

HISTORICAL MUSCAT

HANDBOOK OF ORIENTAL STUDIES

HANDBUCH DER ORIENTALISTIK

SECTION ONE

THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST

EDITED BY

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HISTORICAL MUSCAT

HISTORICAL MUSCAT

An Illustrated Guide and Gazetteer

BY

J.E. PETERSON



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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In some ways, the genesis of this project lies in the research that I conducted in British archives and in the field in Muscat for my doctoral dissertation during 1974–1975 (subsequently published as *Oman in the Twentieth Century: Political Foundations of an Emerging State*). I maintained my interest in the country and in Muscat's history through the years and gathered more material during a period of research in Oman in 1986. More specifically, the idea of producing a gazetteer of Muscat arose during the first few years of my residence in Muscat as Historian of the Sultan's Armed Forces (1989–1999). When asked to consider giving a lecture to the Historical Association of Oman, I thought that an explanation of the various quarters, forts, houses, and mosques of Muscat and of the background to the various outlying villages and suburbs would be of particular interest to expatriates, who formed the majority of the Historical Association's membership. But I required more time to gather information and, in the end, I gave an illustrated lecture on the 1915 Battle of Bayt al-Falaj instead.

The second spur to organizing the material for this work was provided by the commissioning of Dr. Monique Kervran by the Diwan of Royal Court to create the Muscat Gateway Museum. I was pleased to provide assistance for this museum to Dr. Kervran, and shared with her the information I had collected over several decades and the numerous photographs I had taken of Muscat and its environs. Some original maps were created jointly by Dr. Kervran and myself and produced for us by Hélène David and René Saupin. These maps and a number of my photographs were loaned for display in the museum. The photographs which are not mine in origin and some maps in this book are reproduced by permission of their respective copyright owners.

Completion of the manuscript for this book was delayed for some years longer than anticipated for a variety of reasons. After presenting Sultan Qabus with the completed manuscript of *Defending Oman: A History of the Sultan's Armed Forces*, I departed Oman and relocated in Tucson, Arizona, USA. However, a steady stream of writing projects, consultancies, and commissioned conference papers

and articles delayed the final production of the book. A year was spent in London at the International Institute for Strategic Studies and a term at the University of Durham. Several research projects required fieldwork in the Gulf, followed by writing and publication. The production of other works—an Adelphi Paper on *Saudi Arabia and the Illusion of Security*, the second edition of my *Historical Dictionary of Saudi Arabia*, a Durham Middle East Paper on *The Emergence of Post-Traditional Oman*, and a vastly expanded and updated version of an annotated bibliography on *Defense and Regional Security in the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf, 1973–2004*, as well as some 20 articles—not surprisingly took up much of my time.

Acknowledgments must go to a number of people. Foremost is Dr. Monique Kervran, who provided assistance and encouragement of many different kinds. Mohammed Said Nasir al-Wuhaibi of Oman's Ministry of Heritage and Culture shared his own knowledge, accompanied me on reconnaissances to various sites in Muscat, and put me in touch with materials and people. Mallalah Ali Habib, formerly Adviser to the Minister of Heritage and Culture, was also very helpful in various stages of the project, particularly in relation to information on Matrah. My discussions with Dr. M. Redha Bhacker, of Petroleum Development Oman, and his wife, Bernadette Bhacker, were extremely valuable and we went around to visit locations in Muscat and especially Matrah on a number of occasions. Dr. Donald and Eloise Bosch not only provided photographs but were unstinting in their reminiscences and hospitality on many occasions. Charles R. Butt graciously made available a number of photographs from the rich store he had taken in the late 1960s and early 1970s and Xavier Beguin Billecocq provided permission to reprint photographs in his family collection. In addition, historical photographs and maps were obtained from the Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris), the British Library (London), the National Army Museum (London), the National Maritime Museum (Greenwich), the Royal Geographical Society (London), and the Royal Society for Asian Affairs (London).

An earlier version of the opening essay on transforming Muscat was presented at a seminar on "Connections and Identities: Understandings of the Arab Gulf" at Oxford University in 2001. The gazetteer is derived from a mixture of (a) descriptions in published sources; (b) references in archival sources; (c) personal observations during numerous visits to and long residence in Muscat; and (d)

information gained through interviews, discussions, and other exchanges with individuals knowledgeable about the area.

Each entry in the gazetteer follows the following format: [name in English] [full transliteration with diacritics] [name in Arabic] [text of entry] [source(s) used in compilation]. Names in boldface in an entry indicate that the word or words it contains has its own entry elsewhere in the gazetteer. In an attempt to strike a balance between readability and scholarly responsibility, the sources used in the compilation of each entry are listed in short form at the end of the entry. A full list of the sources and a relevant bibliography is provided at the end of the book. The notation “Pers.” at the end of the list of most sources indicates information gathered by the author.

References are provided in both the essay and gazetteer entries to relevant figures, whether maps or photographs. The selection of photographs was directed by historical value and availability but also an effort to introduce new photographs to publication and not replicate previously published ones where feasible. I chose for the most part not to include photographs of people largely because of their publication elsewhere, notably in Bill Peyton’s *Old Oman*. Abbas Ghulam Rasool al-Zadjali’s “Muscat Past and Present” contains an extensive portfolio of photographs as well. It is my intention to post a number of photographs not used in this book on my website, www.JEPeterson.net.

GLOSSARY OF ARABIC TERMS

English Spelling	Full Transliteration	Arabic	Definition
afḷaj	afḷāj	افلاج	plural of <i>falaj</i> (see below)
‘aqabah	‘aqabah*	عقبة	pass
‘ayn	‘ayn	عين	water spring
bagh	bāgh	باغ	garden or farm
bandar	bandar	بندر	natural harbor
barasti	barāstī	براستي	reed hut serving as housing for the poorer population of the Muscat region before 1970
bayt	bayt	بيت	house (individual houses are described in the appropriate section under the MATRAH and MUSCAT entries)
bilad	bilād	بلاد	town, region
burj	burj	برج	tower
bustan	bustān	بستان	garden
falaj	falaj	فلج	canal or water channel
harah	ḥārah*	حارة	quarter or neighborhood
hillah	ḥillah*	حلة	quarter or neighborhood
Ibadi	ibādī	إباضي	the Islamic sect to which about half of Omanis belong; an offshoot of the first schism in Islam, Ibadism is found mainly in Oman with small communities in Zanzibar and North Africa
imam	imām	إمام	the traditional secular and Ibadi religious head of the Omani community; the last <i>imam</i> was in the 1950s; imamate = the territory controlled by an <i>imam</i>
jabal	jabal	جبل	mountain, hill
jami‘	jāmi‘	جامع	congregational mosque
khawr	khawr	خور	inlet or bay

Table (*cont.*)

English Spelling	Full Transliteration	Arabic	Definition
madinah	madīnah*	مدينة	town, settlement, city
maṣjid	maṣjid	مسجد	mosque
ma'tam	ma'tam	مأتم	a building used for Shi'i religious ceremonies
mina'	mīnā'	ميناء	seaport
muḥallah	muḥallah*	محلة	quarter or neighborhood
qal'ah	qal'ah*	قلعة	fort or citadel
qasr	qaṣr	قصر	palace
ra's	ra's	رأس	point, headland
rawdah	rawḍah*	روضة	garden
sayh	sayḥ	سيح	plain or useless scrub land
sultan	sulṭān	سلطان	the secular ruler of Oman since the establishment of the Al Bu Sa'id dynasty in the mid-18th century; the title was bestowed by the British but early Al Bu Sa'id rulers were averse to using the term because of its negative connotations in Ibadi usage (<i>sultan</i> = power); sultanate = the territory controlled by a sultan
suq	sūq	سوق	market
sur	sūr	سور	wall or enclosure
tawi	ṭawī	طوي	well
tuyan	ṭuyān	طويان	plural of <i>tawī</i> (see above)
wadi	wādī	وادي	valley, watercourse

* = spelled with a final "t" and not an "h" when the word is in construct with following noun; e.g., *hillah* becomes *hillat al-shaykh*.

TRANSFORMING MUSCAT: THE CULTURAL CONSEQUENCES OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

This essay is not primarily a treatise on urban development, even though it does attempt to provide some enlightenment on the urban development of the Muscat capital area since 1970. Nor is it intended to provide a detailed chronological narrative of Muscat's history. Such a task would not be very original, as it would consist principally of reliance on and summarization from secondary sources. Even more importantly, much of Muscat's history is lost to present knowledge, and a chronological narrative would be extremely sparse until the arrival of the Europeans. Even then, great gaps would remain for much of the following centuries.

Instead, two primary purposes lay at the heart of this essay. The first is to define and explain the historical environment that determined the significance and design of Muscat, Matrah, and environs prior to 1970. The second intention is to explain: (a) how the development of the conurbation since 1970 has transcended the historical boundaries and considerations of the existing settlements, (b) how the process of development has proceeded largely without any consideration of the impact on Muscat's tangible or remembered history, and (c) how much of the tangible historical legacy of Muscat has been gratuitously destroyed and much of the remainder trivialized and bowdlerized. This said, undoubtedly it would be useful to provide at the outset a brief historical overview of the history of Muscat and its surrounding region.

Historical Muscat

Pre-Portuguese Period

The origins of Muscat are lost in the mists of time. It seems reasonable to conclude that the site was settled at a very early date because of the twin advantages of a natural harbor and the natural defenses provided by the rugged surrounding terrain. Moreover, water was to be found in some abundance and there is plentiful evidence

that nearby sites, such as Bandar Jissah on the sea or Bawshar inland a few kilometers, were settled in prehistoric times. There is no reason to think that Muscat should be any different. Paradoxically, the fact of its long habitation and constant rebuilding, especially in the three decades since 1970, has obscured or buried all traces of the distant past.¹ Although preliminary archaeological investigations in the general Muscat region have provided some glimmers, extremely little historical evidence exists regarding settlement in the Muscat area, including the principal towns of Muscat and Matrah, before the 16th century A.D.

Most likely the existence of Muscat was well known to ancient geographers, even if they noted it only briefly in passing. It may well have been Ptolemy's Kryptos Limen, or "Hidden Port," and so may have been mentioned in the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*.² There is also an unsubstantiated local tradition that Muscat was founded by Himyari colonizers.³ One historical source claims that the Sassanid Shah Khausraw Anushirvan (r. 531–578) built Muscat, but this does not seem credible.⁴ Two 9th century works detailing the sailing routes from the Gulf to China cite Muscat's importance as the last watering place for ships heading out of the Gulf for destinations in India, East Africa, and beyond long before the coming of Islam.⁵

Other medieval Arabic sources refer to Muscat as a port where ships took on drinking water before setting off for India or Yemen.⁶

¹ In support of the ancient origins of Muscat, M. Redha Bhacker al-Murad, in his "Guide to Mirani and Jalali Forts in Muscat" (unpublished manuscript, August 1993), p. 3, states that recent archaeological evidence points to maritime trading links between Oman, the Red Sea, and the Gulf as early as the 6th millennium B.C.

² S.B. Miles, *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1919; 2nd ed., London: Frank Cass, 1966), p. 462; G. Rex Smith, "Masqat in the Arab Lexicographers and Geographers," *Journal of Oman Studies*, Vol. 6, Pt. 1 (1983), pp. 146–147. The assertion by J.R. Wellsted, *Travels in Arabia* (London: John Murray, 1838; reprinted Graz: Akademische Druck, 1978), Vol. I, p. 10, that it may have been Ptolemy's Moscha is not supportable.

³ Smith, "Masqat," p. 146.

⁴ H.M. al-Naboodah, "The Commercial Activity of Bahrain and Oman in the Early Middle Ages," *Seminar for Arabian Studies*, Vol. 22 (1982), p. 81; citing Qudamah b. Ja'far.

⁵ Murad, "Guide," p. 3; citing the *Book of Roads and Provinces* compiled by Ibn Khurdadbih, pp. 846–885, and the anonymous *Relation of China and India*, p. 851.

⁶ Smith, "Masqat," p. 147; citing Ibn al-Faqih al-Hamadani in the early 10th century and Muhammad al-Muqaddasi in A.D. 985, respectively. Other sources mentioning Muscat include Muhammad al-Idrisi (d. 1166), Ibn al-Mujawir (d. 1291), and al-Dimashqi (13th century).

Ibn Battutah mentions his visit in 1330 only in passing, offhandedly calling Muscat “a small place” where a certain kind of fish was found.⁷ The usefulness of the site as a port may be reflected in the supposed roots of its name, *مسقط*, *masqat* = the place where something is dropped. It should be noted, however, that there is no clear etymology of the name and it is most likely that the present spelling *masqat* is an Arabization (as a noun of place) of a pre-Islamic, pre-Arab name.⁸

But the two apparent advantages to Muscat’s location cited above—a natural harbor and natural defenses—also presented serious limitations. The bay opens to the north, rendering anchored shipping vulnerable to the winter *shamal* winds. In addition, the surrounding rocky and largely ophiolite mountains defied extensive cultivation, restricted expansion, and cut Muscat off from an economic hinterland as well. For centuries, only the presence of water meant that ships would put into port where they would replenish their water supplies and buy locally grown vegetables.

Consequently, Muscat remained on the margins of history until relatively recently while other ports such as Suhar and Qalhat prospered.⁹ Improvement in ship design and the development of long-distance trade may have been factors in finally bringing Muscat into prominence. Its central location *vis-à-vis* both the interior and Hormuz

⁷ Smith, “Masqat,” p. 147.

⁸ J.C. Wilkinson, *Water and Tribal Settlement in South-East Arabia: A Study of the Aflaj of Oman* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 33n4, notes that classical sources sometimes spelled Muscat with the definite article or as Maskat [مسكت], while Omani sources frequently wrote Maskad [مسكد] or even Maskah [مسكة]. Wilkinson also reported that he had been told on various occasions by Omanis of the interior that in their areas the name was pronounced as Maskad or Miskid until quite recently. Smith, “Masqat,” p. 146, finds all the supposed Arabic derivations (alternatively said to be an abbreviation of *مسقط الرأس*, *masqat al-ra’s* = “place of birth” or “place where the sand ends”) inconclusive, as he does the suggestions that the name may be an Arabization or derived from the Persian.

⁹ J.C. Wilkinson, in *The Imamate Tradition of Oman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 331n5, notes that when Suhar was the preeminent port, Muscat’s role consisted of little more than serving as the last place to top up with water before crossing the Arabian Sea. There is clearly more work to be done regarding the development of ports along the Gulf of Oman littoral. It may be supposed that Suhar, despite lacking any natural harbor whatsoever, retained its preeminent position because it was well known as a port from prehistoric times. But why did Qalhat, with only a small *khawr* (inlet) and an extremely isolated position on a rugged coast, prosper during the 14th to 16th centuries? And why did Sur, with an extensive although shallow natural harbor, never expand much?

led to its emergence as a transshipment port for Persia and India between the 13th and 15th centuries, and it eventually eclipsed the Hormuzi kings' port at Qalhat.¹⁰ Ahmad b. Majid, the famous Arab navigator sometimes reputed to have piloted Vasco da Gama on his Indian Ocean crossing, wrote that "Muscat is a port unequalled in all the world" and stresses that his home port had become the main center of Omani trade where "boats take on cargoes of fresh and dried dates and horses and sell cloth, oil, slaves and cereals."¹¹

The Portuguese Impact on the Shape and Definition of Muscat

The arrival of the Portuguese in A.D. 1507 not only provided the first extant descriptions of Muscat of any relevance but also marked the initial changes in the shape, definition, and composition of Muscat town that are capable of identification today. Many of the principal features of Muscat were either built at this time or adapted by the Portuguese occupiers. The Portuguese retained and improved the fortified earthen sea wall, known as Sikkat al-Madfa' and surmounted by 60 large cannon, that had been hastily constructed by the inhabitants after news reached them of Portuguese atrocities along the Omani coast.¹² Similarly, the landward wall already encircling the town was strengthened. The wooden *jami'* (Friday congregational mosque) in the center of Muscat was burnt to the ground and replaced by a church.

The Portuguese traveller Duarte Barbosa, believed to have visited Muscat in the early years of the 16th century just after the Portuguese conquest, described it as "a large place, wherein dwell many persons of standing. It has great trade and an exceeding great fishery, where are taken fish many and great, which they salt and dry. They have dealings in this fish with many countries."¹³ Even Afonso de Albuquerque, the Portuguese admiral who conquered the city, observed

¹⁰ Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition*, pp. 44 and 331n5.

¹¹ Murad, "Guide," p. 4.

¹² Miles, *Countries and Tribes*, p. 464.

¹³ Duarte Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa; An Account of the Countries Bordering on the Indian Ocean and their Inhabitants, written by Duarte Barbosa, and completed about the Year 1518 A.D.* (trans. from the Portuguese by Mansel Longworth Dames; 2 vols.; London, Hakluyt Society, 1918; reprinted New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1989), Vol. I, p. 71.

that "Mascate is a large and populous city. . . . It is the principal entrepôt of Hormuz, of old a market for the carriage of horses and dates; it is a very elegant town with very fine houses and supplied from the interior with much wheat, maize, barley and dates for lading as many vessels as come for them."¹⁴

These factors made Muscat both an obvious target for Portuguese conquest and valuable to the Europeans as a readily defensible center for Portuguese control of the Oman coast. Albuquerque first landed on the Omani coast near Masirah Island before bypassing Sur and taking Qalhat without resistance. Quriyat was only captured after a severe battle, which caused the inhabitants of Muscat to send emissaries to treat with the invaders. However, when Albuquerque discovered during the negotiations that a rampart of wood and earth had been constructed between the beach and the town and surmounted by mortars, he ordered Muscat to be bombarded from the sea. This had little effect and so Albuquerque then ordered a two-pronged attack on the town and succeeded in breaching the defenses and over-running the defenders. Most of the inhabitants were slaughtered and the town was pillaged and burned, including the large wooden mosque. Eight days after taking Muscat on 2 September 1507, Albuquerque set sail for Suhar and Hormuz.¹⁵

With the establishment of a Portuguese garrison at Muscat (along with factories at Qalhat, Muscat, and Suhar), initial construction began on the two great forts overlooking the harbor. There is some indication that the Portuguese built Fort São João, the eastern fort later known as al-Jalali, during 1582–1587 on existing fortifications, perhaps on a fortress mentioned by Albuquerque in his description of Muscat.¹⁶ Duarte Barbosa refers to a fortress pre-dating the

¹⁴ Murad, "Guide," p. 4.

¹⁵ Miles, *Countries and Tribes*, pp. 145–147.

¹⁶ Paolo M. Costa, "Historical Interpretation of the Territory of Muscat," in *Oman Studies* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1989; Serie Orientale Roma, Vol. 63), p. 101. Costa speculates that the Portuguese may have used the existing fort on the site initially and then utilized the site on the western side of the harbor for an entirely new fort later. In his view, it is likely that the Portuguese continued to use and improve the existing structures on the site of al-Jalali, with the only new element possibly being the gun-gallery overlooking the harbor. Costa also repeats the widespread speculation that the name al-Jalali is derived from an Arab commandant named Jalal and adds the possibility that it might be a corruption of the original Portuguese name. *Ibid.*

Portuguese arrival in Muscat, and Braz de Albuquerque, the son of Afonso de Albuquerque, described Muscat as a beautiful city with refined mansions and an existing fortress.¹⁷ Another Portuguese source states that Captain Belchior Calaça was sent in 1587 to build a fortress in Muscat, and that he began work on the same site as the previous fort, naming it São João and completing it by providing the fort with cannons and a cistern.¹⁸ This would explain why, during a visit to Fort al-Mirani by the Spanish ambassador to Persia in 1617, al-Jalali was described as the “old fort.”¹⁹

Some years prior to this visit, the Portuguese had set to work building a fortress on the site of present Fort al-Mirani for defense against emerging Ottoman naval power in the Arabian Sea. The first threat occurred in 1546 when Muscat was bombarded by four Ottoman galliots arriving from the Red Sea, but eventually they sailed off without landing. This was enough, however, to prompt the King of Portugal to despatch Dom da Lisboa to Muscat with the task of building a fort on the site of present-day al-Mirani since no fortifications existed to protect the western side of Muscat harbor. Work barely had been begun in 1552²⁰ when a more serious threat appeared off Muscat in the form of an Ottoman fleet under the command of Piri Reis. The Portuguese commander and his garrison of 60 men hastily retreated to the unfinished fort, leaving the town open to sacking. But the Ottomans managed to drag a cannon to the summit overlooking the fort and, after an 18-day siege, the Portuguese capitulated before the Ottomans departed.

After the Portuguese resoundingly defeated several subsequent Ottoman expeditions, including a victory in a naval battle with an Ottoman fleet near al-Fahl Island (just off Muscat’s northwest coast), they appear to have been lulled into a false sense of security and shelved plans to rebuild Lisboa’s fort for another 30 years.²¹ But

¹⁷ Murad, “Guide,” p. 56.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ The Bents state that work on the forts began in 1527 but the impetus for their completion came by the order of Madrid after the union of Portugal with Spain in 1580. J. Theodore and Mabel V.A. Bent, *Southern Arabia* (London: Smith, Elder, 1900), p. 53. Donald Hawley, in *Oman and Its Renaissance* (London: Stacey International, 1977), pp. 110–111, says that work began in 1522 but was destroyed in the same year by the Ottoman fleet of Piri Reis; but he gives no source for his information. Miles, *Countries and Tribes*, p. 169, gives the date as 1552.

²¹ Miles, *Countries and Tribes*, pp. 169–178.

another Ottoman fleet appeared in 1580 or 1581. Its commander, Mir 'Ali Bey, in a daring stratagem, secretly landed soldiers at the nearby village of Sidab and commenced to attack Muscat by both sea and land. The defending Portuguese were forced to retreat into the *gharayzah* (see below) and the rest of the population fled to Matrah and as far as Bawshar. Fortunately, the Ottoman commander was content with simply pillaging the town before departing.²²

Changes During the 17th to 19th Centuries: the Priority of Fortifications

The intensification of European competition in the western Indian Ocean soon made it imperative for the Portuguese to improve the defenses of Muscat, which increasingly became their principal base in the Arabian Sea and Gulf. Not surprisingly, the town's proven vulnerability led to the construction of an ambitious defensive system that remained unchanged in its fundamentals until the present time. Emphasis was placed on the great forts of al-Jalali and al-Mirani, completed between 1586 and 1588 as Forts São João and Capitão respectively, which were well situated to command both the harbor and the town. Plans for the reconstruction were drawn up by the Portuguese Viceroy in Goa by order of King Philip of Spain and Portugal and carried out by Captain Belchior Calaça who was sent to Muscat sometime between 1584 and 1587 as the builder as well as the first captain, from which the fort apparently received its original name of Fort Capitão.²³ Constructed on a narrower ridge, Fort al-Mirani is smaller in size and remains today in much the same state as the Portuguese left it. In order to protect the fort from fire from nearby ships, a gun platform was built at sea level and connected to the fort above by a protected stairwell.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 179–180.

²³ The name of the Viceroy commissioning the reconstruction is commemorated in a stone inscription in old Portuguese on the inner arch of the second gateway into al-Mirani, although it was his successor, Dom Manuel de Souza de Coutinho who completed defenses upon taking his commission in 1587. Captain Belchior Calaça, sometimes referred to as Belchior Alvares in reliance on Serjeant, is also immortalized in the stone inscription. Murad, "Guide," p. 11. Three Portuguese inscriptions in the fort and another at the British Consulate-General are described, with translations and photographs, in R.B. Serjeant, *The Portuguese Off the South Arabian Coast* (Beirut, 1974), pp. 163–166). Two of al-Mirani's inscriptions are reproduced at figs. 85 and 86.

After the fall of Hormuz from Portuguese control in 1622, the Portuguese made Muscat their regional center and added other maritime defenses to make the city virtually impregnable from sea.²⁴ But the emergence of a threat under the Omani al-Ya'aribah in the early 17th century forced the Portuguese to strengthen land defenses as well. The outer perimeters of the settlement were cleared and an earthen wall was erected or strengthened between Bumat Salih (the tower at the southeastern end of the wall) and Bab al-Mitha'ib (the watergate at the northwestern end). A ditch or moat was dug in parallel along its outer perimeters at the same time. Additional watch-towers were built at Kalbuh, Riyam, and Sidab, and fortifications strengthened as far afield as al-Sib.²⁵ It appears that the upkeep and maintenance of the forts during this period was paid for by a certain Shaykh Qays b. Rashid, the Omani governor of Muscat, who had been allowed to deal with the affairs of the local populace without interference from the Portuguese. He made a deed of gift to the Portuguese of one-half of Muscat's considerable port revenues in perpetuity for this purpose.²⁶

By this time, Muscat boasted two churches: the original church built on or near the site of the destroyed *jami'* mosque and the other in an Augustinian monastery. The latter apparently was built in 1597 and formed part of a larger complex including the governor's residence, factory, and garrison. This came to be known as the *gharayzah*, *gareza*, or *greiza*, a term undoubtedly derived from corruption of the Portuguese word for church, *igreja*. The governor resided for most of the year in the *gharayzah* but moved to Fort Capitão (Fort al-Mirani) during the hot season, which was considered more important than Fort São João (Fort al-Jalali). During the same period, a new customs house was erected with a gate bearing the date 1625, and a boat dock was extended under Fort al-Mirani.²⁷

²⁴ Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition of Oman*, pp. 44–45; Miles, *Countries and Tribes*, p. 182.

²⁵ Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition*, pp. 46 and 331n7; Miles, *Countries and Tribes*, p. 192.

²⁶ The *shaykh* went to Hormuz to enter into the deed of gift, which was signed on 6 October 1589 with Dom João Pereira, the captain and governor of the fort of Hormuz. Murad, "Guide," p. 11.

²⁷ Miles, *Countries and Tribes*, pp. 163–164 and 464. The monastery eventually included a garden remarked upon by several visitors. Contemporary maps also show a well-defined canal bringing freshwater from wells outside the walls to the harbor,

But, in the end, this expansionist phase came to naught as waning Portuguese power in the region met emerging Omani resistance. Imam Nasir b. Murshid al-Yaʿrubi attacked Muscat unsuccessfully in 1640 and again in 1648, when, after two months of siege, the Portuguese agreed to abandon their forts outside Muscat and accept a neutral Matrah. Less than two years later, the forces of new Imam Sultan b. Sayf al-Yaʿrubi were able to push their way into Muscat town during the night, forcing about 600 Portuguese to escape by sea to Diu in India. A six-month siege ensued against the Portuguese commandant in Fort Capitão and the Baluchi defenders of the *gharayzah*. Eventually, having abandoned most of their supplies and ammunition in the *gharayzah* in their haste, the defenders of the fort were compelled to surrender. All of the garrison were said to have been killed, save 18 who converted to Islam, and some accounts tell of the commandant throwing himself over the walls to his death.²⁸

Although the historical record is sketchy, it is known that Matrah was occupied and transformed during the Portuguese period as well. Matrah Fort was constructed out of two watchtowers situated on a steep and rocky hill overlooking the harbor and town. Because the site was extremely constricted by the topography, the finished fort consisted of little more than two curtain walls preserving a protected space between the watchtowers.²⁹ A contemporary Portuguese map

as well as to the storage basin at the edge of the harbor (see fig. 6). These appear to have been pre-Portuguese in construction but undoubtedly improved by them, especially since a small fort now known as al-Rawiyah was built to control the wells and upper reaches of the canal.

²⁸ Miles, *Countries and Tribes*, pp. 193–197. The account of the commandant's suicide is told by Hamilton, *New Account of the East Indies* (cited in Murad, "Guide," p. 36), as well as Miles. The Muscati historian Ibn Ruzayq offers the dramatic story of the downfall of Muscat as a result of the Portuguese commandant Pereira demanding to marry the daughter of an Indian merchant named Narûtem. As his only way out, Narûtem convinced the commandant to empty the forts' water cisterns, food supplies, and ammunition stores so they could be replaced by fresh stores in preparation for the impending Yaʿrubi attack. When this was done, Narûtem secretly informed Imam Sultan b. Sayf who prepared his attack to take advantage of his enemy's vulnerability. G.P. Badger, ed. and tr., *The History of the Imams and Seyyids of ʿUmân, by Salîl-ibn-Razûk, from 661–1856* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1871), pp. 81–85.

²⁹ It would appear that the transformation from separate watchtowers into a small fort was done by the Yaʿaribah, possibly during the period between their capture of Matrah and then their subsequent capture of Muscat. Enrico D'Errico, "Introduction to Omani Military Architecture of the Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Journal of Oman Studies*, Vol. 6, Part 2 (1983), pp. 299–300.

(see fig. 49) provides some indication that another, more substantial, fort was constructed next to the *suq* in Matrah, although there is no historical corroboration of this. This map thus gives rise to the idea that the present fortified quarter of Matrah known as Sur al-Lawatiyah was originally this larger Portuguese fort and that it passed, at some point after the Portuguese expulsion, into the hands of the Lawatiyah Shi'ah community.

Muscat's History Before the Al Bu Sa'id

Following their conquest of Muscat, the Ya'aribah pursued the Portuguese down the East African littoral, besieging and evicting their rivals from Mombasa and other forts and settlements. With the creation of a mercantilist empire, the Ya'aribah undoubtedly made extensive use of Muscat as their major port while continuing to keep their capital in the interior where their power base was located. Various powers sent representatives to negotiate trade pacts with al-Ya'aribah in Muscat and some representatives even resided in the town.

Unfortunately, historical sources for Muscat during the Ya'rubi period are as poor as for the pre-Portuguese period. Clearly, the Ya'aribah expanded the fortifications, particularly Fort al-Jalali and the watchtowers on the hills surrounding Muscat. The Ya'rubi *imams* made use of the Augustinian monastery as their residence whenever they visited Muscat. The European travellers Engelbert Kaempfer (in 1688) and Carsten Niebuhr (in 1765) both remarked that both churches still stood and were used as the *imam's* Muscat residence and warehouse.³⁰ Nevertheless, even though Muscat/Matrah had emerged already as Oman's principal port and, despite the Ya'rubi emphasis on maritime expansion abroad, especially to East Africa, permanent physical changes to Muscat and Matrah seem to have been minimal.

³⁰ G. Weisgerber, "Muscat in 1688: Engelbert Kaempfer's Report and Engravings," *Journal of Oman Studies*, Vol. 5 (1979), p. 97; and Carsten Niebuhr, *Travels Through Arabia, and other Countries in the East* (n.p., 1792; reprinted Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1968), p. 115.

Muscat's History Under the Al Bu Sa'id

The Al Bu Sa'id dynasty (ruling from the 1740s to the present) had considerably greater impact on Muscat's appearance than its predecessor. The principal reason for this was the decision by the third Al Bu Sa'id ruler to move his capital from the interior to Muscat, the first Omani ruler ever to do so.

Ya'rubi rule in Oman had lasted for less than a century and eventually was consumed in internecine dynastic struggles. One contender for the imamate imprudently called upon Nasir Shah of Persia for help, thus opening the way for Persian assertion of control over much of the coast of Oman, including Muscat. It fell to Ahmad b. Sa'id Al Bu Sa'id, a successful merchant from the interior and *wali* (governor) of Suhar for one of the Ya'rubi contenders, to provide the focal point of resistance to the Persian invasion. Ahmad gathered Omani forces and managed to evict the Persian forces from all their strongholds and drive them from Oman. Muscat was among the towns liberated and it was reported by the Muscat historian Ibn Ruzayq that when Ahmad's representative arrived at Muscat with those inhabitants of the neighborhoods beyond the walls who had fled the occupation, they were unable to recognize where their former dwellings had stood because of the damage caused by the stabling of the Persian cavalry and the quantity of dung which had accumulated. Before Ahmad's representative could restore order and adjudicate the property disputes, some 60 people had been killed in various altercations.³¹

In gratitude for his leadership, Ahmad b. Sa'id was elected *imam* about 1749, an unusual election because of his lack of religious qualifications, and he established his capital at al-Rustaq. But Ahmad's rule was troubled by insurrection on the part of his sons Sayf and Sultan who in 1781 managed to gain possession of the Forts al-Mirani and al-Jalali by stealth, and soon after held another son Sa'id captive there, then used the forts to bombard Muscat when Ahmad attempted to regain control. Ahmad managed to capture al-Mirani and in the following year, establishing his headquarters in the *gharayzah*, ordered the commandant of al-Mirani to bombard al-Jalali from across Muscat harbor while his ships opened fire from outside the

³¹ Badger, *Salil-ibn-Razik*, pp. 153–154.

harbor. When Saʿid managed to escape from al-Jalali, Ahmad reached an agreement with his sons Sayf and Sultan and regained control of al-Jalali.³²

Ahmad's son Saʿid succeeded him as *imam* in 1783 but he too was faced with recurrent challenges to his rule. First, Muhammad b. Khalfan, the son of his *wakil* (deputy or representative) in Muscat, Khalfan b. Muhammad, held Saʿid's son Ahmad prisoner in Fort al-Jalali. Another of Saʿid's sons, Hamad, persuaded Muhammad b. Khalfan to allow him and his followers to stay in a house known as Bayt al-Nawwab inside the walls. Then Hamad secretly convinced the commanders of both forts to join his side. His suspicions aroused, Muhammad b. Khalfan made his way to Bayt al-Nawwab, only to find it empty. He was fired upon when he attempted to enter al-Jalali and on his way to al-Mirani, Hamad and his followers fired at him from al-Kharkhanah (a workshop or factory), forcing Muhammad to surrender all claims to Muscat.³³ About 1789, Saʿid allowed his son Hamad to assume political leadership of the country while Saʿid retained the title and purely religious functions of *imam*. While his father remained in al-Rustaq, Hamad moved his residence to Muscat where he could better direct his maritime interests. Hamad worked to strengthen Muscat's defenses and fortified the village of Ruwi inland from Matrah. He died of smallpox at Muscat in 1792 and was interred in one of the *wadis* behind the town.³⁴

The initial period of Al Bu Saʿid rule (*i.e.* the latter half of the 18th century) was marked by an interest and growth in maritime trade, which furthered the importance of Muscat. A native broker of the (British) East Indian Company was stationed periodically in Muscat during the years 1773 to 1779. Tipu Sultan, ruler of Mysore (1782–1799), established a permanent trading mission and factory at Muscat, where he anchored part of his commercial fleet during the

³² Miles, *Countries and Tribes*, pp. 278–280.

³³ Badger, *Salil-ibn-Razik*, pp. 196–200. What little more is known about Bayt al-Nawwab is provided below. By al-Kharkhanah, Ibn Ruzayq may have meant the *gharayzah*.

³⁴ This detail is from J.G. Lorimer, comp., *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, ʿOmān, and Central Arabia* (Calcutta: Superintendent, Government Printing, Vol. I: 1915; Vol. II: 1908), Vol. I, p. 418. The tombstone (or more likely its replacement) can still be seen in the large cemetery next to the Hillat al-Shaykh suburb in Muscat's al-Wadi al-Wusta (see fig. 135).

off-season.³⁵ But the relationship between Tipu Sultan and the Al Bu Saʿid also had its disadvantages. The anti-British attitude of the former aroused British suspicion of the Al Bu Saʿid, already pricked by Muscati slave trading in British territories, which was not helped when a letter from Napoleon Bonaparte to Tipu Sultan via Muscat was intercepted.³⁶ A commercial treaty was signed with the British in 1798 and ratified in 1800, although it did not include any right to establish a factory in Al Bu Saʿid territory.³⁷ A British Agent was represented at Muscat during the period 1800–1809 and then again in 1840.³⁸

The history of Muscat during the 19th century eventually became associated with neglect and decline more than anything else. Its fortunes mirrored those of Oman as a whole. Once Saʿid b. Sultan, son of Sultan b. Ahmad (the second Al Bu Saʿid ruler and last of the family's *imams*), gained power about 1806, he gradually expanded his interests overseas and especially to East Africa, eventually making Zanzibar his main residence. This diverted attention away from Muscat but the principal downturn occurred after Saʿid's death in 1856. His Arabian and his African territories were divided between two sons. Most of the wealth was in Zanzibar and Muscat's (and Oman's) income plummeted. In addition, strife within the family and between Muscat on the one hand and the tribes and religious leaders of the interior on the other was endemic throughout the second half of the century.

The ruler of Muscat, Thuwayni b. Saʿid, was killed by his son Salim at Suhar in 1866 and Salim's entry into Muscat, accompanied by a coterie of Islamic leaders, caused panic amongst the inhabitants. As the dust cleared and (British) India extended recognition, a coalition of tribal and religious forces with ʿAzzan b. Qays, a

³⁵ Muscat traded silk worms, sheep, saffron seed, rock salt, horses, pearls, raisins, pearl fishers, and artificers for Tipu Sultan's navy for sandalwood, pepper, ivory, cloth, and rice. Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition*, pp. 50–51. Al Bu Saʿid trading activities during this period were widespread, stretching from the Makran Coast immediately opposite, down the coast of India and up the other side, into the islands of Southeast Asia and along the East African littoral. M. Reda Bhacker, *Trade and Empire in Muscat and Zanzibar: The Roots of British Domination* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 33.

³⁶ Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition*, pp. 50–51.

³⁷ Bhacker, *Trade and Empire*, pp. 32–33.

³⁸ Robert G. Landen, *Oman Since 1856: Disruptive Modernization in a Traditional Arab Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 195.

member of a cadet branch of the Al Bu Saʿid, at their head, invaded Muscat in 1868. Salim barely had time to escape to one of the forts before fleeing to Persia. Not for the first or last time, Muscat experienced considerable devastation. ʿAzzan b. Qays ruled Muscat and Oman as *imam* for nearly three years before he was killed defending Matrah from the forces of Turki b. Saʿid, another son of the earlier ruler Saʿid b. Sultan.

In 1883, a force of Hinawi tribes under the leadership of Salih b. ʿAli al-Harithi descended on Muscat.³⁹ Avoiding the usual strategy of taking Matrah first, they approached Muscat from al-Wadi al-Kabir in the south and surprised the garrison with an attack in the middle of the night. With Turki himself on the ramparts, the attack was repulsed and after an unsuccessful attack on Matrah and another rather desultory attempt on Muscat, the tribes abandoned the offensive in the face of the arrival of tribal reinforcements for the *sultan*.⁴⁰

But this success in repelling the attackers proved to be only a temporary respite. Shaykh Salih b. ʿAli al-Harithi led the Hinawi tribes on another attack on Muscat in early 1895. Salih's son ʿAli managed to seize one of the gates of Muscat and admitted a large number of tribesmen hidden outside the walls. Faysal, who had succeeded his father Turki as *sultan* in 1888, barely had time to escape over the rooftops and via the British Agency to Fort al-Jalali. Fort al-Mirani remained in the hands of the *sultan's* brother Muhammad and only al-Waljat quarter and the British Agency remained free of tribal control. The tribes declared as their *imam* Saʿud b. ʿAzzan b. Qays, son of the erstwhile *imam* some thirty years previously. But with the arrival of Ghafiri tribal supporters for the *sultan*, a stalemate ensued which finally ended with payments to induce the tribesmen to leave. Nevertheless, they looted and burned the town on their departure. The incident prompted Sultan Turki to strengthen

³⁹ Virtually all tribes of Oman are divided into two great confederations, al-Hinawiyah and al-Ghafiriyah. For a short explanation of the confederations and a listing of their members, see J.E. Peterson, "Oman: al-Ghafiriyah and al-Hinawiyah Tribal Confederations," Arabian Peninsula Background Note, No. APBN-001, published on www.JEPeterson.net, September 2003.

