of the Wilayat also breed livestock.

Buraimi has its own distinctive folklore. The "Ayyalah" or "Ardha" dance is particularly popular among the local inhabitants, who are renowned for the skill with which they perform it.

Progress and development have reached Buraimi and, like the Sultanate's other Wilayats, it receives a wide range of services aimed at improving the living standards of its people.

The Wilayat's health care services include the new Buraimi Hospital - a referral hospital with up-to-date equipment which offers all types of specialist medical treatment. It has 150 beds.

Education. The Wilayat has 10,653 boys and girls studying at government primary, preparatory and secondary schools.



Parks are provided for the people

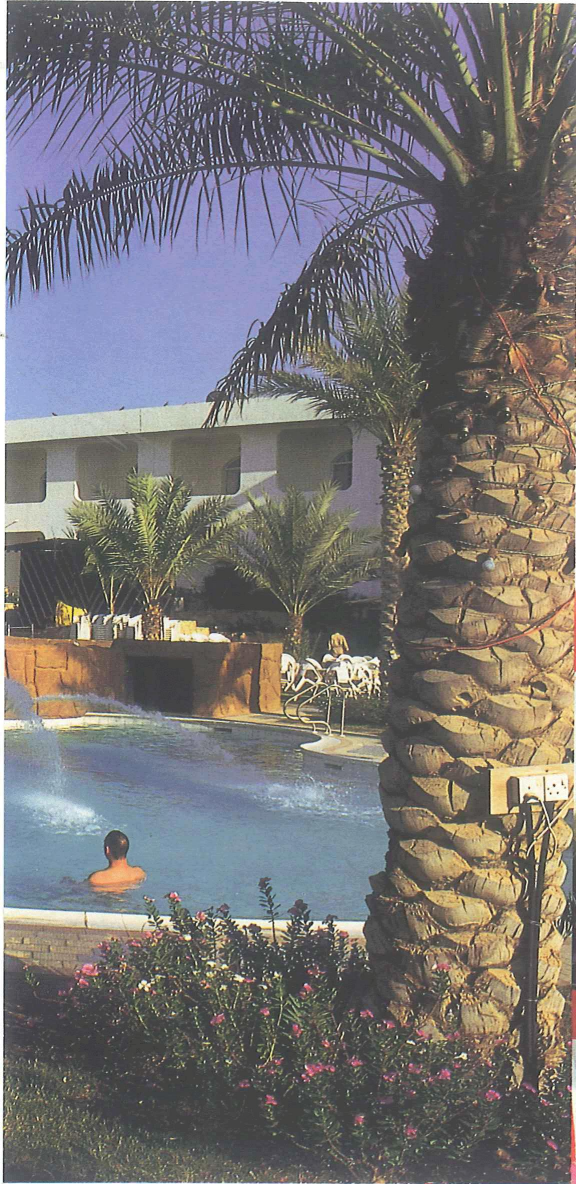


The busy streets of Buraimi

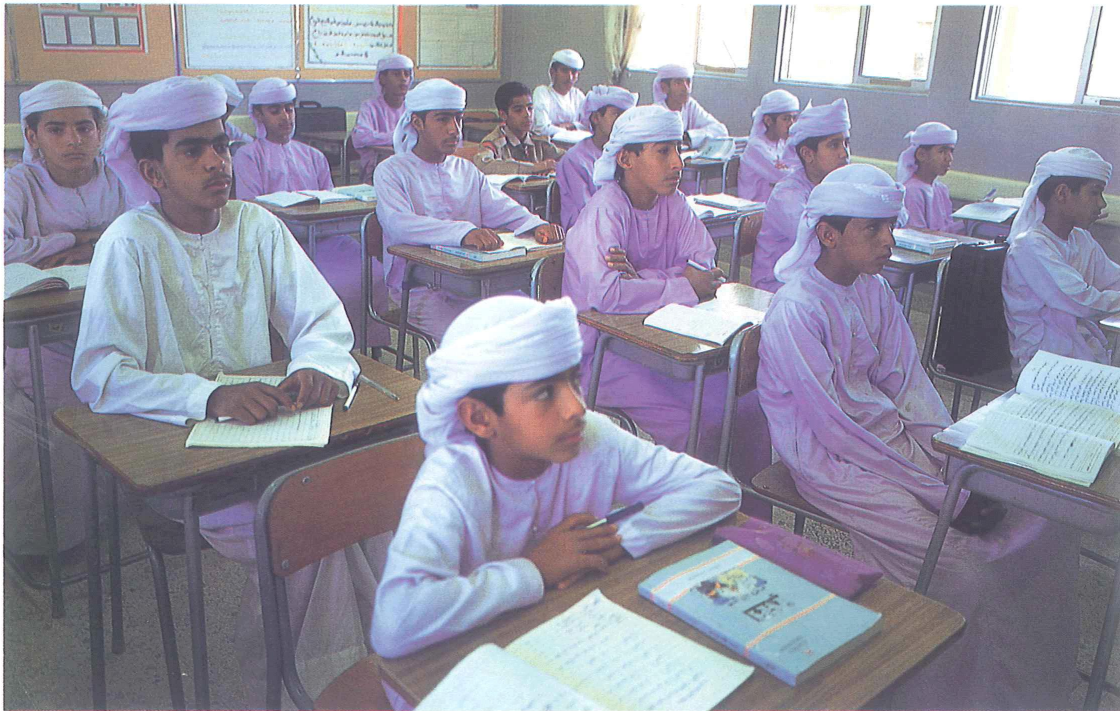




Tourists enjoy the superb amenities of the Buraimi Hotel



A happy day – Children wait to greet His Majesty



Education for all – Students listen attentively to their teacher

The Wilayat has been well provided with electricity, water and telephone services, as well as modern roads, while the municipality and environment services have transformed Buraimi city.

The government ministries have established branches in the Wilayat to provide services for the local population on their own home territory.

Work is scheduled to begin this year on the construction of an industrial estate for light and medium industries. Buraimi Industrial Estate will be built in the Bani Jaber area on the Mahdhah road and will eventually cover an area of two million square metres. Phase One will cover 150,000 square metres.



Buraimi Hospital



A technician operates some of the Sultanate's sophisticated medical equipment

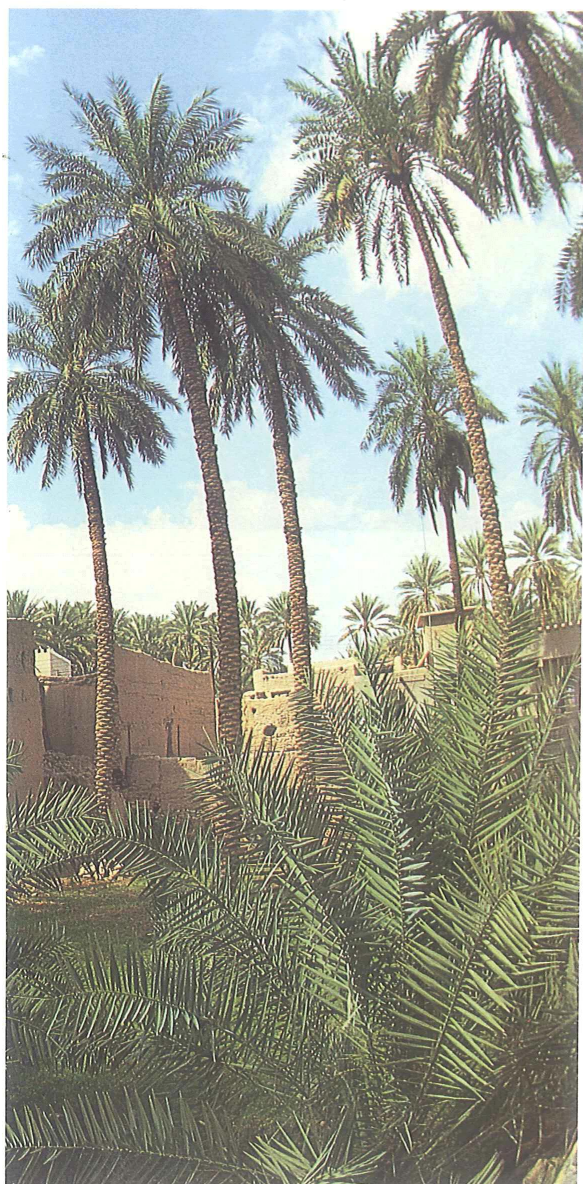




Wilayat Ibri



Palm trees and castles – an evocative Omani scene



There were 111 schools in the Dhahirah region in the 1994-95 school year. These schools had a total of 46,177 pupils – 23,867 boys and 22,310 girls.