⁴⁰ The second attempt on Muscat consisted only of ineffective musketry fire on the watchtowers around Kalbuh and Tuyan, probably including al-Rawiyah Fort. Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, Vol. I, pp. 509–510; Landen, *Oman Since 1856*, p. 338.

his defenses by purchasing new guns for the forts and adding to the numbers of palace guards.⁴¹

The Government of India had declared its neutrality during the siege but it was to become more closely embroiled in Muscat affairs in following years, partially as a result of a persistent French challenge to the paramount British position and partly because of gathering war clouds, specifically with the Ottoman Empire. The French challenge was manifested in a number of ways, such as encouraging the sale of arms in Muscat's *suq* (market) that then found their way to the North West Frontier of India to be used against the British, and in flagging Omani smuggling and slaving dhows from Sur which rendered them inviolate from British seizure at sea. In 1898, Sultan Faysal was persuaded by a visiting French gunboat to grant a concession for a coaling station at Bandar Jissah, a natural harbor a few kilometers east of Muscat. When the British learned of this development, the *sultan* was given an ultimatum to cancel the concession or find his Muscat palace and forts bombarded by a British fleet. The *sultan* capitulated and the Anglo-French crisis over Bandar Jissah was resolved by French acceptance of an offer to share British coaling facilities in al-Mukalla Cove within Muscat harbor.⁴²

With the imminent outbreak of worldwide hostilities and a recrudescence of the interior threat to Muscat, the Government of India in 1913 sent a contingent of Indian Army troops to defend Muscat against any repeat of a tribal attack. The soldiers occupied the *sultan's* old fortified residence at Bayt al-Falaj, just inland from Matrah, and proceeded to establish picquet posts on the hills surrounding Bayt al-Falaj, Matrah, and Muscat. The precautions proved prudent as a large force of tribesmen, united under the banner of a newly elected *imam*, attacked the picquets in early 1915. The Indian Army cordon beat off the assault and the attackers never got near either Matrah or Muscat. This was to be the last battle in the area of Muscat. Bayt al-Falaj was to remain a military headquarters, first of the

⁴¹ Landen, *Oman Since 1856*, pp. 376–377; J.E. Peterson, *Oman in the Twentieth Century* (London: Croom Helm; New York: Barnes and Noble, 1978), pp. 167–168; British Library, Oriental and India Office Collection, R/15/6/37, J. Hayes Sadler, Political Agent, Muscat, to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, 18 March 1895 (this document contains Sadler's eyewitness diary of events during the siege).

⁴² Landen, *Oman Since 1856*, pp. 248–254.

Indian Army troops and then of the small Muscat Infantry/Levy Corps, which was created in 1921 to replace the Indian Army unit.

Despite all the adverse developments during the 19th century, the physical development of Oman was marked by two building phases, the results of which continue to punctuate the Muscat landscape. In the early part of the 19th century, the relocation of the Al Bu Sa'īd family to Muscat resulted in the construction of a number of large, solid residences, a few of which still survive. One of the first of these presumably was the Bayt al-ʿAlam Palace, built at the harbor's edge on the foundations of the Sikkat al-Madfa' sea wall. Construction apparently was begun by Sa'īd b. Sultan when he came to power in 1806 or 1807, and the original palace may not have been completed until 1815 or later.⁴³ Certainly the palace was complete by 1824 when it was used to receive a European visitor.⁴⁴ Visitors toward the end of the 19th century remarked on the caged lion kept in the palace courtyard and even described its employment in tormenting prisoners.⁴⁵ A visitor in 1898 remarked that the palace still displayed damages from its occupation by rebellious interior tribes in 1895 and noted that the *sultan* did not have the necessary funds to repair it.⁴⁶ The Bayt al-ʿAlam complex grew to consist of (from east to west) *al-harīm* (the women's quarters), the main palace, and Bayt al-Barzah (a building where the *sultan* held his *majlis* or audiences and met people who came to see him). A narrow street ran alongside the landward side of the complex and contained the main entrance. After

⁴³ Vincenzo Maurizi, *History of Seyd Said, Sultan of Muscat; Together with an Account of the Countries and Peoples on the Shores of the Persian Gulf, Particularly of the Wahabees* (London: J. Booth, 1819; reprinted Cambridge: Oleander Press, 1984), p. 22. Maurizi arrived in Muscat in 1809 and remained there for at least several years, claiming to have been appointed Sa'īd b. Sultan's personal physician. He made a second visit to Oman in 1814.

⁴⁴ George Thomas Keppel, *A Personal Narrative of a Journey from India to England, by Bussorah, Baghdad, the Ruins of Babylon . . . in the Year 1824* (London, 1827, 2 vols.), pp. 12–13. Another traveller received an audience in the palace in 1835. Victor Fontanier, *Voyages dans l'Inde et dans le Golfe Persique* (2 vols., chez Paulin, éditeur, Paris, 1844–1845).

⁴⁵ Jane Dieulafoy, "A Suse, 1884–1886: Journal des Fouilles," *Le Tour du Monde*, No. 1 (1888), p. 6; Emma Cochran Ponafidine, *My Life in the Moslem East* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1932), p. 85; J. Theodore Bent, "Muscat," *Contemporary Review*, Vol. 68, No. 360 (December 1895), p. 877; J. Theodore Bent and Mabel V.A. Bent, *Southern Arabia* (London: Smith, Elder, 1900; reprinted, Reading: Garnet, 1994), p. 57. Dieulafoy made note of two lions during her visit.

⁴⁶ Emile Allemann, "Mascate," *Le Tour du Monde*, No. 8 (23 February 1901), p. 93.

the construction of this palace, there is no more mention of the eastern (or first) Portuguese church, which presumably was demolished.⁴⁷

The first several decades of the 19th century also saw the building of a number of other substantial houses, mostly of two or three stories, with traditionally thick walls and interior courtyards. The British traveller J.R. Wellsted, visiting Muscat in the 1830s, remarked on the substantial, handsome houses belonging to the old princess, the *sultan's* mother, his governors, and several others.⁴⁸ It is impossible, of course, to determine how many houses were constructed but, given Muscat's general decay until the mid-20th century, nearly all must have survived until 1970. Similarly, the original names and knowledge of earlier inhabitants of the houses have been lost. Some of the surviving buildings were known by the names of their final residents: Bayt Nadir b. Faysal (the eldest son of Sultan Faysal b. Turki, r. 1888–1913), Bayt 'Abbas b. Faysal (a younger son of the same *sultan*), and Bayt al-Wakil (*wakil* = deputy, signifying Shihab b. Faysal, another son of Sultan Faysal, who ran Muscat in the 1950s and 1960s on behalf of Sultan Sa'id b. Taymur). Bayt Faransa acquired its name from its use as the office and residence of the French consul around the turn of the 20th century. Al-Bayt al-Ruwayhi was named after one of the principal tribes of Oman, presumably because it was owned by a tribal member. Bayt Gharayzah (often spelled Greiza) undoubtedly was named because of its location near the old *gharayzah*.⁴⁹ Other less substantial residences were

⁴⁷ As the exact location of the church cannot be determined, it could be speculated that the church was incorporated into Bayt al-'Alam, particularly *al-harim*, especially as both structures were known to be close by the Customs House which survived into the 20th century. The only, admittedly slight, evidence for this is the remark by Wellsted that one of the two churches had fallen into ruins (presumably the *gharayzah*) and the other had been converted into a palace for the *imam*. *Travels in Arabia*, Vol. I, p. 11. Note that Wellsted visited in the 1830s, a decade or more after Maurizi wrote that the palace was under construction. It is also possible that either a small mosque in the vicinity or a Hindu temple may have been rebuilt on the spot of the church; both structures disappeared in the early 1970s.

⁴⁸ Wellsted, *Travels in Arabia*, Vol. I, p. 13. The houses cannot be dated accurately but it seems likely that they were built only after the Al Bu Sa'id rulers made Muscat their headquarters. They are not mentioned by any earlier traveller, including Maurizi.

⁴⁹ A descendant of the merchant 'Ali Musa, who founded the Muscat mosque bearing his name, holds that 'Ali Musa built Bayt Gharayzah, which would therefore date the building to the late 19th or early 20th century. Interview with Yahya Muhammad Nasib, 30 December 1974.

also built presumably during the 19th century; of these nearly all have disappeared.

The last quarter of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century marked another spurt of building, producing a number of edifices which continue to mark Muscat's heritage. A new building for the British Political Agency or Consulate was completed in 1890 on the waterfront site of the house occupied by the agency from the middle of that century. In the following years, the premises of the British Government of India expanded westward along the shoreline until it met the old Customs House.⁵⁰ Details of the builders and the dates for most of the other buildings have been lost and it can only be surmised from their styles of construction and other deduction that they date from this time.

One of the earliest of these was Bayt Nasib, located on the landward side of the Political Agency. Its origins are unknown but it was a one-story edifice owned by a Sayyid Yusuf in 1906 when rented by a newly arrived US consul. The building's second story was apparently added by the consul before the consulate was moved to another building nearby.⁵¹ This latter building was Bayt Mughub, sometimes called Bayt al-Zawawi after the family that owned it. Built into the ophiolite hill behind it, Bayt Mughub was constructed in the 1870s or 1880s but may have been built into existing buildings. Later in the 20th century, it served as the Indian consulate until 1961 and then became the United States Embassy in the 1970s and 1980s. A third house, also located in al-Waljat Quarter of eastern Muscat, appears to date from the same period of late 19th century or early

⁵⁰ Ruth Hawley, *The British Embassy in Muscat: A Short History* (n.p., November 1980).

⁵¹ Letters home of of US Consul to Muscat, William Coffin (1906–1908), dated 29 October 1906, 9 November 1906, 20 December 1906; displayed at a US Embassy exhibition at Bayt al-Zubayr, Muscat, March 1998. The Sayyid Yusuf was probably Sayyid Yusuf b. Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Zawawi. A photograph probably taken ca. 1913 by the Officer Commanding the Indian Army troops at Bayt al-Falaj, towards Fort al-Jalali and apparently from the roof of Bayt al-Kharajiyah, clearly shows the American flag flying over what seems to be Bayt Mughub (a copy of the photograph is held by the Sultan's Armed Forces Archives, Muscat, SAF/DPM/SA/12). Another photograph taken about 1910 from the rear of al-Waljat Quarter towards the British Consulate shows the American flag flying over what appears to be Bayt Nasib (from a collection in the National Army Museum, London, Acc. 5707–54).

20th century, and is known as Bayt al-Kharajiyah because it served as the residence of several of the *sultan's* British "foreign ministers." Another prominent house was Bayt Ratansi, a red-roofed three-story house built in al-Waljat Quarter about 1890 by Hindu merchant Ratansi Purshottam.

The same period saw the construction of the three most prominent pre-1970 mosques of Muscat: 'Ali Musa Mosque, located just outside al-Bab al-Saghir gate in Muscat Wall (completed in A.H. 1328 or A.D. 1910); al-Zawawi Mosque, inside the wall near al-Waljat Quarter (completed about 1906), and Nasib Khan Mosque, not far outside al-Bab al-Kabir (date unknown). All three are Sunni mosques and named after their benefactors. The principal Ibadi mosque—and the mosque used by the Al Bu Sa'id family—was al-Khawr Mosque, a small mosque of indeterminate origin sitting under Fort al-Mirani and not far from the jetty of Muscat harbor, thus its name.

Matrah was less fortunate in possessing notable structures, apart from its commanding fort and the interlocked houses of Sur al-Lawatiyah. No dates can be established for any of the houses of the latter, particularly as many have been rebuilt over the years. Perhaps the oldest extant house in Matrah is Bayt Nasib Khan, built early in the 20th century by the merchant of the same name (although parts may be much older) and used at different times by the British Political Agency and the American Arabian Mission as their first hospital.⁵² Another imposing house was built by Ratansi Purshottam on the Matrah waterfront in 1903. The American mission eventually moved operations to al-Rahmah Hospital, somewhat further inland, which was enlarged several times during the course of the 20th century.⁵³

⁵² Hawley, *British Embassy in Muscat*; and interviews with Yahya Muhammad Nasib, 30 December 1974, and Kamal 'Abd al-Rida Sultan, 1 November 1996.

⁵³ One of the long-serving missionary doctors, Paul Harrison, wrote in his memoirs that the hospital was formerly the home of an Indian doctor who lived in Matrah for many years, i.e. apparently meaning Dr. A.S. Jayakar, the long-serving British Political Agency surgeon and frequently Acting Political Agent during the last half of the 19th century. It remains unclear whether Harrison was referring to the newer home of al-Rahmah Hospital or the earlier Bayt Nasib Khan. Paul Harrison, *Doctor in Arabia* (New York: John Day, 1940), pp. 24 and 65.

*Twentieth-Century Muscat Before 1970**Physical Dimensions and Layout*

Muscat in the mid-20th century had changed little over the previous century or two, except perhaps for the worse. The town was divided by its walls: most of the enduring structures were located Intramuros while the poorer inhabitants tended to live Extramuros. Virtually no changes had been made to the wall in centuries. Its contours followed the same line set down by the Portuguese and the integrated watchtowers still stood as before. The wall was breached in three places. Al-Bab al-Saghir, “the little gate,” provided entry from the south and led directly into the *suq* or market area (which itself stood in the same location since before the Portuguese arrival) (figs. 102 and 106). Al-Bab al-Kabir, “the big gate,” at the southeast corner of the wall, provided entry for motor vehicles as well as pedestrians and thus had become the principal gate, securely locked every evening at sundown (figs. 23–26 and 95–101). However, an 18th century anonymous French map (figs. 4 and 6), which provides the most detailed plan of old Muscat, clearly shows that the old water canal from the Extramuros wells to the *khawr* entered Intramuros precisely at al-Bab al-Kabir. It might therefore be postulated that the original entrance to the town was al-Bab al-Saghir and that al-Bab al-Kabir was developed later after the canal had fallen into disuse and was replaced by a pipeline. A third gate, al-Bab al-Mitha‘ib, is situated in the western wall and adjacent to the northern ridge on which Fort al-Mirani is located. As indicated by the name (*mitha‘ib* = drains), the opening was cut to allow the run-off from the *wadi* (which collected from the hills beyond the town and ran parallel to the western wall) to reach the sea at the *khawr*.

Most remnants of the Portuguese occupation were located Intramuros. Fort al-Jalali had become the country’s principal—and fearsome—prison. Fort al-Mirani served as a garrison for the *sultan*’s guards; ceremonial salutes for visiting ships and dignitaries were fired from its terrace and its small domed chapel fell into disuse. Neither fort had been well-maintained. The two fortifications guarding the entrance to the harbor, al-Sirah al-Gharbiyah and al-Sirah al-Sharqiyah, were in ruins, as were the watchtowers on the hills overlooking the town and al-Rawiyah fortlet in Tuyan. The original Portuguese church had long disappeared. The *gharayzah* had survived in part until well into the 20th century, serving as stables for various *sultans* once its

function as a residence was no longer required or possible; the last remaining wall appears to have been demolished and the land cleared sometime between the 1920s and the 1950s. The Customs House continued to serve in its original capacity, as did the *khawr* jetty underneath Fort al-Mirani (see the aerial photograph of the jetty in Peyton, p. 116).

The most prominent structure of Muscat Intramuros was Bayt al-ʿAlam Palace, which occupied half the shoreline of the harbor. The palace had been repaired or rebuilt several times since its construction but after Sultan Saʿid b. Taymur (r. 1932–1970) failed to return to his capital after 1958, it fell into disuse and the *harim* was moved to Bayt Gharayzah. The remainder of the shoreline was occupied by the British Agency complex. Behind these two complexes lay a maze of houses, mosques, and narrow lanes, much of it derelict. Only the need for new residences to house Sultan Saʿid’s British advisers produced any new construction inside the walls. The house built in the late 1950s for Leslie Chauncey, a former Political Agent who became the *sultan*’s principal adviser, and the house begun at the end of the 1960s for a new Petroleum Adviser (and later taken over by Sayyid Tariq b. Taymur, the Prime Minister after 1970) were built on the site of the old *gharayzah*.⁵⁴

Slightly more development took place outside the walls. Al-Saʿidiyah School was built in 1940 next to ʿAli Musa Mosque. The British Bank of the Middle East (BBME) opened the first bank in Muscat in 1948 in Bayt Faransa but its own premises were completed outside al-Bab al-Kabir in 1956 (see the photograph in Peyton, p. 120). A Municipality building was constructed between this bank and al-Bab al-Kabir in the mid-1960s (see the aerial photographs of Muscat and Matrah in Wace, pp. 894–895). After the discovery (1964) and first exports (1967) of oil, Sultan Saʿid commissioned a British architect, John Harris, to draw up a development plan for Muscat and Matrah. One result in Muscat was the construction of a girls’ school farther up the *wadi* from BBME.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Several individuals in Muscat told the author in the 1990s that unspecified “Christian artifacts” were uncovered during construction of the second house but I have been unable to confirm this. A son of Sayyid Tariq remembers that a Portuguese cannon was unearthed during the construction of a garden wall but left in the ground.

⁵⁵ The plan was summarized in Barbara Wace, “Master Plan for Muscat and Oman,” *Geographical Magazine*, Vol. 41, No. 12 (September 1969), pp. 892–905.

Social Composition of Muscat and Matrah

In the past, the most substantial aspects of Muscat were almost always situated within the walls. To a large extent, this also included the population. Muscat Intramuros was the home of members of the ruling family and most of Muscat's prominent merchants, as well as what few foreign consuls were present. Many of the houses outside the walls tended to be of *barasti* (palm frond) construction (fig. 209). These structures were always the worst to suffer in times of political unrest or natural disaster; many were destroyed in a series of suspicious fires in the 1960s. The names of the Extramuros quarters often reflected the occupations of their inhabitants: al-Dalalil (brokers or middlemen), al-Madbaghah (tannery), al-Nisasil (weavers), al-Hinna (selling of henna), and al-Safafir (coppersmiths). Much the same held true for Matrah.

Although by tradition Muscat was originally occupied by the Arab Bani Wuhayb tribe and Matrah by the Arab Bani Hasan tribe, neither tribe no longer comprised the majority in either town even by the turn of the 20th century. Baluch formed probably the largest proportion of the population, followed by people of black African descent. There were also a considerable number of 'Ajam or Persians, and some families of Arab Shi'ah, known as al-Baharinah. Most of the Hindus, mainly from the Banian merchant class, resided in Muscat while Matrah was home to most of the Lawatiyah, Ja'fari Shi'ah of Indian origin, mixed with some Agha Khanis. It was said that 14 languages were spoken regularly in the *sugs* of Muscat and Matrah.⁵⁶ Muscat's small Jewish community had virtually disappeared by this time and the only Christians were foreigners. Arab tribes still populated the nearby villages, such as Ruwi, al-Wutayyah, al-Saruj, and Bawshar, although the fishing suburbs such as Kalbuh, Sidab, Haramil, al-Bustan, and Qantab contained sizeable numbers of Baluch.

Muscat Since 1970

In July 1970, Oman (or Muscat and Oman as it was officially known at the time) was a sleepy backwater, noted for an isolation as pro-

⁵⁶ W.G. Grey, "Trades and Races of Oman," *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (January 1911), p. 4.

found as Nepal or Tibet and, by a very few outsiders, for the leftist insurgency in its southern province. A few months later, the Sultanate of Oman began to take its place alongside its monarchical neighbors as a rapidly developing Gulf oil state. The catalyst for this abrupt about-face was the palace *coup d'état* of 23 July 1970 in which Sandhurst-trained Qabus b. Sa'īd overthrew his father Sa'īd b. Taymur as *sultan*. As Omanis were fond of repeating in subsequent years, before 1970 there was nothing and after 1970 there was everything—the difference was Qabus.

Not surprisingly, the focal point of the development revolution which swept over the country was the capital and the changes to Muscat, Matrah, and the surrounding region were more rapid and deeper than anywhere else. What had been two small towns and a handful of distinct villages grew into a major urban area within a decade or two, outstripping the projections of even the most optimistic planners. But the capital area's path of development was dictated by its unique geographical arrangement, rather than its historical setting.

The Urban Explosion

The initial impetus behind the urban explosion was the creation of the nucleus of a modern government. The growing flood of Omanis returning from abroad at this stage tended to relocate to their own villages and regions throughout the countryside.

The need for a fully functional government was recognized from the beginning and personnel were recruited from the small cadre of trained Omanis and a broad diversity of Arabs and foreigners. Besides the municipality, only one purpose-built government building had emerged before the 1970s: the small Khawr building near Bayt al-'Alam Palace in Muscat. This was taken over for use by the nascent Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Other makeshift premises, such as schools and residential blocks were the first locations of other ministries. On its completion in the early 1970s, the *mujamma'* complex between Matrah and Ruwi, was used to house two ministries on each of its four floors.

Gradually, as government needs and the state's financial capabilities grew (especially during the oil price boom years of 1974 through the early 1980s), more appropriate structures appeared. The Ministry of Defence and the Services headquarters left crowded Bayt al-Falaj

Camp for the new Mu‘askar al-Murtafa‘ (Military Heights) complex behind al-Sib International Airport in the second half of the 1970s while several other ministries moved into new premises in the Ruwi area. By the mid-1980s, an entire series of ministry buildings populated a stretch in al-Khuwayr between the sea and the new dual-carriageway to the airport. The Palace Office (more recently termed the Royal Office) and the Internal Security Service occupied the hills overlooking the new al-Qurm shopping district.

Residential, commercial, and industrial expansion naturally kept pace with the government. The Greater Matrah master plan prepared in the last years of Sultan Sa‘id b. Taymur’s rule envisaged an expansion over Matrah’s encircling hills to Wadi Bayt al-Falaj behind. Prior to 1970, this somewhat triangular-shaped valley contained the Bayt al-Falaj army camp at one point, the small village of Ruwi at a second point, and absolutely nothing at the third. Within the space of five years, a new dual-carriageway had been built from Matrah’s new corniche to Ruwi. The village of Ruwi was swamped under a hodgepodge of shops along the new Ruwi High Street, small workshops, and cheap housing. Other houses and apartment blocks began to fill in the area around Bayt al-Falaj, as well as the new al-Falaj Hotel. A new congregational mosque, known as the Qabus Mosque after its donor, sprang up at the end of Ruwi High Street, and gradually the third point of the triangle, al-Wadi al-Kabir, began to fill in with more workshops, garages, and small industrial concerns. By 1985, a road had been cut through the pass at the end of the valley, linking it with al-Bustan on the coast east of Muscat town.

This road was required to provide access to the new al-Bustan Palace Hotel, completed just in time for the first Gulf Cooperation Council summit to be held in Muscat. A coastal road also linked the village of al-Bustan and the hotel to Muscat, as well as to the villages of Sidab and Haramil on the way. Although the residents of these villages soon built new houses, the restrictive geography of hills and sea prevented any significant expansion to the east of Muscat.

At the same time, it soon became apparent that Wadi Bayt al-Falaj would not be able to contain all of Muscat’s development needs. Al-Nahdah Hospital, begun under the old régime, already lay just outside Ruwi, and the oil company, Petroleum Development (Oman) (PDO) had established its base of operations in Sayh al-Malih—the cove immediately west of Matrah that was renamed Mina’ al-Fahl—

with its residential area on the coastal hills of Ra's al-Hamra' to its west. The old airfield in Wadi Bayt al-Falaj was clearly in the wrong place and a new airport was built on the coastal plain some 25 kilometers from Muscat town. Years later, the course of the old runway served as the main road through the country's new banking district. At the same time of the early 1970s, the sultanate's first planned residential development, Madinat Qabus (Qabus City), was built in splendid isolation on the low hills overlooking the small village of al-Saruj and the sand dunes behind the sea at al-Qurm.

By the mid-1980s, however, Madinat Qabus was no longer isolated. Having filled Wadi Bayt al-Falaj, advancing urbanization snaked through narrow Wadi 'Adayy and spilled out into al-Qurm flood plain, where new shopping centers began to emerge. Old al-Qurm village was enveloped in a wave of fine houses covering the hills of desirable al-Qurm Heights. The Muscat Intercontinental Hotel appeared on al-Qurm beach and the sand dunes, which had made access to the beach impossible without four-wheel-drive vehicles, disappeared.

The progress of ribbon development along a Ruwi-Qurm-Khuwayr-'Udhaybah corridor was relentless. Once again, the path of urbanization was determined principally by geography. There was nowhere to go inland from Ruwi, as the only fissure in the hills was Wadi 'Adayy.⁵⁷ Even though al-Qurm Heights marked the end of the coastal hills and the beginning of al-Batinah beach (stretching several hundred kilometers to the UAE border in the northwest), the resultant coastal plain provided only several kilometers of depth between the sea and the hills, all the way to al-'Udhaybah. Thus the Muscat conurbation continued to spread west.

From the mid-1980s, a six-lane dual-carriageway provided the single main thoroughfare for the capital area, beginning in Matrah and terminating in a great roundabout west of al-Sib Airport. The Burj al-Sahwah (Renaissance Tower) in the middle of the roundabout symbolized the country's rebirth but the roundabout also constituted the juncture of the roads from Muscat, the sultanate's coast, and the interior. Once meant to mark the end of Muscat, Burj al-Sahwah soon became a victim of unrelenting sprawl. To its northwest, al-Sib

⁵⁷ This *wadi* starts in the broad inland plain of Sayh al-Hatat and follows a narrow winding gorge north some 10 kilometers to a point just west of Ruwi, where it abruptly turns to the west and then winds its way to the sea at al-Qurm.

village grew into a massive development of family houses. Residential building continued along the coast west of al-Sib and inland towards the hills and a village named al-Khawd, site of the country's new Sultan Qabus University. The demands of increasing commuter traffic forced a realignment of the main thoroughfare to bypass the Burj al-Sahwah roundabout and another road was laid out along the coast north of the airport. Although never more than a few kilometers wide, metropolitan Muscat now stretched for some 60 kilometers or more from east to west (fig. 66).

The filling in of nearly every available space within this area meant that industrial infrastructure and commercial warehouses were forced to relocate to more remote locations. A new industrial park was created in an isolated *wadi* alongside the main road to the interior. But soon even it was not big enough and new areas had to be found. At the same time, successive development plans sought to relocate industrial projects to other parts of the sultanate, to spread the prosperity and to stem the flow of Omanis to the capital.

Half-planned and half-accidental in origin, Muscat's ribbon development continues to evince numerous problems. Fortunately, the capital's superb road network was all but completed before the collapse of oil prices in 1986. Unfortunately, the growth in population and increasing numbers of vehicles on the road meant that traffic congestion became a severe problem throughout much of the capital. The main dual-carriageway worked well most of the time but slowed to a crawl during rush hours. When accidents or the movement of the *sultan* or VIPs closed the road, traffic throughout the ribbon came to a virtual dead-stop. Elsewhere, traffic jams and black accident areas turned commercial areas into mazes of one-way streets.

In the late 1960s, Mina' al-Fahl seemed to be the perfect location for PDO's oil terminal: a sheltered bay, an isolated, deserted area perfect for industrial development, and still not far away from Muscat's center. Thirty years later, the site was clearly inappropriate. The company was pinned in by urban development on all sides, the refinery was in the middle of residential areas, and tanker trucks had to fight with heavy car traffic to make their way out of the capital area. Similar concerns surrounded the country's principal port in Matrah, Mina' Qabus. The only way out of the port for imported shipping was along the same few congested roads. The workshops and warehouses that had been banished in early years to isolated al-Wadi al-Kabir suddenly lined the ceremonial route that all important visitors must take to get to al-Bustan.

The Social Impact of Muscat's Urbanization

Generally speaking, the dispersion of the Omani population in Muscat during the post-1970 period follows two patterns. The first began when the wealthier of Muscat and Matrah's inhabitants moved to new homes in the initial new developments, such as the areas between Bayt al-Falaj and Ruwi. Al-Qurm Heights, developed from the mid-1970s, served as a magnet for senior members of the ruling family, wealthy merchants, and government ministers. As incomes rose, particularly for civil servants and small merchants, more residential settlements appeared. At the same time, with the expansion of the government—as well as expansion of the largely government-fuelled economy in general—more Omanis from all areas of the country were attracted to the capital. Initially, many or most of these regarded themselves as commuters: they sought to rent as inexpensive housing as possible and always returned to their home towns and villages at the weekend. Gradually, however, they began to put down roots in Muscat, building their own homes (in addition to houses “back home”) and bringing their families to the capital (because of, for example, better and more comprehensive educational facilities for their children).⁵⁸

Muscat's dramatic growth during the post-1970 period was equally due to the influx of expatriates. According to the 2003 census, just under 40% of the capital governorate's 632,073 residents were expatriates. This was an improvement from the 1993 census, which found that expatriates formed some 47% of the governorate's 622,506 residents.⁵⁹ The spatial dispersion of these expatriates corresponds to their socioeconomic status. Senior and mid-level government employees, commercial managers, and nearly all Western workers occupy the same housing as their Omani counterparts throughout the urban spread from al-Qurm on the east to al-Sib and al-Khawd on the

⁵⁸ Muscat's urban expansion and changes in social organization are discussed in Fred Scholz, *Muscat–Sultanat Oman: Geographische Skizze einer einmaligen arabischen Stadt* (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1990).

⁵⁹ Sultanate of Oman, Ministry of National Economy, *Statistical Yearbook 2004* (Muscat, October 2004), accessed online at <<http://www.moneoman.gov.om/mone/population.htm>>; Sultanate of Oman, Ministry of Development, *General Census of Population, Housing and Establishments 1993* (Muscat, 1994). This proportion compares with 24% expatriate population for the country as a whole, and reflects Muscat's relatively higher standard of living (demand for domestic workers), its role as Oman's commercial and industrial center, and the concentration of government agencies and employment in the area.

west. Lower-income workers (apart from domestic servants who typically have quarters attached to their employers' residences) either live in company camps or find shared housing especially in the older areas of the capital.

Even as high and mid-income Omanis have deserted Muscat and Matrah for the new suburbs, the twin towns and the other small coastal villages have been left to lower-income groups. Although there was also a certain amount of emigration of Omanis from other parts of the country to these older areas (particularly in the *wadis* behind Muscat and al-Hamriyah quarter behind Ruwi), most of the Omani inhabitants of these areas appear to be the original residents with a high proportion of Baluch and Omanis of African descent. Many houses are rented to groups of foreign workers, particularly from the Indian subcontinent. This is especially true in Muscat while Matrah appears to retain a higher proportion of local inhabitants in modestly rebuilt homes clustered in small quarters nestled amongst the hills. Transformed Ruwi tends to service the Asian expatriates, partly with housing but particularly with small shops that cater to Asian consumers.

The striking impression left by residential patterns is the complete mingling of Omani and expatriates. There are very few areas in the Muscat region inhabited only by Omanis or by expatriates. Rather than the result of deliberate government policy, this pattern appears to have developed naturally. Certainly, it has also been promoted by the legal prohibition on expatriates owning real property: thus many Omanis have built houses for themselves or for income in areas inhabited by Omanis and foreigners.

The Legacy Lost: The Rape of Muscat

Cities grow, priorities change, and development marches on. Muscat is no exception and certainly the Muscat capital area of today is a far more lively, diversified, and productive place than it was forty years ago. But so much of the area's renewal and expansion occurred at the needless expense of what had been a rich historical and cultural legacy. Unfortunately, this is a pattern that has recurred throughout the country.⁶⁰ The wholesale destruction of Muscat requires some detailed explanation.

⁶⁰ Particularly notorious examples are the old *jami'* mosques of Nizwa and Nakhl with their unique 13th-14th century *mihirabs* (prayer niches): they were completely

In 1970, Muscat town was undoubtedly one of the best preserved capitals in the world. The following can only be said with the benefit of hindsight of course, but it is a pity that it could not be recognized at the time that the capital would grow so prodigiously and that therefore Muscat Intramuros should have been preserved as a historic quarter. This of course did not happen. Instead, Muscat Intramuros suffered considerable historical and aesthetic depredation and its historical sites have nearly disappeared entirely.

One of the early and still most significant developments was the demolition of the old and decaying Bayt al-‘Alam Palace. No thought appears to have been paid at the time to the possibility of restoration or even preservation of some features. The rich collection of official documents was unceremoniously disposed of and salvageable contents soon disappeared.⁶¹ The replacement was an Anglo-Indian pastiche of a palace, Qasr al-‘Alam, which not only dwarfed the dimensions of the old palace but soared over all Muscat in a most jarring way.

The entire waterfront between Fort al-Mirani and the British Embassy compound was cleared and incorporated in the new palace. Far more damaging was the wholesale destruction of al-Banyan quarter, a labyrinth of narrow lanes and old houses traditionally occupied by Muscat’s Hindu merchants—the losses included the Indian Consulate, imposing Bayt Ratansi, at least one small mosque, and a Hindu temple. Over the years, the adjacent seaside was gradually filled in to form a massive lawn where the *sultan* conducts his annual tea parties on the occasion of Oman’s National Day (fig. 112). Qasr al-‘Alam Palace is purely ceremonial and the *sultan* is rarely found there; instead, when in the capital area, he resides at his palace at al-Sib or, more recently, Bayt al-Barakah just up al-Batinah road.

A few years after this, Muscat *suq* disappeared (fig. 106). Smaller in scale than the Matrah *suq* and, by the early 1970s, more the location of merchants’ offices than a counterpart to Matrah’s commercial

destroyed so that new and undistinguished Qabus mosques could be erected on the same sites.

⁶¹ Stories abound of passers by rummaging through documents and taking what they pleased. One unverified account claims that bundles of documents were tied up and thrown into a dhow with other objects, bound for the palace in Salalah; unfortunately the dhow sank in a storm. The ornate, wooden, main doors of the palace were said to have disappeared into a local bank (figs. 20–22).

cornucopia, the twisting lanes of Muscat *sug* and its debouchment directly through al-Bab al-Saghir gave an attractive taste of Muscat's history (fig. 102). Its place was taken by a nondescript variety of Diwan offices and residences of modern breeze-block construction. Next were the walls of Muscat (figs. 69–70). Apparently regarded as too mean for what was rapidly becoming royal precincts, the walls were demolished and replaced by new walls of imported stone. Although some care was taken to preserve the nature of al-Bab al-Saghir, the reconstruction of al-Bab al-Kabir was done in a totally alien and overbearing style (figs. 23–26 and 95–101).

Fort al-Jalali was subjected to “modernization” as well. A seaward-side extension of landfill enabled the construction of a heliport and a small funicular railway was added to relieve visitors of the necessity of climbing the long series of steps to the old doorway on the landward side. Inside the fort, trees, shrubs, flowerbeds, fountains, and pools replaced the prison atmosphere of the past, and a modest *son-et-lumière* was installed in the former governor's office. Fort al-Mirani escaped much of Jalali's “Disneyfication,” in part because it remained a working garrison of the Royal Guard of Oman. Modest repairs were made and the old Portuguese chapel was restored, complete with a small exhibition (fig. 84). The biggest change was the construction of a lift from sea level to the main floor of the fort, artfully concealed as a tower. However, the construction of a road to al-Mukalla Cove near the entrance to the harbor necessitated the destruction of the Portuguese artillery battery, as well as the old *khawr* jetty.

Many of Muscat's old houses did not survive either. The destruction and rebuilding of Bayt Gharayzah in a more-or-less traditional style necessitated the disappearance of Bayt al-Wakil. Bayt Faransa, restored in the 1960s as the office and residence of PDO's government liaison officer, received a new lease of life when it was made into the Omani-French Museum.⁶² Bayt ‘Abbas, having fallen into disarray on the death of its last owner, was used briefly by a contracting firm before being restored and then locked up and never

⁶² The new museum was dedicated by then-President François Mitterand. Unfortunately, since the proximity of another old house across the narrow street obstructed television camera angles, the other house, Bayt Shatuh, was quickly demolished before the ceremony.

used. Bayt Nadir was briefly taken over in the late 1970s or early 1980s as a modest museum organized by the Historical Association of Oman. But the building was condemned due to structural weakness and the society's collection was dispersed. Although still standing at the beginning of the 21st century, the building simply rots away. A small house behind it, Bayt Mawzinah, was restored at one point but then sat unoccupied and is also decaying.

At the other (eastern) end of Muscat, in al-Waljat and Mughub quarters, Bayt Mughub was pressed into service as the first United States Embassy from 1972 until the late 1980s. As the embassy grew, the overflow went into adjacent Bayt Nasib. Both buildings remained unoccupied and untouched after the departure of the American embassy to the new diplomatic quarter in Shati' al-Qurm. The British Embassy was pushed from its pride of place next to the palace to the distant diplomatic quarter not long after the American embassy departed. Then the imposing and verandahed seaside chancery of the British Embassy was unceremoniously reduced to rubble before National Day 1995—despite the presence of the Prince of Wales as guest of honor. Fortunately, Bayt al-Kharajiyah temporarily was spared the same fate by undergoing restoration and use as a Diwan office. By 2004, however, all of al-Waljat Quarter, including Bayt Mughub, Bayt Nasib, Bayt al-Kharajiyah, several mosques, and the remaining buildings of the British Embassy compound, was completely destroyed to make way for new palace buildings. Even al-Zawawi Mosque was demolished, presumably to make way for yet more Diwan structures.

Muscat Extramuros, while perhaps not so historically or architecturally interesting, was similarly ravaged by new construction of homes and offices. The dozen or so farms that had prospered thanks to Muscat's old wells were replaced by Diwan buildings and apartment blocks; most of the wells fell into disuse. Emigration into the capital by low-income Omanis resulted in the presumably illegal construction of houses in the upper reaches of the *wadis*, indifferent to their encroachment on ancient cemeteries.

The remainder of the metropolitan area did not fare much better. The main gate breaching Matrah's walls, al-Bab al-Kabir (or Bab al-Darwazah), had been left unused since 1962 when a torrential downpour caused the gate to collapse, injuring three people. Thereafter traffic simply proceeded around the gate through a breach in the wall, even though the gate was still symbolically locked every evening.

Sometime in the late 1970s or early 1980s, the gate was knocked down and a modern gate, also purely symbolic, was erected in its place. Al-Bab al-Mitha'ib, presumably meant originally as a means to allow runoff from rainfall to reach the sea in the same manner as its counterpart in Muscat, was also knocked down and traffic today continues to pass through the breach in the wall thus created. The third gate, Bab Jibru or al-Bab al-Saghir, disappeared shortly after 1970 along with the western half of Matrah wall, since it obstructed access to the new corniche and port.⁶³

Matrah Fort, however, fared perhaps the best of all the area's fortifications as it was restored to its original or traditional state. Although it belongs to the Royal Oman Police, it is unoccupied except by a caretaker. Another recent Matrah casualty is al-Rahmah Hospital, built and operated by the American Arabian Mission until 1970 when it was turned over to the Omani Ministry of Health (figs. 180–181). It was knocked down in the late 1990s.

Matrah's historic Sur al-Lawatiyah quarter remains entirely in private hands, i.e. Lawati families and the community as a whole regarding mosques and *ma'tams*. Families continue to demolish and rebuild individual houses, including along the distinctive fronting of the Corniche. The principal mosque of the quarter (and also the main Shi'i mosque in Oman), also located on the Corniche, has been rebuilt numerous times, most recently in the 1990s in a Persian style. Entrance to the *sur* (*sur* = wall or walled compound) is provided by two gates, one on the Corniche and the second on the opposite landward side. Rather than the quarter possessing distinct walls, the walls of the outer houses have been built to adjoin each other in order to maintain the quarter's protected and fortified character. The *sur* originally possessed four towers, one at each quarter. A house has been constructed on the site of one tower, the second was restored by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture (although it is now decaying), the third is in ruins, and the fourth has disappeared, but the coffee shop taking its place is circular, apparently in commemoration of the former structure (see figs. 188–191).

⁶³ The Jibru quarter suffered more disruption in 1985 when the area was razed to create a new roundabout and line of commercial enterprises connected with the port. The quarter's inhabitants, traditionally porters and harbor workers, were moved to public housing a considerable distance away near the university.

In the valley beyond Matrah lies the fort of Bayt al-Falaj. Built probably sometime in the 18th century as a summer residence for its owner, possibly one of Oman's rulers or perhaps a governor of Muscat, the imposing structure was soon fortified because its strategic location at the entrance to Muscat/Matrah made it an ideal defensive site.⁶⁴ At subsequent intervals in the 19th century, it apparently was used as a country residence by Al Bu Sa'id rulers, whenever it was not under attack, that is. It acquired new significance in 1913 when an Indian Army force was landed to protect Muscat from a tribal invasion and Bayt al-Falaj was made the expedition's headquarters. The small village surrounding the fort was transformed into an army camp, which it remains today. When the Indian troops were replaced in 1921 by the Muscat Infantry/Levy Corps, the fort continued to provide offices, stores, and even jails. It remained the headquarters of the country's armed forces until the late 1970s, whereupon it was converted into a museum. The building's name, i.e., house of the water channel, points to the existence of surrounding gardens which were fed by *aftaj* (plural of *falaj* = water channel) from farther up the valley (fig. 198). One *falaj* was restored in the 1970s and although it provided plenty of water for the few lawns and gardens surrounding the restored fort, most of the water was diverted to sewage channels and thence out the sea.