A reminder of Oman's turbulent past

Ibri's northern neighbours are the wilayats of Saham and Rustaq in the Batinah Region, while the wilayats of Yanqul, Dhank and Buraimi lie to the north-west. To the south are the Wilayats of Adam, in the Dakhiliyah Region, and Haima, in the Wusta Region.

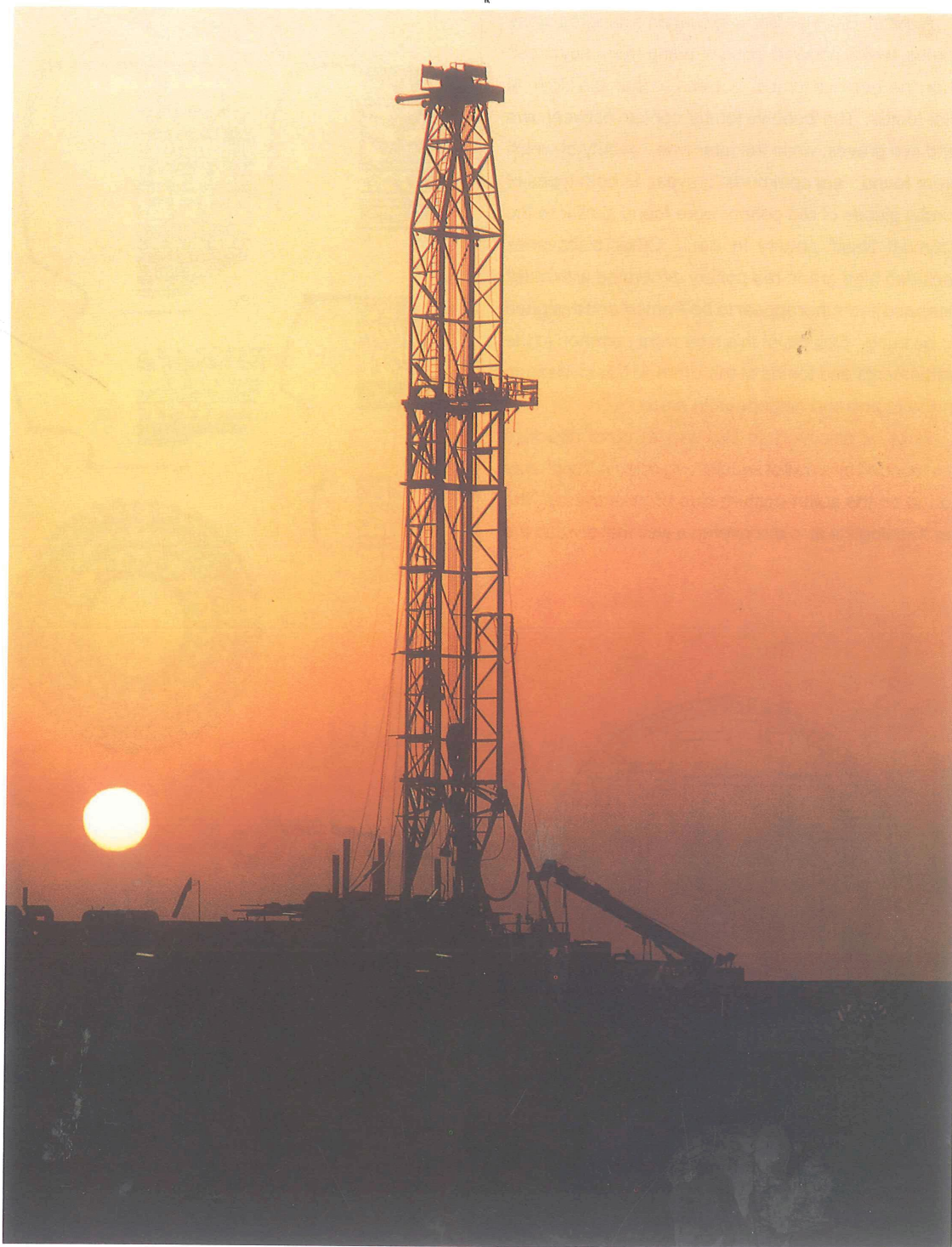
Saudi Arabia, the Empty Quarter and the United Arab Emirates lie to the west.

The Wilayat of Ibri has 93,475 inhabitants and approximately 118 villages. In the past trading caravans used to pass through it, as did several major land routes linking the Sultanate with the other Gulf states. It may have acquired its name - Ibri - from the Arabic root "a-b-r", which conveys the connotation of "crossing" or "traversing".

Ibri today is known for its oil and gas fields - which provide one of the country's main sources of income.

The Wilayat of Ibri is also well-known for its ancient sites, including forts and towers as well as the ruins of Bat - the second Omani site to be listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site after Bahla Fort in the Dakhiliyah Region.

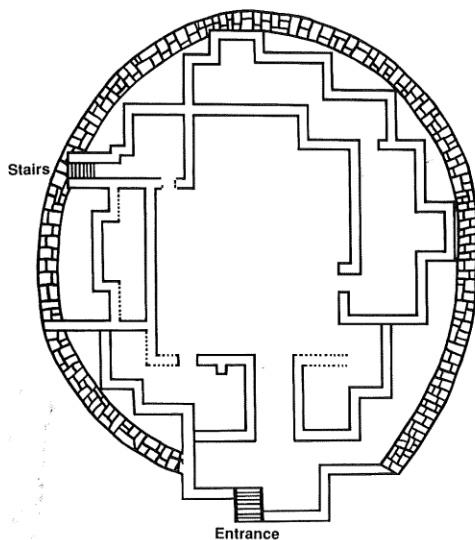
Bat lies in the eastern part of the Wilayat of Ibri. Bat's historical importance lies in its location at the crossroads of the old trade routes, along which caravans passed laden with merchandise destined for other regions. It was here that a Danish archaeological team – in co-operation with the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture's Department of Antiquities – carried out a survey in 1976 and discovered a number of tombs about two kilometres to the north of the present-day village. The southern area of the site contains tombs of the "beehive" type, which is well-known in the region.



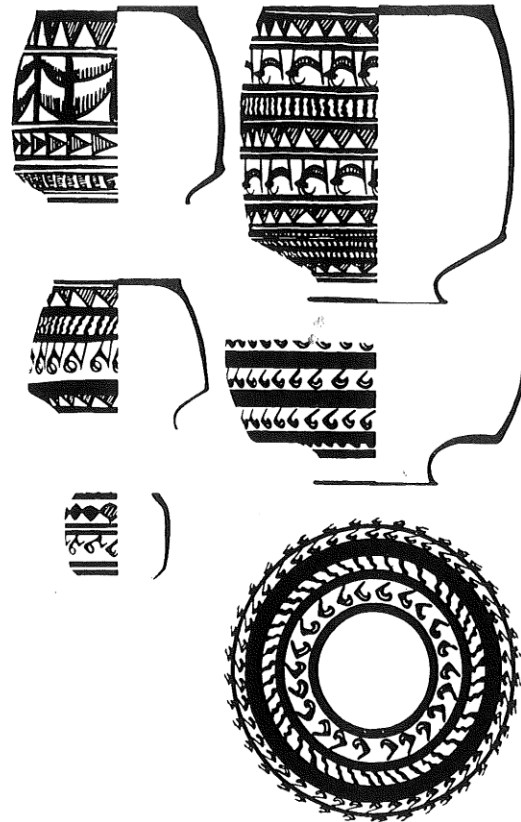
Drilling oil

Another area was found to contain a hundred stone tombs, which showed signs of being more advanced than the 'beehive tombs', but less so than the Umm Al Nar tombs. The 'beehive tombs' contain between two and five graves, while the later type - twenty of which were found - are communal graves. In both types of tombs pieces of red pottery were found similar to the "Jumdat Nasr" pottery in Iraq. Other discoveries included high-grade red pottery decorated with black lines and items that appear to be 'framed' and designed to be hung. Objects of this type were common in the settlements and tombs of the Umm Al Nar civilization in the region and neighbouring areas.

Another discovery in Bat was a round structure surrounded by a wall of square-cut rocks. A "mint" was found on the south-eastern side of its entrance. The archaeologists also discovered a well that divided the



Plan for a building, recently excavated at Bat



Ancient incised bowls



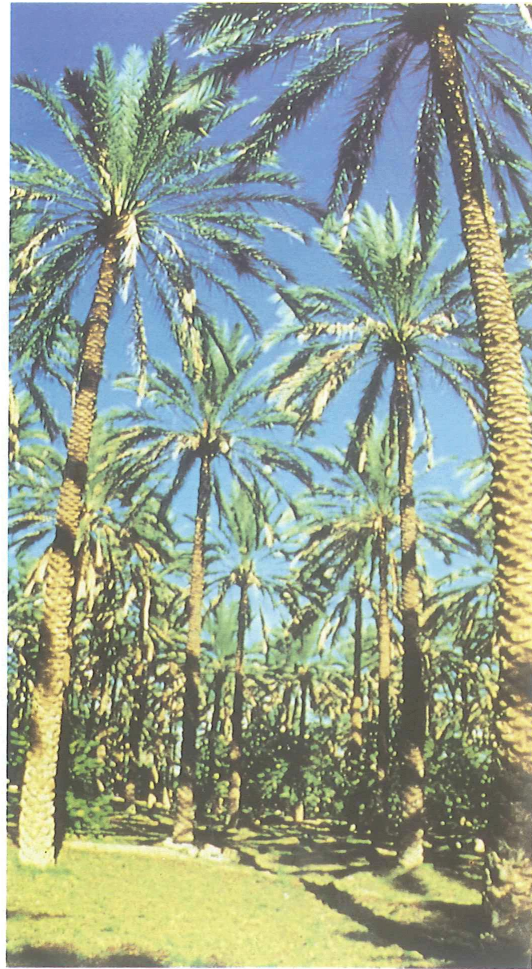
building into two halves. Each half contained a row of rectangular rooms without entrances or connecting passages or connections with the outer wall. This suggested that the rooms were not designed for living accommodation. After exhaustive archaeological study it was decided that these structures - the six rooms - performed the function of watch-towers for the area.

Inside the fort there is a large Friday Mosque. The fort also has two wells, a stable and two towers. One of these overlooks the old souk, which lies to the north, while the other has a view to the south. Ibri Fort has a square keep and a massive outer wall.

Jabal Al Shahshah Fort was the real town centre in ancient times. The traces of a mud-brick well have been discovered beneath its ruins.

Al Aswad Fort's history dates from the year 972 of the Hegirah. It is a tall, formidable building with four towers - Burj Al Rih, Burg Al Muraqabah, al Sabah and Burg Sulaiman.

The Oman Agriculture and Fisheries Bank advanced loans totalling RO. 258,000 to citizens of the Dhahriah region in 1994. This has been more or less the average annual figure since the Bank was established in 1981.



Natural beauty – Light and shade at Ibri



One of the most important towers in the Wilayat is Burj al Shari'ah - a sentry tower.

The citadel of al Sulaif was built by Imam Sultan bin Saif Al Yarubi. It consists of a number of buildings, including houses and a mosque, and has an outer wall with several high towers. It also has a well and a falaj flows beneath it.

Other tourist attractions in the Wilayat of Ibri include a number of springs and falajes. In the village of Muqniyat lie al Haidith spring and, surrounded by date and mango groves, al Jinah spring. Falajes include Falaj al Mafjoor in Ibri, as well as the falajes of al Mab'ooth, al Iraqi, al Ainayn, al Dareez and al Qurwan.

Another tourist landmark is the village of Dhamm in Wadi al Ain, which is a popular picnic site with Omanis and residents, particularly in rainy weather, when the rains cascade down in waterfalls from Jabal Al Kawr and al Jabal al Akhdar.

Al Dareez Fort - a major defensive fort - has two towers and several gates.

Other places of interest including Al Ghabbi Fort - another ancient building with several towers - al Ainayn Fort, al Sulaimi Fort and Bait al Sarooj. Bait al Sarooj is an old house, not a fort.



A technical class in progress



*"For women, the door is open" H.M. Sultan Qaboos
Omani Girl University Students*



The Wilayat of Ibri has numerous traditional arts, crafts and occupations. The main occupations are pasturing, stock-rearing, weaving and agriculture. The area's major crops include fruit (particularly dates and citrus fruits), wheat, vegetables and animal fodders.

Traditional handicrafts include cloaks, decorated saddle-bags, palm-weave items, leather work, pottery, wicker-work, traditional building materials and Omani halwa. Traditional songs and dances include "al Ayyaalah", "al Maidan", "al Wayliyah" and "Zaffat al 'Arous".

Oman's development under His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said has brought numerous benefits to the Wilayat of Ibri.

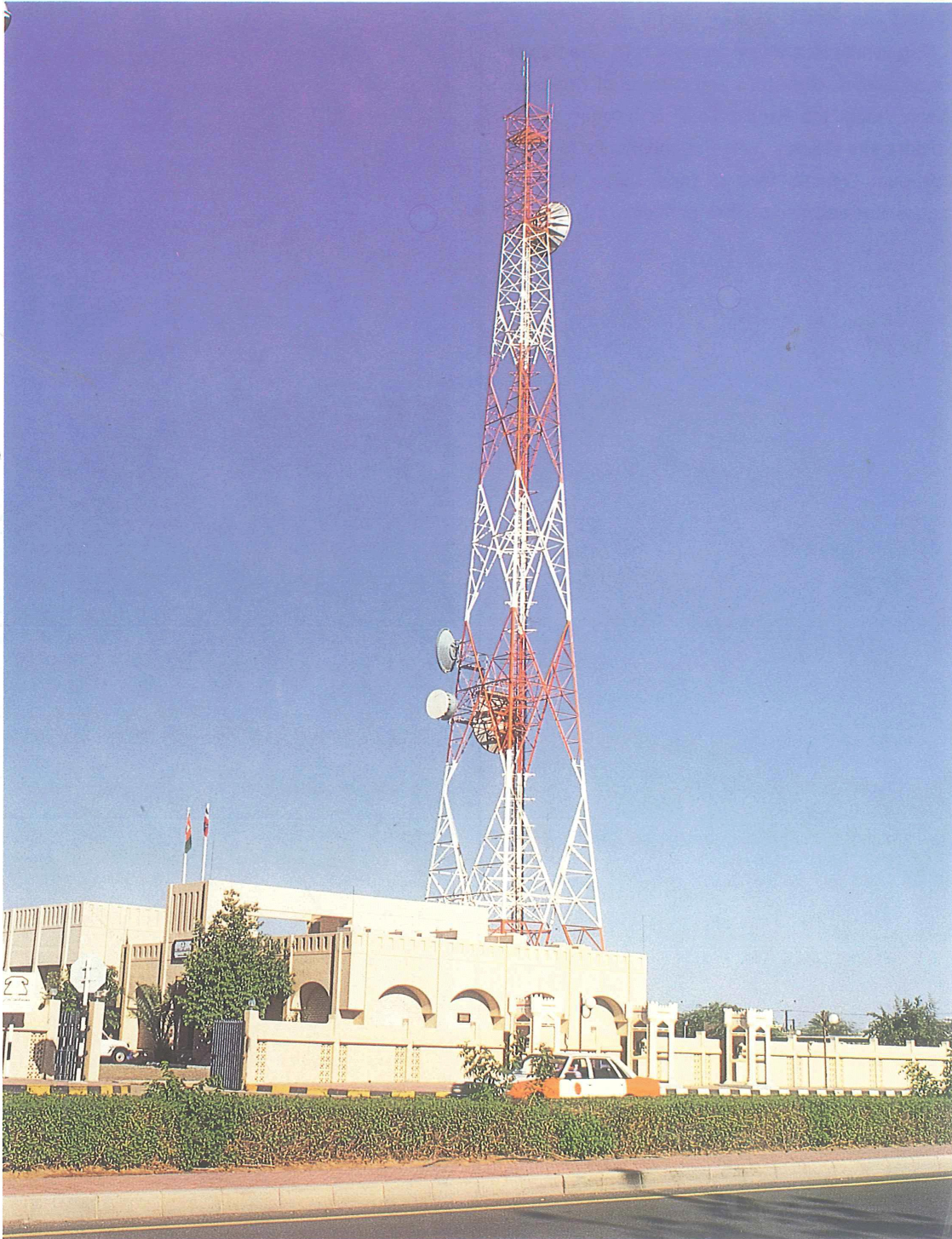
Health care services include Tan'am Hospital - the main health institution in the Wilayat - as well as six other health centres, all of which provide advanced health care to citizens throughout the Wilayat.

Education. There are 58 boys' and girls' primary, preparatory and secondary schools, in addition to a teacher-training college and a vocational training institute.