The principal village of the valley had been Ruwi, which was completely transformed into the capital's new commercial center in the 1970s.⁶⁵ The only road out of the Muscat/Matrah area passed through Ruwi and entered Wadi 'Adayy to the west. At the point of joining lay an earthen wall known as Sadd Ruwi (Ruwi Dam), built in the late 18th or early 19th century most probably as a defensive measure.⁶⁶ The wall had mainly collapsed by the 20th century and a small customs post, regulating traffic between Muscat/Matrah and the rest of the country, stood nearby. The single remaining tower was restored in the 1970s but carelessly destroyed and replaced by a less authentic structure.

⁶⁴ It was first mentioned in this connection in 1792–1793 during the internecine fighting between the sons of Imam Ahmad b. Sa'id Al Bu Sa'id for control of the country. Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 421.

⁶⁵ A small Portuguese tower in the village was restored in 1985. Costa, *Historical Interpretation*, p. 113.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 106–107.

Farther afield, many other traces of Muscat's past have disappeared. Like Ruwi, the villages of al-Wutayyah, al-Saruj, and al-Khuwayr have been subsumed by modern developments. A neolithic fishing village on the Ra's al-Hamra' hills at al-Qurm Heights was excavated in the 1970s and then built over. On the low hills above the string of villages that constitute picturesque Bawshar exist a considerable number of prehistoric tomb cairns. But in recent years, the construction of new residential areas has put these cairns under risk of destruction. One of Bawshar's impressive mud-brick fortified houses has been restored but the remainder have been abandoned and left to decay.

Neglect was also the fate of old Dama, a Sassanid town and site of one of the network of prehistoric trade fairs covering the Arabian Peninsula but destroyed by floods in A.D. 865.⁶⁷ As the modern village of al-Sib expanded after the mid-1970s, the presumed tell of Dama was incorporated into a large new villa. Mention might also be made of the old caravan road skirting the edge of the hills before making its way into the interior. The track of the road, including stone bridges over several wadis, was constructed by the Muscat Levy Corps in early 1928.⁶⁸ No longer used, the road can be discerned in a only few places, such as the stretch between Bawshar and Ghallah (see fig. 59).

The areas to the east of Matrah have also seen the destruction of historic sites. Until recently, the little cove of Rawdah contained the ruins of a substantial country house (dating from at least the early 19th century) and extensive gardens, watered both by wells and *aflaj*. Nearby houses were inhabited and an extensive date garden existed into the early 20th century.⁶⁹ In 1994 or 1995, a marina was constructed in the cove and the ruins were needlessly razed to provide space to put construction materials. After completion of the marina, a car park was constructed around a circular lawn—on

⁶⁷ J.C. Wilkinson, *Water and Tribal Settlement in South-East Arabia: A Study of the Aflaj of Oman* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), pp. 40–41 and 132.

⁶⁸ FO/371/13728; Commandant's Report on Muscat Levy Corps, May 1926–1928; Captain R.W.G. Stephens, Commandant, Muscat Infantry, Bayt al-Falaj, 11 May 1928.

⁶⁹ The first mention of the site was by Théogène-François Page, commander of a French naval vessel visiting Muscat in 1842, in *Journal de Campagne de la Favorite*, manuscrit illustré, cited in Billecocq, *Oman: Vingt-Cinq Siècles*, p. 191. It was later described by Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 1194.

exactly the same site as the ruins. Similar disregard for historical significance was shown at Haramil, another small cove east of Muscat and accessible only by sea until a road was cut through the surrounding hills in the 1980s. A quarantine station for bubonic plague was built there in 1897 for passengers arriving on ships at Muscat.⁷⁰ The last remaining part of the station, an attractive arched structure, was unceremoniously destroyed in 1996 to provide local fishermen with more parking space.

Another example of wanton destruction is Masjid al-Luqtah, at the inland entrance to Wadi 'Adayy. This was actually a 200-year-old complex including a religious school, a small mosque, a formal garden with an ornamental pool, a two-story pavilion, and a courtyard house. Water for the extensive gardens was provided through a four-kilometer *falaj*. The ruins, apart from a small mosque, were completely destroyed in 1985, apparently because they interfered with the boundary wall of a new earth station.⁷¹

Singapore is one of the most frequently cited examples of prosperity and development resulting in the wholesale destruction of cultural and historical legacy.⁷² Sadly, Muscat has followed a similar path. True, the country's emerging reliance on tourism has led to an emphasis on cheap restoration of Oman's extensive numbers of magnificent forts. But little has been done in the Muscat area. The collection of small museums is mostly in new buildings, as well as having been established on an *ad hoc* basis. As described earlier, historical monuments—large or small, significant or marginal, well-preserved or in ruins—are considered to have little value and are transformed without a second thought or, far more often, are simply bulldozed.

Although most of this destruction is the consequence of simply carelessness or indifference, there may also be a deliberate element. As one observant Omani remarked, it would not be unusual for the

⁷⁰ Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, Vol. II, p. 2552. Plague first appeared in Muscat in 1899 and plague may have decimated the village of Bandar Jissah, just down the coast. Allemann, "Mascate," p. 95.

⁷¹ Costa, *Historical Interpretation*, p. 116. The complex is also described in John Alexander Smith, "The Islamic Garden in Oman: Sanctuary and Paradise," *Garden History: The Journal of the Garden History Society*, Autumn 1991, pp. 187–208.

⁷² Contrast this with Sanaa in Yemen, where the lack of money has meant that much of the old walled city remains intact and new construction, at least in old areas, tends to follow traditional patterns.

present régime, like so many before it, to consciously destroy the accomplishments of its predecessors in order to highlight or promote its own grandeur.⁷³ Unfortunately, such a strategy may soon be successful. New Omani generations, already too young to remember life before 1970, have little to go by except what this government tells them. By the time questions are raised about the past, it will be too late: too little of the past will be left to commemorate.

⁷³ For detailed examinations of how the rituals, objects, and memories of “tradition” are created and even manipulated, see Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

A GAZETTEER OF PLACE NAMES IN MUSCAT AND ITS VICINITY

— A —

‘ADAYY, WADI [wādī ‘adāy; وادي عدي] The watercourse, normally dry, which empties the Sayh al-Hatat basin into the sea at **al-Qurm**. The wadi originates in a sinuous canyon several kilometers long from its beginning at the northern end of Sayh al-Hatat to a point just west of **Ruwi**. From there the wadi turns west and proceeds in an increasingly leisurely fashion to the sea. The canyon between Ruwi and Sayh al-Hatat is of the most interest for its collection of rock art scattered along the length. Nearly all is pecked art with depictions of battles and hunting scenes. [COSTA, p. 116; PERS.]

‘AJAM [‘ajam; عجم] The name of a quarter of Muscat located between the **Takiyah** and **Safafir** quarters and previously inhabited chiefly by Persians. Also the name of a quarter in Matrah inland from **Tuyan**, inhabited by Baluch and Persians. In the 1980s, most of the Matrah quarter’s inhabitants were transferred by the government to “social housing” in **al-Khawd**. [LORIMER, VOL. II, PP. 1183 AND 1199; PERS.]

AL BU SA’ID [āl bū sa’id; آل بو سعيد] A quarter of Muscat Intramuros, stretching from the old Customs House to Fort **al-Mirani** along the shore and inland to al-Bab al-Kabir. Bayt al-‘Alam, the *sultan*’s palace, and the houses of the Al Bu Sa’id family were located in this area. Among the houses were Bayt Gharayzah, Bayt Faransa, Bayt ‘Abbas, Bayt al-Wakil (also known as Bayt Shihab), and Bayt Ahmad b. Ibrahim (for more information, see “**Houses**” under “**MUSCAT**” entry). It also contained Masjid al-Wakil, said to be the oldest mosque in Muscat at the time of its post-1970 destruction (subsequently rebuilt), and Masjid al-Khawr, the mosque of the ruling family and also rebuilt in the 1970s. Masjid al-Wakil takes its name either from Bayt al-Wakil (after the popular title of Sayyid Shihab b. Faysal, uncle of Sultan Sa’id b. Taymur [r. 1932–1970] who served as the *sultan*’s representative or deputy [*wakil*] in Muscat), or from a much

earlier deputy of an Al Bu Saʿid ruler in Muscat. Maṣḥid al-Khawr takes its name from its proximity to the *khawr* (an inlet in Muscat harbor). Another mosque, similarly rebuilt, is Maṣḥid al-Aghbari between Bayt Faransa and al-Bab al-Kabir; named after an *ʿalim* (religious scholar) or *qadi* (religious judge) from the al-Aghbari family of Wadi al-Tayyin. A slave market also operated in the quarter near the *khawr* in the early 19th century. [LORIMER, vol. II, p. 1182; KEPPEL, p. 21; PERS.]

ARBAQ [arbaq; أربق] A small village formerly located on the shore of Matrah Bay just northwest of Matrah and inhabited by sailors and small merchants. A small fort with two round towers, similar to Matrah Fort, protected the western side of the anchorage (figs. 41 and 175). Both the village and the fort were demolished in 1970 during the construction of the new port of Minaʾ Qabus (see **MATRAH**). The village appeared to be deserted when an engineering survey was made in 1960 to determine the feasibility of construction of a small port on the site. [LORIMER, vol. II, p. 1192; COSTA, p. 112; FO/371/156807; PERS.]

ʿARSAH [ʿarṣah; عرصَة] A small neighborhood of Matrah just outside al-Bab al-Kabir. Traditionally ʿArsah (= auction place) was the site where local agricultural produce was brought in from the countryside and auctioned to local fruit and vegetable retailers. [PERS.]

ʿARYANAH *see* **ʿIRYANAH**

ʿAWR, WADI AL- [al-ʿawr; وادي العور] A quarter of Muscat Intramuros running from Fort **al-Mirani** to **Bab al-Mathaʿib**, west of the **Al Bu Saʿid** quarter and next to the western town wall. There are no distinctive houses in this area, possibly because it is low, has a high water table, and is susceptible to flooding. According to Lorimer, most of the inhabitants were Baluchis. Tradition holds that a colony of blind people lived in this quarter in the past (*ʿawr* = blind). [LORIMER, vol. II, p. 1183; PERS.]

ʿAYINT [ʿayint; عينت] A small plain in an isolated cove along the coast between Matrah bay and **Sayh al-Malih** (Minaʾ al-Fahl). It was used as a summer resort by the Lawatīyah community and was the site of a farm owned by Sultan b. Muhammad al-Fadl of the

W.J. Towell Company, who grew herbs there. The expansion of Mina' Qabus in the early 1980s required the destruction of the Baluchi fishing village of **Shutayfi**. The government relocated Shutayfi's inhabitants to new "social housing" in 'Ayint on land taken from the Sultan family. A road was cut through the hills to give vehicle access from **Darsayt**. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1192; COSTA, P. 112; PERS.]

AZAIBA *see* 'UDHAYBAH, al-

— B —

BAB [bāb; باب] Door or gate. Place names beginning with the word *bab* are listed according to the rest of the name. Information regarding the gates in town walls are given in the entries for **MUSCAT** and **MATRAH**.

BAHARINAH, al- [al-baḥārīnah; البحارنة] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls near al-Bab al-Saghir and behind al-Sa'idiyah School and the 'Ali Musa Mosque. Despite the name (the Baharinah are a small ethnic community of Arab Shi'ah), Lorimer wrote that most of its inhabitants were Persians. Al-Baharinah is also the name of a small quarter inside the walls between Muscat *suq* and al-Bab al-Kabir. It still contains a Shi'i *ma'tam*. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1183; PERS.]

BALUCH, al- [al-balūsh; البلوش] A quarter of Matrah inside the walls adjoining the quarters of **Takiyah** and **Nazimawjah**. It is also called Ghurayfah after a nearby hill and, at the beginning of the 20th century, had a mixed population of Bani Jabir, Baluch, Bani Hadarim, and Bayasirah. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1199]

BANDAR [bandar; بندر] A geographical term for a bay, anchorage, or natural harbor. Place names beginning with the word *bandar* are listed according to the rest of the name.

BANYAN, al- [al-banyān; البنيان] A quarter of Muscat Intramuros running inland from the old Portuguese Customs House. Not surprisingly because of the name, it contained houses of Hindu merchants, a Hindu temple, and a small *suq*. It was also the site of the first Indian consulate in the 1960s and early 1970s. The quarter was

demolished during the construction of the new Qasr al-‘Alam Palace in the mid-1970s. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1182; PERS.]

BASRAH, al- [al-başrah; البصرة] A small quarter or neighborhood of Muscat outside the walls, located between al-Bab al-Kabir and **al-Jufaynah**. [PERS.]

BAWSHAR [bawshar; بوشر] A cluster of small villages nestled at the base of the mountains outside of Muscat, some nine miles southwest of **Ruwi**. The villages include (from west to east) Fath Al Bu Sa‘id (فتح آل بو سعيد; with inhabitants from the Al Bu Sa‘id according to Lorimer), Jal (جال; Bani Hasan); Sad (ساد; ‘Awamir); Bawshar Bani ‘Umran (بوشر بني عمران; Bani Hasan); and Falaj (فلج; Bani Hasan occupants of Al Bu Sa‘id-owned houses). Lorimer also included **Ghallah** and **Lansab**, with their satellites, as part of Bawshar but these are some distance away on the opposite side of a ridge. The Ministry of National Heritage and Culture restored Bayt Muqham, a fortified round tower said to be three hundred years old, in Bawshar Bani ‘Umran in the 1990s (fig. 58). Formerly a residence of members of the Al Bu Sa‘id family, the house’s last occupant (until 1970) was a member of the Khalili family. One of the most famous families of Oman and providers of many Ibadi *imams*, the family is originally from the Bani Kharus of al-‘Awabi but had resettled in Bawshar and later moved their seat to Sama’il upon becoming the paramount shaykhs of the Bani Ruwahah. Their ties to Bawshar remained strong, with family members serving as *walis* (representatives) of the *sultan*. Bawshar was mentioned as a place of refuge for the Portuguese defenders of Muscat when the town was attacked by an Ottoman fleet in 1581. Another fortified house, probably several hundred years old, stands in ruin in Fath Al Bu Sa‘id (fig. 213), next to a rebuilt mosque with a small cannon. Several additional old houses are found in the vicinity (fig. 214). A large number of pre-Islamic graves have been found in the valley and beehive tomb cairns can be seen on the surrounding hills (fig. 215). The remains of a large fortification surmount a hill above Bawshar and the old caravan road ascends a hill leading to Ghallah; it was improved by the Muscat Levy Corps in the 1920s (fig. 59). [LORIMER, VOL. II, PP. 322–323; COSTA, PP. 114–115; WILKINSON 1977, PP. 182–183; WILKINSON 1987, PP. 45, 257, AND 259; OMAN DAILY OBSERVER, 8 DECEMBER 1998; PERS.]

BAYT AL-FALAJ [bayt al-falaj; بيت الفلج] A *wadi* and former settlement near Matrah. Wadi Bayt al-Falaj runs into the sea at **Darsayt**. The only land routes out of Matrah run through the *wadi*. A modern road exits Matrah through the former **Jibru** quarter and upon entering Wadi Bayt al-Falaj forks. One branch ascends west over the hills to Mina' al-Fahl and **al-Qurm**. The other runs along the western side of the *wadi* until passing through the former village of **Ruwi** at the southwest corner of the *wadi* and then exits through **Wadi 'Adayy**. The original route from Matrah to the wadi ran through a low pass at al-Kharashif [al-kharāshif; الخرأشيف] to a small settlement of Bayt al-Falaj, clustered around an old fortified residence of the *sultans* (fig. 198), and then on to Ruwi. The location of the fort and the settlement was fixed by a series of *aflaj* (water channels) which converged on the fort and permitted the maintenance of gardens. Bayt al-Falaj was the object of fighting between Al Bu Sa'id contenders in 1792–1793. The fort was remarked upon by Western visitors in the 19th century, including Maurizi (1819), Stiffe (1859; who said it was dilapidated) and Palgrave (1863).

Indian Army troops brought in 1913 to defend Muscat against attack by a coalition of tribes under the banner of resurgent Ibadism established their headquarters in the fort. The battle took place in January 1915 on the hills to the west and southwest of Bayt al-Falaj, with the Indian Army defenders easily repulsing the attackers (fig. 202). By 1921, the Muscat Levy Corps was created to replace the Indian Army forces. The fort and its surroundings served as the headquarters of the sultanate's armed forces and its principal installation until a new complex was completed at al-Mu'askar al-Murtafa'ah near **al-Sib** in the 1980s (figs. 51–52 and 199). The first permanent house built by the military in the camp was erected in a quasi-traditional style ca. 1950 and used by the Military Secretary P.R.M. Waterfield through the 1960s and then as the first office of Sayyid Fahr b. Taymur when Deputy Minister of Defence after 1970. After being named Deputy Prime Minister for Security and Defence, Sayyid Fahr's office was relocated in a purpose-built tower block.

A temporary landing strip was laid out just south of the army camp in the 1950s by Gulf Aviation (later Gulf Air) with some financial contribution from the Muscat government and Petroleum Development (Oman). The airfield was used heavily during the 1950s al-Jabal al-Akhdar War and then became the principal airfield for

the newly created Sultan of Oman's Air Force from 1959 (figs. 54 and 200–201). It also served as the country's only civil airfield until the early 1970s when al-Sib International Airport was opened. Air force operations were transferred at the same time to an installation adjacent to al-Sib civil airport.

Through the 1970s and especially the 1980s, Bayt al-Falaj camp was increasingly surrounded by urban development. A commercial and banking district was created just south of the main gate and the old landing strip became its main street (fig. 53). Residential housing, hotels, government offices, and commercial establishments gradually filled the remainder of the wadi. An area to the southeast, known as al-Wadi al-Kabir, was selected to contain auto repair garages and light industry. [LORIMER, VOL I, P. 421; LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 255; BADGER, P. 224; MAURIZI, PP. 25–26; STIFFE 1897, P. 613; BELL; GORMAN; MURPHY; AL-SALIMI; BILLECOCQ, P. 206; COSTA, P. 112; FCO/371/140190; PERS.]

BUSTAN, AL- [al-bustān; البستان] A fishing village east of Muscat, until recently the last of a series of coastal settlements accessible from Muscat by a linking road. The village was moved from the eastern side of the valley to the western side to accommodate the construction of al-Bustan Palace Hotel, completed to host the 1985 Gulf Cooperation Council summit (fig. 35). The hotel and village can be reached by a dual carriageway from Wadi **Bayt al-Falaj** as well as by the coastal road. [PERS.]

— D —

DABGHAH [dabghah; دبغة] *see* **MADBAGHAH, AL-**

DAKAKIN *see* **MITHA'IB** (Matrah)

DALALIL, al- [al-dalālīl; الدلائل] *or* **DALALIN** [dalālīn; دلالين] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls, west of al-Wadi al-Kabir and south of **al-Jufaynah**. The Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church of America was located in this quarter. Lorimer identified its inhabitants as Bayasirah (a community of uncertain origin traditionally restricted to low-class occupations) and freed slaves. A quarter of the same name is also found inside Matrah's walls, south of Matrah Fort and stretching toward the seafront. According to Lorimer, it was

inhabited by mixed Arab tribes and Bayasirah (*dalalil* = brokers or middlemen). [LORIMER, VOL. II, PP. 1184 AND 1198; PERS.]

DAMS. Flood control was a persistent problem in Muscat. The major source of runoff, from al-Wadi al-Kabir, flowed into a channel on the east side of the Muscat walls and was then directed under the walls at **Bab al-Mitha'ib** and on into Muscat harbor at the *khawr* below Fort **al-Mirani**. A small dam of unknown origin, built of stone and *sarij* (traditional mortar), existed well up al-Wadi al-Kabir. It has been speculated that it was built by the Portuguese but it has become completely silted up. A larger concrete dam was constructed some distance downstream from the first in the early 1950s by Col. Basil Woods-Ballard, the Minister of External Affairs (1948–1953). This dam still stands intact (fig. 145; photographs of the dam filled with water are in Zadjali, p. 39). However, a much larger and more modern dam was completed in 1993 a short distance downstream of the concrete dam (fig. 146). An old dam for flood control also existed in **al-Zabadiyah** quarter of Matrah; this was replaced by a new dam built after 1970. Sadd **Ruwi** (Ruwi Dam) was a defensive wall despite its name. [COSTA, PP. 111–112; PERS.]

DARSAYT [darsayt; درسيٲ] A village of Wadi **Bayt al-Falaj** stretching from the seacoast, where the Bani Hasan inhabitants fished, to a kilometer inland to an area known as 'Alwā or Darsayt al-Dakhili, where al-Lawatiyah and Bani Wuhayb residents owned summer homes and date gardens (fig. 55). Much of the latter area is now covered by a highway interchange and school. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1192; PERS.]

DAWHAH [dawḥah; دوحه] A small fishing village outside Matrah, no longer in existence. It was on the west side of a promontory between **Kalbuh** and **Riyam** and inhabited by Al Kathir from Dhufar, according to Lorimer. The village was razed when the new dual-carriageway corniche was built in the 1980s and the villagers relocated to **Ruwi**. Al-Inshirah restaurant sits on the site. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1193; PERS.]

DIKKAH [dikkah; دكة] A quarter on the east side of Matrah beyond Matrah Fort, inhabited by Baluchis. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1193]

DINAKI, BANDAR [bandar dinakī; بندر دنكي] A small bay on the east side of Matrah examined by engineers of the British firm Sir William Halcrow in 1960 as a possible site for a new port. Bandar Dinaki was judged as a better site than **Arbaq** because of its access to the Muscat/Matrah road, but in the end no port was constructed. [FO/371/156807]

— E —

ELECTRICITY. In 1960, the first electricity franchise in Oman was granted to Muhammad Musa ‘Abd al-Latif, a Lawati merchant, and Isma‘il al-Rasasi, the Wali of Matrah, who then established a generating plant in **Riyam**. This plant apparently served only Matrah. At roughly the same time, Sultan Sa‘id b. Taymur built a small DC-generating station in Muscat that served the palace, ruling family, the few government offices existing at the time, and some shops that were allowed to use only a single bulb. The system was switched over to AC with the acquisition of four American generators in April 1961. The only private generators permitted were the Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) office in Muscat, the British Consulate (which boasted the only air-conditioning unit in Muscat), and the American Mission. For years, no electricity was provided outside Muscat’s walls until a line was run to the British Bank of the Middle East, just outside al-Bab al-Kabir. The *sultan* was persuaded subsequently to approve a loan of 1,50,000 rupees to add two more generators, one in 1963 and the second in 1964.

Steps to consolidate electrical supply for the capital began with a grant equivalent to £800,000 to a coalition of merchants to establish a power station at Riyam (fig. 36) and a distribution system for the Muscat/Matrah area. Construction began in 1967 and the Muscat Power Company was incorporated on 26 December 1968 as a private firm with a 30-year concession, operating three generators with an installed capacity of 3mw. As a result, homes that previously had only a single light bulb and perhaps a fan were now able to install air conditioning and refrigerators. However, the company had insufficient capital to meet increased demand after June 1970 and was purchased by the government in November 1970. The Government Power Corporation began operations on 1 January 1971

and added another generating plant. Capacity steadily rose to 23mw by mid-1974. New generators were installed that could use Oman's crude oil, thus reducing fuel costs. A pipeline was laid from the oil terminal at Mina' al-Fahl to Riyam, where storage tanks and a treatment plant were constructed in spring 1974. PDO continued to generate its own electricity for industrial operations and offices and quarters at Mina' al-Fahl. [WACE, p. 902; OMAN 1975, pp. 49–50; FO/371/168685; FO/371/168705; FO/371/185384; PERS.]

— F —

FADA' [fada'; فِدْع] or **al-HIRTH** [al-ħirth; الحِثْ] A small quarter or neighborhood of Matrah outside the walls, running from **Ma'qal** (outside **Bab al-Mitha'ib**) towards al-Rahmah Hospital (the old American Mission hospital demolished in the 1990s). Commonly called Fada' but also known as Harat al-Hirth. [PERS.]

FALAJ. [falaj; فَلَج] A water channel generally consisting of a mother well where the water table rises near a hill or mountain, an underground channel with regular maintenance wells to transport the water to the place required, and one or more aboveground channels that circulate the water through a village and into the fields. Pl. *aflaj*. For more on *aflaj* in the Muscat area, see **WATER SUPPLY**.

FORTS *see* **JALALI, AL-, AND AL-MIRANI FORTS**, and the sections on “**Fortifications**” under both **MATRAH** and **MUSCAT**.

— G —

GHALLAH [ghallah; غَلَّة] A village at the foot of the hills between Matrah and **al-Sib**, just west of **Bawshar**, noted for its hot springs (fig. 216). Indian and Pakistani Shi'ah travel to the village to climb the mountain behind where they believe that the footprint of the caliph 'Ali b. Abi Talib can be seen in the rock, although this tradition is not accepted by Omani Shi'ah. The British traveller J.R. Wellsted mentioned his visit to the hot springs of Imam 'Ali in the 1830s. An army camp and air force camp are located nearby. [COSTA, pp. 115–116; WELLSTED, VOL. I, pp. 26ff.; PERS.]

GHUBRAH [ghubrah; غبرة] A garden village between Matrah and **al-Sib** at the base of the hills paralleling the coast. It was traditionally inhabited by Bani Hasan and Bani Wuhayb, with some property owned by Muscat Hindus, although it has expanded considerably as part of the capital conurbation. [LORIMER, VOL. II, p. 1191; COSTA, p. 114; PERS.]

GHURAYFAH [ghurayfah; غريفة] A small quarter or neighborhood of Matrah outside the walls, along the **Tuyan** road. [PERS.]

GIDAN, *see* **JIDAN**

— H —

HARAMIL [ḥarāmīl; حرامل] A fishing village or suburb of Muscat, located in an isolated cove east of **Sidab**. A French traveller described the cove as uninhabited in 1842 and as a place where ships put in to take on fresh water from a well. After an outbreak of bubonic plague at Gwadar (on the Pakistani Makran coast and at the time a Muscat possession) in 1897, a quarantine station was established in Haramil for passengers arriving on ships at Muscat. The arched building of the station was subsequently abandoned and destroyed in 1996. [PAGE; LORIMER, VOL. II, p. 2552; COSTA, p. 116; PERS.]

HARMAL, SAYH al- [sayḥ al-ḥarmal; سيع الحرمل] A featureless plain between **Matrah** and **Ruwi** in the vicinity of **Bayt al-Falaj**, apparently receiving its name from a flower (*harmal* = African rue). The plain was the site of a bloody battle between Omani defenders and invading Persian forces in the mid-18th century. The spot where the Omani commander and his men were buried was called *Musārrā al-Shuhadāʾ* (= Arena of the Martyrs) and covered with white pebbles, while the graves of the fallen Persians were sited on nearby hillocks. The exact location of the graves is not known but is thought to be inside the Bayt al-Falaj army camp. [BADGER, pp. 147–148; PERS.]

HAWSH, al- [al-ḥawsh; الحوش] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls, adjoining **Tuyan** quarter in the direction of al-Wadi al-Kabir. The area is also known as *Hawsh al-Banyan* (*hawsh* = enclosure)

since much of the property was owned by the Khimji Ramdas family and used for keeping cows. A Hindu temple is nearby (fig. 32). After 1970, the area was acquired by the Diwan of the Royal Court and built up with government housing. [PERS.]

HINNA, al- [al-ḥinnā; الحنّاء] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls, west of the road to **Sidab** and just behind the extramural *suq*. Presumably the area had been a location for selling or preparing henna in the past, hence the name. Lorimer described its inhabitants as Africans, Persians, and Arabs. The Muscat fish market was located in this area but it has been replaced by a municipality market. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1183; PERS.]

HIRTH, Harat al- *see* **FADA'**

— I —

'IRYANAH [ʿiryānah; عريانة] A quarter of Matrah inside the walls and away from the sea, tucked between **al-Suq** and **al-Wadi** quarters. The quarter contains **Bab al-Mitha'ib**, a gate in the town wall. Lorimer described the population as Baluch, Arab brokers of mixed tribes, and Bayasirah. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1198; PERS.]

— J —

JALALI, al-, and al-MIRANI FORTS. [al-jalālī; الجلالی; al-mīrānī; الميراني] The two impressive forts overlooking Muscat harbor. The eastern fort, al-Jalali, was constructed by the Portuguese a few decades after taking Muscat in 1507 and following the second Ottoman sacking of Muscat in 1582 (figs. 18 and 19). There is evidence to suppose that the Portuguese fort was built on earlier Omani foundations (including mentions of an existing fortress by early Portuguese visitors) and that the principal Portuguese improvement was the construction of a gun deck overlooking the harbor (figs. 87 and 88).

Construction of the western fort, al-Mirani, was also begun in 1552, not long after the Portuguese conquest, apparently on a virgin site (figs. 73–86). However, an Ottoman attack on Muscat a few

months later saw the attacking force hauling a cannon to the top of the ridge overlooking the fort and an 18-day siege forced the defenders into submission, after which the hastily built fortifications were destroyed. Construction commenced again after the Ottoman departure but proceeded laggardly until another Ottoman attack convinced the Portuguese authorities that Muscat required proper defenses. Both al-Mirani and al-Jalali were completed at the same time during 1586–1588.

Al-Mirani featured a large gun platform commanding the harbor and a smaller one overlooking the town. An additional sea-level battery was added in 1610 to defend against ships that might move in close to the fort under the range of the upper guns. Generally regarded as the more substantial of the two forts, it served as the summer residence of the captain who resided in the *gharayzah* for the rest of the year. It also contained a small chapel, which was restored after 1970 and the fallen dome replaced.

The Portuguese ouster from Hormuz in 1622 and the decision to concentrate forces in Muscat brought additional improvements. Muscat's walls were rebuilt in 1623–1626, two small fortifications (al-Sirah al-Gharbiyah and al-Sirah al-Sharqiyah; see “*Fortifications*” in **MUSCAT** entry below) were added at the entrance to the harbour, watchtowers were constructed on the hills around the town, and a new Customs House was completed. Maintenance of the forts was handled by the Omani governor of Muscat, who also dedicated the port's revenues to the Portuguese in exchange for permission to handle the affairs of the local population.

Portuguese control of Muscat ended in December 1649 when the forces of Imam Sultan b. Sayf al-Ya‘rubi entered the town. Although some 600 Portuguese were evacuated by sea, many others took refuge in Fort al-Mirani. The besieged fort was forced to surrender on 23 January 1650. Fort al-Jalali had been strengthened and improved in the years after 1622 as well and there are indications that instructions had been given to make it the principal fort. This has led to conjecture that the Portuguese defenders in 1649–1650 retreated to al-Jalali and not al-Mirani as commonly supposed.

While there is no historical evidence regarding when and what were the Omani improvements to the forts, it has been suggested that the present forts underwent considerable changes following the Portuguese occupation. While Fort al-Mirani was constructed hastily, probably using local craftsman and configured according to the nat-

ural exigencies of the site, both forts appear to have possessed large open spaces protected by curtain walls. This design was dictated by the small numbers of soldiers available and the need to move artillery about. Later, Omani, improvements to the forts demonstrated a new need to accommodate larger garrisons and a change in function from the purely defensive to a base from which sorties could be made.

Their use as refuges during domestic political struggles is occasionally recorded through the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1738, Persian troops, sent to occupy Oman by Nadir Shah, secured the surrender of the forts after a siege. Ahmad b. Sa'īd, the first of the Al Bu Sa'īd rulers, subsequently blockaded Muscat and eventually gained control of the forts in 1749. In the following years, he renovated both forts, especially al-Jalali which had been extensively damaged during the civil wars that led up to the Persian incursion. European paintings in the following decades showed the addition of overwhelming central structures and round towers for the first time.

During the 1871 fighting in which Imam 'Azzan b. Qays was killed, the power behind the throne, Sa'īd b. Khalfan al-Khalili, barricaded himself in one of the forts until persuaded to surrender. When Muscat was sacked by the tribes in 1895, Sultan Faysal b. Turki was forced to flee his palace over the rooftops to Fort al-Jalali for sanctuary, while his brother held on to Fort al-Mirani, before managing to drive off the attackers.

A visitor in the late 19th century describes al-Mirani as having a ruined battery near the water and very old Spanish and Portuguese guns with carriages that were falling to pieces. Writing in the early 20th century, Lorimer described the forts as being in disrepair and without any "modern value." Armament consisted of old muzzle-loading guns fit only for firing salutes (fig. 15). Their garrisons of about 200 Baluch and Arabs were armed with rifles but had no military training.

Fort al-Mirani continued to serve as a garrison for the *sultan's* retainers and was taken over by the Muscat Garrison unit of the armed forces in the late 1960s, for use as a garrison for the guards for the fort, the palace, the British Consulate-General, and Fort al-Jalali. A principal function, in addition to serving as a barracks, was for its aging guns to provide salutes for visiting naval vessels. After 1970, Fort al-Mirani was partially restored with a lift hidden in a new round tower, and the provision of residential quarters for some of the Royal Guard; the sea-level battery was destroyed to make

way for a road to the new naval headquarters in **al-Mukalla** Cove (fig. 16).

Fort al-Jalali was used for much of the 20th century as the country's principal prison, with some of the nearly 200 prisoners spending decades within its confines. These included prisoners from the interior during and after al-Jabal al-Akhdar War of the 1950s and Dhufaris from the Dhufar War of the 1960s and 1970s. Five prisoners escaped over the wall in 1954 with a rope made from their clothing but four gave themselves up the same day and the fifth was found hiding a few days later in the Christian cemetery (fig. 139). There was a mass break-out of 44 prisoners in 1963. Most were captured within a day or two and the last a month later. The escape, although well-planned with the removal of stones from the wall and utilizing ropes fashioned from gunny bags, was doomed by the lack of post-escape plans and the prisoners' poor physical condition. Two members of the ruling family escaped with the help of a guard in 1969 but were apprehended a few days later.

After it ceased being a prison in the 1970s, al-Jalali underwent more extensive restoration than al-Mirani: a heliport was built on an adjoining rock, another helipad was carved out of the rock behind just above sea-level, a road was built to connect the fort, and a type of funicular lift was constructed to provide easy access for VIP visitors to the landscaped courtyard and a *son-et-lumière* display was installed in the commandant's former quarters. The gun deck, although renovated, was well preserved.

The origins of the present names of both forts is unknown. The Portuguese name of al-Jalali was São João. It has been speculated that its present name comes from an Arab or Baluchi commander named Jalal but there is no historical evidence for this. Al-Mirani was known to the Portuguese as Capitão (presumably after its builder and first captain, Belchior Calaça). It has been variously suggested the present name derives either from Miran, again the supposed name of a Baluchi commandant, or from Almirante, the Portuguese word for admiral, who was supposed to have succeeded the captain general commanding Muscat's forces in the latter part of the Portuguese presence. [STIFFE 1897, p. 612; MILES, p. 463; LORIMER, VOL. II, pp. 1180–1181; LANDEN, pp. 319–320; D. HAWLEY, pp. 110–111; MURAD, p. 37; COSTA, p. 111; D'ERRICO, p. 306N16; WILLIAMSON; SERJEANT; R/15/6/37; FO/1016/353; PERS.]

JIBRU [jibrū; جبرو] A quarter of Matrah inside the walls and inland of **al-Shamal** quarter. Situated just inland of the port, much of the quarter was demolished in preparation for the 1985 GCC summit in order to construct a roundabout and a major road from the Corniche to the rest of the capital region. The quarter's 'Ajam and Baluch inhabitants were relocated to **al-Khawd** near the university. The walls of Matrah, on which Sayyid 'Azzan b. Qays was killed in 1871 while defending his claim as ruler of Oman, ran through this quarter. A Shi'ah mosque is still in use and the large Lawatiyah cemetery lies just inland of the quarter. Farther inland, a small 400-year-old mosque was restored in 1977 and kept in use by the staff of the nearby Oman Flour Mills. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1199; COSTA, P. 112; PERS.]

JIDAN (GIDAN) [jīdān; جيدان] A quarter or neighborhood of Matrah outside the walls, between **al-Dalalil** and **Ghurayfah** (or **Shibul**) quarters. A prominent local merchant, Hamid Talib al-Zakwani, built what was at the time (before 1970) an elaborate residential building, which continues to be occupied by some members of his family. [PERS.]

JISSAH, BANDAR [bandar jiṣṣah; بندرجصّه] A bay and anchorage southeast of Muscat protected by an island and accessible only by sea or track over the surrounding hills until the construction of a road to the nearby village of **Qantab** in the 1980s. In A.D. 696, a fleet sent by the governor of Iraq, al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf, anchored in Bandar Jissah while the army it carried fought a losing battle against the Omanis in nearby Wadi Hatat. A village with a partially preserved mosque and a raised gun platform lies in ruins near the beach. The location's excellent quality as an anchorage is offset by its scarcity of fresh water. The village's origins and original settlers are not known but the al-Qawasim apparently seized the anchorage in the early 19th century during their period of expansion from Julfar (modern day Ra's al-Khaymah in the United Arab Emirates) and it was noted as being a Qasimi village later in the same century. The origins of al-Qawasim before their appearance in Lingeh (modern Iran) in the 18th century are unknown, and there is unsubstantiated speculation that they originated in Oman; there are still Qasimis in Muscat.

In March 1898, a visiting French warship persuaded Sultan Faysal b. Turki to grant a concession for a coaling station at Bandar Jissah. When news of the concession reached Europe, it provoked an Anglo-French crisis. A subsequent reconnaissance of the bay by the French consul and another visiting warship was for nought as the British prevailed upon the *sultan* to cancel the concession in February 1899. The village, however, was already deserted as a French visitor noted with the remark that the “souffle de la mort” had struck it (figs. 155–157). Several abandoned farms and a ruined watchtower are located inland from the village and a number of pre-Islamic tombs lie further up the *wadi* (fig. 154).

A study group from the British navy inspected Bandar Jissah in April 1968 to evaluate its suitability as the base for the sultanate’s planned navy. Although Bandar Jissah was judged to have adequate space on sea and land for a base, its inaccessibility and lack of water meant that **al-Mukalla** Cove in Muscat harbor was seen as a better choice. An improved road and beach facilities made it a popular beach in the 1980s and a diving center was built in an adjoining cove in the 1990s. A hotel was constructed in an adjacent bay in the 2000s. [LORIMER, VOL. I, P. 944; MILES, PP. 50–51 AND 469; LANDEN, PP. 248–254; ALLEMANN, P. 95; COSTA, PP. 116–117; PERS.]

JUFAYNAH, al- [al-jufaynah; الجفينة] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls, running from al-Bab al-Kabir to the pass to **Riyam** but on the south side of the road (**al-Madbaghah** lies on the north side). Its cramped physical position in the wadi apparently is responsible for the name (*jafnah* = bowl). Lorimer indicated that the population was Baluchi. A Hindu crematorium was situated just below the pass. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1184; PERS.]

— K —

KALBUH [kalbūh; كلبوه] Once a separate village over a low pass to the west of Muscat, Kalbuh became an extension of the town after a dual-carriageway was cut through the pass to connect with the Matrah Corniche. Lorimer noted that the inhabitants were Baluchis, Arabs from tribes of al-Batinah, and slaves. Two towers topped the promontories on either side of the small bay: Burj Kalbuh

on the east and Burj Dawhah on the west. A small park was constructed on part of the shoreline in the 1990s. Despite the name's similarity to the word for dog, it derives from *kalb* = a steep, vertical pillar. [LORIMER, VOL. II, PP. 1193–1194; ALLEMANN, P. 94; PERS.]

KHALALU [khalālū; خالالو] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls around the small fort of Qal'at al-Rawiyah [see "Fortifications" in **MUSCAT** entry] on the way to al-Wadi al-Kabir. Lorimer described its residents as Bani Wuhayb, al-ʿAwamir, and Africans. Several wells and gardens adjoined the quarter along the *wadi*. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1184; PERS.]

KHAWD, al- [al-khawd; الخوض] A village southwest of **al-Sib** near the mountains. The village was the site of a confrontation in 1954 between the *sultan*'s forces and those of Shaykh Sulayman b. Himyar al-Nabhani acting on behalf of newly elected Imam Ghalib b. ʿAli al-Hina'i. Sultan Qabus University was established nearby in the 1980s. [WILKINSON 1987, PP. 310–311; PERS.]