Numerous government directorates-general, departments, units and centres provide citizens with a range of services on their own home territory. They include the Directorate-General of Health Services, the Directorate-General of Education, the Directorate-General of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Dhahirah Region Housing Department, the Commerce and Industry Department, the Dhahirah Regional Electricity Department, Ibri Municipality, the Social Affairs Department, Ibri Water Department, the Water Resources Department, the Labour Office, the Roads Centre, the Agricultural Produce Marketing Centre, the Telephone Office, the Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Office, the Postal Unit, a branch of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Shari'ah Court and the Wali's Office.



Ibri Earth Satellite Station



State of the Art Communications

Seih Al Masarat

This is the place where annually H.M. The Sultan meets Sheiks, dignitaries and citizens of Dhahirah region. "Meet the People Tour" is a forum which provides His Majesty with the opportunity to meet individual Omanis face to face, listen to their suggestions and discuss their problems.



His Majesty The Sultan confers with his people during his annual



'Meet the People Tour'



Wilayat Mahdhah



Tranquility – Nature in Mahdhah



At the end of 1994 the Dhahirah region had 8,905 functioning telephone lines. At present the region also has eight post offices, fifteen postal distribution agencies and 3,850 private post boxes.



Harvesting

Mahdhah is bordered by the Wilayat of Buraimi and the United Arab Emirates to the south and by the Emirates of Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman and Ras al Khaimah. To the east a chain of mountains separates it from the Batinah Region.

It has 8,331 inhabitants and ninety-nine villages.

The Wilayat of Mahdhah has produced personalities who have played distinguished roles in Oman's history. The best known was Ahmed bin Nu'man al Ka'abi, who was the first Arab ambassador to the United States of America in 1840.

Its main historic landmarks are the forts of Ubul, Bait al Nad, al Khabib and Qala'at Sharm.

Tourist sites include Wadi Sharm, Wadi al Qahafi, al Lajj, Uyul, al Ubailah, al Khadhra, al Jazira and Jabal al Howraa.

Local occupations and crafts include spinning, weaving and palm-weave products. Traditional dances include "al Razfah", "al Ayyalah", "al Taghrood" and "al Tareq".



Ahmed bin Nu'man Al Ka'abi, the first Arab Ambassador to the U.S.A. in 1840



Administrative buildings

The Wilayat's soil is ideal for agriculture; thus Mahdhah has adopted an ear of corn as its emblem. Other crops include vegetables, fruit (including dates) and animal fodders.

The years of the Renaissance have brought health and education, as well as electricity and water services to the Wilayat of Mahdhah. The operation of these and other services is handled by a number of government offices, including Mahdhah Municipality, the Agricultural



A childrens' playground



Development Centre, electricity, water and telephone offices, a police station, the Shari'ah Court, the Wali's Office and the Deputy Wali's Office in "Al Rawdhah".



Care for mother and child



A farmer admires his crop



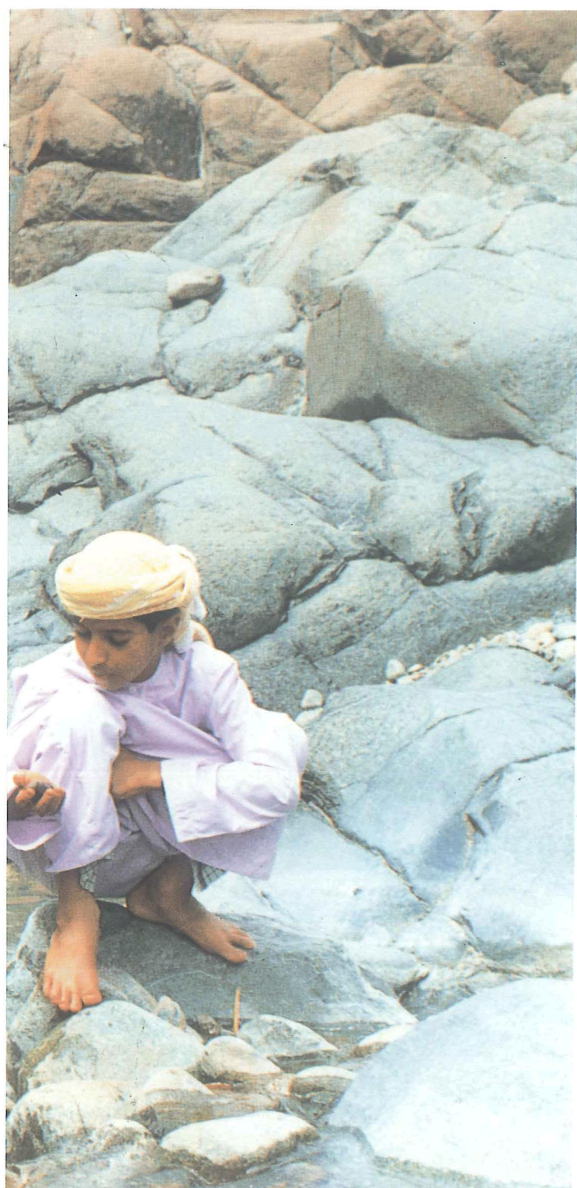
Nature's bounty – date palms



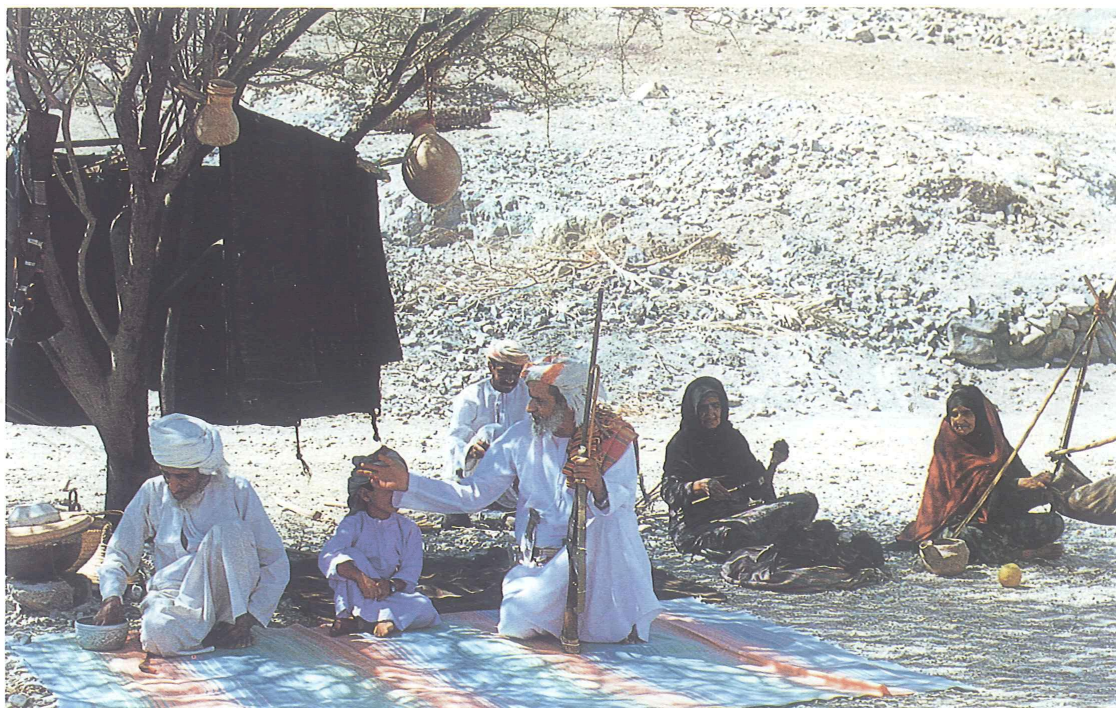
Wilayat Yanqul



An Omani boy beside the cool waters



By the end of 1994 housing loans totalling RO. 2,070,884 had been advanced by Oman Housing Bank to citizens of the Dhahirah region. This has been more or less the average annual figure since the Bank was established in 1976.



An encampment

The Wilayat of Yanqul lies in the north-eastern part of the Sultanate. Its neighbours are the Wilayat of Ibri, to the south and east, the Wilayat of Dhank to the west and, to the north, the Wilayat of Sohar in the Batinah region. It has 14,950 inhabitants and around 70 villages. It has long been a 'transit station' between the Dhahirah and Batinah regions, and this may be the reason for its name "Yanqul", with its connotation of "crossing" ("intiqaal").

Yanqul's most famous landmark is Jabal Al Hawra - its most beautiful mountain peak – and Jabal al Hawra has been adopted as the emblem of the Wilayat. Yanqul also has sixteen towers and forts; some of them are hundreds of years old. The most important fort is "Bait al Maraah".

On the summit of Jabal al Khutaim, which rises to a height of 600 feet above the surrounding plain, the ruins of a number of ancient buildings can be seen.



The beauty of nature



An art appreciation class

Yanqul's main tourist site is Wadi al Raki, with its fine scenery and wide variety of beautiful trees. Other attractive spots include an area near the village of al Saririyen, which is famous for its abundant waters and superb views, and the village of al Waqibah with its many valleys and cool climate.

Farming and stock-rearing are the main occupations of the people of the Wilayat. Crops include fruit (including dates and citrus fruits), wheat and sugar-cane.

Yanqul's main traditional songs and dances are "al Ayyalah", "al 'Aazi", "al Muthaniya", "al Maidan", "al Tareq", "al Shillah al Harbiyah", "al Wannah" and "al Zaffah".



A refreshing dip



The Wilayat of Yanqul has gained numerous benefits from the development process under His Majesty Sultan Qaboos' leadership. Its population now enjoys modern health and educational services, as well as electricity, water, telephones and other benefits of twentieth-century life which have helped raise living standards in the Wilayat. Government offices and institutions help ensure that these services reach the population wherever they may be. They include Yanqul Municipality, Yanqul Hospital, schools, an Agricultural Development Centre, Yanqul Sports Club, Electricity and Telephone Services, the Shari'ah Court and the Wali's Office.

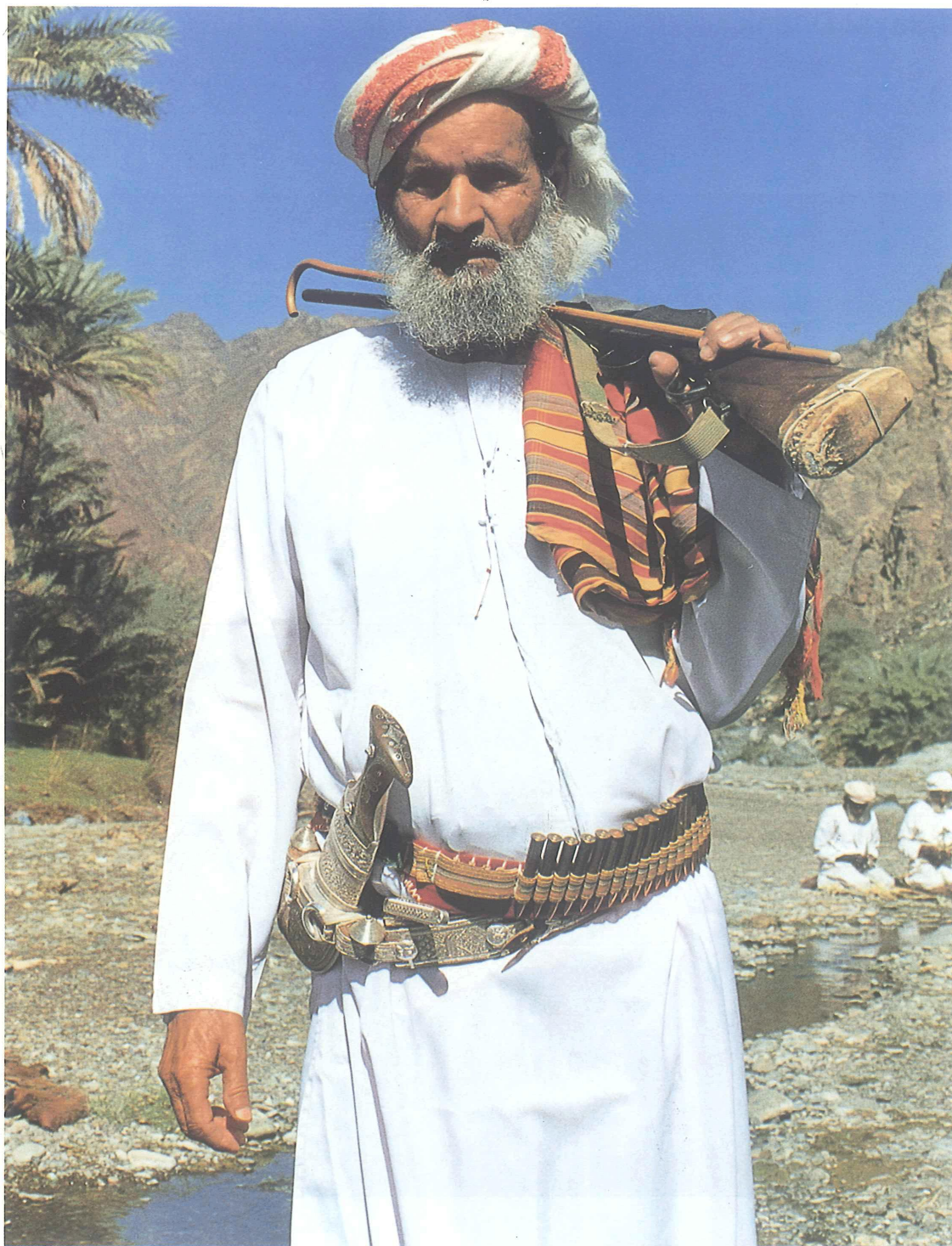
Traditional crafts include weaving, palm-leaf products, goldsmithing, carpentry and sugar-making.



Ladies are skilled in fine embroidery



Traditional handicrafts – palm-leaf weaving





Wilayat Dhank



The beauty of Oman



During the the year 1994 3,270 citizens of the Dhahirah region were paid social security benefits totalling RO. 719,000.



Caves in Wilayat Dhank

Dhank lies at the centre of the Dhahirah region. Its neighbours are the Wilayats of Buraimi to the north and west, Ibri to the south and west, and Yanqul to the east.

The wilayat has a distinguished history. It has 16,181 inhabitants and 48 villages. The imams of earlier times took an interest in Dhank, as can be seen today in Falaj al Bazili in the west of the Wilayat and the "Imam's Fort" in its central area. Falaj al Bazili was constructed by Imam Saif bin Sultan Al Yarubi, who cultivated extensive areas around it, while the "Imam's Fort" was renovated by Imam Azzan bin Qais.



There are 17 literacy centres in the Dhahirah region – one for male students and 16 centres for female students. 449 students attended these classes in the 1994-95 school year – 37 males and 412 females.

There are 14 Adult Education Centres in the Dhahirah region – 2 for men and twelve for women – with a total of 39 primary, preparatory and secondary classes seven for men and 32 for women. 553 students studied at these centres during the 1994-1995 school year.



Education is provided in modern buildings



Schooltime



Ibn al Rumtha built Al Oud Fort in Safalat al Wahshi. Other forts in the Wilayat include al Shiraya', al Subaikha, al Marqu', al 'Aqr, Doot, al Jafrah, Balat, al Khilli and al Fath. There are also six towers: al Saghar, al Taff, al Ghafah, al Khilli, Abu Kariyah and al Qala'ah.

Wadi Dhank is one of the Wilayat's main tourist sites. Other popular spots are Wadi al Fath and Wadi Qumaira.

The Wilayat is well endowed with falajes underground water resources and springs. Its falajes include al Sadd, al Sima, al Muhaidith, al Taff, Salalah, Qumaira, al Rahbah, Balat, al Fath, al Janbi, al Khilli and Khamat. Its two springs are al Musaifiya and Bani Saa'idah.

The Wilayat's traditional occupations include carpentry, blacksmithing, farming and stock-rearing. The main crops are fruit, mainly dates, as well as

indigo, vegetables, and animal fodders.

Local crafts include wickerwork, palm-weave productions, traditional Omani building materials and indigo.

The Wilayat of Dhank is well provided with government services and projects. It has a health centre, six schools and several government offices. Among these are Dhank Municipality, the Electricity Office, the Water Office, the Post Office, the Agricultural Development Centre, the Police Station, the Shari'ah Court and the Wali's Office.



Water is the source of life



Modern housing



One of Oman's trunk roads



Folk Arts



Traditional dance in the Dhahira Area



The folklore of the five Wilayats of the Dhahirah Region reflects the character of the local inhabitants. They are famous for their courage and love of entertainment and song.

The folklore of the Dhahirah also echoes some of the Region's customs and traditions.