KHAYRAN, BANDAR [bandar khayrān; بندرخیران] A large bay southeast of Muscat and east of **Bandar Jissah** with considerable protection from the open sea because of encircling islands. Lorimer noted that the local residents were fishermen from the Bani Battash. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1195]

KHAZZAFIN, al- [al-khazzāfīn; الخزافین] A quarter of Matrah outside the walls, inland from **al-Siyagh** and **Sarmalla** quarters. Lorimer noted it contained a population of mixed tribes. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1199]

KHUTMAH, al- [al-khutmah; الخطمة] A small quarter of Muscat outside the walls, just outside al-Bab al-Kabir and around the foot of the hill topped by Burj Bustu. Lorimer described its inhabitants as Arabs and Baluchis. The name comes from *khatm* = nose or muzzle. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1184; PERS.]

KHUWAYR, al- [al-khuwayr; الخوير] A village and fortified compound midway between Matrah and **al-Sib**, on the edge of the dunes paralleling the sea. The village was inhabited by Bani Hasan fishermen who also sold firewood in Matrah. It was demolished in

1985 to make room for the new main highway flanked by a row of ministry buildings. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1191; COSTA, P. 114; PERS.]

KUHBUN [kuhbun; کهبین] A quarter of Matrah outside the walls between the mountains on the east and **al-Zabadiyah**, behind al-Rahmah Hospital. The inhabitants are mostly Baluch. [PERS.]

KUMBAR [kumbar; کمبر] A quarter of Matrah outside the walls, behind **Jibru** and up a hill. The name may have been taken from the Gujarati word for oven, since the area was used by ‘Ajami bakers. Many of the quarter’s residents are Sonabara (gold+worker in Gujarati) who are still goldsmiths; many have taken the name of al-Sayigh (= jeweler). Alternatively, the name may have come from the Gujarati name for potters, a Muslim caste in India often found together with Sonabara. [INDIA, PP. 132 AND 138; PERS.]

— L —

LANSAB [lanṣab; لنصب] A settlement west of **Ghallah** and a stopping place for travellers bound for the interior. Like Ghallah, Lansab and surrounding villages contain hot springs. A military installation sits outside the settlement. [LORIMER, VOL. II, PP. 322–323; PERS.]

LAWATIYAH, SUR al- [sūr al-lawātīyāh; سور اللواتية] A quarter of Matrah inside the walls, fronting on the harbor (figs. 40 and 187). The quarter is protected by a solid ring of outer houses and the only entrances are two gates, one on the seaside and the other in the rear. Originally there were towers at each of the quarter’s four corners. The tower on the southeast corner was restored by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture in the 1980s, the southwest corner has been reduced to rubble, the northwest corner has disappeared but a round café (owned by a Lawati *waqf* [charitable trust]) imitating the shape of the tower sits in its place, and the northeast corner has been replaced by a house constructed at the turn of the 20th century (figs. 188–191).

The quarter’s origins are unknown but a Portuguese map during the period of Portuguese occupation depicts a substantial fort constructed next to the Matrah *sūq* (fig. 49). It is thus possible, although there is no historical evidence, that the present Sur al-Lawatiyah was

originally a Portuguese fort and that it passed, at some point after the Portuguese expulsion, into the hands of the Lawatīyah Shi‘ah community. Some Lawatīyah maintain that the community purchased the *sur* (= enclosure) from either the original inhabitants of Matrah, the Bani Hasan, or from the country’s Al Bu Sa‘id rulers. The origins of the Lawatīyah community are similarly unknown although they appear to have been in their present location for more than 200 years and may have arrived during the period of the Ya‘aribah dynasty (1650–1740s). Some Lawati point to the existence of a sixteenth-century date above a gate of the quarter as evidence of their presence from that time but that would only indicate the date of construction of the gate. At present, the entire community is Ja‘fariyah (or Twelver) Shi‘ah, although it has co-existed with a smaller Khojah community of Agha Khani Isma‘ilis. The latter seem to have arrived later in Oman, probably during the Al Bu Sa‘id era (since the 1740s) but were assimilated into the Lawatīyah or departed Oman for Pakistan about 1965 on the orders of the Agha Khan.

Although many of the Lawatīyah have moved out of the *sur* into new houses around the capital, the houses of the *sur* remain intact, a few still the residences of poorer Lawatīyah and the remainder temporarily occupied by their owners during religious festivals. The harbor side of the quarter consists of a row of attractive Indian-style houses along the corniche and a large mosque, recently rebuilt in a Persian style. Until 1970, non-Lawatīyah were forbidden by the community from entering the *sur* and in recent years visitors are again discouraged from entering. [BARRETO DE RESENDE; LORIMER, VOL. II, p. 1198; ALLEN 1981, p. 49; PETERSON 2004, pp. 40–43; PERS.]

LUGHAN [lūghān; لوغان] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls, beyond **Tuyan** and al-Rawiyah Fort, west of Hillat **al-Shaykh**, on the way to al-Wadi al-Kabir. Lorimer described its inhabitants as Baluchis. The origin of the name is unknown but local tradition holds that the Lughan were a people from Baluchistan or Pakistan, perhaps related to the Baluch in the same way that al-Zadjal are. A 19th-century observer noted two classes of Hindus in Muscat, one of which was known as Lavana from Sind, also called Multani; the name could have been corrupted into Lughan. Also spelled Lohana, there seems to be a connection between the caste and the Nizari Isma‘ili Khojas, some of whom were resident in Oman in connection with al-Lawatīyah. A possible connection may be through the

presence of some 50 to 100 tombs in the quarter, constructed of mortar and brick (figs. 33 and 140–142). None of the tombs has any markings or writing. Local tradition again suggests that the tombs are Portuguese, Turkish, or Persian, but this seems unlikely given the number. A possible Khoja connection is strengthened by the presence of a comparable number of similar tombs in the Lawatiyah cemetery in Matrah (figs. 196–197). There are also some similarities with tombs in the apparently Jewish cemetery in Suhar. Another speculation derives from the use of the term Ughani by Persians to describe an Afghan; al-Ughan may have been corrupted into Lughan in the same way that the Omani settlement of al-Ashkarah is known as Lashkarah. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1184; ASANI, P. 439; R/15/6/4; PERS.]

LULU'AH [lulu'ah; لولوثة] A quarter of Matrah outside the walls west of **Kuhbun**, with al-Rahmah Hospital on its northern edge. The quarter once contained four *tawis* (= well) and a garden with a sizeable water reservoir. A buried pipeline carried water to a distribution point near Matrah *suq*, where water carriers would fill their goatskin bags and sell the brackish water to local inhabitants who used it only for bathing and washing. The reservoir and pipeline were demolished in 1995. The enclosed living quarters of al-Rahmah Hospital staff and an old windmill lay between the hospital and Lulu'ah, and another windmill could be seen until recently in the derelict remains of what was once a tuberculosis or leprosy sanatorium. The hospital, built by the Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church of America and turned over to the government in 1970, was demolished in the late 1990s. [PERS.]

LUQTAH, Masjid al- [luqtah; اللقطة] A small mosque situated in what was formerly a larger estate, near the Wadi 'Adayy exit of Sayh al-Hatat. The estate, also known as al-Khaḍrā' or Falaj al-Dankī, included a religious school, a formal garden with an ornamental pool, house, and falaj. The complex was destroyed in 1985, apart from the mosque which was included within the perimeter fence of a new earth station for satellite communications. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1191; J. SMITH, PP. 195–198; COSTA, P. 116; PERS.]

— M —

MADBAGHAH, al- [al-madbaghah; المدبغة; also known as dabgah, دبغة] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls, running from **Kalbuh** to the western wall of Muscat, along the north side of the main road (i.e. adjacent to **al-Jufaynah** on the south side). *Madbaghah* = tannery, so presumably the tanning of leather had been done there at some time in the past. Lorimer noted that the inhabitants were chiefly Baluchi and he notes the existence of a house belonging to the British naval contractor, Nasib b. Muhammad, also known as Nasib Khan. Although the house no longer exists, a large Sunni mosque on the edge of the quarter carries the name of Nasib Khan. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1184; PERS.]

MADINAT QABUS [madīnat qābūs; مدينة قابوس] Oman's first "modern" housing development, built in the mid-1970s on low hills above **Shati' al-Qurm** and **al-Khuwayr**. As a planned community, it consisted of modest Western-style villas and a few apartment buildings, with a shopping complex in the center. Eventually, as land in the capital area became scarce, larger and more expensive houses were constructed within Madinat Qabus. [PERS.]

MALIH, SAYH al- [sayḥ al-mālīḥ; سيح المالح] A plain between **Darsayt** and **Ra's al-Hamra'**, sandwiched between rows of hills and fronting on the sea with a wide beach. The cove was used by Sultan Sa'id b. Taymur for grazing camels and hunting, and served as a landing place for travellers from Muscat and Matrah bound for the interior (fig. 203). Some of the valley's hillsides bear evidence of stone quarries used for the construction of buildings in Muscat and Matrah. When Petroleum Development (Oman) (PDO) selected Sayh al-Malih as the site of its headquarters and later the terminal of its oil pipeline from the interior, Sultan Sa'id changed the name from Sayh al-Malih (= salty plain) to Mina' al-Fahl (= Fahl Port, after nearby al-Fahl Island) (fig. 204). It was also a favored swimming site of expatriates who called it "Blackpool Beach." PDO built Khawlah Hospital towards the inland end of the valley in the late 1960s. A small oil refinery was built in the area in the 1980s. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1191; COSTA, P. 113; PERS.]

MA'QAL [ma'qal; معقل] A quarter or neighborhood of Matrah outside the walls, consisting of the area around the small open space just outside **Bab al-Mitha'ib**. In years past, Ma'qal was a busy area where camel trains came with loads of firewood, where it was arranged in small piles and sold to Matrah inhabitants to be used in cooking. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1184; PERS.]

MATRAH [maṭraḥ; مطرح] (Overviews of Matrah past and present are at figs. 37–38 and 171). **History.** Less is known of Matrah's history than its more prominent twin, neighboring Muscat. Like Muscat, Matrah's origins are shrouded in mystery. There is no reason not to assume that a fishing village existed on Matrah's sandy shores from prehistoric times and that coastal and possibly long-distance trade took advantage of Matrah's protected harbor and access to the interior. As far as is known, Matrah's original inhabitants were the Bani Hasan tribe and a sizeable town was known to exist in Matrah at the time of the Portuguese occupation.

Obviously, Matrah was touched by many of the same events as Muscat. Attacks on Muscat were generally accompanied by attacks on and/or occupation of Matrah as well. To protect their position, the Portuguese are thought to have expanded two watchtowers overlooking the *suq* into a small fort and it is possible, although uncorroborated by clear evidence, that what is now **Sur al-Lawatiyah** was originally a Portuguese garrison.

As discussed under Muscat's history, Hamad b. Sa'id was the first of the Al Bu Sa'id rulers to make Muscat his capital, thus increasing Matrah's importance. But his rule was not uncontested. While Hamad was in al-Rustaq, his uncle Sultan b. Ahmad gathered tribesmen from Wadi Sama'il and attacked Matrah, entering it by 'Aqabat al-Marākh and plundering the *suq* and homes, carrying his booty off to nearby **Darsayt**. The Wali of Muscat followed in pursuit but the *wali's* forces were routed at the pass leading to Darsayt and **Bayt al-Falaj** (presumably near where Oman Flour Mills is presently located). Sultan's men pursued the *wali* to the **Jibru** gate of Matrah before returning to Sama'il.

Subsequently, Sa'id b. Sultan was opposed in his attempts to become ruler by his uncle Qays b. Ahmad, who gathered an army along al-Batinah coast and captured **al-Sib** before reaching **al-Qurm** in 1804. An attack on al-Sadd (presumably Sadd **Ruwi**) was repulsed

by guns and musketry but Qays was more successful in his assaults on 'Aqabat al-Marākh and Bayt al-Falaj, where he expelled the Baluchi garrison. Returning to his attack on al-Sadd, he forced the defenders to retreat to **Sayh al-Harmal** (in Wadi Bayt al-Falaj) and then continued his approach to Muscat. The commander of Matrah fort sent a message to Sa'id's brother Salim, who was defending Muscat on his brother's behalf, warning that he was nearly out of supplies and close to surrender. Qays' forces by this time had occupied **Mutayrah** on the eastern side of the fort and parts of the *suq* on the other. Salim sent reinforcements who engaged the enemy in Matrah on 13 December 1804 around the *suq*, thus permitting boatloads of supplies to reach Matrah fort. Some time afterwards, Qays made another attempt on Muscat but a counterattack by Salim's forces to distract him resulted in a fierce battle in **Wadi 'Adayy**, in which many of Salim's men were killed and Salim was forced to retreat, thus allowing Qays to enter al-Sadd. The *wakil* (deputy) of Muscat, Muhammad b. Khalfan, opened Matrah's al-Bab al-Kabir for Qays' men who entered and plundered the *suq*. Through negotiations, Qays took possession of Matrah fort.

However, the peace soon broke down and Qays marched again on Matrah. Stopped in his advance, he sent men forward to Muscat by the passes above **Riyam** and **Kalbuh** but they were unable to get through. Qays thereupon led his main forces on Muscat via 'Aqabat al-Sahūn and then descended into **al-Balush** quarter. Opposed by fire from al-Rawiyah fort and surrounding watchtowers, Qays marched on **Sidab** and captured the pass leading to Muscat. An attempt to enter Muscat from the surrounding hills was prevented. Meanwhile, Sa'id b. Sultan gathered tribal reinforcements and made his way from al-Sib to al-Sadd. His ships bombarded the town and fort of Matrah and preparations were made to storm the wall of Sur al-Lawatiyah and to attack the town from 'Aqabat al-Khayl. However, the attack was abandoned as negotiations ensued.

Matrah figured as well later in the century when tribal forces seeking to restore the Ibadi imamate attacked the capital area. In 1874, Shaykh Salih b. 'Ali al-Harithi, the leading personality of the interior, at the head of a coalition of Hinawi tribes, defeated Matrah's garrison of Wahhabi mercenaries and captured the town, plundering its *sugs*. The ailing Al Bu Sa'id ruler, Turki b. Sa'id, bribed Salih to abstain from attacking Muscat. But the *shaykh* returned three

years later, again occupying Matrah and looting the *sugs* and this time laying siege to Muscat until the arrival of a British warship forced them to retreat. Matrah was occupied in yet another assault led by Shaykh Salih in 1895, when he also entered Muscat and contested control of the town.

When still another attack was expected after the election of an *imam* in 1913, Indian Army troops were sent to defend the capital and did so successfully in a battle on the hills above Bayt al-Falaj in January 1915. That was to be the last time Matrah was directly threatened. However, the town did experience subsequent episodes of violence. Followers of the exiled Ibadi *imam* set off several small bombs in Matrah in 1960 and another at the Shell petrol station outside al-Bab al-Kabir (Bab al-Darwazah) in 1964 (fig. 45). These may have been related to an outbreak of fires in both Muscat and Matrah in September 1960. The fires were almost certainly caused by arson and quickly and disastrously swept through the *barastis* (reed dwellings) in the outlying poorer quarters. Another wave of fires in both towns occurred in April-May 1964, leaving an estimated 3000 people homeless (figs. 192-195). An additional burden was caused by a heavy rainstorm in July 1962 that caused al-Bab al-Kabir to collapse. It was reminiscent of another great storm in June 1890 that killed as many as 700 people in Matrah and Muscat and washed several dhows into the streets of Matrah. [BADGER, pp. 206, 275-276, 278-281; LORIMER, Vol. I, p. 418; LANDEN, pp. 329 AND 337; ALLEN 1990; FO/371/148898; FO/371/148902; FO/371/162842; FO/371/174553]

Fortifications. Matrah's principal fortification is Matrah Fort, which sits dramatically on a hill overlooking the sea with **Mutayrah** on one side and the *sug* area of Matrah on the other (figs. 39, 44 and 172-173). It appears larger from a distance than it really is and originally consisted of simply several unconnected towers. It is not known whether the Portuguese built these towers or simply strengthened ones already existing. The towers are represented in contemporary illustrations during the Portuguese occupation and the curtain walls that connect the towers may have been added during the subsequent Ya'rubi period. Because of the small size of the fort, the Portuguese garrison for Matrah must have been quartered elsewhere and this gives rise to speculation that the **Sur al-Lawatiyah** may have been constructed originally as a Portuguese fort. As discussed above in connection with Matrah's history, Matrah fort was fought over several times in the early Al Bu Sa'id period. A smaller fort at

Arbaq commanded the western side of the Matrah anchorage but was destroyed about 1970.

Like Muscat, Matrah was defended on the landward side by a city wall divided in the center by hills. This wall was perforated by three gates. The main gate, al-Bab al-Kabir, near the centerpoint of the wall, was also known as al-Darwazah (*darwazah* = gate) and collapsed as the result of a torrential downpour in 1962, injuring three people. Although the gate was rebuilt, traffic did not use it but entered the town through a nearby breach in the wall (figs. 45–48 and 179). To the east lay Bab al-Mitha'ib, which exists presently only as a watchtower adjacent to another breach in the wall that permits access to local traffic. The third gate, Bab Jibru, was on the western side of the wall, allowing exit from the **Jibru** quarter of the town towards the lesser used pass connecting Matrah with **Ruwi** (now the path of the main road out of Matrah). While the eastern reaches of the wall still exist, the western section disappeared long ago. In 1871, the army of an Al Bu Sa'id contender launched an attack on Matrah's walls and in the ensuing fight, the sitting ruler, 'Azzan b. Qays Al Bu Sa'id, was shot and killed on the walls, as was the commander of the attacking forces. [BADGER, P. LXXIV SUMMARIZING PP. 319 AND 224; Landen, P. 319; COSTA, P. 112; D'ERRICO, PP. 299–300; FO/371/162842; PERS.]

Population and Quarters. The original population of Matrah seems to have been the Bani Hasan tribe, in counterpart to Muscat which was originally inhabited by the Bani Wuhayb. But as Matrah's commercial importance increased, other communities settled in Matrah and gave the town a more complex, mixed population. It is impossible to know Matrah's population in previous times although various European travelers estimated it 8,000 in 1833 and 18,000 in 1835. Lorimer reckoned that the inhabitants totalled 14,000 at the beginning of the 20th century.

This population was mixed as much or perhaps even more than that of Muscat. In addition to the Bani Hasan, other Arab tribes with elements residing in Matrah were al-Siyabiyin, al-Rahbiyin, al-Manadhirah, and the Bani Jabir. But Matrah was more characterized by non-Arab communities, including Lawatis, Persians, and especially Baluch. The traditional center of the longstanding Lawatayah community (also known as Khojahs) is in the **Sur al-Lawatayah** quarter on the seaside of Matrah. Merchants of Indian origin, the Lawatayah were concentrated in Matrah (where Lorimer estimated

their number at over 1000) while Hindus (a much smaller community of only 100 or so, according to Lorimer) seemed to have the edge in Muscat. Not surprisingly, the Sur al-Lawatīyah is adjacent to the *suq*. The relatively small Persian (or ‘Ajam) population was concentrated in ‘**Ajam** and **Jibru** quarters while the poor and more numerous Baluch, along with the related community of Zadjalis, were to be found in many quarters. As indicated in the individual entries on Matrah’s quarters, there were also small communities of African servants and slaves, Bayasirah, and such occupational communities as *sayigh* (= jeweler) and *sonabara* (= goldsmith). As in Muscat, the more prosperous classes lived in substantial buildings inside the walls while the poorer groups tended to inhabit flimsy reed *barastis* outside the walls.

Geographically, Matrah’s quarters, like those of Muscat, can be divided between those inside the walls and those outside the walls (fig. 169). The northern band of Intramuros quarters, mostly bordering on the sea, consist of **Dikkah** to the east of Matrah fort and, moving westward, **al-Wadi**, ‘**Iryanah** (inland), **al-Suq**, **al-Siyagh**, **Sur al-Lawatīyah**, **Nazimawjah** and **Takiyah** (behind the *sur*), **Sarmalla**, and **al-Shamal**. The southern band of Extramuros quarters and neighborhoods consist of **Mitha’ib** on the east (and south of ‘Iryanah), then, moving towards the west, **Ma’qal**, **Darwazah**, ‘**Arsah**, and **al-Dalalil**. Quarters and neighborhoods to the south and southwest include **Lulu’ah**, **Kuhban**, **Ward Muhammad**, **Siblah**, **Washirid**, **Shibul**, **al-Zabadiyah**, **Sayh al-Rahbiyin**, **Tuyan**, **Jidan**, **al-Ghurayfah**, **Shujay’i**, and ‘**Ajam**. On the west side exterior to Bab Jibru, and separated from the other Extramuros quarters by steep hills, lie **Jibru**, **Kumbar**, and **al-Khazzafin**. [LORIMER, PP. 1198–1199; PETERSON 2004; PERS.]

Port. While there is no corroborating evidence, Matrah must have existed as a port for a very long time because of its harbor and inland access to Omani markets. Still, proper port facilities did not exist prior to the 1970s and the town’s sandy beaches meant that ships were forced to anchor in the harbor and lighters used to move passengers and freight between ship and shore. Most of the maritime commerce was dominated by the Lawatīyah community who also settled branches in other towns of al-Batinah coast and even the interior to trade imported goods for dates. In the 20th century, while dhows and coastal crafts were allowed to use Matrah, all ocean-going vessels were forced to discharge their cargo and passengers in

Muscat harbor, despite the poor handling conditions there, and small boats were used to transfer cargo to Matrah (fig. 80). Only a small customs jetty existed in Matrah (fig. 171).

Sultan Saʿid b. Taymur (1932–1970) was very conscious of the need for harbor improvements in Matrah and the British engineering firm, Sir William Halcrow & Partners, was engaged to study the harbor situation in 1961. The firm looked at the possibility of creating port facilities in Matrah harbor at various locations. The Matrah customs jetty was seen to have advantages—it was well-sheltered and adjacent to the commercial area—but extending the jetty was considered impossible because of shallow water and rock and coral projections were dangerous to ships. **Arbaq**, on the west side of the harbor, was positively regarded for the shelter it provided from prevailing winds and the ease of communication with the interior. On the other hand, it would require considerable reclamation to create a deepwater wharf and rocky hills made carving a road to Matrah difficult. **Bandar Dinaki** and other bays on the Muscat side of Matrah were attractive because of the deep water they afforded and shelter from weather but the surrounding hills gave little space for port and storage facilities and a new road would be needed to connect them with Matrah. Halcrows recommended Bandar Dinaki as the best site but port development was postponed because of the lack of funding.

The advent of oil revenues in 1967–1968 renewed schemes for a new port. As part of the *sultan's* 1967 development plan for Matrah and Muscat, a new port in Matrah was planned by Halcrows at a cost of more than £10 million to be built in the Arbaq area, along with a corniche to front the Matrah seaside (see a projection of the port on an aerial photograph of Matrah in Wace, p. 899). A contract was awarded in March 1970 to a Belgian firm to construct the first stages of the deepwater port. Construction of the port began several months before Sultan Saʿid was deposed in July 1970 and the resultant port, expanded several times through the subsequent years, became known as Minaʾ Qabus. The original plan to develop the port in four stages, staggered until 1980, was quickly revised after the rush to development ensued under Sultan Qabus. All three remaining stages were completed in 1974. Later improvements included an expansion to handle container cargo and a storage area on reclaimed land in **Shutayfi** bay (fig. 168). [WACE, pp. 902–904; OMAN 1975, p. 40; FO/371/156807; FCO/8/1086; FCO/8/1417; PERS.]

Houses and Other Buildings. Matrah was not as well endowed as Muscat with substantial buildings. Many of the grander homes of the Sur al-Lawatiyah have been rebuilt in the recent past. One of the few houses that stood out was Bayt Nasib Khan in Sarmalla quarter near the waterfront. The front part of the house and its verandah were constructed by prominent Muscat merchant Nasib Khan apparently early in the 20th century but the rear portion appears to be much older. Occupied in the mid-20th century by a prominent Lawati merchant family, it was utilized after 1970 by the British Council. The house was restored in the early 1990s by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture (fig. 184).

The Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church of America acquired the house of A.S.G. Jayakar, an Indian doctor who had worked in the British Consulate before retiring to Matrah. The house, located in **Lulu'ah** quarter on the road leading from al-Bab al-Kabir to **Bayt al-Falaj**, was notable for possessing an iron fence with iron lampposts at each corner. The American medical missionaries transformed the house into al-Rahmah Hospital, which they maintained until 1970 when it was turned over to the Ministry of Health (figs. 180–181). The hospital was demolished in the late 1990s. In the early part of the 20th century, several dozen lepers were allowed to live in the square in front of the hospital. [HARRISON, p. 24, CAPTION TO PHOTOGRAPH OF HOSPITAL OPP. p. 65, AND pp. 137–138; D. HAWLEY, p. 19; R/15/6/145; PERS.]

Mosques. Little information is available about the mosques of Matrah. The principal mosque is the Shi'i mosque on the cornice built into the wall of Sur al-Lawatiyah, reconstructed in a Persian style in the early 1990s. There are two other small Shi'i mosques in Sur al-Lawatiyah and another behind the Jibru roundabout. A larger mosque sits in the Lawati cemetery on the eastern edge of Matrah. The other Matrah mosques, Sunni and Ibadi, are undistinguished. [PERS.]

Schools. Matrah had its own al-Sa'idiyah School for boys, situated on the waterfront to the west of Sur al-Lawatiyah and opened in 1959 or 1960. Sultan Sa'id b. Taymur agreed in 1966 to the initiative by the oil company, Petroleum Development (Oman), to open a trade school in Muscat/Matrah but instead students were apparently sent out of the country. [FO/371/162780; FO/371/168691; FO/371/185363; FCO/8/570]

MINA' al-FAHL *see* **MALIH, SAYH al-**

MIRANI, FORT al- *see* **JALALI, AL-, AND AL-MIRANI FORTS**

MITHA'IB, BAB al- [bāb al-mithā'ib; باب الميثاعيب] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls and outside the gate of the same name. Lorimer gave its inhabitants as Baluch with some Africans and Arabs. A quarter of the same name (also known as Dakakin; dakākīn; دكاكين) lies just outside Matrah's **Bab al-Mitha'ib**, opposite **'Iryanah** quarter inside the gate. Until the 1970s, the gate constituted the only opening in the Matrah wall between the mountains on the east and the old al-Bab al-Kabir on the west. A watchtower is incorporated into the wall next to the gate (fig. 182). [LORIMER, VOL. II, p. 1184; PERS.]

MIYABIN [miyābīn; ميايين] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls west of **Takiyah**. In the past, it was known as a location for burials and residence for poorer Arabs, particularly Bani Wuhayb, Baluch, and Africans. A path leads over a low pass to **al-Zadjal** quarter. The origin and meaning of the name is unknown. [LORIMER, VOL. II, p. 1184; R/15/6/4; PERS.]

MUGHUB [mughub; مغب] A quarter of Muscat inside the walls adjacent to the old British Embassy or perhaps even including it. It was also known as Fath al-Bahr since it fronted the sea in front of Fort **al-Jalali**. A house known as Bayt Mughub or Bayt al-Zawawi was built by the Zawawi family in the 1870s and was occupied by the United States Embassy from 1972 until 1989; it was demolished about 2004 as part of the Diwan's plans to incorporate the area into palace precincts. [LORIMER, VOL. II, p. 1189; PERS.]

MUKALLA, al- [al-mukallā; المكلا] A cove just inside the entrance to Muscat harbor (figs. 12 and 17; see the photograph in Zadjali, pp. 24–25). Miles remarks that down to the 16th century the cove was known as “Moculla Chini” because, in his speculation, it was the place where Chinese vessels anchored in medieval times. Lorimer noted that a few families of fishermen from Socotra Island (now in Yemen) came annually to the cove at the beginning of the hot weather for a month or two. During the siege of Muscat in 1895 by interior tribes seeking to restore the Ibadi imamate, all British

subjects in Muscat were removed to safety in al-Mukalla. The British maintained a coaling station in the cove, in which they offered space to the French in 1898 to prevent their establishment of a naval facility at **Bandar Jissah**. The cove was redeveloped in the early 1970s as the headquarters and principal base of the new Sultan of Oman's Navy and a tunnel was cut through the mountain from the **Bab al-Mitha'ib** entrance to Muscat to connect with a new road along the shoreline of Muscat harbor from Fort **al-Mirani** to the cove. When the navy's headquarters were shifted to al-Mu'askar al-Murtafa'ah and a new principal naval base was built at al-Wudam on al-Batinah in the 1980s, the Royal Yacht Squadron became the sole occupant of the cove's facilities. [LORIMER, VOL. II, PP. 1180 AND 1185; MILES, P. 462; R/15/6/37; PERS.]

MUSCAT [masqat; مسقط] **History—Before the Arrival of the Portuguese.** There are frustratingly few references to Muscat before the Portuguese conquest in 1507. Even the origin and meaning of the name is not clear. In its present form, Masqat (masqat; مسقط) appears to be a noun of place: if derived from the verb *s-q-t*, it would seem to mean “a place where something falls or collapses. Alternatively, it has been suggested that it is an abbreviation of *masqat al-ra's*, meaning either “place of birth” or “place where the sand ends.” The most likely explanation of the name, however, is that it is an Arabization of a pre-Islamic place name.

The rapid post-1970 re-development of Muscat permitted no excavations either inside or outside Muscat's walls, nor has there been any archaeological study of Matrah. But given nearby discoveries of prehistoric habitation at **Ra's al-Hamra'**, **Bandar Jissah**, **al-Wutayyah**, and **Bawshar**, it would be inconceivable that fishing settlements did not exist in both Muscat and Matrah at a very early date, given the natural harbors, ample sites for protection, fresh water supplies, and possibility of cultivation. One source cites “local tradition” to the effect that Muscat was founded by Himyari colonizers but there is no historical or archaeological evidence to support this claim.

Despite its imperfections, Muscat possesses the best natural harbor on the Arabian Peninsula coast between Aden and the Gulf. Thus, it is not surprising that it has received some mention, even if sparsely, from ancient travelers and geographers. Some writers have identified Muscat with Ptolemy's Kryptos Limeen (“hidden port”).

Omani historians of the last several centuries mentioned Muscat in connection with the invasion of Oman in the 8th century by the Umayyad governor of Iraq al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf but this is not supported by earlier writers. Early compilations of sailing routes to China refer to Muscat as the last place ships put in for water before crossing the seas, a practice said to antedate the coming of Islam.

Medieval travelers mention Muscat only in passing. Ibn al-Faqih al-Hamadhani (early 10th century) commented on the availability of water for ships. Muhammad al-Muqaddasi (A.D. 985) wrote that Muscat was "the first place the Yemen ships come to, a fine place with an abundance of fruits." Muhammad al-Idrisi (d. 1166) described Muscat as a town with a large population and Ibn al-Mujawir (d. 1291) refers to it as "the anchorage" of Suhar. Al-Dimashqi (13th century) mentioned the presence of pearl fishers at certain times of the year and Ibn Battutah (1330) referred to Muscat as a small place where a certain type of fish was found.

Still, Muscat did not begin to make its mark as significant port until just a few centuries before the arrival of the Portuguese. It was mentioned by the early 13th century as a transshipment port for goods destined for the Kirman region in Iran. The development of larger ships and the growing importance of long-distance trade seems to have played a role in causing Muscat and Matrah to supplant Qalhat (on the Omani coast east of Muscat) as trading ports by the end of the 15th century. Ahmad b. Majid described Muscat in that century as the center of Omani trade where "boats take on cargoes of fresh and dried dates and horses and sell cloth, oil, slaves and cereals." Duarte Barbosa, a Portuguese traveler who may have visited Muscat just after its conquest, cited the town as an important trading and fishing center. Even its conqueror, Afonso d'Albuquerque, described Muscat on first seeing it as "a large and populous city . . . , the principal entrepot of Hormuz, of old a market for the carriage of horses and dates; it is a very elegant town with very fine houses and supplied from the interior with much wheat, maize, barley, and dates for lading as many vessels as come for them." [DUARTE BARBOSA, VOL. I, P. 71; MILES, P. 462; BENT 1900, P. 51; WILKINSON 1977, P. 33N4; G. SMITH, PP. 145-147; WILKINSON 1987, PP. 44 AND 331N5; MURAD, PP. 3-4]

History—Portuguese Period. Afonso d'Albuquerque, appointed as the first Portuguese Viceroy of India, led a Portuguese fleet of conquest in the first years of the 16th century up the eastern coast of Africa and then crossed over to the Arabian Peninsula. Socotra

was captured in 1505 and in the summer of 1507 Albuquerque made his way along the Oman coast, passing by Masirah Island and the port of Sur before capturing Qalhat, the stronghold of the Kings of Hormuz, without resistance. Closer to Muscat, the Portuguese seized Quriyat after strong resistance and burned the town. Albuquerque's forces reached Muscat by August and on arrival, he received a delegation from the town agreeing to provide supplies to his fleet and pay tribute to Portugal. But the Arabs broke off negotiations upon the arrival of reinforcements and Albuquerque began bombardment.

The assault began before daybreak with two Portuguese assault groups attacking the opposite ends of a hastily constructed rampart of earth and wood surmounted by mortars. The town's defenders fought hard but were overcome and, once through the rampart, the Portuguese groups merged and drove the inhabitants out of the town, remaining in pursuit until most of those fleeing were killed, along with many who had remained in the town. Setting himself up in the town's stockade, Albuquerque gave permission to his men to sack the town. The Omanis promised to pay Albuquerque 10,000 xerafins of gold if he did not burn the settlement. But when they failed to produce the sum, Albuquerque had the entire town, including the large wooden and stucco mosque and the shipping in the harbor, set on fire. Those inhabitants who had survived as prisoners were set free after having their ears and noses cut off. After eight days in Muscat, the Portuguese embarked for Suhar and, after capturing that town, went on to Hormuz.

The Portuguese soon returned to establish permanent factories with garrisons at Muscat, Qalhat, and Suhar. The advantages of Muscat's natural harbor were quickly recognized and it soon surpassed Qalhat as the leading port on the Omani coast. As Muscat grew in relative importance, work was begun on improving its fortifications and creating an inland wall of mud around the town. By 1527, construction had begun on what were to become Forts Capitão (**al-Mirani**) and São João (**al-Jalali**). But the forts (or at least Fort al-Mirani) were not yet finished when Ottoman fleets appeared off Muscat. Four Ottoman galliots appeared out of the Red Sea in 1546 and bombarded the town without success. A far more serious threat was mounted in 1550–1551 when a fleet with 16,000 men under Piri Pasha landed in Muscat and sacked the undefended town after the Portuguese garrison had barricaded itself in unfinished Fort al-Mirani. After 18 days of siege, the fort fell to the

Ottoman attackers, who impressed their captives into their galleys and set sail for Hormuz.

But that was not the last of the Ottoman threats. The Portuguese were victorious in a large naval battle near al-Fahl Island, just west of Muscat. Another fleet under Ali Bey carried out a two-pronged attack from sea and from land in 1581, using troops landed at **Sidab**. Once again, the Portuguese retreated to the forts and the *gharayzah* (church compound), leaving the population to flee to Matrah and **Bawshar**. The Ottomans departed after pillaging the town and the Portuguese prudently chose to complete the two forts commanding the harbor in 1586–1588.

The ouster of the Portuguese from their base in Hormuz in 1622 forced them to retrench in Muscat, where the Portuguese fleet patrolling the entrance to the Gulf was based. A dock and the Customs House was completed in 1625, as testified by a date above its gate. To protect increasingly important Muscat, additional watch-towers were built above the town and above Matrah, while batteries were placed at the passes giving land access to Muscat from **Kalbuh** on the west and Sidab on the east. The Portuguese commander Ruy Freyre de Andrade ordered the improvement and completion of Forts Capitão and São João in 1626 to defend against Persian, English, and Dutch attacks. A gun battery was built at sea level beneath Fort Capitão to prevent enemy ships from slipping under the fort's artillery. The inland wall was rebuilt all the way from Bumat Salih in the east to **Bab al-Mitha'ib** under Fort Capitão, and the land outside it was cleared to prevent surprise attacks (figs. 65 and 70). Although the governor resided for most of the year in the *gharayzah*, he retreated to Fort Capitão in the hot weather. In addition to the church in the *gharayzah*, another church existed near the Customs House.

But Portuguese fortunes in the Indian Ocean generally were in decline during the first half of the 17th century. Portugal's union with Spain in 1580 weakened support for Portuguese colonies in Asia and siphoned off troops to fight Spanish wars in Europe. Despite Muscat's importance after the fall of Hormuz, the town was described by visitors as "beggary poor." The Portuguese general Ruy Freyre de Andrada, after supervising the improvement of defenses, died in Muscat of dysentery and was buried in the *gharayzah* below the high altar.

For more than a century, threats to Portuguese Muscat had emanated exclusively from the sea, reflecting the disunity of Oman.

But the appearance and growing strength of the Ya‘aribah *imams*, beginning with the election of Nasir b. Murshid in 1624, changed this and forced the development of additional land defenses and fortifications as far away as **al-Sib**. Imam Nasir led his forces against Muscat in 1640 but failed to breach the defenses. Still, the Omanis captured Suhar in 1644.

In 1648, the Omanis attacked Muscat again. After six weeks of siege, during which the Portuguese defenders exhausted their ammunition and saw their ranks reduced by the plague, agreed to major capitulations. While they were allowed to keep Muscat, they were forced to abandon Matrah and Quriyat, demolish a number of fortifications, and eliminate duties on Omani trade with Muscat. But this was a temporary respite.

A third attack began in January 1650 and this time the Omani forces under the new *imam*, Sultan b. Sayf al-Ya‘rubi, successfully infiltrated the town at night, killing a large number of inhabitants who offered no resistance. Their success was enabled by the lack of guards on the town walls because the diminished garrison had retreated to the forts and the *gharayzah*. The fort surrendered five days later and the *gharayzah* three days after that, just before a relief fleet entered the harbor. Some 700 inhabitants, including the captain-general, apparently escaped to India by sea.

The fall of Muscat has generated a number of unverifiable stories. When Fort Capitão surrendered, its commandant was said to have hurled himself over the walls while the soldiers in the garrison were killed, apart from 18 who converted to Islam. During the 1648 attack, an iron chain was said to have been suspended between two watchtowers in the **Tuyan** area; Portuguese marksmen were placed in iron cradles attached to the chain from where they fired upon approaching attackers.

An Omani source attributes the fall in 1650 to the revenge of an Indian merchant named Narûtem, whose daughter was desired by the Portuguese commander. In desperation, Narûtem persuaded the commander to empty the water-tanks in the forts, clear out the stores of provisions, and remove the gunpowder supplies—using the rationale that their replacement by fresh supplies was necessary in the event of a protracted siege. Narûtem furthermore informed Imam Sultan of what he had done and advised him to attack on a Sunday when the soldiers would be off-duty and drunk. The same source adds that a Portuguese soldier named Cabreta led a desperate counter-

attack that ended in death; his name supposedly was given to Burj Kabrita in Muscat's wall.

Muscat was to remain solely under Omani sovereignty thereafter. Nevertheless, its Portuguese legacy can still be seen in the two forts overlooking the harbor and the wall surrounding the inner sanctum of Muscat. The story of some conversions of soldiers to Islam undoubtedly gave rise to the unsubstantiated idea of a small Portuguese community remaining in Muscat through the ensuing centuries. A few Portuguese loanwords still exist in the Muscati dialect of Arabic, such as *bandara* (*bandeira*) for flag and *maysah* (*mesa*) for table. [CRAESBEECK, p. 210; BARBOSA, p. I/71; BADGER, pp. XXVI-XXVII, 79-85; MILES; BENT 1895, p. 877; DANVERS, VOL., I, pp. 159-161 AND 497-498, VOL. II, pp. 27 AND 296-298; BATHURST, pp. 98-99; BOXER 1980, pp. 44-45; WILKINSON 1987, pp. 44-46; D'ERRICO, pp. 294-298; PERS.]