"Al Ayyalah"

"Al Ayyalah" is the leading traditional song and dance form in the Dhahirah Region. Its rhythm is produced on four types of instruments:

1. The flat "Kaser" drum, both sides of which are covered with cowhide. It is struck on one of its sides with a stout stick;
2. The "Rahmani" drum, which is struck on both sides with the palm of the hand;
3. The "Daff", "Taar" or "Samaa". It is a tambourine covered on one side with sheepskin and is struck with the open palm;
4. The "Taasah" or the "Sahhaal". This consists of two flat, brass cups which are shaken to produce a jingling sound.

In some parts of the Dhahirah Region the "Taasah" is not used in the "al Ayyalah".

The dance consists of rows of men with performers between the rows. Each man in the rows takes his neighbour's wrist in one hand, while in the other hand he holds a stick, which he waves in time to the triple beat - either from side to side or up and down. Simultaneously, and in time with the beat, he moves his head repeatedly up and down. His feet are not moved, though he moves his knees slightly in harmony with the movements of his head and the stick.

The performers between the rows comprise a number of men carrying guns, swords, khanjars and sticks. The men with the swords throw their swords up in the air and catch them skilfully when they fall. Some of the men with the guns do likewise, though the usual practice is to hold the gun in both hands and describe a complete circle with it in the air. The men with the sticks perform a similar movement. All rotate in short, sedate jumps in time with the beat, mingling with the musicians, who are sometimes more than fifteen in number.



Al Ayyalah



"Al Razha"

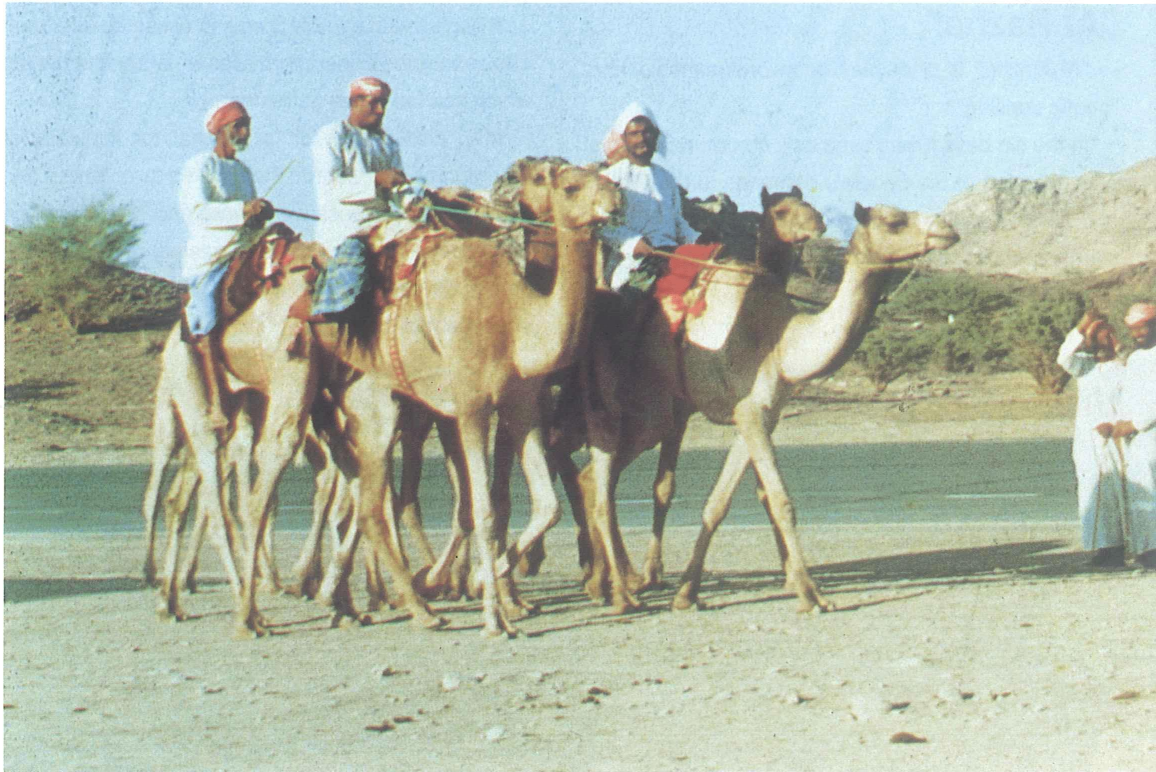
"Al Razha" is a display of swordsmanship and "poetic duelling".

In the old days it was used as a communal means of expression of the people's demands to the Walis, and also as a way of declaring war, mustering the warriors, announcing victory and mediating between disputing parties.

It begins with a roll of drums to assemble the men. Then each tribe's poet improvises verses on the subject which has led to the gathering.

Men also gather for "al Razha" for the sake of entertainment or so that their skilled swordsmen can display their prowess with sword and shield and the tribal poets can show off their mastery of love poetry, panegyric, satire, stories and conundrums - the literary equivalent of swordplay.





An Al Hambal Procession

The name "Razha" is taken from the verb "yarzah" (to feel a burden), meaning that the performer feels the burden of his sword. It also implies that he is required to bear this burden without faltering, so that when he jumps up into the air he lands firmly on his feet.

The tradition of throwing the sword up into the air and catching it by its hilt - regardless of its weight or sharpness - enables "al Razha's" performers to show off their skills to one another.

There are different types of "al Razha", which vary according to the movements of the performers, the type and speed of the dominant rhythm, the metre of the verse and its style of delivery, and the subject improvised by the poet.

The names of the different types of "al Razha" refer to the poetry recited, the movements of the performers or the area from which it originates. One of the best-known types is "al Razha al Mashubah", in which the verse is either love-poetry or panegyric.

In the case of "Razha al Harbiyat" the poetry deals with an aspect or the aim of war through satire, or its sanctions a raid, tells of a previous victory or resolves a dispute.

In "Razhat al Hawwamah" one of the rows - usually the row representing the host group or tribe - begins by remaining in its place, while the other row circles the area. While it is doing so, its position becomes - for a time - parallel with that of the "fixed row". It then continues on its way until it is facing the "fixed row",



which then begins a similar circling movement.

"Al Razha al Khalidaiyah", is named after Wadi Bani Khalid in the Sharqiyah Region.

In "Razhat al Nahiyah", the group forms a single line, which then divides into two. Each half stands facing the other half.

When two tribes meet for "al Razha", each tribe brings its own drums with it. The drums are usually passed on from one generation to the next.

Two drums are used - the "Kaser" and the "Rahmani". Both are struck on both sides with a thin stick. The drums of the row that is singing are silent until the row has been provided with the words and music of the verse.

The two drummers move between the rows until the

verse is finished. Their drums then fall silent. The drums of the other side are beaten when the new verse begins. This new verse is usually in reply to the previous verse. Verses are then recited and sung alternately by the two rows until "al Razha" has achieved its objectives.

"Al Hambal"

"Al Hambal" is a "singing procession" of men going to or coming from the venue of "al Razha".

It is called "al Masirah" (procession) because it involves movement from one place to another. It is also called "Zamil al Rijal" (men's song and dance).

"Al Hambal" has a brisk, double beat.

The "Kaser" and "Rahmani" drummers lead the procession. They may be accompanied by the "Burgham" (a type of wind instrument) player, who plays a series of staccato notes to summon the people to "al Hambal".

The drummers at the head of the procession either face forwards (like the other members of the procession), or face the procession and walk backwards.

The members of the procession form themselves into short parallel rows, one behind the other, with a reasonable space between each row to allow each individual to carry his gun or sword in a forward-inclined position, in a display of boldness and courage.

"Al Hambal" may consist solely of men, without women. However, if the event to which the procession is heading is one in which women would participate - such as greetings on the birth of a child - the women will join in the procession, with their children, behind the last row of men.



Razfat Al Badu

"Al 'Aazi"

"Al 'Aazi" is a poetry recital without song or music. The poem is recited by a poet or story-teller.

The poet leads his group holding his sword and shield and walks forward delivering his "fakhr" (boast) or panegyric. He shakes his sword at each pause in his delivery, causing its blade to tremble.

Behind the poet is a group of men who circle the area within the two rows of the "Razha". These rows arrange themselves in a square around the poet and his followers, who repeat a series of short, traditional, one-word exclamations such as "Wa salimt" ("May you be safe"). In the old days rifles would also be fired. Today, guns are still rapped audibly on the ground in

time with the exclamation, which - generally - follows the first couplet of the verse delivered by the poet.

Another exclamation is "Al mulku lillah yidoom" ("Sovereignty remains with Allah"). The performers elongate the letter "alif" as an expression of reverence and to emphasise the meaning of the words. This is also repeated at the end of the verse.

In some parts of the Sultanate the poet concludes his verse with an expression of "fakhr" (boasting) or praise of his family, friends or tribe.

There are three types of "Aazi" poetry. In the first - "al Alfiyah" - every verse starts with a letter of the alphabet, in sequence, beginning with the letter "alif" (hence the name "alfiyah"). The last verse begins with the letter "ya".



However, some poets find themselves unable to recite a complete poem with verses beginning with all the letters of the alphabet, so in practice the system varies somewhat.

The second type of "Aazi" poetry is called "al Adadiyah" (numbered), because the first three verses - at the very least - begin with a number. The poet says "Firstly", and recites a verse, after which he says "Secondly", and recites another verse, and so on. The length of the poem depends on the ability and skills of the poet.

The third type of "Aazi" poetry is called "al Mutlaq" (unrestricted), because the verses are not subject to any "alphabetical" or "numerical" systems or rules.

In "al 'Aazi" the poem usually begins with "Bismillah" (In the Name of Allah) and ends with blessings and peace upon the Messenger of Allah.

These days "al 'Aazi" poetry is mainly used to praise His Majesty Sultan Qaboos and the achievements of his reign.

"Al 'Aazi" may be preceded or followed by what is called "al Ta'aweetah" - or "al Ta'yytah". This occurs particularly in the Wilayats of Yanqul and Ibri in the Dhahirah region.

"Al Ta'aweetah", which is a form of panegyric, begins with the word "sood" - from "siyaadah" (dominion) and "su'dad" (power, sovereignty) - followed by the name of the person the poet wishes to praise. Then the poet speaks about his Wilayat, his country and its Sultan, and various aspects of local history. The chorus repeats the word "sood" and the poet recites the names of those being praised. The performance ends with the words "wal Muslimeen takabbar" spoken by the poet.

"Al Tareq"

"Al Tareq" belongs to the beduin tradition. The singers sit either on a camel or on the ground.

Two singers take part. One of them begins, then the other takes over at the end of the couplet and produces a version that is identical in words and music to the first singer's.

The tune remains constant throughout the poem and is almost invariably the same from one singer to another and from one Wilayat to another.

"Al Tareq" can have a wide variety of themes; the most common are love poetry, nostalgia or praise of the singer's camel.

"Al Tareq" is generally sung from a slow-moving camel. Hence its rhythm differs from that of "al Taghrood", which is sung from trotting camels.

The name (and style) of "al Tareq" varies from one region of the Sultanate to another. In the Dhahirah Region it is called "al Radha".

"Al Taghrood"

"Al Taghrood" is sung either on camel-back or on horseback to stimulate enthusiasm in either the animal or its rider. The camel "Taghrood" is called "Razhat al Bedu" or "Razfat al Bedu". It has a single, unchanging tune which does not vary from one place to another and is sung by a group of men. The vowels are lengthened in a melodic form that corresponds to the movement of the animals.

"Al Taghrood" is also called "shallat al Rukkaab" or "Hambal al Rukkab". The meaning of both these terms is the same - that is, "Masirat Al Rijaaal" (men's procession). The specifically camel "Taghrood" has many names, including "al Ghairood", "al Ghaarood", "al Taghreedah", "al Taghreed", "al Gharroodah", "al Gharood" and "al Gharoodah".

Originally "al Taghrood" would be sung by a group of camel-riders heading for, or victoriously leaving, a battle. The bedouin also used to sing it for entertainment in their desert camps.



The horse "Taghrood" is a song in which the singer praises his horse. It is interspersed with shouts to animate the animal.

The horse "Taghrood" is usually sung by horsemen to arouse their horses before they take part in a race. Its verses include themes like courage and coming to the aid of the weak.

"Al Wannah"

Memories and love are generally the themes of this type of song. In the old days a bedouin man would sing it to himself to while away the time on a long camel journey. Nowadays the singer sings it seated on the ground with one of his cheeks resting on his open hand and his eyes closed, surrounded by bedouin. He may be accompanied by another bedouin singer, who takes over the poem and the tune at the end of the couplet and echoes it in precisely the same form that it was originally sung.

Apart from being devoted to nostalgia and love, this type of poetry occasionally takes praise for the camel as its theme. It is sometimes called "al Nuha" ("Lament") because of its sorrowful character.

In the Wilayat of Buraimi it is called "Walad al Arab" (son of the Arabs) to indicate that it is of bedouin origin. In the other Wilayats of the Dhahirah Region it is called "Bint al 'Arab" (daughter of the Arabs) for the same reason.

Dance with Wind Instrument Accompaniment

There is a type of entertainment in the Wilayat of Dhank in which one or more women perform skilful solo dances to the music of a double "Mizmaar" (reed pipe) and a group of singers playing a large variety of drums, including the "Kaser", the "Rannah", the "Rahmani" and the long "Rahmani".

The music consists of a single phrase which only

changes very slightly to conform to the verse. The piper plays a musical phrase, which is echoed in verse by the group of singers.

The rhythm is a simple double beat. The dance consists of two steps with a slight bending of the knees and an energetic toss of the arms. When there is more than one solo dancer, each dancer dances freely as the mood takes her, her movements only being dictated by the beat of the drums.

Some elderly men may be attracted by the music and join in the dancing in a spirit of merriment and fun.

In this type of Dhahirah folklore it is customary to throw money on to the head of the woman who is dancing.

"Al Wailah" (Women's Dance)

"Al Wailah" is a form that is found specifically in the Wilayat of Ibri in the Dhahirah Region. the performers (all of whom are women) sing and move their bodies in unison in time with the beat.

The women form themselves into groups, each woman placing her right arm round her neighbour's shoulders. Each group moves in unison like a single body.

To begin with, each woman shakes a silver rattle which she holds in her free hand, to mark and emphasise the simple rhythm. Then, when the leader of the group has given her silver rattle a long shake, the groups of women exchange places, following a traditional predetermined series of movements, and form circles. The silver rattle is shaken continuously while the groups of women are changing places.

In the Wilayat of Ibri "al Wailah" is accompanied by a number of "Kaser" or "Rahmani" drums.

The women form two rows. In front of each row is a group of drummers. The drummers lead their rows of



A womens celebration

women round the open area where the performance takes place. At the end of the "movement" the two rows exchange places. The dance continues to the accompaniment of singing and drumming.

" Al Talmees" - "Qranqashooh"

This is a children's celebration to mark the night of the middle of Ramadhan. The children tour the streets of their area, visiting the houses and singing for halwa. The song has a simple, double rhythm and consists of the words "Qranqashooh. Qranqashooh. Give us some halwa".

To mark the beat the children use seashells from the Batinah coast.

The name "Qranqashooh" is onomatopoeic and is taken from the sound of the rough outer surfaces of the

shells rubbing together.

In some places the celebration is called "Qranqahoooh". This is a mispronunciation of the correct name.

In the Wilayats of the Dakhiliyah Region the children sing the same song, but they mark the beat by striking two pieces of rock together. In the Dakhiliyah Region "Qranqashooh" is called "Tawq Tawq", from the sound of the two pieces of rock being repeatedly struck together.

The words of the "Qranqashooh" (or "Qranqahoooh" or "Tawq Tawq") songs are the same words that have been sung by generations of children. The form they take is determined by the reception the children receive from the occupants of the houses where they beg for halwa. If they get a positive response, the children sing a poem in which they praise the people of the house and wish them well. If the occupants do not give them



anything, the children revile them and wish them ill.

In the Wilayats of the Dhahirah Region "Qranqashooh" is also called "al Talmees" (begging), because the children beg halwa from the occupants of the houses they visit.

In the Wilayat of Al Khabourah "Qranqashooh" is called "al Ra'aboob" after the type of seashell that the children use to mark the rhythm.

'Al Razha Al Kabirah'

It is called "Kabirah" (big), because it is the "Razha" of the top swordsmen and the leading poets, who "duel" with verse, stories and conundrums. In the old days it was the "Razha" of war and peace, and the "Razha" of mediation between disputing parties. These days it is the "Razha" of greetings and praise for His Majesty Sultan Qaboos and the achievements of his reign.

"Al Razha Al Kabirah" has a slow, sedate, triple rhythm in harmony with the movements of the performers.

The poet provides the words of the verse to one of the two opposing rows, after the word "Lal" has been repeatedly sung using the same tune and the same sedate rhythm as the metre of the poem. As soon as the drums start to play - the drums of the side whose turn it is to sing the verse - the display of prowess with sword and shield begins.