History—Ya'aribah Period. There are few details of happenings in Muscat during the Ya'aribah period (1650-c. 1740). Under Imam Sultan b. Sayf al-Ya'rubi, the Omanis in remarkably quick time unified the country and built a naval fleet that not only prevented the Portuguese from reacquiring their Omani possessions but chased the Europeans down the coast of East Africa. The fleet was founded on the capture of Portuguese ships in Muscat harbor in 1650 but subsequently grew to include other captured prizes and purpose-built ships modeled on Portuguese ships and apparently constructed in India. The Omanis fought evenly with the Portuguese on the high seas, conducted raids against Mombasa in 1660-1661, sacked the important port of Diu in India in 1668 and nearly captured the fortress of Mozambique Island in 1670. Mombasa fell to the Omanis in 1698 and, although momentarily recaptured in 1728, soon returned to permanent Omani control.

It seems that one of the Portuguese churches, probably the eastern one behind the Customs House, became the residence of the *wakil*, or deputy of the *imam*, who permanently resided in Muscat, while the other remained a storehouse and the erstwhile residence of the *imam* when visiting Muscat. Doubtlessly, improvements were made to both the forts overlooking the harbor and to the inland walls, but there is limited evidence to confirm this. [BOXER 1969, pp. 133-136; PERS.]

History—18th Century. The Ya'rubi imamate eventually deteriorated into civil war and a Persian force sent by Nadir Shah entered Oman ostensibly in support of one of the candidates as *imam* but in

fact took over the country, including Muscat. Once again, there are no historical details of the Persian occupation of Muscat, either in terms of events or construction.

The Persians were ousted about 1741 by Omani forces led by the Ya'rubi governor of Suhar, Ahmad b. Sa'id Al Bu Sa'id. In recognition of his services, Ahmad was elected *imam* and his descendants continue to rule Oman until the present. When his representative arrived at Muscat with some of its inhabitants who had fled earlier, it was said that those who had lived outside the walls could not recognize where their houses had been due to the damage caused by the stabling of the Persian cavalry. This apparently led to altercations among the returnees and some 60 people were said to be killed before the representative sorted out the property disputes.

Two sons of Ahmad b. Sa'id, Sayf and Sultan, entered Muscat in 1781 and took control of Forts al-Mirani and al-Jalali by stealth, from where they defied their father. Imam Ahmad's siege of the forts was cut short by the appearance of a Qasimi army from Ra's al-Khaymah. Eventually Ahmad regained possession of al-Mirani but was forced to leave al-Jalali in their hands. At the beginning of 1782, though, Imam Ahmad returned to Muscat and took control of the *gharayzah* and began bombarding Fort al-Jalali from Fort al-Mirani and from his ships lying on the opposite side of al-Jalali. A third son Sa'id, who had been captured by Sayf and Sultan, bribed his way to freedom and Ahmad subsequently regained control of al-Jalali.

But the forts were soon to reassume a prominent role in Muscat's history. During the imamate of Sa'id b. Ahmad (r. 1783–1789), the son of the *wakil* (governor) of Muscat held Sa'id's son prisoner in Fort al-Jalali. Sa'id's other son Hamad came to Muscat to negotiate with the *wakil*'s son and was given part of a Bayt al-Nawwab in which to stay. Hamad and his followers gained control of both Forts al-Jalali and al-Mirani and thus of Muscat in the name of his brother Sa'id. Only a few other snippets of Muscat's 18th-century history exist. The period after Imam Ahmad's death saw intense competition for power amongst his sons, who maneuvered over control of the forts of Muscat and Matrah, as well as **Bayt al-Falaj**. Hamad b. Sa'id (r. 1789–1792) was the first of the Al Bu Sa'id rulers to make Muscat his capital, strengthening its defenses and fortifying the nearby village of **Ruwi**. He died of smallpox in Muscat and was interred in the cemetery near Hillat al-Shaykh, where a gravestone

still marks his remains. [BADGER, pp. 153–154, 196–200, 219–224; MILES, pp. 278–280; LORIMER, VOL. I, p. 418; WILKINSON 1987, pp. 50–51; PERS.]

History—19th Century. Muscat remained a significant prize in continuing internecine struggles within the Al Bu Saʿid. During the reign of Badr b. Sayf (r. 1804–1806), his rival Qays b. Ahmad took advantage of Badr's absence to occupy Matrah and lay siege to Muscat. When his attempts to gain entrance to the town failed, Muscat's garrison—with the support of Badr's supporter Saʿid b. Sultan, the nominal Imam Saʿid b. Ahmad, and various tribes—pushed Badr back to Matrah and were preparing to attack him there when he sued for peace. As a result, he lost control of Matrah.

Muscat's next appearance in 19th-century history came after the perricide of Thuwayni b. Saʿid by his son Salim in Suhar in 1866. Salim soon took possession of Muscat, accompanied by strict Ibadi followers who threatened the British Indian community. A British warship took on board a number of subjects while others fled by local craft. The crisis eased a few months later when the Government of India recognized Salim as ruler and appointed a British native agent.

But the situation was not to remain calm for long. In 1868, ʿAzzan b. Qays, a rival claimant to the throne from a cadet branch of the Al Bu Saʿid, managed to successfully invade Muscat. Salim barely had time to escape to one of the Portuguese forts overlooking the harbor, leaving his valuables behind him. These included the heirlooms of the dynasty, which were said to have been plundered and/or destroyed by ʿAzzan's strict Ibadi and tribal forces. Three years later, however, helped by British antipathy to ʿAzzan, the main line of Al Bu Saʿid led by Turki b. Saʿid launched a counter-attack against Matrah. During the battle, ʿAzzan was killed while defending the town from the top of its walls.

Muscat suffered from two more attacks during the 19th century. In 1883, a group of Hinawi tribes led by Salih b. ʿAli al-Harithi marched on Muscat. Bypassing Matrah, the tribes made their way to Muscat by that town's al-Wadi al-Kabir and mounted an attack on Muscat's walls in the dead of the night of 22 October. A fierce defense, led by the *sultan* himself, repulsed the attack and inflicted some 30 fatalities on the tribesmen. Subsequent and equally unsuccessful attacks were made on nearby Sidab and Ruwi, as well as a small attack on Matrah. Two days later, tribal forces appeared in al-Wadi al-Kabir again and on the hills overlooking Kalbuh, but their attempts to capture the watchtowers and Muscat's water supply

also failed. The arrival of tribal reinforcements in support of the *sultan* forced the attacking tribes to disperse.

The most serious attack took place in 1895. Again Salih b. 'Ali al-Harithi led a coalition of Hinawi tribes into the outlying areas of Muscat in February. Using negotiations with Sultan Faysal b. Turki (r. 1888–1913) as a cover, Salih b. 'Ali seized one of Muscat's gates late in the night of 13 February and admitted a large group of tribesmen who proceeded to spread throughout the town. The *sultan* was forced to flee from Bayt al-'Alam Palace over the rooftops to Fort al-Jalali while his brother Muhammad held Fort al-Mirani. Apart from the forts, only the British Agency and al-Waljat Quarter remained outside the hands of the attackers.

The British Consul declared his neutrality and the British Indian families were taken by boat to **al-Mukalla** Cove as the undisciplined tribesmen plundered the town and their residences. Salih b. 'Ali's forces raised the white flag of the imamate over the palace and declared 'Azzan b. Qays' son Sa'ud as *imam*. The arrival of Ghafiri tribesmen in support of the *sultan* forced a stalemate and the *sultan's* determined counterattack on al-Bab al-Saghir and al-Banyan Quarter was repelled with the loss of about 20 lives on each side. Eventually Salih b. 'Ali agreed to a payment and an amnesty to withdraw on 10 March. But his followers pillaged what was left of the town, destroyed the Hindu temple, and started several fires.

As a consequence, Sultan Faysal mounted new 12-pounder guns in the forts of Muscat and Matrah, engaged additional palace guards, and strengthened his alliances with potentially helpful tribes. But his finances were also stretched to the breaking point by the Government of India's insistence that he reimburse British Indian subjects for their losses.

Foreign representation in Muscat during most of the 19th century was exclusively British. A British agent had been posted to Muscat during the period of 1800–1809 but commercial and consular duties were subsequently handled by untrained Indians. The British Political Agency was re-established in 1840 and remained in operation until converted into an embassy in 1971. The location of the agency before the construction of a purpose-built facility in 1890 is uncertain. A French vice-consulate was established in 1894 and an American vice-consulate was established in the first years of the 20th century. [BADGER, P. CXIII; R/15/6/37; LORIMER, VOL. I, PP. 439–440, 477–478, AND 509–510; LANDEN, PP. 243, 338, 376–377; PETERSON 1978, PP. 167–168]

History—20th Century Until 1970. In order to prevent the reoccurrence of the 1895 and earlier attacks on Muscat, the Government of India sent Indian Army troops to protect Muscat after the election of a new *imam* in the interior in 1913. These troops were bivouacked first at **al-Wutayyah** and then around the *sultan's* summer palace at **Bayt al-Falaj**. In January 1915, a coalition of tribal forces acting in the name of the *imam* launched an attack on the hills around Bayt al-Falaj but were repulsed by the defending Indian Army troops with considerable loss of life on both sides. The troops were eventually replaced by the redundant Seistan Levy Corps from Baluchistan, which was then transformed into the Muscat Levy Corps. This provided the nucleus of Oman's armed forces, which remained headquartered in Bayt al-Falaj fort until the 1980s.

Muscat saw a modest building boom in the 1890s and 1900s, including the construction of the three major Sunni mosques and several prominent houses. Subsequent building was sparse, consisting of little more than al-Sa'idiyah School and the British Bank of the Middle East before the 1960s. The last decade of Sultan Sa'id b. Taymur's reign saw the construction of a municipality building, post office, girls' school, boys' boarding school, modest government offices at al-Khawr, and several residences for his British advisers, including two on the site of the old Portuguese *gharayzah*. (*All these buildings are described below; see also fig. 7.*) [PERS.]

Fortifications. Nearly all of the fortifications extant in and around Muscat and Matrah date from the Portuguese period, although many have been modified during the intervening centuries and most have been restored or altered since 1970. Undoubtedly, many of these fortifications existed prior to the Portuguese and were either adapted or improved by them but no specific evidence exists to this effect. The most prominent and imposing of Muscat's fortifications are the forts of al-Jalali and al-Mirani, which overlook Muscat harbor and command the town. (*A full description of these forts can be found in the entry for "JALALI, AL-, AND AL-MIRANI FORTS."*)

Muscat possessed at least rudimentary walls on the inland side prior to the Portuguese arrival and these were rebuilt after 1622. The Portuguese also constructed two small sea-level fortifications to guard the entrance to Muscat harbor. Al-Sirah al-Gharbiyah [al-sīrah al-gharbīyah; السيرة الغربية] (called São Antonio by the Portuguese) was built some time between 1610 and 1635 with cannon on several levels, and was meant additionally to guard the anchorage in

al-Mukalla Cove. Al-Sirah al-Sharqiyah [al-sīrah al-sharqīyah; السيرة الشرقية], developed as a gun battery across the entrance from al-Sirah al-Gharbiyah on Muscat Island, was the lesser of the two fortifications. Both fell into ruins in the following centuries but were restored in 1985 (figs. 89–91). [MURAD, PP. 15–16 AND 27; COSTA, PP. 110–111]

Farther inland, about a kilometer up al-Wadi al-Kabir in the Tuyan quarter, is a still-standing Portuguese fortlet, Qal‘at al-Rawiyah [qal‘at al-rāwīyah; قلعة الراوية; *rawiyah* = irrigated] It was erected to protect the wells providing Muscat’s water supply at the time of the mid-17th-century assaults on Muscat of Imam Sultan b. Sayf al-Ya‘rubī. The Al Bu Sa‘id ruler Sultan b. Ahmad subsequently improved the fort and the surrounding watchtowers. The fort originally had three stories, as shown in early 20th century photographs, but only two stories exist at present and the steps to the entry on the second floor have disappeared (figs. 92–94). Qal‘at al-Rawiyah was restored by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture after 1970. Traces of the *falaj* which ran down to the harbor can be seen below the fort.

In addition, a number of watchtowers dot the hills around Muscat. Most of these were either built by the Portuguese or strengthened from existing ones. Some date from after the Arab re-occupation of Muscat, although even very rough dates of construction for all watchtowers have been lost. These include Burj Sa‘ali [sa‘ālī; سعالي] above al-Waljat quarter on the southeast side, Burj Bustu [būstū; بوستو] between al-Bab al-Kabir and Tuyan, Burj al-Murabbi‘ [al-murabbi‘; المربع] farther up al-Wadi al-Kabir from Bustu, Burj Damudar [damūdār; دمودار] above the west end of the town, Burj Madaymin [madaymīn; مديمين] on the side of Muscat closest to **Riyam**, and Burj al-Mukalla on top of the same ridge that holds Fort al-Mirani and overlooks al-Mukalla Cove. [LORIMER, VOL. II, PP. 1180–1181; BADGER, PP. 79–80 AND 224; ZWEMER, PHOTOGRAPH ON P. 92; PERS.]

Population and Quarters. *General.* The population of Muscat prior to 1993 can only be speculated. Various travellers through the last few centuries have published wildly fluctuating estimates. A traveller in 1843 put the town’s population at 35,000 but, in the decades after the death of Sa‘id b. Sultan (d. 1856) and the resultant decline in Muscat’s fortunes, the population was thought to drop to levels as low as 8000 in the 1870s and even to nearly 4000 in the 1920s. But the inaccuracy of these estimates is shown by wildly different guesses by contemporaneous travelers, such as 20,000 in 1835, 12,000

in 1833, 10,000 in 1820 and only 2000 in 1824. The first accurate enumeration came with the 1993 census which put the population of Muscat Governorate at 549,150. Of this total, 40,856 resided in the Wilayah (District) of Muscat and 173,908 in the Wilayah of Matrah. [MAURIZI, P. 22; MIGNAN, P. 243; OSGOOD, PP. 92–93; KEPPEL, P. 9; WELLSTED, VOL. I, P. 17, LANDEN, PP. 66, 125–126, 406; BIDWELL, PP. 145–146; OMAN, 1995, P. 53]

The original inhabitants of the Muscat and Matrah villages appear to have been the Arab tribes Bani Wuhayb in Muscat and Bani Hasan in Matrah. With the growing political importance of Muscat and commercial importance of Matrah, other groups came in and thus the population grew mixed, even though certain quarters were associated with particular groups (fig. 8). A British Political Agent at the turn of the 20th century noted that 14 languages were spoken daily in the *sugs* of Muscat and Matrah:

Arabic is spoken by natives; *Persian* by some natives of Persia who have settled recently in Oman for trade purposes as well as by some families who are of Persian extraction and whose residence dates from the Persian occupation of MCT; *Baluchi* by the Baluch fishermen and others who form majority of servant class throughout State; *English* by the Political Agent and his staff, also certain Goanese and other merchants; *French* by the French Consul and certain Belgian arms merchants; *Swahili* by Negro slaves and their relatives; *Somali* by natives of Somaliland who visit Oman shores yearly in search of dates, etc.; *Hindustani* by large bulk of educated population; *Sindi* by Hindu merchants from Sind and by the Khoja community who have within the last century settled in Oman and are rapidly coming to be regarded as part of the Arab population; *Gujerati* by a number of Hindu traders from southern part of Bombay Presidency, residence of some of whom in Oman dates back for 150 years, possibly more; *Portuguese* or *Goanese* by the Goanese population, merchants, domestic servants, etc., who number a dozen souls or more; *Pushtu* by Baluch and Afghan arms' dealers who are still to be met with occasionally in bazaars; *Armenian* and *Turkish* by Armenian merchants and secretaries and by a few Turkish soldiers who having deserted from the Turkish army operating in Yemen have migrated east and taken service under the sympathetic ruler of Oman. [GREY, P. 4]

The variety of people to be found in the *sug* were described by an American visitor in 1843 as including: "yellow-haired Somauli, goggle-eyed negroes, expectorating Banians, Circassians with tiny feet, fierce-looking Syrians with slouching gaits and sandy beards, dispirited Armenians, Parsee sun votaries, wild Bedoweens with bushy beards,

strutting Kurds with small eyes and prominent noses, haughty Afghans with long faces, and armed Beloochees, with all their varieties of dress and tongues, out-babeling babel and making up such a scene of confusion and noise as can seldom be found anywhere but in an eastern bazaar.” [OSGOOD, p. 92] Lorimer’s *Gazetteer* also noted the “exceedingly heterogenous” population of Muscat:

Arabs of full blood are extremely few and Baluchis appear to be the numerically strongest element; next to Baluchis are probably negroes and half-caste Arabs, called Mawalid. Baluchis are soldiers, sailors, porters, servants and petty traders. There is a considerable Persian community, who are shopkeepers, fishmongers and makers of quilts and bedding. The Hindus number about 200 male adults and 50 women besides some children, presence with some of them of their families being a recent innovation; they are bankers, importers from India or rice, piece-goods, sugar and coffee, date-exporters, silversmiths, and owners of some of best gardens in suburbs. There are some Hadarim or Hadramawtis in Sultan’s service, with their families; and a few families of fishermen from Soqotra come annually to Mukalla cove in the beginning of hot weather and remain for a month or two. A few Abyssinians, called Habush, and Nubians, called Nuban. About 20 Portuguese are settled at Muscat as general storekeepers, vendors of spirits and tobacco, clerks and servants. There are 10 Khojahs and six Jews at Muscat. The population of Muscat is fluctuating and is at its lowest in hot weather when more than half the inhabitants of the suburbs leave for al-Sib, Barka and other places in the Batinah in quest of a less trying climate. In winter, when the town is full, the population may be 10,000, viz. 3000 residing within the walls, 5000 in the suburbs, and 2000 visitors; in size Muscat is inferior to Matrah. The principal food of the people, apart from fish, is rice; but the poorer classes subsist largely on bread made of jowari. [LORIMER, VOL. II, p. 1185]

Baluch. One of the largest elements of the population in both Muscat and Matrah for a very long time has been the Baluch. The Baluchi heartland lies along the Makran coast of the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea, where Baluchistan comprises one of the four major political divisions of Pakistan and spills across the border into Iran. In 1784, a member of the Omani ruling family sought refuge in the Baluchi port of Gwadar and was allowed to settle there by the ruler of the surrounding region. Gwadar thus became an Omani possession until it was sold to Pakistan in 1958. Omani sovereignty over Gwadar undoubtedly facilitated Baluchi movement to Oman in search of work and settlement. More importantly, however, Baluch have long served as soldiers throughout the Gulf and western Indian

Ocean, including Oman. The first modern organized army unit in Oman, established in 1921, was entirely Baluch in composition and the demand for manpower to combat an insurrection in Dhufar during the 1965–1975 period led to steady recruitment of Baluch soldiers until the early 1970s. A number of these soldiers subsequently settled in the sultanate. Nevertheless, the Baluch presence in Oman long antedates these factors. Early European travellers to Oman in the 16th and 17th centuries mentioned the Baluch and it can be reasonably assumed that Baluch have resided in the country at least for centuries before that. Their language is Baluchi and they are uniformly Sunni Muslims. Lorimer noted that the Baluch in Muscat and Matrah constituted half or more of the population and served as soldiers, sailors, porters, servants, and petty traders. Both towns possess a **Harat al-Balush**, or Baluch Quarter. [LORIMER, VOL. II, PP. 1185 AND 1200; PETERSON 2004, PP. 35–37]

Zadjalis. Closely connected to the Baluch is the small community of al-Zadjal. Although the Zadjalis of Oman appear to have come originally from Baluchistan, their origins in Baluchistan are unknown. They speak their own language, most closely related to the Kutchi language spoken by some of the Hindu families in Oman, and probably have resided in Oman for as long as the Baluch have. Zadjalis may be found in most areas with Baluch population; a small quarter of Muscat (outside the walls) is known as **al-Zadjal**. [PETERSON 2004, P. 37]

Hindus. Similarly, the arrival of the Hindu merchants at Muscat is unknown. It has been speculated that they were first permitted to reside in Muscat by the Portuguese but, equally, there is no reason to suppose that Indians did not reside in Muscat before then. Many of those of the Portuguese period were Banians, Hindu merchants from Sind and Gujarat, and it is known that merchants from the city of Thattha in Sind forged trading links with Muscat and established warehouses in Muscat at this time. Omani historians chronicled the pivotal role of a Banian merchant named Narûtem in assisting the Omanis recapture of Muscat from the Portuguese in 1650. The Dutch merchant Engelbert Kaempfer, visiting Muscat in 1688, remarked on the presence of Banians, as did the Italian physician Vincenzo Maurizi in the early 19th century, who claimed they numbered 4000. A British visitor, Robert Mignan, passing through Muscat in 1820, also remarked on the number of Hindu merchants from Bombay and Gujarat, and the Rabbi David Beth Hillel estimated

the number of Banian families at 1000 in 1828. The Indian Navy officer J.R. Wellsted, visiting Muscat in the 1830s, remarked that there were more Banians in Muscat than in any other city of Arabia and estimated their number at 1500. He added that they nearly monopolized the pearl trade from the Gulf and were prominent in the supply of grain from India and Indian cloth and piece-goods. Captain George Brucks of the Indian Navy put their numbers at 2000 during his visit in 1835. Comte A. Gobineau, visiting in 1856, noted that their sacred cows wandered the streets with impunity.

Gradually over the course of the 18th and 19th centuries, the Sindi Bhattia merchants prominent during the Portuguese and Ya'rubī periods were replaced by Kutchi Bhattias. The British medical assistant, Gaspar de Rozario, noted in 1872 that Sindi Lavanās, apparently from Multan, continued to reside alongside the Kutchi Bhattias, although most had left by the early 1900s. By the turn of the 20th century, the number of Banians were estimated at approximately 200 adult males, some 50 women and a few children. They were engaged as bankers and imported rice, piece-goods, sugar, and coffee from India, exported dates, were silversmiths, and owned some of the best gardens in Muscat's suburbs. Although under the protection of the British Government of India, they suffered from Muscat's insecurity in the late 19th and early 20th century. The siege of Muscat in 1895 by various tribes under an Ibadi revivalist umbrella resulted in the destruction of the Hindu temple inside the walls and the ransacking of their shops and stores. The political atmosphere, combined with Oman's economic decline, led to the departure of many Hindu merchants from the country.

As a consequence of these developments and the emergence of a new nationalist atmosphere in Oman after 1970, only a handful of Hindu families remained in Oman. The origin of all the present families is in Gujarat, with many coming from the Kutch district there and so speak Kutchi at home. The Hindus of Muscat primarily lived in either **al-Waljat** or **al-Banyan** quarters, both of which are located inside the old walls. Two temples existed in that area, known generally as Ma'bad al-Banyan and Bayt al-Pir, but both disappeared with the redevelopment of al-Banyan Quarter for the new palace in the mid-1970s. Another temple still exists in al-Hawsh Quarter outside the walls: a temple is believed to have existed on the site for about 150 years but the present temple, Muthi Shwar, was recently rebuilt. A fourth temple located near the Muscat end

of the road over the pass to Riyam, was also a victim of Muscat's post-1970 redevelopment. Previous Hindu crematoria were located in Kalbuh, formerly a small suburb on the sea just north of Muscat (fig. 138), and near the Christian cemetery, accessible only by sea between Muscat and Sidab (fig. 139). By the beginning of the 21st century, the only Hindu crematorium in Oman was located some distance away near the town of Suhar.

The demolition of al-Banyan and al-Waljat quarters of Muscat, as well as Muscat's old *suq*, as part of the rebuilding of Muscat in the 1970s, meant that many Hindu merchants moved both their commercial premises and their residences to Matrah—thus altering the old balance of Hindu merchants tending to occupy Muscat and Lawatayah merchants occupying Matrah—and then to new urban developments in the following decades. The enormous house in Muscat's al-Banyan quarter built by Ratansi Purshottam (1843–1904) in the 1890s, and rivalling the old Bayt al-ʿAlam palace, was demolished in 1974 to make way for the new Qasr al-ʿAlam Palace. [*See also the entry on “KUMBAR” for two smaller communities of Indian origin.*] [MAURIZI, P. 22; MIGNAN, P. 243; WELLSTED, VOL. 1, PP. 19 AND 21; BADGER, PP. 81–85; FOSTER, PP. 127–134; BIDWELL, PP. 144–151; ALLEN 1978, PP. 130–131; ALLEN 1981; WEISGERBER, P. 97; PETERSON 2004, PP. 38–40; R/15/6/4; R/15/6/37; PERS.]

Shiʿah. The largest Shiʿah community in Oman is al-Lawatayah, traditionally located principally in Matrah although some Lawatis maintained shops and warehouses in Muscat. All remaining Shiʿah of Oman belong to the Jaʿfariyah or Twelver Shiʿah sect. Two other Shiʿah communities, considerably smaller in size, resided in Muscat. One of these was al-Baharinah (sing., Bahrani). The term is used elsewhere in the Gulf, most notably in Bahrain where it refers to the largest sector of the Bahraini population, a distinct community which is Arab, Shiʿah, previously rural, and presumably descended from the original inhabitants of the islands. In Oman, however, al-Baharinah simply means Arab Shiʿah. It would appear that each Bahrani family migrated to Oman from elsewhere in the Gulf separately, probably over the course of the last several centuries, and then intermarried. Despite its small size, the Bahrani community has been quite prominent. Less than a dozen Bahrani families lived in Muscat before 1970 and the town boasts two quarters named **al-Baharinah**, one inside the walls, in the area of Bayt Faransa (now the Omani-French Museum), and the other outside the walls,

behind al-Sa'idiyah School. A Bahrani mosque remains in the latter quarter; both still contain *ma'tams*.

Persians have resided in Oman, particularly Muscat, for centuries. Given the proximity of Persian lands across the Gulf of Oman, Oman's colonization by Persia in the centuries before Islam, and Nadir Shah's occupation of Oman in the early 18th century, it can be speculated that Persians have lived in Oman as long as have Baluch. Wellsted in the 1830s and Osgood in the 1840s noted that Persians, banned from Oman after the expulsion of Nadir Shah's army in the 1740s, were again permitted to reside in Muscat where they were mostly merchants dealing in India piece-goods, coffee, hookahs, and rose-water. At the turn of the 20th century, the British Political Agent in Muscat, W.G. Grey, remarked on the existence in Muscat of both recently settled Persian traders and long-established families of Persian extraction, while Lorimer noted the existence of a considerable Persian community, occupied as shopkeepers, fish-mongers, and makers of quilts and bedding. The Persian presence is noted in the names of various quarters of Muscat and Matrah. The commonly used name for Persians, 'Ajam, is preserved in the '**Ajam** quarter of Muscat, which Lorimer noted was inhabited chiefly by Persians. He also mentions that the **Nisasil** quarter was occupied by Persians from Qishm and other coastal areas; the name comes from the concentration of weavers who made the cotton undergarments and bedding for the general population, although in later times the weavers appeared to have been drawn from other inhabitants of indeterminate origin. Similarly the nearby **Safafir** quarter, which Lorimer described as mainly Bahrani, also included poorer families of Persians who were occupied as coppersmiths, hence the name of the quarter. [WELLSTED, VOL. 1, P. 17; OSGOOD, P. 94; GREY, P. 4; LORIMER, VOL. II, PP. 1183 AND 1185; PERS.]

Jews and Christians. Muscat has been home to a small but persistent population of Jews until recently. Travellers reported the presence of Jews in Muscat in 1625 (during the Portuguese occupation), in 1673 (when a synagogue was under construction), and 1688 (after the Portuguese expulsion), and again at the beginning of the 19th century. Wellsted wrote that some of the Jewish inhabitants of Baghdad who were forced to flee in 1828 found refuge in Muscat where they were occupied in producing silver ornaments, lending money, and producing alcohol. A visiting rabbi reported in 1828 that there were four Jewish families and a small synagogue and a few years later

another rabbi preached to 12 Jews at Passover and claimed that there were some 350 Jewish families scattered throughout al-Batinah. Jews represented British interests in the 1830s and the 1860s. Various travellers later in the 19th century mentioned Jewish merchants in Muscat, a French visitor in 1898 was approached by an old Jewish seller of jewelry, and Lorimer reported the existence of six Jews in Muscat at the turn of the twentieth century. The last Jew of Muscat apparently was named or called Sulayman al-Yahudi, who may have left Oman about 1948; his children or grandchildren are said to have converted to Islam. A community of Jewish merchants is known to have resided in Suhar, a town of al-Batinah coast and Oman's oldest port, in medieval times and what may be a Jewish cemetery still exists on the outskirts of old Suhar. [BETH HILLEL, p. 109; SAMUEL; MAURIZI, p. 22; WELLSTED, VOL. 1, pp. 21–22; FONTANIER; ALLEMANN, p. 87; LORIMER, Vol. 1, pp. 400, 472, AND 1185; FLOOR, p. 25; WEISGERBER, p. 97; PERS.]

There is no evidence regarding the presence of Christians in Muscat prior to the Portuguese conquest. It should be noted, though, that a Nestorian church probably existed in al-Mazun (the Persian name for either Oman or just Suhar) during the early centuries of Christianity. During the Portuguese period (1507–1650), two churches and an Augustinian monastery were established in Muscat and some of the edifices, if not the churches, remained extant for considerable time in converted use after the Portuguese departure (these constructions are discussed in greater detail below under “**Houses and Other Buildings**”). In 1896, a group of African boys were freed from slave-traders and placed in the care of the American Mission in Muscat, where they were educated and brought up as Christians. However, it would appear that after they finished their education and found employment, they dispersed throughout Muscat/Matrah and lost their Christian religion. Rumors still exist of families with parents or grandparents that were Christian but these have neither been verified or disproved. Similarly, determining the existence of Portuguese, or more likely Goans with Portuguese blood, presumably residing in Muscat since the 17th century, is elusive. Grey mentions that Portuguese or Goanese was spoken in Muscat by a Goanese population of about a dozen, consisting of merchants, domestic servants, etc. Another hint of the existence of this community is the documentation in British archives of the *sultan's* grant of land for a Christian cemetery near the American Mission in Muscat: the list of subscribers to the cemetery includes a number of handwritten

Portuguese names. Several Christian churches, with their own premises, have been established in the Muscat area after 1970 to service the large expatriate Christian population. [GREY, P. 4; AMERICAN MISSION; PETERSON 2004, P. 49; R/15/6/67; PERS.]

Other Groups. Muscat has been home as well to various groups of low economic and social status. A number of these have been African slaves and servants, who typically lived in the quarters composed of *barasti* huts outside Muscat's walls. Similarly, these outer quarters included elements of al-Bayasirah (sing. Baysari), a community of unknown origin but thought by many to be descended from the original, pre-Arab inhabitants of the country or from its pre-Islamic Persian settlers. Although traditionally restricted to low-status occupations and forbidden to carry arms, Bayasirah occasionally held high positions. Another more mysterious group, may have been the Lughan. **Lughan** is the name of a quarter located outside the walls of Muscat and some distance up al-Wadi al-Kabir. Local tradition says that the Lughan were a people from Baluchistan or Pakistan, perhaps connected to the Baluch in the same way that the Zadjal are connected. As mentioned above, Rozario wrote in 1872 that a group of Hindus known as Lavanas were prominent in Muscat. Alternatively, it has been suggested that the name Lughan is a corruption of al-Afghan, in the same way that the Omani placename al-Ashkharah has come to be pronounced Lashkharah. [LORIMER, VOL. I, P. 298; WILKINSON 1974; R/15/6/4; PERS.]

Houses and Other Buildings. *General.* Until the 1970s, Muscat's built environment consisted of a wide variety of edifices ranging from the Portuguese period up through the mid-20th century. Although much of this architectural legacy was wantonly destroyed in the succeeding decades, there is no evidence that any pre-Portuguese structures existed in 1970. The principal Portuguese contributions were the two forts of **al-Jalali and al-Mirani**, the fortlet of al-Rawiyah and other watchtowers and small forts (see the section on "**Fortifications**" above in the **MUSCAT** entry), the Customs House and two churches (see below in this section). Only the fortifications and the Customs House remained standing until 1970, although the main al-Jalali and al-Mirani forts had been modified over the centuries and both, but especially al-Jalali, were extensively renovated after 1970. A representative of the Dutch East Indies Company who passed through Muscat in 1673, *i.e.* a little more than a decade after the expulsion of the Portuguese, observed that all other Portuguese

buildings had been destroyed, which he ascribes to an Arab sense of revenge.

Otherwise, the principal buildings of pre-1970 Muscat appear to date either from the early 19th century, the last several decades of the 19th and first decade of the 20th century, and the 10–20 years immediately prior to 1970. There is no firm evidence regarding the dates of construction of the early-19th-century buildings, a diverse collection of houses apparently built for members of the Al Bu Saʿid ruling family. But they are unlikely to be older because of the absence of any mention of them in visitor accounts prior to this time. On the other hand, both Maurizi and Wellsted remark on these houses in the early 19th century; according to Wellsted, at least some were still under construction. This also seems the original date of Bayt al-ʿAlam Palace, even though it was constructed partly on the old seawall constructed by the Portuguese. At least one visitor (W.F.W. Owen, in 1824), also mentioned in passing houses of wealthy merchants that seemed to be comparable to the Al Bu Saʿid houses. A French visitor in the 1840s remarked that the house of the French agent (Sayyid bin Khalfan) was furnished in the style of the English in India. An American visitor of about the same time, noting that bin Khalfan was also the American agent, remarked that the American flag was raised in Muscat for the first time in 1843 on bin Khalfan’s house.

There does not seem to be a single driving factor behind the second building boom of ca. 1890–1910. The British Political Agency/Consulate was constructed in 1890 simply because new premises were needed. Not enough is known about the financial situation of the Zawawi family to speculate about the construction of Bayt Mughub in the 1870s. The construction of the three principal Sunni mosques of Muscat in the 1890s and 1900s—ʿAli Musa, Nasib Khan, and al-Zawawi—seems to have been partly pure coincidence and partly the consequence of prosperity derived from the arms trade and other commercial ventures. Similarly, Ratansi Purshottam’s house was clearly the result of his sudden fortune from arms and other trading endeavors. The origins of Bayt al-Kharajiyah and Bayt Nasib are unknown but from their style they presumably date from this period, at least in their outward appearance. Another oddity that did not survive the test of time was an ice factory built by Sultan Faysal b. Turki (r. 1888–1913) but was noted as closed by 1895.

The final, minor, building phase of the mid-20th century occurred during a period of stagnation in Oman and, until the very late 1960s,

seemed to be based on the speculative possibility of oil income. The impetus came from both the private sector and the sultanate government. Thus, the British Bank of the Middle East built new premises in 1956 just outside the main gate, al-Bab al-Kabir, and in the 1960s Sultan Saʿid built both a post office and a municipality building in close proximity. With an assurance of oil income from 1968, Sultan Saʿid's modest development plans included a new government office building at al-Khawr beneath al-Mirani Fort, and a girls' school up the *wadi* in the direction of Tuyan.

Most other houses in Muscat were of less substantial character and all have gradually disappeared in the post-1970 era. Outside the walls, most of the only noteworthy houses belonged to farms owned by members of the ruling family or merchant families; these were all razed after 1970. The American Mission of the Reformed Church of America also built a small hospital and residence that remained standing into the early years of the 21st century (fig. 127). Most extramuros residents, however, lived in *barastis*.

Numerous visitors remarked on the jumbled, confined nature of the streets and on the more substantial houses. The British apothecary Rozario described the houses in considerable detail in 1872, remarking on their ingenious construction to deal with the severe summer heat and to protect the women inside from public gaze. All were of two stories arranged around a central courtyard and boasting an open terrace on the roof. Some houses, he noted, were built of sandstone and mud, mixed with fragments of old mortar, gravel, and other rubbish. The interiors were plastered with what Rozario called Gutch, as well as *saruj*, a waterproof plaster, where needed. The narrowness of the streets allowed the erection of bamboo and mat covers to protect them from the burning sun. The lack of any sewage, however, made the streets unpleasant and stinking.

Another facet of Muscat life that attracted the attention of visitors was the *suq* (market). British visitor George Thomas Keppel, visiting in 1824, noted that the merchandise in the *suq* was displayed on open platforms with the streets covered to protect the goods. The merchants were from India and their wares included cloth, grain, *halvah* (a local sweetmeat), fried locusts, salt, and sulphur. Owen, observing Muscat in the same year, regarded the *suq* as filthy and noted that the palm-leaf mats covering the alleys did not protect them from rain and thus left the entire area knee-deep in mud. Houses in this area, he noted, were only a single-story high and

each had a small opening onto the alley that served as the shop. Near the end of the 19th century, another British visitor judged that Muscat's *sug* did not offer much to the curio hunter but did mention the availability of *khanjars* (the curved Omani dagger), as well as *halwah*. [Many of the authors cited referred to the market as a *bazaar* but this term is actually Persian; the Arabic equivalent is *sug*.] [KEPPEL, p. 17; OWEN, pp. 336–337; FONTANIER, p. 26; OSGOOD, pp. 79–80; BENT 1895, pp. 876–877; R/15/6/4; FLOOR, pp. 24–25; PERS.]

‘Abbas, Bayt [bayt ‘abbās; بیت عباس] One of the Al Bu Sa‘id houses probably constructed in the early 19th century. It is sited behind Bayt Faransa adjacent to the city walls. The name derives from its last inhabitant, Sayyid ‘Abbas b. Faysal, son of Sultan Faysal b. Turki. After Sayyid ‘Abbas’ death in the 1980s, the house was renovated but never occupied (fig. 120). [PERS.]

‘Alam, Bayt al- [bayt al-‘alam; بیت العلم] The former palace on the waterfront in Muscat intramuros (figs. 67–68, 72, and 108; see the photograph of 1969 in Peyton, p. 118). The palace was constructed by Sa‘id b. Sultan on the foundations of the old Portuguese sea wall, Sikkat al-Madfa‘. The dates of construction are unknown: a visitor noted that it was not finished by 1814 while another visitor was received by Sa‘id b. Sultan in the still apparently unfinished palace in 1824, as was another in 1835, and the “sterility” of the palace was remarked upon by a visitor in the 1840s. A visitor in the mid-1880s remarked upon the two lions caged in the courtyard of the palace but only one lion remained later in the decade, when it was used to frighten prisoners. When that lion died in the first half of the 1890s, it was not replaced. Although the palace was renovated during the same period, it suffered from being captured by tribal insurgents in 1895 and Sultan Faysal b. Turki was said not to have funds to repair it. After the Second World War, Sultan Sa‘id b. Taymur began spending more and more time in Salalah in the south of Oman and he never returned to Muscat after 1958. The palace was locked up and no one was allowed to enter. Although many repairs were needed, nothing was ever done. After the July 1970 *coup*, officials entered and recovered a large store of arms and ammunition. Unfortunately, the palace archives were removed and lost. By this time, Bayt al-‘Alam consisted of four parts (from east to west): al-Harim (the women’s quarters), the main palace, Bayt al-Barzah (the reception hall where the *sultan* had held *majlises* [formal councils or informal meetings] and met people; *barzah* = vestibule),

and another wing with a number of rooms that were put into use immediately after the coup as government offices. But when the new Sultan Qabus came to Muscat a few weeks after the coup for the first time in his life, he stayed in Bayt Chauncy [a house built in the late 1950s for a British adviser to the previous Sultan] nearby and construction soon began on a new palace at al-Sib. Bayt al-‘Alam was demolished and a new ceremonial palace, Qasr al-‘Alam, built in its place (figs. 109–112). [MAURIZI, P. 22; KEPPEL, PP. 12–13; FONTANIER, P. 28; DIEULAFOY, P. 6; MILES, P. 464; PONAFIGINE, P. 85; BENT 1895, P. 877; BENTS 1900, P. 57; ALLEMANN, P. 93; BONNENFANT ET AL., P. 133; PERS.]