Swordsmanship has its own firm traditions and rules. The seniors precede the juniors in order of performance. In addition, both performers in a duel must be of a similar standard, so that a poor swordsman does not challenge a skilled one (or vice versa). Each swordsman's objective is to strike the thumb of his opponent's left hand - the hand holding the shield - so that he drops his defence.

When the two duellists have "achieved their objectives" in the duel they stop. If one side or the

other is a clear winner, a third person intervenes and separates the two combatants' swords by slicing his sword through the air, bringing the duel to an immediate halt.

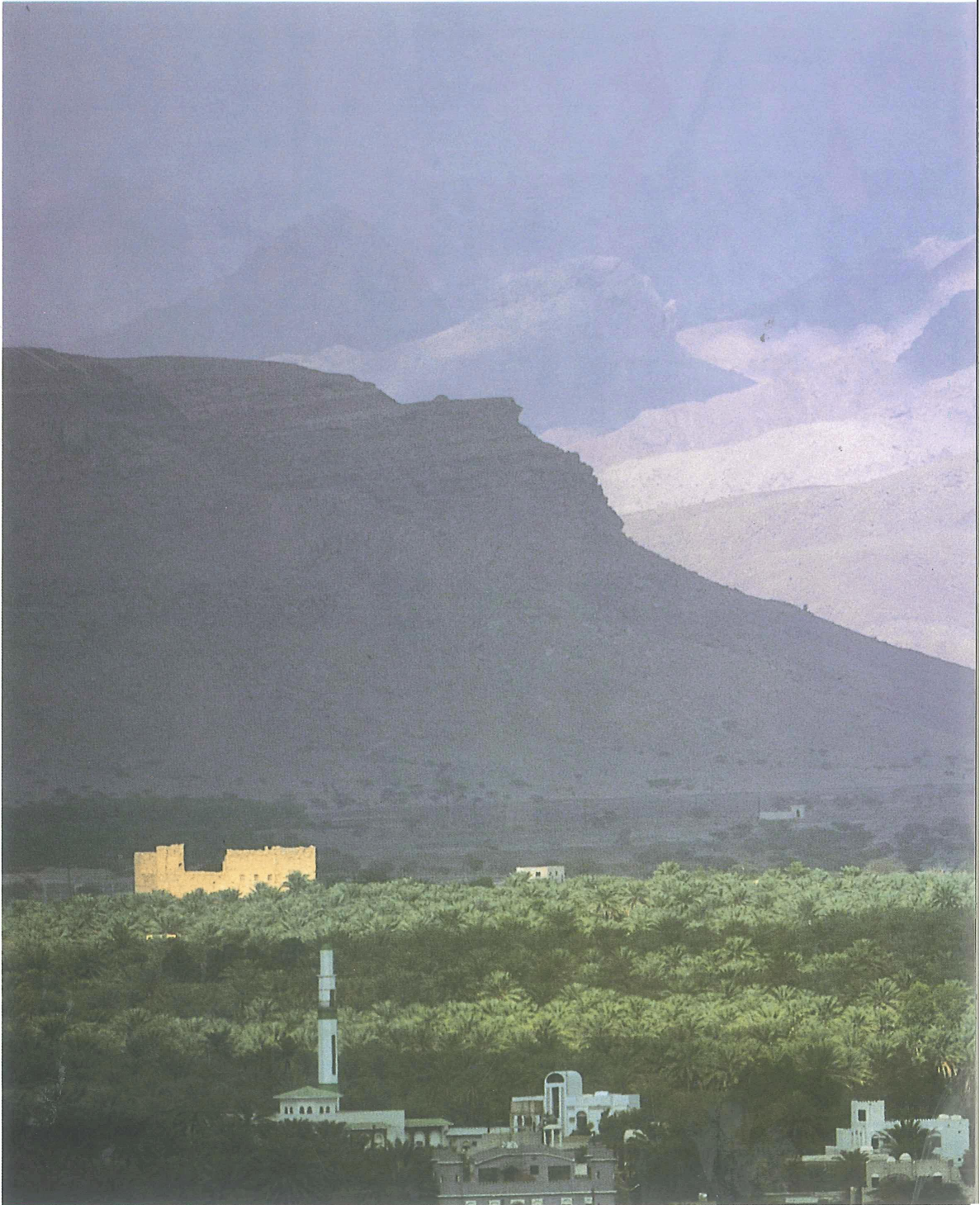
In these cases the rule is that the person who decides the result of the duel, or stops it by slicing his sword through the air, should be one of the senior men; that is to say, senior in years or status, or both.



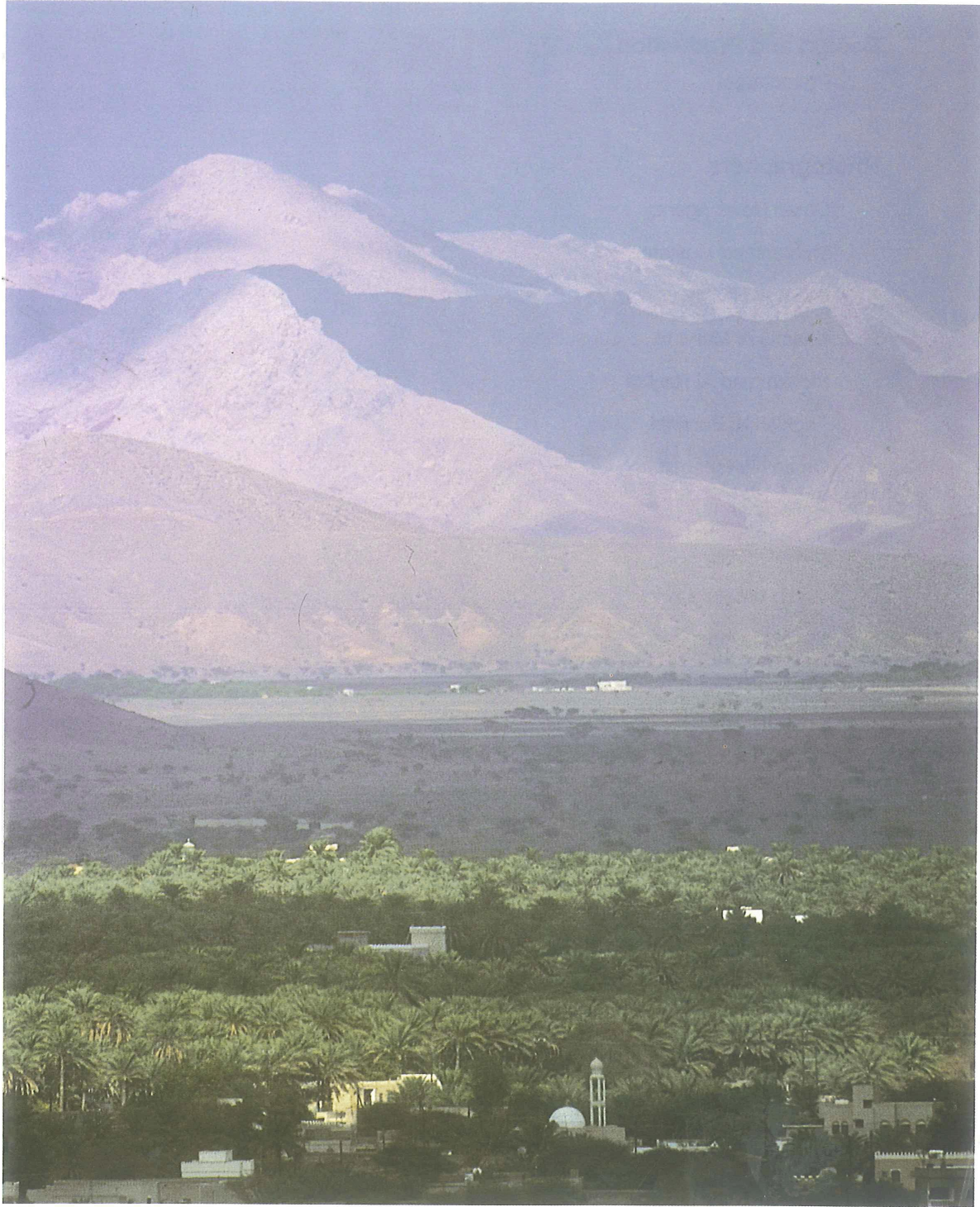


Not as serious as it looks – Omani men perform a famous dance





History and nature





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