British Agency/Consulate/Embassy. Britain has maintained a representative in Muscat since 1800, quite possibly at or near the same site until the embassy left Muscat for **Shati‘ al-Qurm** in the 1990s. There is no record of the site of the residency, later political agency, until it was recorded on an 1860 British survey map, but the rented premises dated from the 1820s. The agency purchased the building in 1878 from Bibi Zaynab bint Muhammad Amir. However, despite extensive renovation, it was decided to construct a new building on the site and the work was completed in 1890 (figs. 27–28, 68 and 113–114). The stone was probably quarried from nearby **Sayh al-Malih**. A veranda, bathrooms, gateway and portico, offices, and swimming pool were added to the building over the years. In 1901, the waterfront property extending to the Customs House was purchased from leading merchant Ratansi Purshottam (thus forestalling a French attempt to purchase the land for their own consulate) and used to construct a house for the Agency Surgeon. A few years later, quarters were added for the telegraph establishment and Agency clerks. As a result of an epidemic of bubonic plague in 1899, efforts were made to improve medical facilities and a small hospital, known as the Muscat Charitable Hospital, was built just outside the Agency: although run by the Agency, expenses were shared by the Agency and the *sultan* after 1958 and in 1970 it was handed over to the government of Oman. The courtyard was dominated by an enormous flagpole where by tradition any slave who reached the pole was able to claim his or her freedom and issued by the Agency with a manumission certificate; the flagpole was deemed too dangerous in 1972 and demolished. The tennis court across a narrow alley from the main gate existed from at least the 1880s. The British Embassy moved from the site in the early 1990s to new embassy premises in Shati‘ al-Qurm while a new residence for the ambas-

sador was built on a hill overlooking the sea on the coast at **Rawdah**. The chancery building was demolished a few years later and the entire compound was destroyed when al-Waljat Quarter was levelled for new palace construction in 2004 (figs. 115–116). [DIEULAFOY (1884–1886), p. 4; LORIMER, VOL. I, p. 578; R. HAWLEY; D. HAWLEY p. 116]

Churches and the Augustinian Monastery. The Portuguese built two churches in Muscat. The first was established near the Customs House, *i.e.* in the center of Muscat slightly inland of the harbor. Although the precise location of the church can no longer be established, it seems reasonable to assume that it may have been constructed on the site of the *jami*^c (congregational mosque) burned by Albuquerque at the time of the conquest in 1507. Engelbert Kaempfer, a visitor in 1688, nearly 40 years after the Portuguese were expelled, noted that this church was white with a high roof, visible from two small streets, and was serving as a storage house. Details of the other church are confused. The archives of the Order of St. Augustine state that the monastery was founded in 1597 and that five or six monks were occupied in it. The church became known as the “cathedral” or “igreja” in Portuguese; this was corrupted into Arabic as *gharayzah* (often transliterated as “greiza”). It is impossible to determine, however, whether the monastery was freestanding or was attached to the complex of factory, garrison, and commander’s quarters. Visitors’ accounts do not mention a separate complex from the monastery. Robert Padbrugge, who visited Muscat in 1672 as a representative of the Dutch East Indies Company, observed that the cathedral was in use as the *imam*’s court and speculated that it might be given to the company as a residency. Kaempfer mentioned that the cathedral was being used for the storage of goods as well as a residence for the *imam* on his infrequent visits to Muscat. Both churches were still in existence at the time of Carsten Niebuhr’s visit in 1765, who observed that one was a warehouse and the other the governor’s residence. Another visitor in 1843 also mentioned the existence of the two churches, one in use by Banian merchants and the other utilized by the governor as a palace.

It is commonly supposed that Bayt Gharayzah (see below) was built on the site of the cathedral from which it takes its name. This cannot be the case, however, since the remains of the cathedral were extant until sometime in the 20th century while Bayt Gharayzah was constructed presumably in the first quarter or half of the 19th century. Don Garcia de Silva y Figueroa, the Spanish Ambassador to

Persia who visited Muscat in 1617, described the Convent of St. Augustine as facing Fort al-Mirani and being less than 50 paces away from it. American visitors in 1835 remarked on two surviving Portuguese churches, one a store-house and the other a government office. The apothecary at the British Agency in Muscat wrote in 1872 that it was evident that the “cathedral” was meant to serve as the palace of the Portuguese governor but that it was also evident that it served as accommodation for the garrison soldiers; he added that a square was marked out in front of the building for mustering the troops, which was used as an arsenal in 1870. S.B. Miles, the British Political Agent in Muscat during the 1880s, avers that Al Bu Sa‘id ruler Sultan b. Ahmad, used the cathedral as his residence for about seven years before Bayt al-‘Alam Palace was built. J. Theodore Bent, who visited Muscat several times with his wife at the end of the 19th century, wrote that three walls of the huge old cathedral were still standing with several windows intact, but that the building was being employed as a stable for the *sultan*’s horses and the walls were rapidly crumbling away (fig. 71). It is not known when the last vestiges were demolished but a British adviser in Muscat in the 1950s remarked that the ruins had been cleared and an open space left. An aerial photograph of Muscat taken in 1960 shows the site as empty land. The house of Leslie Chauncy, an adviser to Sultan Sa‘id b. Taymur, was built on part of the land in the 1950s and another house for an adviser was begun on the remaining land in the late 1960s. Not yet completed at the time of the *coup d’état* in 1970, the house was turned over to the new Sultan’s uncle, Tariq b. Taymur. During work on a garden wall, a Portuguese cannon apparently was uncovered but subsequently left undisturbed. [NIEBUHR; MAURIZI, p. 22; RUSCHENBERGER, pp. 77–158; OSGOOD, p. 81; MILES, p. 286; BENT 1895, pp. 876–877; BENTS 1900, pp. 45, 49, 63; WILLIAMSON; D’ERRICO, p. 306n15; FLOOR, pp. 22–25; INNES, pp. 13–14; WEISGERBER, p. 97; ÉVORA; R/15/6/4; PERS.]

Customs House. The Portuguese Customs House survived well into the 20th century. Constructed, according to a date engraved above one of the gates, in 1625 when the Portuguese made Muscat the center of their regional operations, the building lay between Bayt al-‘Alam Palace and the British Consulate. A wharf jutted out from the Customs House to the waterfront, where goods and passengers were unloaded and inspected. Various visitors remarked that it was always bustling. The wharf and building disappeared with the con-

struction of the new Qasr al-‘Alam Palace after 1970. [MAURIZI, PP. 110–111; FLOOR, P. 25; R/15/6/4; PERS.]

Fahd, Bayt [bayt fahd; بیت فهد] A small house adjoining the old Bayt al-‘Alam Palace on the side of Fort al-Mirani. Although identified as Bayt Fahd in 1895, it appears to be the same house as that later occupied by Sayyid Mahmud b. Muhammad b. Turki. The house disappeared at an unknown date (but probably 1950s or early 1960s) and the area was later used as a small market place for the sale of firewood (fig. 130). [R/15/6/37; PERS.]

Faransa, Bayt [bayt faransā; بیت فرنسا] One of the Al Bu Sa‘id houses of Muscat, situated between al-Bab al-Kabir and the *sug*, built in the 1830s or 1840s (figs. 107 and 117–119). It apparently belonged to Sayyidah Ghaliyah bint Salim b. Thuwayni in the middle part of that century and later was occupied by American missionaries for a few years until Sultan Faysal b. Turki offered it to France in 1894 as the residence of the Consul, Paul Ottavi. When tribal forces from the interior seeking to restore the imamate rampaged through Muscat in 1895, Ottavi refused to leave the house and seek sanctuary aboard a British warship in the harbor. The house suffered from cannon fire although it apparently remained under French control. When the French withdrew representation from Muscat in 1914, the building gradually fell into disuse. The British Bank of the Middle East opened its first office in the building in 1948 and remained there until its new building was completed in 1956. Petroleum Development (Oman) subsequently made use of the building as its liaison office until the 1980s. It was restored as the Omani-French Museum in the early 1990s. [ALLEMANN, P. 82; R. HAWLEY, P. 10; D. HAWLEY, P. 116; PERS.]

Gharayzah, Bayt [bayt gharayzah; بیت غریزه] This house apparently was one of a number of residences built by the Al Bu Sa‘id family following their relocation to Muscat as their capital in the early 19th century. Although commonly regarded as having been built on the site of the old Portuguese cathedral, from which it derives its name (an Arabic corruption of “igreja,” the Portuguese word for church; sometimes transliterated in English as Bayt Greiza), the continued existence of the ruins of the cathedral into the 20th century makes this impossible (*see the entry under “Churches” above*). Following the permanent relocation of Sultan Sa‘id b. Taymur’s residence to Salalah in 1958, the worsening state of his Muscat palace forced the transfer of the *harim* (women’s quarters) of the palace to Bayt Gharayzah.

The house was demolished after 1970 and a new building, originally meant as guest quarters for the new Sultan's visitors, was constructed on the same site. [WELLSTED; MILES, PP. 163–164 AND 464; PERS.]

Indian Consulate. India was the only country besides Britain to have resident diplomatic representation in Muscat before 1970. The first Indian Consulate apparently was opened in Bayt Mughub (Bayt al-Zawawi) in the 1950s but moved to a larger building in al-Waljat Quarter in 1961. There it remained until the building and the surrounding area were demolished about 1975 to make way for the new Qasr al-ʿAlam Palace. [PERS.]

Kharajiyah, Bayt al- [bayt al-kharajīyah; *بيت الخرجية*] A private house lying at the intersection of al-Waljat and al-Banyan Quarters (figs. 123–124). Although the origins of the house are unclear, its style would indicate construction in the late 19th or beginning of the 20th centuries. Earlier in the 20th century, it seems to have been owned by an Indian named Khan who was in charge of **al-Jalali and al-Mirani** forts. After his departure from Muscat, the house became the property of a local family. When the family fell into debt, it was purchased by a local merchant, Hajji ʿAli Baqir ʿAbd al-Latif, who then rented it to the sultanate government, which used it as accommodation for British officials. The explorer Bertram Thomas lived there while serving as Financial Adviser (1925–1930) and it was subsequently occupied by successive “Ministers of External Affairs,” Basil Woods-Ballard (1948–1953) and Neil Innes (1953–1958). The building was restored after 1970 and provided office space for the department of Projects and Maintenance of the Diwan. Ironically, the department razed the building in the early 2000s as part of the redevelopment of al-Waljat Quarter. [INNES; PERS.]

Mawzinah, Bayt [bayt mawzinah; *بيت موزنة*] A small house wedged between the larger Bayt Nadir and a Baharni *maʿtam* in the center of Muscat Intramuros (figs. 121–122). Its origins are unknown but the name comes from Sayyidah Mawzinah, the eldest daughter of Sayyid Nadir b. Faysal b. Turki, a brother of Sultan Taymur b. Faysal. The house was restored about 1980 to replace Bayt Nadir as a museum but it was never used for that purpose. Sayyidah Mawzinah later moved to a house outside the walls between the original British Bank of the Middle East and the American mission; this house is also known as Bayt Mawzinah. [PERS.]

Mughub, Bayt [bayt mughub; *بيت مغب*], also known as Bayt al-Zawawi [*بيت الزواوي*] A house in al-Waljat Quarter built into a rock

face at the far eastern end of Muscat. Although the house was built by al-Zawawi family sometime between the 1870s and 1885, it seems to have been constructed over and/or incorporated previous buildings. The house served as the second premises of the United States Consulate from sometime between 1906 and 1913 until the consulate was closed in 1915. The house was later utilized by the Indian Consulate between the mid-1950s and 1961. When the Indian consulate moved to other premises, the building remained vacant until the United States Embassy reclaimed the building in 1972. The house was vacant once again after the American embassy moved to a new building in Shati' al-Qurm in 1989; it was demolished about 2004 as part of the wholesale razing of al-Waljat Quarter. [PERS.]

Municipality Building. One of the first “modern” government buildings in Muscat. Plans for the Municipality Building were begun in 1959 and construction was completed about 1965. The building was located just outside al-Bab al-Kabir and not far from the original British Bank of the Middle East. [PERS.]

Nadir, Bayt [bayt nādir; بیت نادر] One of the original Al Bu Sa'id houses of Muscat, built presumably in the first third of the 19th century. The house fronts on the main street leading from al-Bab al-Kabir to Fort al-Mirani and was opposite Bayt Shihab (Bayt al-Wakil). The current name comes from its last occupant, Sayyid Nadir b. Faysal b. Turki, a brother of Sultan Taymur b. Faysal. Sometime after Sayyid Nadir's death about 1971, the house was utilized temporarily for the offices of the Ministry of Communications and then as a museum. However, the museum was relocated when the building apparently was determined to be unsafe. Although still standing into the middle of the first decade of the 21st century, the house continued to remain vacant (figs. 103–105). [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES; PERS.]

Nasib, Bayt [bayt naṣīb; بیت نصیب] A house opposite the British Consulate/Embassy compound and adjacent to Bayt Mughub. Although the style of the building suggests it was completed in the late 19th century, it appears to have incorporated older structures from previous centuries. It took its final name from Nasib b. Muhammad Khan, a Muscat businessman and property-owner at the turn of the 20th century, but it apparently belonged to Yusuf al-Zawawi in 1906 when the first resident American consul arranged to rent the house and subsequently added a second-story addition with the overhanging balcony. Upon the closure of the US Consulate in 1915, the house was left vacant until leased by the British Royal Air Force

(RAF) for use as temporary accommodation and a permanent wireless post. Bayt Nasib underwent a succession of owners before it was sold to Malallah b. Jan Habib Murad in 1930 and then to ‘Abdullah ‘Ali Musa Khan in 1936. When the RAF vacated the building in 1945, it was taken over by the British Consulate. The United States Embassy, opened in Bayt Mughub in 1972, soon found itself in need of additional space and so occupied Bayt Nasib as well until the embassy moved out of Muscat in 1989. Like Bayt Mughub, Bayt Nasib then remained vacant until it and the rest of al-Waljat Quarter was destroyed in 2004. [COFFIN; D. HAWLEY, p. 12; PERS.]

Shatuh, Bayt [bayt shātūh; بيت شاتوه] An older house of Muscat opposite Bayt Faransa, the origins of which are unknown. It received its name from Sayyidah Shatuh bint Taymur b. Faysal, a full sister of Sultan Sa‘id b. Taymur, and was later occupied by Petroleum Development (Oman) and a British official of the sultanate government until it was abruptly demolished just before the opening of the Franco-Omani Museum in Bayt Faransa, apparently because it interfered with television panoramas of the museum opening by French President François Mitterand. [PERS.]

Shihab, Bayt [bayt shihāb; بيت شهاب] One of the Al Bu Sa‘id houses presumably constructed in the first third of the 19th century, located halfway between al-Bab al-Kabir and Fort al-Mirani and opposite Bayt Nadir. It was last occupied by (and takes its name from) Sayyid Shihab b. Faysal b. Turki, a half-brother of Sultan Taymur b. Faysal. Because Sayyid Shihab was known as the *wakil* (representative of the *sultan*), the house was also known as Bayt al-Wakil—although there does not seem to be any relationship to another house of unknown location named Bayt al-Wakil after a *wakil* governing Muscat for its Ya‘rubī rulers after the ouster of the Portuguese. Bayt Shihab was demolished as part of the renovation of Muscat in the late 1970s or early 1980s. [PERS.]

United States Consulate/Embassy. The establishment of a US diplomatic presence in Oman in 1879 relied on European merchants resident in Muscat to serve as US Consuls, who conducted consulate affairs from their business premises. A local agent handled American affairs in the 1840s. The US State Department appointed an American consul in 1906, William Coffin, who established a consulate and residence in Bayt Nasib, opposite the British Consulate, and added its second story. A few years later, the consulate was moved to nearby Bayt Mughub where it remained until the third and last of the Americans appointed as Consul departed in 1913. A local business-

man, Muhammad al-Fadl, represented American interests until the Consulate was ordered closed in 1915. A United States Embassy was opened in Bayt Mughub in 1972 and remained there until moving into a new purpose-built embassy at **Shatī' al-Qurm** in 1989 (fig. 29). [OSGOOD, PP. 79–80; PERS.]

Zawawi, Bayt al- see *Mughub, Bayt*.

Mosques. The four principal mosques of Muscat in the last century and up to the present have been those of al-Khawr, 'Ali Musa, Nasib Khan, and al-Zawawi. The first is Ibadi and the other three are Sunni. Many other Sunni and Ibadi mosques, as well as a few Shi'i mosques, were to be found both inside and outside the walls. Many of these mosques were demolished in the post-1970 era while some were rebuilt or renovated. There is little or no information available for most of them, including their origins and with which sect they were associated.

'Ajam, al- [ʿajam; العجم] A small mosque, located in al-Waljat Quarter intramuros, that may have been demolished prior to 1970. From the name ('Ajam = Persian Shi'ah) it may be presumed that it was a Shi'ah mosque. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES; PERS.]

'Ali Musa [ʿalī mūsā; علي موسى] A large and distinct Sunni mosque outside Muscat's walls, opposite al-Bab al-Saghir and next to al-Sa'idiyah School (fig. 131). An inscription near the entrance indicates that it was built in A.H. 1328 (= A.D. 1910). 'Ali Musa was a prominent Muscat businessman of the late 19th/early 20th centuries who became prosperous through buying and selling guns. [PERS.]

Bab al-Mitha'ib [bāb al-mithā'ib; باب المشاعيب] A small mosque located just outside the Muscat gate of the same name, hence its name. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES; PERS.]

Baharinah, al- [al-baḥārīnah; البحارنة] A small mosque in **al-Baharinah** quarter, outside the walls and directly behind al-Sa'idiyah School. From its name (al-Baharinah = Arab Shi'ah), the mosque was obviously Shi'i. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES]

Baladiyah, al- [al-baladīyah; البلدية] A small mosque outside al-Bab al-Kabir and across the wadi behind the Municipality Building of the 1960s (*baladiyah* = municipality). [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES]

Bidyu [spelling uncertain] Location unclear. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES]

Dabiyin, al- [al-Dābiyīn; الدابيين] Location unclear. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES]

Dakhil [dākhil; داخل] Location unclear but presumably Intramuros from the name (*dakhil* = inside). [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES]

Fardah, al- [al-farḍah; الفرضة] A small mosque located directly behind the old Customs House. Since the Customs House was also known

as Bayt al-Fardah, the mosque presumably acquired its name from its proximity to the Customs House. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES; PERS.]

Habib [ḥabīb; حبيب] Location unclear. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES]

Hamad b. Muhammad, Sayyid [al-sayyid ḥamad b. muḥammad; السيد احمد بن محمد] A small mosque situated inside the British Consulate compound. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES]

Jamiʿ, al- [al-jāmiʿ; الجامع] Situated in al-Banyan Quarter midway between the old Bayt al-ʿAlam Palace and the newer al-Zawawi Mosque, the name suggests a connection with the old congregational mosque (*jamiʿ*) destroyed by the Portuguese but there is no evidence for this assumption. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES; PERS.]

Jamʿiyah, al- [al-jamʿīyah; الجمعية] Located near Bayt al-Kharajiyah in al-Waljat Quarter, the mosque's name apparently is derived from its association with use by a particular community, presumably al-Baharinah. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES; PERS.]

Jufaynah, al- [al-jufaynah; الجفينة] A small mosque in **al-Jufaynah** Quarter on the way up to Riyam Pass. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES; PERS.]

Khawr, al- [al-khawr; الخور] A small Ibadi mosque at the landward foot of Fort al-Mirani and sited between the fort and Bayt Gharayzah (figs. 30 and 130). There is no reliable dating for the mosque but it takes its name from the nearby small *khawr* or harbor of Muscat. This was a simple mosque in traditional Ibadi style that was used by the ruling family, probably due to its proximity to the palace. Traditionally, the *sultan* would greet well-wishers after ʿid (Islamic festival) prayers at this mosque. In addition to its use as an ordinary mosque, it also served as a school in Ibadi religious instruction. The mosque was demolished in the early 1970s and a new, larger, mosque in a non-Omani style but bearing the same name was built on the same site. [FO/1016/104; PERS.]

Madbaghah, al- [al-madbaghah; المديغة] A small mosque located in **al-Madbaghah** Quarter. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES]

Madrasah, al- [al-madrasah; المدرسة] A small mosque constructed inside the grounds of al-Saʿidiyah School (*madrasah* = school). [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES]

Miyabin [miyābīn; ميابين] A Sunni mosque in **Miyabin** Quarter nearest to the southern hills surrounding Muscat. The same name was given to another mosque in the same quarter, located between the Sunni mosque and al-Saʿidiyah School. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES]

Mughub [mughub; مغب] A very small mosque situated just north of Bayt Mughub in al-Waljat Quarter, near the entrance to Fort al-Jalali and adjacent to the British Consulate. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES]

Musharīfah, al- [al-mushārīfah; المشارفة] Located in Tuyan Quarter behind Bagh al-Sultan. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES]

Nasīb Khan [naṣīb khān; نصيب خان] A large Sunni mosque constructed just across the *wadi* running along Muscat's southern walls and near al-Bab al-Kabir (fig. 132). The mosque was built around the turn of the 20th century by local merchant Nasīb Khan. [PERS.]

Qadīm, al- [al-qadīm; القديم] A mosque of unknown origin (*qadīm* = old or ancient) formerly located in **Takiyah** Quarter near the road leading to Sidab. The mosque apparently was demolished prior to 1970. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES]

Suq al-Bizz [sūq al-bizz; سوق البز] A small mosque near the palace end of Muscat *suq*, demolished along with the remainder of the *suq* during Muscat's renovation in the 1980s (*suq al-bizz* = spice market). [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES; PERS.]

Takiyah [takīyah; تكية] A mosque located in Takiyah Quarter near the road to Sidab. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES]

‘Ubbād, al- [al-ubbād; العبَاد] A small ruined mosque at the end of al-Wadi al-Saghir in the southern hills behind Muscat (fig. 137). It was used by especially devout worshippers, hence the name (*‘ubbād* = worshippers) and presumably was built in an isolated area for that reason. [PERS.]

Wadi al-‘Awr [wādī al-‘awr; وادي العور] A mosque of **Wadi al-‘Awr** Quarter, located just inside Bab al-Mitha’ib. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES]

Wakil, al- [al-wakīl; الوكيل] A small mosque near Bayt Shihab, also known as Bayt al-Wakil, from which the mosque takes its name. The mosque was demolished presumably at the same time as Bayt Shihab. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES; PERS.]

Zadjal, al- [al-zadjāl; الزدجال] A mosque of al-Zadjal Quarter near Burj Bustu. [MAKIYAH ASSOCIATES; PERS.]

Zawawi, al- [al-zawāwī; الزواوي] A large Sunni mosque just inside Muscat walls between old al-Bab al-Saghir and the new al-Bab al-Waljat. The mosque was of unusual design with a square minaret similar to the belltower of a Christian church (figs. 133–134). It was built by al-Zawawi family apparently in 1905–1906 and destroyed by the Diwan in 2005 to make way for another modernization project. [LORIMER, Vol. 2, p. 1182; PERS.]

Schools. Oman's educational system dates largely from 1970 and after, but a few private and state schools existed before that time, as well as numerous religious institutes and Qur’anic schools. Abu Dinah and al-Sa‘idiyah schools existed in Muscat from early in the 20th century, the latter utilizing both Omani (including several from

the ruling family) and Palestinian teachers. As a result of the British development subsidy of the 1950s and 1960s, Sultan Saʿid b. Taymur established another al-Saʿidiyah School in Matrah in 1959, a boarding school for the sons of *shaykhs* in Muscat in 1964, and a girls' school was under construction in Muscat at the time of the 1970 *coup*. [FO/371/114576; FO/371/162780; FO/371/168691; FO/371/168685; FO/371/168685; FO/371/174550; FO/371/174576; PERS.]

Abu Dinah [abū dīnah; أبو دينة] One of Muscat's earliest schools, founded by Muhammad Abu Dinah, an Ibadi teacher from Zaytunah in Tunisia who was invited to Muscat by either Sultan Taymur b. Faysal or his brother Sayyid Nadir b. Faysal to open the school. The school was located between Bayt Nadir and the Bahrani *ma'tam*. [PERS.]

Saʿidiyah, al- [al-saʿidīyah; السعيدية] Housed in a large and distinctive building just outside Muscat's walls and opposite al-Bab al-Saghir, al-Saʿidiyah School was for many years the only state school in Oman. The school was established in 1928 in a building outside al-Bab al-Saghir but then closed in 1932. In 1934, the school was reopened in a building rented from Hajji Jaʿfar ʿAbd al-Rahman with students transferred from the Abu Dinah School. The present building was constructed in 1940 and Palestinian teachers were engaged as teachers, complementing Omani teachers such as Sayyid Faysal b. ʿAli and Sayyid Thuwayni b. Shihab. [PERS.]

Wells and Farms. The wells of Muscat were a principal reason for the town's early prominence, since they provided drinking water for ships putting into Muscat on their last landfall before heading across the Arabian Sea. They also were the source of irrigation for a number of surrounding farms, whose produce was also sold to visiting ships. All of the farms were destroyed in the first phase of Muscat's expansion after 1970. Many of the wells fell into disuse although several continue to operate, notably to irrigate small gardens used by the Diwan to landscape properties in the capital area (figs. 143–144). Some of these wells were of the *zajirah* type, which consisted of an elaborate wooden structure above the well, including a pulley to draw water up from the well in a goatskin or other device, and using a donkey or sometimes a cow to pull the rope. A French visitor in the 1840s describes their operation and an American visitor of the same period remarks that the gardens they supplied grew corn, wheat, dates, onions, potatoes, eggplants, parsley and various herbs. All of the wells and farms were located on the southern

side of Muscat outside the walls, in or near Tuyan Quarter on the way to al-Wadi al-Kabir (figs. 10–11 and 129). [FONTANIER, p. 28; OSGOOD, p. 87; PERS.]

Arabic terms specific to Muscat wells include: *bāgh* [باغ] = garden, also known as a *ḥadīqah* [حديقة]; *birkah* [بركة] = cistern; *ṭawī* [طوي] = well; *zājirah* [زاجرة] = the entire structure for extracting water from a well; *turkbah* [ترکبة] = the wooden structure containing the pulley; and *khabb* [خب] = the walkway used by the animal providing power for the pulley.

‘Alawiyat, al-Tuyan al- [al-ṭuyān al-‘alawīyāt; الطويان العلويات] Two adjacent farms at the upper (southern) end of Tuyan, and now bisected by a post-1970 road which leads to the Muscat dam. The downstream farm of the two contains one well while the upstream one contains two wells. Both farms had been government property before 1970 and now belong to the Diwan. The wells produced good sweetwater which was sent to the cistern situated by the small Portuguese fort Qal‘at al-Rawiyah and from there to the old palace of Bayt al-‘Alam. [PERS.]

‘Ali b. Musa, Tawī [‘alī ibn mūsá; طوي علي بن موسى] A small farm with a well and a cistern located just upstream from Tawī Nasib and adjacent (on the north side) to Tawī Yusuf al-Zawawī. A water channel, and later a pipeline, linked the well with the ‘Ali b. Musa Mosque (outside al-Bab al-Saghir). The well and farm were named after the paternal grandfather of Dr. ‘Ali b. Muhammad b. Musa (a post-1970 Minister of Health) and the maternal grandfather of Yahya Muhammad Nasib (a businessman involved with Yahya Costain and other interests). [PERS.]

Barut, Tawī [bārūt; طوي باروت] A government-owned well in **al-Hawsh** quarter next to the Ma‘bad al-Banyan (the Hindu temple of Muthi Shwar). The well has been destroyed. [PERS.]

Bi-Shaqs, Tawī [bi-shaqs; طوي بشقص] A well near the grave of an eminent *‘alim*, Shaykh al-Shakhsi, in the cemetery of Hillat **al-Shaykh** Quarter. It was probably used in connection with burials but it no longer exists, presumably having been destroyed during construction of either the wall now surrounding the cemetery or the new road leading to Hillat al-Shaykh. [PERS.]

Lu’lu’ah, Tawī al- [al-lu’lu’ah; طوي اللؤلؤة] A well located opposite the actual *wadi* bed of al-Wadi al-Kabir and downstream from the farms of al-Tawiyat al-‘Alawiyat. Together with Tawī Sa‘id and Mirjan (located slightly farther downstream along the same *wadi* bed),

these three wells were the property of the government and the water they produced was free to the general population. Tawī al-Lu'lu'ah is no longer in use. [PERS.]

Mahduthah, Tawī al- [al-maḥdūthah; طوي المحدثه] A farm and well owned by the Khimji Ramdas family between Tawī al-Sayyid Nadir and the Hindu temple. Part of the farm was confiscated by the Diwan to build housing while the remainder has been converted to blocks of flats and shops (generally white and green in color) which are still owned by the Khimji Ramdas family. [PERS.]

Ma'murah and Khimji, Tawīyan al- [al-ma'mūrah, kimjī; طويان المعمورة وكمجي] Two wells located in al-Ma'murah cemetery (used by both Baluch and Arabs) near the upper end of al-Wadī al-Saghir. Tawī al-Ma'murah (sometimes called Kamluh [كملود; a name apparently derived from the colloquial word for "completed"]) is an older well at the upper and older end of the cemetery. The well still exists but is dry. Tawī Khimji (near the entrance of the cemetery) was built about 1960 by Khimji Ramdas for use in funeral ceremonies, but it is now filled in. [PERS.]

Mirjan, Tawī [mirjān; طوي مرجان] A government well just upstream from Tawī al-Lu'lu'ah and Tawī Sa'id. The well is no longer in use. [PERS.]

Nadir, Bagh al-Sayyid [al-sayyid nādir; باغ السيدنادر] A residence, garden, and well adjacent to Bagh al-Sultan Taymur, upstream from the latter. It was last used by Sayyid Nadir b. Faysal, a brother of Sultan Taymur b. Faysal. It was taken over by the Diwan presumably at the same time as Bagh al-Sultan Taymur. [PERS.]

Nasib, Tawī [naṣīb; طوي نصيب] A farm and well with a cistern owned by the Nasib Khan family and situated just upstream from the small Portuguese fort at Qal'at al-Rawiyah. The well was linked by a pipe, replacing an earlier water channel, to the Nasib Khan mosque near al-Bab al-Kabir. Named after the paternal grandfather of prominent merchant Yahya Muhammad Nasib. [PERS.]

Rawiyah, Tawī al- [al-rāwiyah; طوي الراوية] A farm, well, and cistern belonging to the government, located adjacent to the small Portuguese fort, Qal'at al-Rawiyah. Because the water of the well was somewhat brackish, it was used to irrigate the adjoining farmland. The cistern was filled with sweetwater by a water channel, and later a pipeline, from the wells in al-Tawīyat al-'Alawiyat. The water in the cistern was used to supply the old palace of Bayt al-'Alam, the connected Bayt al-Barzah, and al-Khawr Mosque; it was delivered

via a water channel and later a pipeline that passed through al-Bab al-Kabir. The well still produces water although it is unused. The cistern is derelict, and the site of the farm is now occupied by housing for the Royal Oman Police. [PERS.]

Saghīrah, Tawī al- [al-ṣaghīrah; طوي الصغيرة] A farm and well previously owned by the Zubayr family but after 1970 becoming the property of the Diwan. It is located upstream from Tawī al-Wakil. Tawī al-Zubayr, located farther up the wadi and also owned by the Zubayr family, provided good sweetwater for the farm and was brought to Tawī al-Saghīrah by water channel and later by pipeline. [PERS.]

Saʿīd, Tawī [saʿīd; طوي سعيد] A government well between Tawī al-Luʿluʿah and Tawī Mirjan. The name is said to have derived from an unfortunate individual named Saʿīd who fell into the well. It is no longer in use. [PERS.]

Samīh, Tawī [ṣāmīḥ; طوي صاميح] A well nestled next to the southwestern hills behind Miyabin Quarter outside Muscat's southern walls. It was formerly owned by the late Sayyid Ahmad b. Ibrahim, a prominent government official during the reign of Sultan Saʿīd b. Taymur. [PERS.]

Taymur, Bagh al-Sultan [al-sulṭān taymūr; باغ السلطان تيمور] Also known as Bayt al-Bagh, this was the garden of Sultan Taymur b. Faysal. After 1970, the garden was taken over by the Diwan, which constructed a mosque and offices on the site. It is located at the fork in the road when proceeding south from al-Bab al-Kabir towards Tuyan and al-Wadi al-Kabir. The garden had no well but received its water from the adjacent Bagh al-Sayyid Nadir. [PERS.]

Yusuf al-Zawawī, Tawī [yūsuf al-zawāwī; طوي يوسف الزواوي] A farm, well and cistern, located upstream from the small Portuguese fort at Qalʿat al-Rawiyah and adjacent (upstream) to Tawī ʿAlī b. Musa. Its water was used to supply al-Zawawī Mosque inside Muscat's walls, using first a water channel and then a pipeline. [PERS.]

Wakil, Tawī al- [al-wakil; طوي الوكيل] The area northwest of and close to Bagh al-Sultan Taymur consisted of wells and a farm until the period of about 1965 to 1969. It was last used by Sayyid Shihab b. Faysal, the *sultan's* representative (= *wakil*) in Muscat, thus the name. Al-Zahrah and Shams al-Khalili Schools (one of which was the girls' school started by Sultan Saʿīd b. Taymur in 1970) are now located on the site. [PERS.]

Zabadiyah, Tawī al- [al-zabādīyah; طوي الزبادية] A farm with two wells previously owned by the Khimji Ramdas family and after 1970

sold to the Diwan, which has since converted the property to offices and housing. [PERS.]

Ẓaʿfraniyah, Tawī al- [al-zaʿfrānīyah; طوي الزعفرانية] The only well in al-Wadi al-Saghīr. It is owned by the government and provided potable water (although of not very good quality) for public use. The name (saffron well) is apparently derived from the yellow color of the soil in which the well was dug. [PERS.]

Ẓubayr, Tawī al- [al-zubayr; طوي الزبير] A well without a farm situated adjacent to and upstream from Tawī Yusuf al-Zawawī. The well originally belonged to al-Zawawī family but it was purchased along with other houses and gardens about 1914 by al-Zubayr b. ʿAlī, who resided in the area until his death in 1956. The well produces good sweetwater which was delivered by water channel and later by pipeline to Tawī al-Saghīrah. Water from this well was also offered for sale to the general population. [BAYT AL-ZUBAYR MUSEUM (MUSCAT); PERS.]

MUTAYRAH [mutayrah; مطيرح] A quarter of Matrah outside the walls (*mutayrah* = diminutive of Matrah). It is located on the seafront just over the low pass that separates it from Dikkah and Matrah Fort. Lorimer said it was inhabited by Baluchis and mixed tribes who were fishermen and pearl divers, and that 50 *ʿaskaris* (guards) were quartered in Mutayrah at night. The new road between Muscat and Matrah, opened in 1927, ran through Mutayrah. The newer corniche road, built in the 1980s, nearly cut Mutayrah off from the sea apart from a small pond accessible to small fiberglass fishing boats. [LORIMER, VOL. II, p. 1193; PERS.]

— N —

NAZIMAWJAH [nāzīmawjah; نازيموجه] A quarter of Matrah outside the walls and behind **Sur al-Lawatiyah**. The name comes from the Swahili words for garden of banana trees and it traditionally was the home of servants for the Lawatiyah community. Lorimer added that there were also Baluchi, Zadjalis, and a few Hindus. [LORIMER, VOL. II, p. 1198; PERS.]

NISASIL [nisāsīl; نساسيل] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls, south of al-Saʿīdiyah School and west of **al-Baharinah** quarter. The

inhabitants were weavers (hence the name of the quarter), noted for making *wuzars* (a type of Omani undergarment) and going to homes to refurbish cotton bedding. They tended to be Muslim but of low caste, such as *bayasirah*; Lorimer mentioned some were Persians from Qishm. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1183; PERS.]

— P —

PORTS *see* “**Ports**” under entry for **MATRAH**

— Q —

QANTAB. A fishing village east of Muscat, situated in a rocky cove between **al-Bustan** and **Bandar Jissah**.

QURM, al- [al-qurm; القرم] A village near **Ra’s al-Hamra’**, named after a type of flower. The village, occupied by Hadiyin and Bani Hasan, has been swallowed up by an extensive residential area. Although most of the village was situated several kilometers inland, part was located by the *khawr* (= inlet) on the mangrove swamp that has become a nature reserve and park. The residential area has climbed the hill behind the *khawr* and includes the Gulf (later Forum) Hotel. A prehistoric fishing village was excavated on the cliff top now occupied by the residence of the late Sayyid Faysal b. ‘Ali Al Sa‘id, and other evidence of prehistoric habitation was discovered on the adjacent clifftop. To the west lay the village of Shati‘ al-Qurm (*shati‘* = beach), which disappeared under a barrage of government and residential development (figs. 57 and 207). In addition to the term of al-Qurm Heights, the name al-Qurm has been applied to the modern shopping area in the nearby flood plain of **Wadi ‘Adayy**. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 18; COSTA, P. 114; PERS.]

— R —

RAHBIYIN, SAYH al- [sayh al-rahbiyīn; سيح الرحبين] A quarter of Matrah outside the walls, beyond al-Rahmah Hospital and to the west of **Lulu’ah**. A large graveyard, now partly inhabited, stretches

from the foot of the mountains and covers a significant part of the quarter. [PERS.]

RA'S al-HAMRA' [ra's al-ḥamrā'; رأس الحمراء] The red headlands to the west of Muscat that mark the end of al-Batinah Coast. After the oil terminal was established at **Sayh al-Malih** (the cove between **Darsayt** and Ra's al-Hamra', renamed Mina' al-Fahl), a residential area for Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) employees was established on the hills of Ra's al-Hamra'. The westernmost cliffs have been built up as the **al-Qurm** Heights residential area but archaeological excavations in the 1970s uncovered a 4th millennium B.C. fishing village, graveyards, and shell middens. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1191; COSTA, P. 114; PERS.]

RAWDAH [rawḍah; روضة] A house and plantation in the secluded cove of Rawdah to the east of Muscat. Lorimer noted that it belonged to Sayyid Muhammad b. Turki, the brother of Sultan Faysal and that the estate contained wells, a *falaj*, and some 800 palm trees. Despite speculation that the estate was constructed in the 1870s by Sultan Turki b. Sa'id, a French naval visitor to Muscat visited the site in 1842 when it belonged to Sultan Sa'id b. Sultan. There is some evidence that it was even older. Abandoned sometime in the 20th century, the estate consisted only of extensive ruins when it was demolished in 1994 or 1995 to make way for a carpark for the new Rawdah Marina (figs. 151–152). [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1194; COSTA, P. 116; PAGE; PERS.]

RIYAM [riyām; ريام] A village and cove midway between Muscat and Matrah (figs. 161–164). A pass ascends Muscat's **al-Jufaynah** quarter and descends into Riyam (figs. 158–160). The pass was used as a precarious track for pedestrians and animals for centuries, possibly well before the Portuguese occupation, and was surmounted by a gated wall with an armed guard (figs. 36 and 159–164). On the other side of Riyam, the track ascended the hill by means of a stone staircase, which still remains intact (figs. 165–166). After a short distance along the ridgeline, the path descended into **Mutayrah** and from there into Matrah. But continuing along the ridge, the path descends slightly into a bowl containing an abandoned farm with a well cut into solid rock and a small *falaj*; the site is marked as Falaj Khalfan on an Indian Survey map of 1904–1905 (figs. 1 and 167). Because the route through Riyam was so precarious, most traffic

between Muscat and Matrah was carried on by sea. The Muscat Levy Corps blasted the track into a road over Riyam Pass and created a rock-filled passage along the cliffs from Riyam to Mutayrah in early 1927 (fig. 170; see the photographs of the opening of the road in Peyton, pp. 56–59).

Muscat's first electricity generator was located in Riyam, at first a small DC-unit in the 1950s and then changed over to AC with four American generators in 1961. Additional generators were added in the following years. The Riyam power station was established as the Muscat Power Company, a private firm with a 30-year concession, in December 1968 (fig. 36). The government renegotiated its repurchase in November 1970 (see entry for **Electricity**). The first cold stores in Muscat, Matrah Cold Stores, was opened across the road in 1969. A small building near the top of Riyam Pass is said to have belonged to BP and used as a petrol pump depot. An abandoned *tawi* (well) lies in the valley on the Riyam side of the pass.

Much of Riyam Cove was filled in during the construction of the Corniche in the 1980s and a park with amusement rides was built on the filled area. A waterfall was built into the rocky outcrop a short way from Riyam on the way to Matrah. This area had been known as Bandar Danaji, which was used as an anchorage for Indian coastal craft (= *danji*, pl. *danaji*). [MAURIZI, PP. 25–26; LORIMER, VOL. II, PP. 1180 AND 1193; COSTA, P. 112; R/15/6/4; PERS.]

ROADS. Before the 20th century, transit between Muscat and Matrah was difficult. Most travellers between the two towns used boats. But this could not be done in stormy weather. Paths suitable for donkeys led out of Muscat in several directions. Those on the east and on the west led only to the villages of **Sidab** and **Kalbuh** respectively. Another went south through the **Lughan** quarter of Muscat and down al-Wadi al-Kabir, eventually reaching al-Wadi al-Kabir area of Wadi **Bayt al-Falaj**; this circular route passed through **Ruwi** village en route to the interior and required a full day to reach Muscat from Ruwi. A fourth path proceeded through **al-Jufaynah** quarter on the east and climbed up to a pass leading to the village of **Riyam**. From there, the traveller could either take a boat on to Matrah or climb a set of stone steps on the southeast side of Riyam to the top of the surrounding hills and then descend into the **Mutayrah** quarter of Matrah. Traces of these paths still exist. A fifth, lesser used, path leading from Lughan to either Mutayrah or the **Dikkah** quarter of Matrah is no longer discernible.

When the threat from the interior to Muscat faded after 1920, the nascent Muscat Levy Corps was put to work on roadbuilding. In the summer of 1926, the unit made improvements to the roads between Matrah and Bayt al-Falaj and between Bayt al-Falaj and Ruwi. The latter road was extended in the autumn to **al-Wutayyah** and then along **Wadi 'Adayy** to a point near **al-Qurm**. The next phase, requiring nearly all of the following year, was more ambitious: construction of the first road between Muscat and Matrah. Building the road between Muscat and Riyam took four months in early 1927, following the existing path over the pass. The route from Riyam on to Matrah required blasting the road out of the rock face and then building a sea wall to protect it. An attempt to extend the road from al-Qurm to **al-'Udhaybah** using a mangrove foundation was unsuccessful. But in 1928, the caravan trail was improved into a road, using an inland route to avoid dunes. Its track proceeded along the base of the hills to **Bawshar** and then rose over a low pass to **Ghallah**. From there it went on to al-'Udhaybah and eventually reached **al-Sib** in May 1928. The total length from Muscat to al-Sib was measured at $36\frac{3}{4}$ miles. The sections between al-Wutayyah and Ghallah were improved again in the late 1940s by the army to permit its use by military vehicles.

Between 1959 and 1962, the road between Muscat's al-Bab al-Kabir and the entrance to Matrah fort was paved for the first time, followed by main roads in Muscat and Matrah and the road from Matrah to Bayt al-Falaj. Thereafter, the municipality was responsible for maintenance of the road to just beyond al-Rahmah Hospital in Matrah, *i.e.* to the town limits, and the Defense Department was responsible for the road on to the Bayt al-Falaj airstrip. In 1963, the road from al-'Udhaybah was improved to the village of Fanja, at the gateway to the Omani interior.

At the end of the 1960s, work was begun on the coastal road from al-Sib to Suhar. Sultan Sa'id b. Taymur had approved plans for a corniche in Matrah but construction was not begun until after the July 1970 *coup*. Eventually, during the early 1980s, the corniche was continued around the sea cliffs to Riyam and then extended through Kalbuh to provide a dual carriageway all the way from Matrah to Muscat. Contemporaneous projects extended the Sidab road all the way to **al-Bustan** village and another dual carriageway was built from al-Wadi al-Kabir of Wadi Bayt al-Falaj over a pass to al-Bustan and linked up with the coastal road. By about

1985, a well-developed network of roads had been completed throughout the capital area. [BENT 1895, p. 875; COSTA, p. 114; FO/371/13728; FO/371/132751; FO/371/148896; FO/371/168705; FO/371/168686; PERS.]

RUWI [ruwī; روي] A village a few kilometers inland from Matrah and the gateway for Muscat and Matrah to al-Batinah Coast and the interior. According to Lorimer, the inhabitants were from the ‘Awamir and Bani Wuhayb tribes (fig. 206). The Portuguese built a small tower to protect Ruwi (the tower was renovated in 1985) and the town was fortified by Hamad b. Sa‘id Al Bu Sa‘id during his reign (1784–1792). Hamad may have been responsible as well for the construction of Sadd Ruwi, a 500-meter-long mud-brick wall across the Ruwi side of **Wadi ‘Adayy**. Despite its name (*sadd* = dam), the wall’s purpose was clearly defensive and not to protect Ruwi against flooding. By the reign of Sa‘id b. Taymur, a customs post was built between Ruwi village and Sadd Ruwi to control and tax goods being shipped between Muscat/Matrah and the interior (fig. 56). Ruwi was noted for its good wells, which enabled the extensive cultivation of vegetables and fruit for sale in Matrah and Muscat. After 1970, Ruwi served as an early focus of urban growth with its high street becoming a commercial thoroughfare while workshops and warehouses sprang up along the back streets. The first major congregational mosque, Jami‘ Qabus, marked the northern end of the high street. Ruwi eventually expanded to merge with Greater Matrah and al-Wadi al-Kabir and the new quarter of al-Hamriyah ascended the hills to the south (a road to Yiti and **Bandar Khayran** begins in the quarter). [MAURIZI, pp. 25–26; STIFFE 1859; LORIMER, VOL. I, p. 419; VOL. II, p. 1618; COSTA, pp. 106–107 AND 113; PERS.]

— S —

SAFAFIR [ʃafāfir; صفافير] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls, opposite **al-Waljat** quarter and facing the pass to **Sidab**. The quarter was occupied by poorer families of ‘Ajam and al-Baharinah, many of whom were coppersmiths (= ʃafāfir, sing. ʃaffār). [LORIMER, VOL. II, p. 1183; PERS.]

SARMALLA [sarmallā; سرملا] A quarter of Matrah inside the walls on the seaside northwest of **al-Siyagh** quarter. Its inhabitants were

Baluch and Bayasirah. The old **Jibru** gate stood on the inland side of the quarter. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1198]

SARUJ, al- [al-sārūj; الساروج] A fishing village east of **al-Qurm**, with some cultivation inland (fig. 208). Several pre-Islamic tombs have been found in the vicinity with artifacts dated to the 3rd/2nd centuries BC. The village was overrun by construction of the capital area's main thoroughfare and the development of Shati' al-Qurm residential area. [COSTA, P. 114; PERS.]

SAYH [sayh; سايح] A geographical term for a barren plain. Placenames including the word *sayh* are listed according to the rest of the name.

SHAMAL, al- [al-shamāl; الشمال] A quarter of Matrah inside the walls, at the far northwestern end of Matrah and beyond **Sarmalla** quarter but before **Arbaq**. It bordered the sea and also **Jibru** gate in the town wall. Lorimer described its inhabitants as Arabs from al-Manadhirah tribe, Baluch, Africans, and Hindus. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1199]

SHAYKH, al- [al-shaykh; الشيخ] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls. From al-Bab al-Kabir, it lies in the direction of al-Wadi al-Kabir but is located at the beginning of al-Wadi al-Wusta. Lorimer declared that its inhabitants were Baluch. Adjacent to the quarter is a large cemetery with the grave of Sayyid Hamad b. Sa'id, the first of the Al Bu Sa'id dynasty to make his residence in Muscat (ruled 1789–1792) (fig. 135). Most graves have no identification but one tombstone, now destroyed, reads 'Abdullah b. Sulayman b. Khalfan b. . . . 'Ali b. Mas'ud al-Rustaqi with a date of A.H. 1108 (?) (fig. 136). [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1184; PERS.]

SHIBUL [shibūl; شِبُول] A quarter (or neighborhood) of Matrah outside the walls, off the **Tuyan** road out of Matrah and beyond **Ghurayfah** and Hillat **Washirid**. Hillat Shibul (*shibl* = lion-cub) contained a garden called Dud Nagil with dipping ponds where people would come to cool down and splash in the summer. [PERS.]

SHUJAY'I [shujay'i; شُجَيْعِي] A quarter (or neighborhood) of Matrah outside the walls and opposite the former al-Rahmah Hospital in the area now housing the Shujay'i *sug* and the large Hamid Talib

shopping and residential complex (fig. 185). This area was once a flourishing garden. [PERS.]

SHUTAYFI [shuṭayfī; شطيفي] A fishing village on the coast northwest of Matrah in a shallow bay with a sandy beach. Lorimer described the inhabitants as deriving from mixed tribes but especially the Bani Zarraf, although more recently most of the population seemed to be Baluch. The village was demolished when Mina' Qabus was expanded for use as a container port in the late 1970s and its inhabitants shifted to social housing in neighboring 'Ayint. A Hindu crematorium used to be located between Matrah and Shutayfi. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1192; PERS.]

SIB, al- [al-sīb; السيب] A village on al-Batinah Coast on the western edge of the Muscat urban area (fig. 60). The ancient fortified center of Dama (damā; دما) was located in the vicinity, a strategic location at the eastern end of al-Batinah Coast and guarding access to Oman's interior. Immigrating Arab tribes were permitted by the occupying Sasanids to control Dama, one of the major pre-Islamic trade fairs of Arabia. Dama was destroyed by a great flood in A.D. 865 but apparently rebuilt as it was attacked by al-Nabahinah in the 12th century. The ruined site has been built upon as a result of al-Sib's recent urbanization. The fort at al-Sib was besieged about 1804 during an internecine struggle between rival Al Bu Sa'īd claimants to rulership of the country and a nearby tribal *sur* (enclosure) was overrun and 70 defenders were killed. Another fort was built and a garrison was established in 1875 to protect the *suq* from raiders (fig. 217). Miles noted that there were six Hindu merchants in al-Sib and Lorimer also mentioned Hindus among the Arab and Persian traders. According to Lorimer, the inhabitants were Arabs from the tribes of al-'Awamir, al-Siyabiyin, Mahamil, Awlad Hadid, Bani 'Umar, al-'Umayr, Bani Jabir, and al-Hirth, as well as Baluch, Zadjalis, and Persians. Al-Sib served as a minor port serving Wadi Sama'il and also as a summer resort for Muscat and Matrah.

Al-Sib was the site of a peace conference in 1861 between Omani ruler Thuwayni b. Sa'īd Al Bu Sa'īd and his brother Turki. The British Political Agent, who had arranged a truce between the brothers and a safe conduct for Turki, withdrew the safe conduct and allowed Thuwayni to imprison his brother—for which the agent was dismissed by the Government of India. A more important peace conference

took place in al-Sib in 1920 between major tribal *shaykhs*, acting for the newly elected Imam Muhammad b. ‘Abdullah al-Khalili, and representatives of Sultan Taymur b. Faysal. The resultant Agreement (or Treaty) of al-Sib recognized the autonomy of the Omani interior and made the *imam* virtually independent of Muscat, a situation that lasted until the forces of Sultan Sa‘id b. Taymur reoccupied the interior in 1955.

The Sultan of Oman’s Air Force operated an airstrip in the area of al-Sib until the early 1970s and the new Sultan Qabus met the *shaykhs* of the Trucial States there a month after his accession in 1970 (fig. 211–212). In 1947, a survey party from Trans World Airways (TWA) assessed the possibility of using al-Sib as a commercial airfield but reported to the *sultan* that it would be too expensive to build. But the idea of an airport at al-Sib eventually bore fruit, as a new airport was built near al-Sib village to replace the cramped airfield at Bayt al-Falaj. Commercial flights began in September 1972 and the Sultan of Oman’s Air Force began using its end of the new facility in early 1973. The continuing growth of the Muscat capital area eventually engulfed al-Sib and spread farther west along al-Batinah. [BADGER, p. 279; MILES, pp. 459–460; LORIMER, VOL. II, pp. 1823–1824; LANDEN, pp. 280–281; *SAF NEWSLETTER*, No. 9 (JUNE 1972), No. 11 (FEB. 1973); WILKINSON 1977, pp. 40–41, 131; WILKINSON 1987, p. 329n1; PETERSON 1976; R/15/6/121; PERS.]

SIBLAH [siblah; سبله] A quarter (or neighborhood) of Matrah outside the walls, along the left side of the road from al-Kharashif pass towards al-Rahmah Hospital, opposite **Tuyan**. [PERS.]

SIDAB [sidāb; سداب] A fishing village immediately east of Muscat, over a low pass that formerly was surmounted by a wall with a gate (figs. 147–150). After 1970, a paved road was built from Muscat to Sidab and eventually extended along the coast to **al-Bustan**. Lorimer gave its inhabitants as Arabs, Baluch, and slaves. The village was noted for its many gardens and the beach also served as a race-course for horses. A boatdock for the Royal Oman Police was built in the village after 1970 (fig. 34). [PAGE; ALLEMANN, p. 94; LORIMER, VOL. II, pp. 1180 AND 1194; PERS.]

SIYAGH, al- [siyāgh; السياغ] A quarter of Matrah inside the walls and on the sea adjacent to **Sur al-Lawatiyah**. Lorimer noted that

the inhabitants consisted of Hindu silversmiths, Baluch, and Bayasirah. [LORIMER, VOL. II, P. 1198]

SUBARAH, al- [al-ṣubārah; الصبارة] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls, south of **al-Dalalil** and below Burj al-Murabbi'. The name comes from the *subarah* tree. [PERS.]

SUQ, al- [al-sūq; السوق] A quarter of Muscat inside the walls inside al-Bab al-Saghir and between **al-Waljat** Quarter and Bayt Faransi. As indicated by the name, the quarter contained Muscat's market and a mixed population. A similarly named quarter in Matrah fronts the sea between **Sur al-Lawatiyah** and the old Customs House (fig. 183). According to Lorimer, the inhabitants consisted of Baluch, Zadjalis, Arabs from mixed tribes, Hindus, and Lawatiyah. [LORIMER, VOL. II, PP. 1183 AND 1198]

— T —

TAKIYAH [takīyah; تكية] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls, astride the road to **Sidab** and thus the farthest quarter from the walls. It takes its name from its elevated location next to the low pass that separates Sidab from Muscat. Lorimer said its inhabitants were chiefly Baluch. A quarter of the same name exists inside Matrah's walls, on the south side of **Sur al-Lawatiyah**. Lorimer listed slaves and servants of the Lawatiyah, Baluch, and Zadjalis as its inhabitants. [LORIMER, VOL. II, PP. 1183 AND 1198]

TUYAN [tūyān; طويان] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls, beyond al-Bab al-Kabir in the direction of al-Wadi al-Kabir. It sits at the spot where the wadi splits into al-Wadi al-Saghir to the northeast, al-Wadi al-Wusta to the east, and al-Wadi al-Kabir to the south. Sometimes regarded as the entire area outside of al-Bab al-Kabir, the quarter more properly lies between **Lughan** and Hillat **al-Shaykh** and, until the 1970s, contained a number of wells and gardens. Not surprisingly, it was a popular place for walks in the late afternoon and evening for Muscat's residents. Lorimer stated that the inhabitants were Baluch but there were many resident Bani Wuhayb who looked after the wells.

By the 20th century, the water was suitable only for agriculture and washing purposes and was sold by water carriers in Muscat. Vegetables grown in the surrounding gardens were sold in Muscat and Matrah. The area contains a number of graveyards, including the walled Al Bu Sa'īd graveyard, perhaps several centuries old, the anonymous graves of Lughan, and the extensive cemetery adjacent to Hillat al-Shaykh. The wells (= *tuyan*, sing. *tawī*) consisted of Bagh al-Sayyid Taymur b. Faysal (*bagh* is a Persian word, similar to *bustan* [= garden]; the farm contained a garden and a two-story house where visiting *shaykhs* would stay), Bagh al-Sayyid Nadir b. Faysal (next to the previous *bagh*), Tawī al-Wakil (named after Sayyid Shihab b. Faysal), Tawī al-Saghir, Tawī al-Rawiyah, Tawī Nasib Khan, Tawī 'Alī Musa, Tawī al-Zawawi, Tawī al-Zubayr, Tuyan al-'Alawiyat (consists of several *tawīs*), Tawī al-Hawsh, Tawī al-Zabadiyah, and, not far away, also Tawī Samih, owned by Sayyid Ahmad b. Ibrahim.

Continuing past Tuyan up al-Wadi al-Kabir leads to the new Muscat **dam**, as well as an older dam, rebuilt in the mid-20th century in concrete. A path leads through the barren hills and over a pass into Wadi **Bayt al-Falaj** in al-Wadi al-Kabir area while a side path leads to **Sidab**.

Another quarter of the same name exists outside the walls of Matrah, along the east side of the road between al-Bab al-Kabir and al-Kharashif Pass (which leads to Bayt al-Falaj). The inhabitants are mostly Baluch. [KEPPEL, p. 24; ALLEMANN, pp. 86–87; MILES, p. 467; LORIMER, VOL. II, pp. 1184 AND 1199; PERS.]

— U —

'UDHAYBAH, al- [often spelled Azaiba; al-'udhaybah; العذيبة] Originally a small tribal village with wells and date palms, it was chosen in the early 1950s as the operational headquarters for the oil company, Petroleum Development (Oman), probably because it was away from the centers of population and was conveniently located for a landing beach and an airstrip. The first crash of an aircraft of the newly formed Sultan of Oman's Air Force occurred nearby in mid-1959. When the oil company vacated the camp at the end of 1960, it was taken over by the Oman Gendarmerie of the Sultan's Armed Forces as its headquarters and continued to be used by the air force (fig. 210). It remained an army camp until the early 1970s

when it was transferred to the J&P construction company. [LORIMER, VOL. II, p. 1191; PETERSON 1978; FO/371/140068, FO/371/140191, FO/371/156758]

— W —

WADI, al- [al-wādī; الوادي] A quarter of Matrah inside the walls on both sides of Khawr Bambah from al-Bab al-Kabir to the sea (figs. 39 and 42–43). Lorimer gave its population as Lawatiyah, Baluch, and Africans. [LORIMER, VOL. II, p. 1198]

WALJAT, al- [al-waljāt; الولجات] A quarter of Muscat inside the walls from **al-Banyan** quarter to the eastern end of the town. Al-Waljat is sometimes considered to include al-Banyan. The former British Consulate, later Embassy, was located in al-Waljat, as was the former American Embassy in Bayt Mughub. Much of al-Waljat's population was Arab, some of which was al-Baharinah. The Hindu businessman Ratansi Purshottam, who specialized in arms trading and date-exporting, built a new red-roofed house in the quarter about 1890 that rivaled the *sultan's* Bayt al-ʿAlam palace in size and height; it was demolished in 1974 as part of the construction of the new Qasr al-ʿAlam Palace. The quarter also included two Hindu temples, Maʿbad al-Banyan and Bayt al-Pir. The entire quarter was razed in the early 2000s in an expansion of Qasr al-ʿAlam Palace. [LORIMER, VOL. II, p. 1182; PERS.]

WARD MUHAMMAD [ward muḥammad; ورد محمد] A small quarter or neighborhood of Matrah outside the walls along the old road from Matrah to **Bayt al-Falaj**. It contained several wells and small plantations, including one well surrounded by roses and possibly owned by someone named Muhammad (*ward muhammad* = rose of Muhammad). Water carriers collected goatskin bags of water from the wells for sale at houses in Matrah. [PERS.]

WASHIRID [wāshirid; واشيرد] A small neighborhood of Matrah outside the walls along the **Tuyan** road, just beyond **Ghurayfah** quarter. [PERS.]

WATER SUPPLY. The Muscat region receives very little average rainfall, generally between 40 and 200 millimeters. This requires

careful sourcing and husbanding of natural water supplies, as well as procedures to redirect flood waters during the infrequent but heavy rainfalls. The most significant *wadi* (watercourse) of the Muscat region is **Wadi ‘Adayy**, which flows from the good-sized Sayh al-Hatat valley south of Muscat through a long, narrow, twisting canyon before emerging near **Ruwi**. It then makes a right-angle turn to the west and, once free of the hills, proceeds northwest to the sea at **al-Qurm**. The principal drainage of Muscat proper originates in al-Wadi al-Kabir, which is joined at **Tuyan** by al-Wadi al-Wusta and al-Wadi al-Saghir. This flow continues through Tuyan and then heads along the west wall of the town, slipping under the wall at **Bab al-Mitha‘ib** and running into the sea at al-Khawr between Fort al-Mirani and the Bayt al-‘Alam Palace. A low area with standing water existed outside the southern walls at least from the Portuguese period, and may have been the result of its drainage course being blocked by the town walls. A moat was dug around the walls to join the main *wadi* west of al-Bab al-Kabir (fig. 70). Matrah has its own north-flowing al-Wadi al-Kabir, which runs into Khawr Bambah and proceeds through the *suq* to the sea. Wadi **Bayt al-Falaj** flows north into the sea at **Darsayt**.

Because the water table was close to the surface along these *wadis*, wells and *aflaj* (sing., *falaj*, water channel) were built along their course. In Wadi Bayt al-Falaj, a long *falaj* gathered water from subsidiary *aflaj*, particularly in its al-Wadi al-Kabir and near Ruwi, and gathered them by the old Sultan’s residence at Bayt al-Falaj (= house of the *falaj*) where the water was used to irrigate gardens. In Muscat, a number of wells were sunk to tap the water table in the Tuyan stretch of al-Wadi al-Kabir and provide water for farms or gardens (see **Wells and Farms** under the entry for **MUSCAT**). At some point several centuries ago, a canal was dug between the wells of Tuyan (*tuyan* = wells) and al-Khawr area of Muscat Intramuros and water was delivered into a cistern. Ships coming out of the Gulf on their way to India or Africa would stop in Muscat to top up water supplies and procure vegetables and fruits. It cannot be determined when the cistern was built but its existence was noted by visitors in 1688 and 1781 and the canal and cistern were detailed on a French map of 1778 (fig. 6). By the early 19th century, the canal had been transformed into a small cemented aqueduct and remained that way through the remainder of the century. It disappeared sometime in the 20th century. In addition, there are about 20 springs in the

Muscat area, mostly at the base of the hills around **Bawshar**, **Ghallah**, and **Lansab**.

Growing demand for water, and the sultanate's new-found oil income, led to the creation of a Water Department in 1968 as part of the Muscat/Matrah development plan. To relieve dependence on local wells, a £1.56 million project for a pipeline from **al-Khawd**, some 50 kilometers west of Muscat, was completed in May 1970 (see the photograph of work on the pipeline in Wace, p. 904). A desalination plant was built at **Ghubrah** in 1976 and by the 1990s, some 90% of Muscat's water supply was produced by this plant. Measures for flood control after 1970 included improvements to the moat around Muscat's walls and the construction of an underground canal to provide an outlet for water from the area of the new Muscat **dam**. [PORTER, pp. 11–15; WELLSTED; STIFFE 1897, p. 613; WACE, p. 902; OMAN 1975, p. 51; WEISGERBER, p. 97; PERS.]

WUTAYYAH, al- [al-wuṭayyah; الوطية] A village between Matrah and **al-Sib**, noted for its prehistoric sites and substantial *falaj* providing water for sizeable date plantations. **Wadi 'Adayy** passes by the village. Archaeological excavations have found traces of human life in the immediate area over a period of nearly 10,000 years. The Bani Wuhayb supplied the village's original population and the Al Bu Sa'id built several palaces in al-Wutayyah, including one owned by Sayyid Thuwayni b. Sa'id and another by Sayyid Taymur b. Faysal. The old caravan route from Ruwi to the interior passed through al-Wutayyah and another route led from a beach landing to the village through **Sayh al-Malih**. The new Muscat Levy Corps were bivouacked at al-Wutayyah on their arrival in 1921, where they suffered an outbreak of malaria before their transfer to **Bayt al-Falaj**. [STIFFE 1859; MILES, p. 461; LORIMER, VOL. I, p. 17; COSTA, p. 113; R/15/1/427; R/15/6/204; PERS.]

— Z —

ZABADIYAH, al- [al-zabādīyah; الزبادية] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls on the east side of al-Wadi al-Kabir opposite Qal'at al-Rawiyah and against the hills between **al-Zadjal** and **al-Hawsh**. Since it comprises a small area, it is more often considered to be a part of al-Hawsh quarter. Before 1970, the area's wells permitted

the cultivation of vegetables and lucerne by its Arab and Baluchi inhabitants. A quarter of the same name exists on the east side of Matrah, south of **Tuyan**, next to **Kuhbun** and south of **Lulu'ah**. Although a number of houses belonging to a mixed population have been built in the area enclosed by mountains, the area formerly was empty apart from three water wells and some plantations between Lulu'ah and the mountains. Water carriers collected water from the wells to sell to the residents of Matrah. The upper part of the wadi contains the modern Matrah dam (built on or near the site of an older dam) and a well-defined trail continues to al-Wadi al-Kabir of Wadi **Bayt al-Falaj**. [MILES, p. 461; LORIMER, VOL. II, PP. 1184 AND 1199; R/15/6/4; PERS.]

ZADJAL, al- [al-zadjāl; الزدجال] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls, immediately under Bustu hill on its south side. Lorimer described its inhabitants as Zadjali shopkeepers. [LORIMER, VOL. II, p. 1185; PERS.]

ZAR, SHURJAT al- [shurjat al-zār; شُرْجَة الزار] A quarter of Muscat outside the walls up a small branch of al-Wadi al-Kabir behind **Tuyan** in the direction of **Riyam**. Although the quarter is now occupied with houses, traditionally it was used for celebrations. Hence the name: *zār* = celebration and *shurjah* = a branch of a wadi. [PERS.]

CHRONOLOGY

Early History

origins	No historical evidence exists regarding the origins of Muscat, although it seems likely that it may be several millennia old or more. Prehistoric settlements and burial grounds dating from the 4th millennium B.C. exist at Bandar Jissah, al-Wutayyah, Ra's al-Hamra', Bawshar, al-Saruj, al-Khuwayr, and elsewhere in the capital area. Prehistoric rock art also exists in Wadi 'Adayy.
696	A fleet sent by al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf, the Umayyad governor of Iraq, is said to anchor at Bandar Jissah and land troops at Yiti, who march to Wadi Hatat where they are defeated by the Omanis.
865	Fortress town of Dama, location of an important pre-Islamic fair and site of present-day al-Sib, is destroyed by floods.
9th through 13th centuries	Muscat is mentioned by Arab sources as a fishing village and as a source of water for ships setting off across the Indian Ocean.
11th century	Muscat becomes a prominent port under the Kings of Hormuz, based at Qalhat in Oman.
late 15th century	Muscat eclipses Qalhat as Oman's main coastal entrepôt.

The Portuguese and al-Ya'aribah Period

1507	Portuguese fleet under Afonso d'Albuquerque reaches Omani coast near Masirah, passes Sur, takes Qalhat without resistance, and captures Quriyat after a severe battle. The Portuguese find Muscat defended by seafront ramparts and, after the failure of negotiations, bombard the town
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- and mount a twin-pronged assault. Muscat is captured after a fierce struggle and most of its inhabitants are put to death. The town is then pillaged and burned to the ground, including the mosque, after the inhabitants fail to provide a ransom, as the Portuguese set sail for Suhar. The Portuguese return shortly afterwards and take permanent possession of the town.
- 1546 Four Ottoman ships anchor at Muscat and bombard the town, but sail away without landing.
- 1552 Ottoman fleet under command of Piri Reis attacks Muscat and captures the town and the forts before departing.
- 1553 Portuguese defeat Ottomans in a sea battle near al-Fahl Island.
- 1580 An Ottoman fleet under Piri Reis attacks Muscat by sea and land, landing at Sidab and infiltrating Muscat; defenders barricade themselves in the *gharayzah* and the two forts and Ottomans pillage the town before withdrawing.
- 1581 Three Ottoman galleys attack Muscat by landing men near the town and then bombarding the town from the harbor. Muscat is successfully invaded and the entire population flees before Ottomans leave.
- 1586–1588 Construction of al-Jalali and al-Mirani forts is completed.
- 1622–1625 Muscat becomes the regional center of the Portuguese after the fall of Hormuz. Their improvements include the rebuilding of the town wall, a new customs house and landing place, and various watchtowers, as well as two watchtowers in Matrah that are subsequently strengthened into Matrah fort.
- 1624 Election of Nasir b. Murshid al-Ya‘rubi as *imam* prompts the Portuguese to build an earthen land wall around Muscat, which is strengthened in subsequent years; the fortification system is extended as far as al-Sib.
- 1626 Fortifications of Muscat are strengthened under order of Ruy Freyre de Andrada to defend against attacks by the Persians, allied at this time with the English and Dutch.
- c. 1627 The fortifications at the entrance to Muscat harbor, al-Sirah al-Gharbiyah and al-Sirah al-Sharqiyah are completed.

- c. 1630 The Portuguese *gharayzah* (a combination of church, factory, barracks, and storerooms) is possibly built at this time.
- 1633 Ruy Freyre de Andrada dies of dysentary in Muscat and is interred below the altar in the Church of Saint Augustin.
- 1640 Imam Nasir b. Murshid al-Yaʿrubi attacks Muscat but is forced to retire with heavy losses.
- 1648 After two months of siege by Imam Nasir b. Murshid al-Yaʿrubi, the Portuguese defenders sue for peace. They are allowed to keep Muscat but must give the Omanis free access to maritime trade there, as well as destroy their other forts and accept the neutrality of Matrah.
- 1650, Jan. Imam Sultan b. Sayf al-Yaʿrubi captures Muscat town and besieges the two forts, which are forced to surrender six months later.

The Al Bu Saʿid Period

- c. 1740 Contending rivals from al-Yaʿaribah family draw Oman into civil war. An attacking Persian army in support of Sayf b. Sultan al-Yaʿrubi wins a major battle at Sayh al-Harmal against Omani forces defending Muscat for Imam Sultan b. Murshid al-Yaʿrubi.
- c. 1744 Muscat is freed from Persian control and Oman is reunited under Ahmad b. Saʿid, who is elected *imam* and becomes the first ruler of Oman in the line of Al Bu Saʿid.
- 1773–1779 The (British) East India Company is sometimes represented in Muscat by a native broker.
- 1781–1782 Ahmad b. Saʿid's sons Sayf and Sultan gain possession of Fort al-Jalali and al-Mirani in Muscat but their father eventually regains control.
- 1782–1799 Tipu Sultan (ruler of Mysore during 1782–1799) establishes a permanent trading mission and factory at Muscat and beaches part of his commercial fleet there during the off-season. British interception of letter for Tipu from Napoleon, sent via Muscat, leads to Britain's signing of a formal agreement with Sultan b. Ahmad.

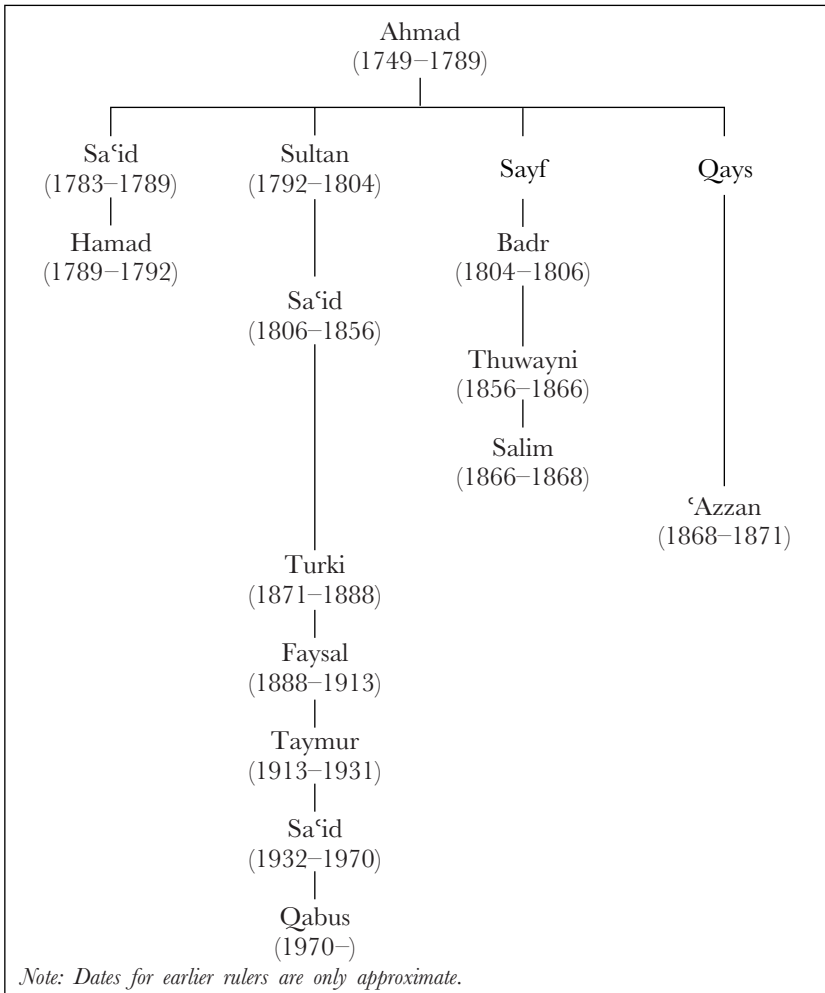
- c. 1783–1789 Fighting takes place in Muscat and Matrah between the forces of the *imam* and the rebellious *wakil* (deputy of Muscat).
- 1789–1792 Sayyid Hamad b. Saʿid (r. 1789–1792) moves his capital to Muscat, strengthens its defenses and fortifies Ruwi. He dies of smallpox at Muscat in 1792 and is buried in a graveyard near Hillat al-Shaykh. A year after his death, Oman is divided between the three principal sons of Ahmad b. Saʿid, with Sultan remaining in control of Muscat.
- 1800 A British representative of the East India Company takes up residence in Muscat.
- early 19th century A number of substantial houses are built in Muscat as residences of members of the Al Bu Saʿid about this time.
- 1804 Qays b. Ahmad attempts to wrest control of Muscat and Matrah, laying siege to Matrah Fort and plundering Muscat's *suq*. Qays gains control of Matrah Fort but is subsequently forced to surrender it.
- 1813 Mutlaq al-Mutayri, commanding forces belonging to the Al Saʿud of Najd, captures Matrah and plunders the town before departing for al-Sharqiyah region of interior Oman.
- 1856 The dominions of Saʿid b. Sultan are split on his death between his sons Thuwayni, who receives Oman, and Barghash, who receives Zanzibar.
- 1861 The Canning Award constitutes British confirmation of the division between Oman and Zanzibar.
- 1866 Salim b. Thuwayni, shortly after killing his father in Suhar, captures Muscat and a native agent is appointed to represent British India in Muscat.
- 1868 ʿAzzan b. Qays invades Muscat and assumes leadership of Oman as *imam*.
- 1871 Turki b. Saʿid attacks Matrah and, during the fighting, Imam ʿAzzan b. Qays is killed. Both Matrah and Muscat surrender to Turki who is recognized by the British as ruler of Oman.
- 1874 Shaykh Salih b. ʿAli al-Harithi leads a coalition of Omani tribes against Sultan Turki b. Saʿid and succeeds in capturing Matrah and plundering the *suq*

- before Turki bribes him not to attack Muscat and withdraw.
- 1877 Shaykh Salih b. 'Ali al-Harithi again attacks Matrah and plunders the *suq* but fails to breach Muscat's walls and is forced to break off the attack when his forces are shelled by a British warship which arrives on the scene.
- 1879 The United States Consulate is established employing European merchants as consuls.
- 1883 Tribal forces led by Shaykh Salih b. 'Ali al-Harithi and 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Sa'id, a rival contender to leadership of the Al Bu Sa'id state, launch a surprise night attack on Muscat by way of al-Wadi al-Kabir. The attack fails, as does a smaller assault on Matrah.
- 1890 A cyclonic storm drops more than 11 inches of rain on Muscat and Matrah, flooding the streets, washing dhows ashore in Matrah, and kills some 700 people throughout Oman.
A new British Political Agency is built on the site of the previous Agency and later becomes the Chancery of the British Embassy.
- 1894 France establishes a consulate in Muscat. Even though the consulate is closed in 1914, the building retains the name Bayt Faransa.
- 1895 Tribal forces led by Shaykh Salih b. 'Ali al-Harithi and his son 'Abdullah, gain entry to Muscat and force Sultan Faysal b. Turki to flee to Fort al-Jalali; only the British Agency and al-Waljat quarter are not taken over. The tribesmen eventually withdraw after pillaging the town.
- 1897 A quarantine station for protection against bubonic plague (which strikes Muscat in 1899) is established at Haramil.
- 1898–1899 Sultan Faysal b. Turki grants France a concession for a coaling station at Bandar Jissah. A few months later the British force him to publicly cancel the concession.
- 1906 The American Consulate in Muscat receives its first American consul but the last American consul departs in 1913 and the consulate is closed in 1915.
- 1913 Notables and tribal *shaykhs* of the Omani interior elect Salim b. Rashid al-Kharusi as *imam*, the first to hold

- that office since the death of ‘Azzan b. Qays Al Bu Sa‘id in 1871.
- 1915 Omani tribal forces under the banner of the Ibadi Imamate attack Indian Army troops defending Muscat for Sultan Faysal b. Turki but are defeated in a battle on the hills above Bayt al-Falaj.
- 1920 Imam Salim b. Rashid al-Kharusi dies and Muhammad b. ‘Abdullah al-Khalili is elected as the new *imam*. The Agreement of al-Sib is signed under the auspices of the British Political Agent between representatives of Sultan Faysal b. Turki and tribal leaders of the interior, granting the interior limited autonomy from the government of the *sultan*.
- 1921 The redundant Seistan Levy Corps arrive in Muscat to become the new Muscat Levy Corps (later Muscat Infantry), the forerunners of the Sultan’s Armed Forces.
- 1926–1928 The Muscat Infantry constructs roads throughout the capital area, including the first motorable road between Muscat and Matrah.
- 1928 Al-Sa‘idiyah School is established in Muscat and moves into its permanent premises in 1934.
- 1948 The British Bank of the Middle East is the first bank to open a branch in Muscat, occupying Bayt Faransa inside the walls until moving into purpose-built premises in 1956.
- early 1950s Gulf Aviation begins using an airstrip laid out near Bayt al-Falaj. This strip also serves as the principal base of operations for the *sultan* of Oman’s Air Force from 1959 until the construction of al-Sib International Airport in the early 1970s.
- A small dam is constructed in al-Wadi al-Kabir south of Muscat.
- 1951 The Indian consulate opens in Muscat.
- 1954 Respected Imam Muhammad b. ‘Abdullah al-Khalili dies and Ghalib b. ‘Ali al-Hina’i is elected *imam*.
- 1955–1959 Forces of the *sultan* occupy Nizwa, ousting Imam Ghalib b. ‘Ali al-Hina’i. His supporters retake Nizwa temporarily in 1957 but are forced to retreat to the top of al-Jabal al-Akhdar. They are chased from there in 1959 and forced into permanent exile. Some followers

- engage in minelaying and minor bomb attacks for almost a decade.
- 1959–1962 The road between Muscat and Matrah is paved.
- 1960 Al-Saʿidiyah School is opened in Matrah.
- 1960–1964 Suspected arson causes serious fires in Muscat and Matrah, destroying many *barasti* homes outside the walls of both towns.
- 1962 Heavy rainstorms hit Oman and cause Matrah's al-Bab al-Kabir to collapse.
- 1963–1975 Disgruntled tribesmen start attacks in the southern Omani region of Dhufar. It expands into a "nationalist" rebellion and is then transformed into a guerrilla war waged by a Marxist front. The Dhufar War officially ends in 1975.
- 1963 Two violent storms cause extensive damage in Muscat and Matrah.
- 1964 Petroleum Development (Oman) discovers oil in Oman. An oil terminal is subsequently developed at Sayh al-Malih, which is renamed Mina' al-Fahl. All oil company operations are moved from al-'Udhaybah to Mina' al-Fahl and a residential community for the oil company is built at nearby Ra's al-Hamra'.
- 1967 Petroleum Development (Oman) begins exports of Omani oil.
- A development plan for Muscat and Matrah is prepared. It includes a electricity project, piped water supply, government buildings, post office, hospital, schools, and a £10 million plan for a modern port and cornice in Matrah.
- 1968 The Omani government receives its first revenues from oil exports.
- Muscat Power Company inaugurates an electrical power station at Riyam.
- 1970 Sultan Qabus b. Sa'id overthrows his father Sa'id b. Taymur in Salalah and makes his first visit to Muscat several weeks later. This change of government ushers in enormous socio-economic development throughout Oman and initiates the transformation of the towns of Muscat, Matrah, together with surrounding villages, into a single modern city.

- 1972 Al-Sib International Airport begins operations, with the Sultan of Oman's Air Force sharing facilities at al-Sib from the following year. The old airstrip at Bayt al-Falaj is eventually converted into a boulevard for Matrah's new commercial district.
- 1985 Al-Bustan Palace Hotel is opened in time to host Oman's first-ever summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council.
- 1993 The new dam at Muscat is completed.

Oman's Modern Rulers: The Al Bu Sa'id Dynasty

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*N.B. Alphabetization of place names incorporating geographical features follows the same procedure as for the gazetteer, e.g., Bandar Jissah will be found under Jissah, Bandar. Page numbers in boldface refer to gazetteer entries under the same name. Place names mentioned in passing in the gazetteer have not been indexed if they have their own entries (or, in the case of houses, mosques, and wells and farms, are described under **MUSCAT** or **MATRAH**). Terms are also boldfaced when they are discussed in some detail in larger gazetteer entries but have no entries of their own. Numbers in italics refer to figure numbers. Members of the Ya'rubi and Al Bu Sa'id ruling families are listed by proper name and not surname.*

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- Legend
- A. Disembarkation quay
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 209. Construction of a *barasti* structure in the 1960s.
 210. Unloading a Dakota of the Sultan of Oman's Air Force at al-'Udhaybah (Azaiba) airstrip in 1968. The airstrip was laid out by the oil company, then served briefly as the air force's center of operations before it moved to Bayt al-Falaj, and later became the compound of the J&P Construction Company.
 211. In addition to al-'Udhaybah, the Sultan of Oman's Air Force also utilized an airstrip a few kilometers to the west at al-Sib (but not the same site later used for the present international airport). Upon Sultan Qabus's overthrow of his father in 1970, the various *shaykhs* of the Trucial Coast were flown into al-Sib airstrip to meet the Sultan for the first time. This August 1970 photograph shows the Omani troops saluting the departure of the *shaykhs*.

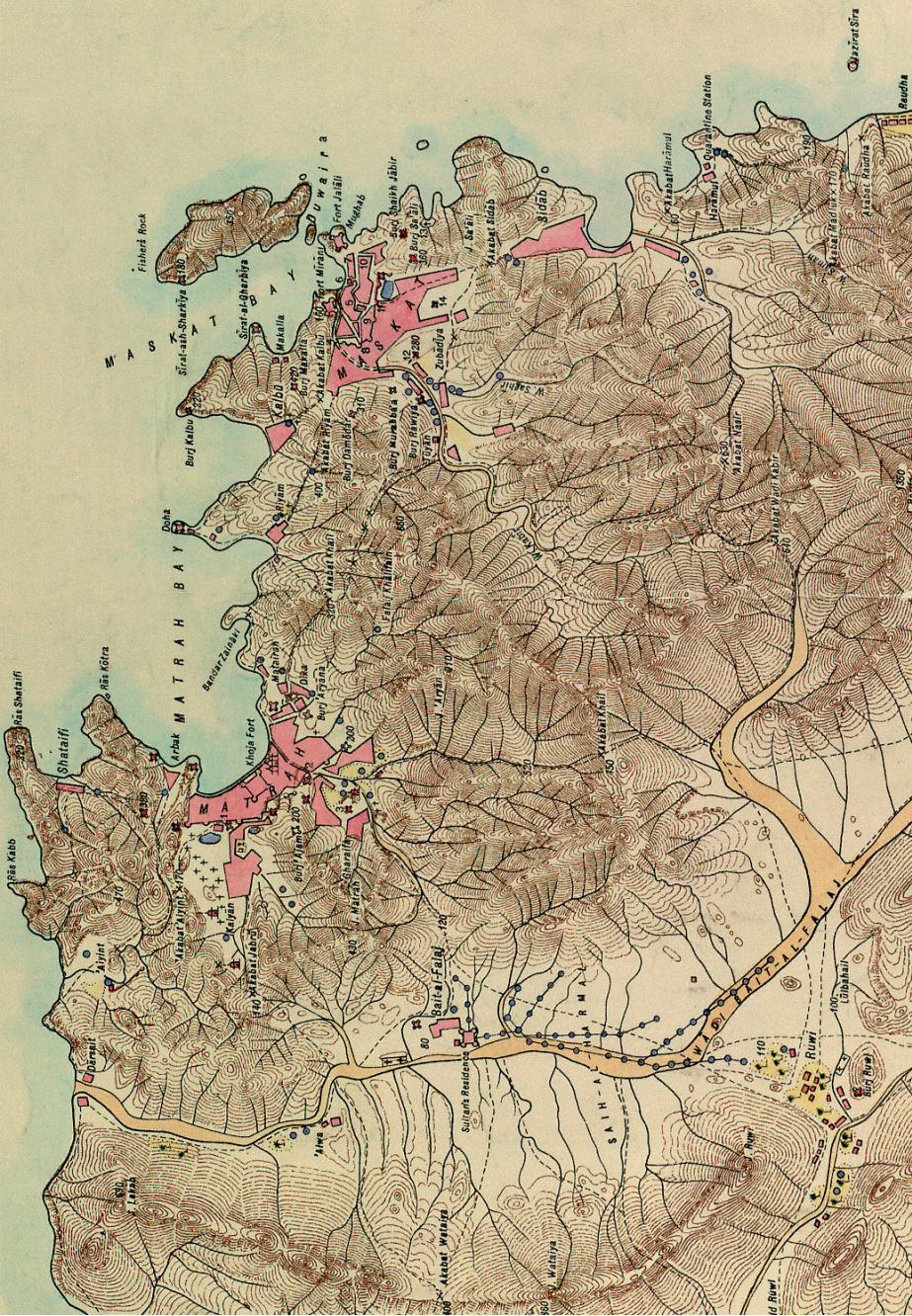
212. The meeting at al-Sib in August 1970. Sultan Qabus b. Sa'ïd is in the center. Shaykh Zayid b. Sultan Al Nahyan, the ruler of Abu Dhabi, is to the left and Sayyid Tariq b. Taymur, the uncle of the Sultan, is approaching to the right of the Sultan.
213. An old mud-brick house at Fath Al Bu Sa'ïd in Bawshar in 1970.
214. Another of Bawshar's old mudbrick houses in 1995.
215. Prehistoric beehive tombs on a hill above Bawshar's Fath Al Bu Sa'ïd village in 1996, shortly before the area was developed into a residential area.
216. A small mosque in Ghallah in 1970. Scraps of cloth have been fastened on the tree to bring luck.
217. The ruined fort of Hurayyis at al-Sib in 1971.

Credits for Figures

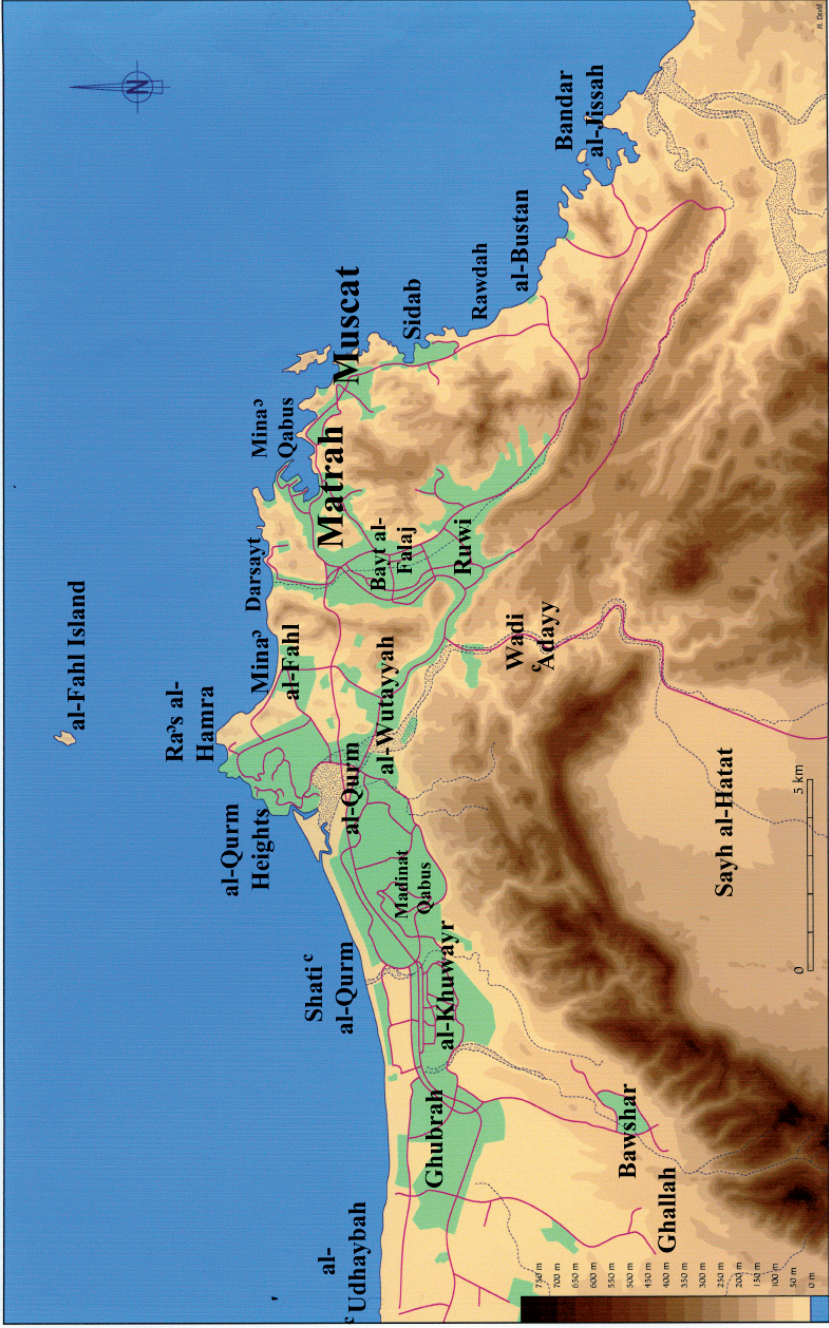
1. British Library (London), Indian Survey map of Muscat/Matrah, Seasons 1904–1905, IOR X/25000 No. 577.
2. Labels by J.E. Peterson on base map by Hélène David and René Saupin.
3. From Pedro Barreto de Resende, *O livro do Estado ala India Oriental* (n.p., 1635).
- 4–6. Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) anonymous French map, 1778.
- 7–8. Hélène David and René Saupin from information provided by Monique Kervran and J.E. Peterson.
9. Charles R. Butt.
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- 16–17. J.E. Peterson.
18. Charles R. Butt.
19. J.E. Peterson.
20. Charles R. Butt.
21. From Emile Allemann, "Mascate," *Le Tour du Monde*, No. 7 (16 February 1901).
- 22–25. Charles R. Butt.
- 26–27. J.E. Peterson.
28. Charles R. Butt.
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- 39–43. Charles R. Butt.
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45. Charles R. Butt.
46. J.E. Peterson.
- 47–48. Charles R. Butt.
49. From Pedro Barreto de Resende, *O livro do Estado ala India Oriental* (n.p., 1635).
- 50–51. J.E. Peterson.
52. Lou Lyddon.
53. J.E. Peterson.
54. Donald T. Bosch.

- 55–58. Charles R. Butt.
59. J.E. Peterson.
60. Charles R. Butt.
- 61–62. J.E. Peterson.
63. Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris), French map of 1701.
64. J.E. Peterson.
65. From Carsten Niebuhr, *Travels Through Arabia, and other Countries in the East* (n.p., 1792).
66. From Fred Scholz, “Muscat: Social Segregation and Comparative Poverty in the Expanding Capital of an Oil State,” in Michael E. Bonine, ed., *Population, Poverty, and Politics in Middle East Cities* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), pp. 141–165.
67. From Jane Dieulafoy, “A Suse, 1884–1886: Journal des Fouilles,” *Le Tour du Monde*, No. 1 (1888), pp. 1–16.
68. © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, collection of Lieutenant (later Lieutenant-Commander) Arthur N. Gouldsmith of HMS Lapwing, D1584.
69. British Library (London), Dunlop Smith Collection, Photo. 355/1(44).
- 70–71. Royal Geographical Society (London), Sir Percy Cox collection, 028309.
72. Royal Geographical Society (London), Sir Percy Cox collection, 028312.
73. From Jane Dieulafoy, “A Suse, 1884–1886: Journal des Fouilles,” *Le Tour du Monde*, No. 1 (1888), pp. 1–16.
74. British Library (London), E.A. Storrs-Fox Collection, Photo. 496/6 (7).
75. Royal Society for Asian Affairs (London), G.J. Eccles collection.
76. J.E. Peterson.
- 77–80. Charles R. Butt.
- 81–91. J.E. Peterson.
92. National Army Museum (London), collection of various prints including views of Muscat, Acc. 8009–84, print 22.
- 93–94. J.E. Peterson.
95. Collection of Xavier Beguin Billecocq.
96. © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, collection of Paymaster (later Paymaster Rear-Admiral) Martin G. Bennett of HMS Highflyer, D1591.
97. Charles R. Butt.
98. J.E. Peterson.
99. From Emile Allemann, “Mascate,” *Le Tour du Monde*, No. 7 (16 February 1901).
100. From Jane Dieulafoy, “A Suse, 1884–1886: Journal des Fouilles,” *Le Tour du Monde*, No. 1 (1888), pp. 1–16.
101. Collection of Xavier Beguin Billecocq.
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103. National Army Museum (London), collection of various prints including views of Muscat, Acc. 8009–84, print 23.
- 104–105. J.E. Peterson.
106. From Emile Allemann, “Mascate,” *Le Tour du Monde*, No. 7 (16 February 1901).
107. Collection of Xavier Beguin Billecocq.
108. British Library (London), unknown provenance, 206 (6).
109. Charles R. Butt.
- 110–112. J.E. Peterson.
113. Royal Geographical Society (London), Sir Percy Cox collection, 028308.
- 114–116. J.E. Peterson.
- 117–118. Collection of Xavier Beguin Billecocq.
- 119–122. J.E. Peterson.
123. Collection of Malcolm G. Dennison.

124. J.E. Peterson.
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128. Collection of Malcolm G. Dennison.
129. Collection of Xavier Beguin Billecocq.
130. Charles R. Butt.
- 131–132. J.E. Peterson.
133. Collection of Malcolm G. Dennison.
- 134–135. J.E. Peterson.
136. Mohammed Said Nasir al-Wuhaibi.
- 137–142. J.E. Peterson.
143. Monique Kervran.
- 144–146. J.E. Peterson.
147. Royal Society for Asian Affairs (London), G.J. Eccles collection.
148. Charles R. Butt.
149. From Jane Dieulafoy, “A Suse, 1884–1886: Journal des Fouilles,” *Le Tour du Monde*, No. 1 (1888), pp. 1–16.
150. Collection of Xavier Beguin Billecocq.
151. J.E. Peterson.
152. Monique Kervran.
153. Donald T. Bosch.
154. J.E. Peterson.
155. National Army Museum (London), collection including views of Muscat, Acc. 6705–103, print no. 64.
- 156–157. J.E. Peterson.
158. © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, collection of Lieutenant (later Lieutenant-Commander) Arthur N. Gouldsmith of HMS Lapwing, D1580.
- 159–160. Collection of Malcolm G. Dennison.
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- 162–164. Collection of Malcolm G. Dennison.
- 165–169. J.E. Peterson.
170. Donald T. Bosch.
- 171–172. Charles R. Butt.
173. J.E. Peterson.
- 174–177. Royal Society for Asian Affairs (London), G.J. Eccles collection.
178. Charles R. Butt.
- 179–180. Donald T. Bosch.
- 181–191. J.E. Peterson.
- 192–195. Collection of Malcolm G. Dennison.
- 196–197. J.E. Peterson.
198. Royal Geographical Society (London), Colonel S.B. Miles collection, 028300.
199. Royal Society for Asian Affairs (London), G.J. Eccles collection.
- 200–201. Charles R. Butt.
202. J.E. Peterson.
203. Donald T. Bosch.
- 204–207. Charles R. Butt.
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209. Donald T. Bosch.
- 210–213. Charles R. Butt.
- 214–215. J.E. Peterson.
- 216–217. Charles R. Butt.



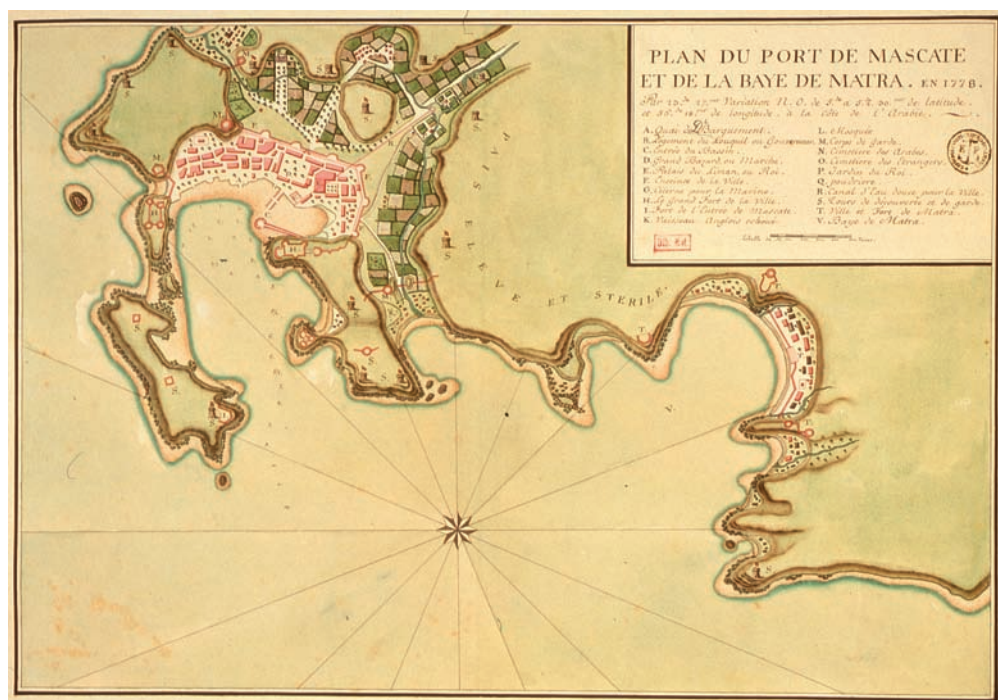
1. Central detail of a map of Muscat and Matrah by the Indian Survey in 1904-1905.



2. The Muscat metropolitan area in the late 1990s.



3. Detail from a Portuguese map of about 1635, showing the seawall as well as the site of the eastern Portuguese church and the Augustinian monastery.



4. A very accurate anonymous French map of 1778 depicting Muscat and Matrah.

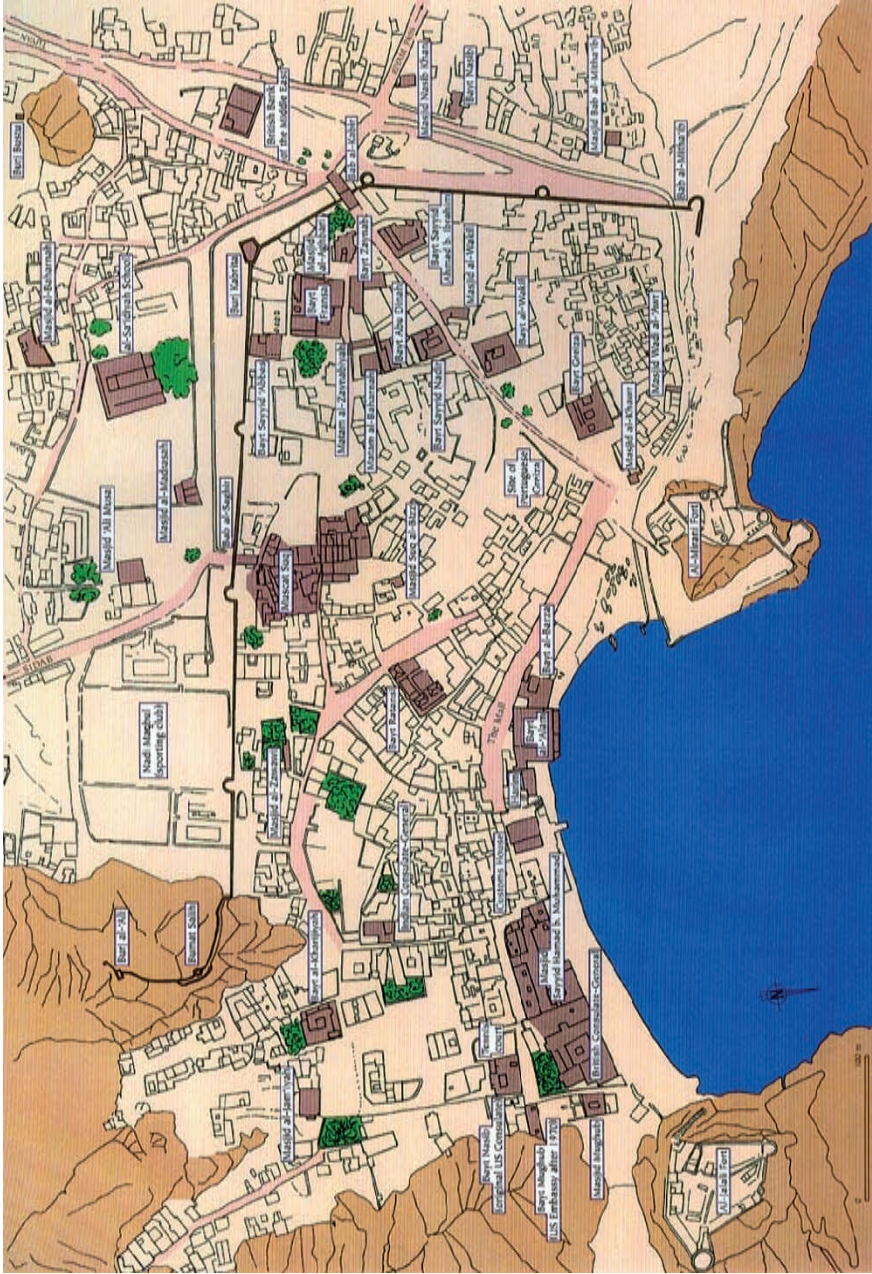


5. Detail of Matrah from the same map.



Legend	
A.	Disembarkation quay
B.	Residence of the Governor
C.	Basin entry
D.	<i>Suq</i>
E.	Palace of the Imam
F.	Town walls
G.	Cistern for ships
H.	The town forts
L.	Mosque
M.	Guard towers
N.	Arab cemetery
P.	King's garden (at upper end of canal)
R.	Sweetwater canal
S.	Lookout towers

6. Detail of Muscat from the same map. The town walls are depicted accurately but not perfectly, as the Cabreta Tower at the southwestern corner is omitted. The map clearly traces the sweetwater canal from Tuyan to a basin at the Khawr. The absence of a gate where the canal passes through the walls and the prominent depiction of another gate leading to the *suq* suggests that al-Bab al-Saghîr may have been the original gate to the town and al-Bab al-Kabîr appeared later after the wall was breached to allow the canal to pass through. Furthermore, the canal explains why a straight street still runs from al-Bab al-Kabîr to the Khawr, in contrast to the town's other short and crooked streets. The "palace of the Imam" is clearly the old *gharayzah*.



7. Muscat about 1960.



10. The wells and gardens of Muscat, nearly all of which have since disappeared.



11. A scene in one of Muscat's gardens in 1910.



12. Muscat in the 1960s. The old coaling station can be seen in al-Mukalla Cove at the upper right.



13. Muscat in the 1990s. Fort al-Jalali is prominent in the foreground and the site of the demolished British Embassy is just behind it to the left.



14. A view over the waterfront from Fort al-Mirani at dusk in 1968. The Portuguese chapel in the fort is visible on the left.



15. A detachment of the new Muscat Police saluting the arrival of the HMS Tartar in 1970. The salutes from al-Mirani were a long-standing tradition, even though the cannon used had become increasingly antiquated and dangerous.



16. Fort al-Mirani from the air in 1998. The new Khawr Mosque and Bayt Gharayzah are on the left with Bab al-Mitha'ib at the top and the new road to al-Mukalla, replacing the old jetty underneath the fort, is on the seaward side of the fort. The prominent and almost free-standing tower on the right was added after 1970 to house an elevator to the upper levels of the fort.



17. Al-Mukalla Cove in 2005. The coaling facilities, visible in figs. 12 and 70, disappeared when the headquarters of the Sultan of Oman's Navy was constructed in the early 1970s. Upon the departure of the navy, it became the headquarters of the Royal Yacht Squadron.



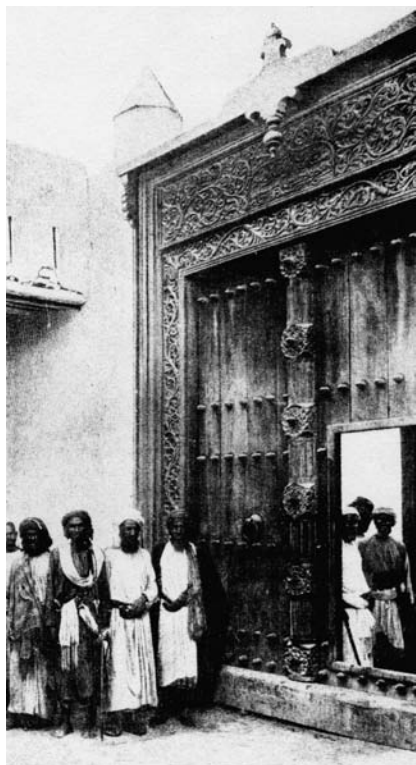
18. Fort al-Jalali in 1975 before restoration.



19. An aerial view of Fort al-Jalali, illustrating the narrowness of the gun deck and the staircase to the original entrance.



20. The Mall in front of Bayt al-'Alam Palace in the late 1960s.



21. The main door of the palace in the late 19th century.



22. The main door in the late 1960s.



23. The street leading into Muscat from Riyam Pass, dressed for the initial visit of Sultan Qabus in July 1970. Al-Bab al-Kabir can be seen in the distance and the Nasib Khan Mosque is on the left.



24. Al-Bab al-Kabir gate dressed to welcome the new Sultan Qabus on his first-ever appearance in his capital Muscat in July 1970.



25. Al-Bab al-Kabir gate from inside the walls in 1971. The new police station is on the right. The banners are reminders of the new law changing driving from the left side of the road to the right.



26. A view in 1999 from the same spot. The gate has been rebuilt and the police station incorporated into the watchtower and gate complex.



27. The British Embassy in 1995, viewed from Fort al-Jalali.



28. British Consul-General D.C. Carden inspects the last Muscat Garrison Guard Unit posted to the consulate in 1968.



29. Bayt Mughub and Bayt Nasib in 1995, after the departure of the US Embassy. Both buildings were demolished in 2005.



30. The old Khawr Mosque dressed for 'Id al-Fitr in 1969.



31. The Sa'id b. Taymur Mosque in al-Khuwayr in 1999. Built to resemble an Ottoman mosque, it is typical of the eclectic styles of mosques constructed in the capital area since 1970. It is also noteworthy as probably the only public acknowledgement of Sultan Qabus's father whom he deposed in 1970.



32. The Hindu temple in al-Hawsh Quarter in 1970.



33. A view of the unidentified ancient graves in Lughan quarter of Muscat, now suffering encroachment by private housing. (See also figs. 142 and 143.)



34. Aerial view of Sidab village in 1998.



35. Al-Bustan Palace Hotel, built in 1985 for the first Gulf Cooperation Council summit hosted by Oman.



36. Riyam from the pass to Muscat in 1968 with the new power station in center.



37. Matrah from the air in 1970. The fish market is in the center with Jibru quarter extending behind it. The large building on the left seafront is the newly built al-Sa'idiyah School. Bayt Nasib is directly behind it.



38. Matrah waterfront in the 1990s with the post-1970 Matrah business district over the hills in the back.



39. Looking east along the waterfront in 1969 towards al-Wadi Quarter and Matrah Fort from the beach in front of Sur al-Lawatiyah.



40. Looking east in 1969 from near al-Sa'idiyah School. The large building in the center is a residence on the northwestern corner of Sur al-Lawatiyah and the Shi'i mosque of the quarter is visible in the distance.



41. The Matrah fish market in 1968 with Arbaq fort in the distance.



42. A 1969 view from Matrah Fort. The *wali*'s office is in the foreground and al-Kharashif Pass to Wadi Bayt al-Falaj can be seen in the distance.



43. A 1968 view of Matrah fire station and the *wali*'s office, with Matrah Fort in the background.



44. Matrah fort in 1998. This view shows the narrow space between the curtain walls and the two watchtowers at either end that formed the original fortifications on the site.



45. Matrah's Bab al-Darwazah and one of the country's few petrol stations in 1967. An earlier gate on the same spot had collapsed a few years previously.



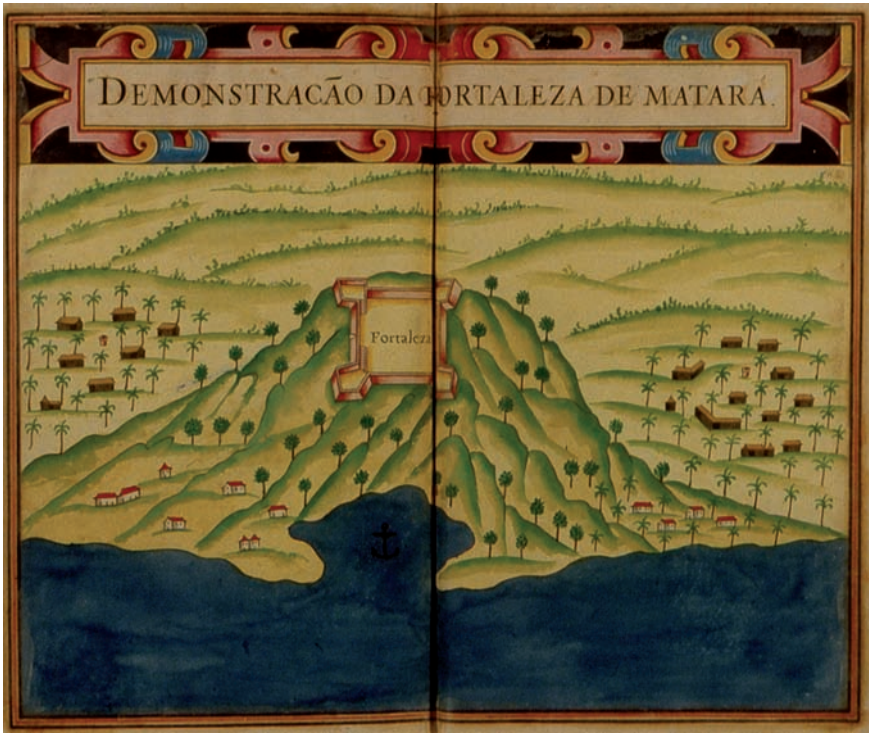
46. The rebuilt Bab al-Darwazah in 1996.



47. Bab al-Darwazah dressed for the arrival of Sultan Qabus on his initial visit in 1970.



48. Fruit market inside the gate in 1969.



49. A Portuguese map of Matrah of about 1635. It seems to conflate the much smaller Matrah Fort on the hill with a likely square Portuguese garrison in the town itself. This may be the origin of what is now the Sur al-Lawatiyah.



50. A 1998 view of Sur al-Lawatiyah, illustrating its square and fortlike nature in isolation from the neighboring quarters. The new Persian style mosque can be seen on the cornice.



51. Bayt al-Falaj fort from the air in 1998, some years after it had been converted to a museum.



52. Bayt al-Falaj army camp in 1971.



53. A Ruwi residential area with the Matrah Business District behind it in 1986. Before the 1970s, this area contained only barren ground. The line of tall buildings in the distance marks the track of what had been Bayt al-Falaj airstrip. The large round building on the right is a telecommunications tower and the tallest building in the photograph is the Sheraton Hotel. Bayt al-Falaj army camp is out of the picture on the left while Ruwi village lies some kilometers to the right.



54. A commercial aircraft of Gulf Aviation (now Gulf Air) at Bayt al-Falaj airstrip in 1959.



55. A 1967 view of Lower Darsayt. The oil tanker offshore is waiting to load nearby Mina' al-Fahl.



56. The customs post at Sadd Ruwi in 1969. Goods transported between Muscat and the Omani interior and coast were required to pay customs here before 1970. The post has disappeared with urban development and a dual carriageway runs over the spot. Ruwi village lies behind the hills in the distance.



57. The village of Shati' al-Qurm in 1970. The area was completely built up in the intervening years and the Grand Hyatt Hotel stands near where the village was.



58. Bawshar's most impressive house, Bayt Mugham, in 1970 before restoration.



59. Bawshar village in 1995. The old caravan trail can be seen in the background ascending the hill to Ghallah in the background.



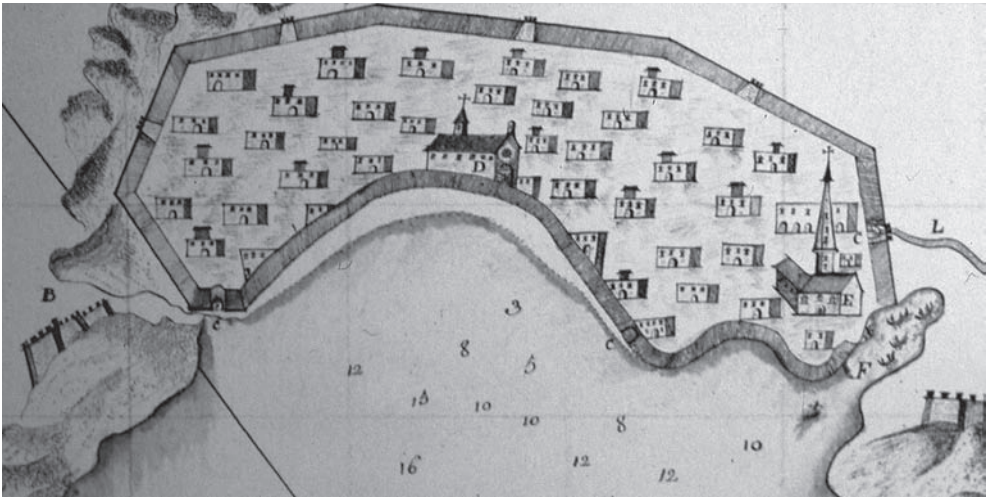
60. A mosque near the *suq* in al-Sib in 1967.



61. Muscat and Matrah before 1970.



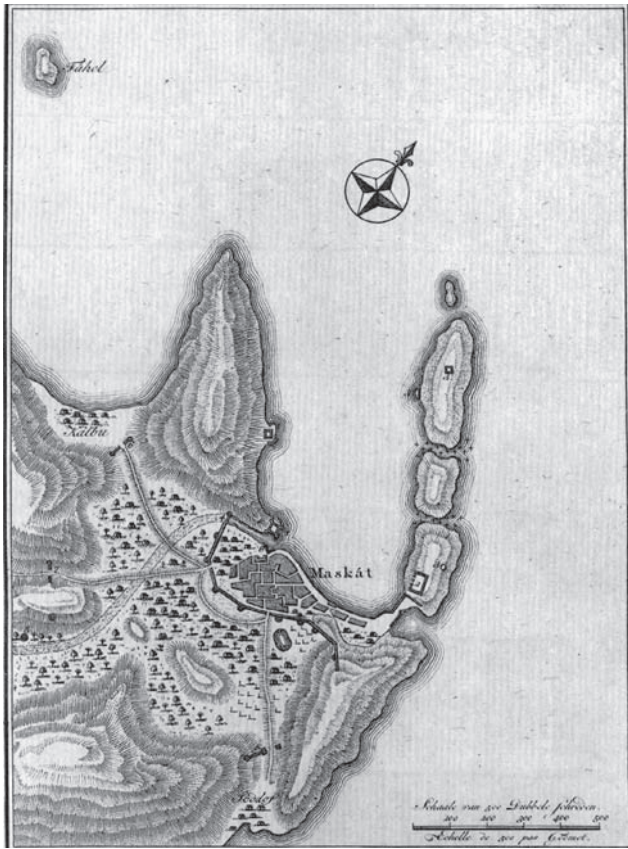
62. Wadi Bayt al-Falaj before 1970.



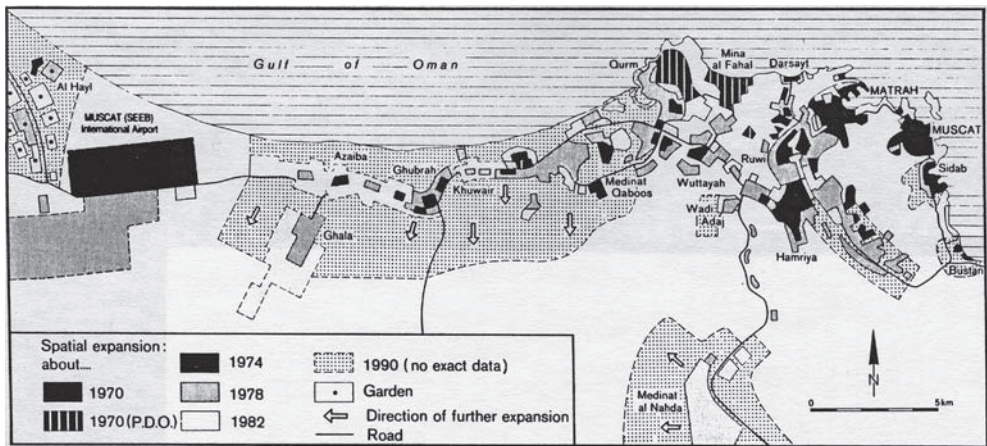
63. Detail of a French map of 1701, showing the locations of the two Portuguese churches.



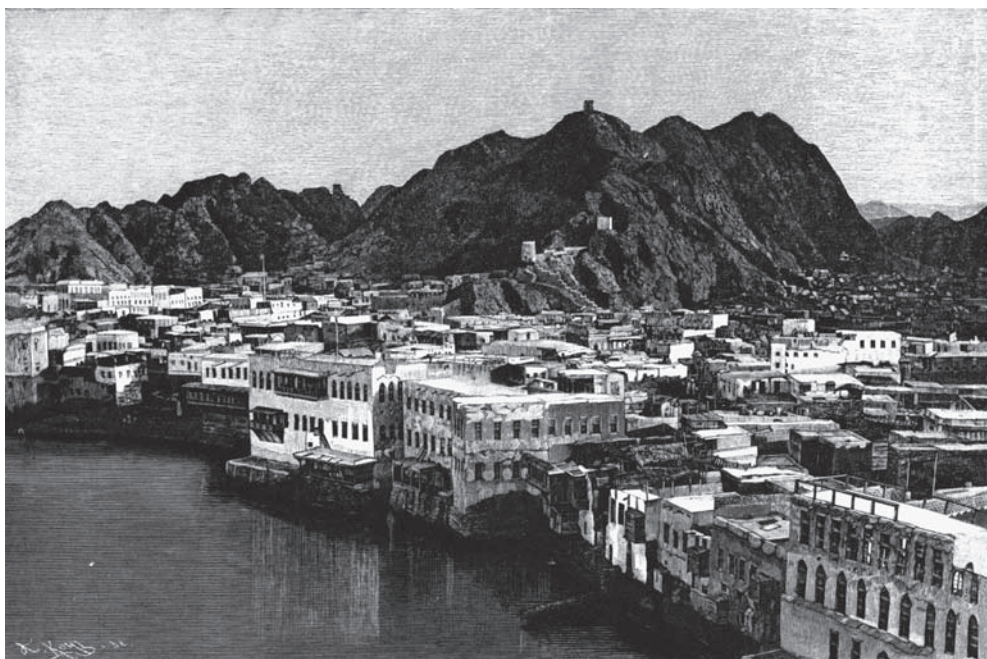
64. Muscat in the 1990s. Muscat town viewed from nearly the same angle as the map above (from the north). Fort al-Mirani in the foreground and Sidab in the upper left distance. This photograph shows the ophiliote hills that surround Muscat, cut it off from its hinterland, and keep overnight temperatures high in summer months.



65. Carsten Niebuhr's 1764 map of Muscat.



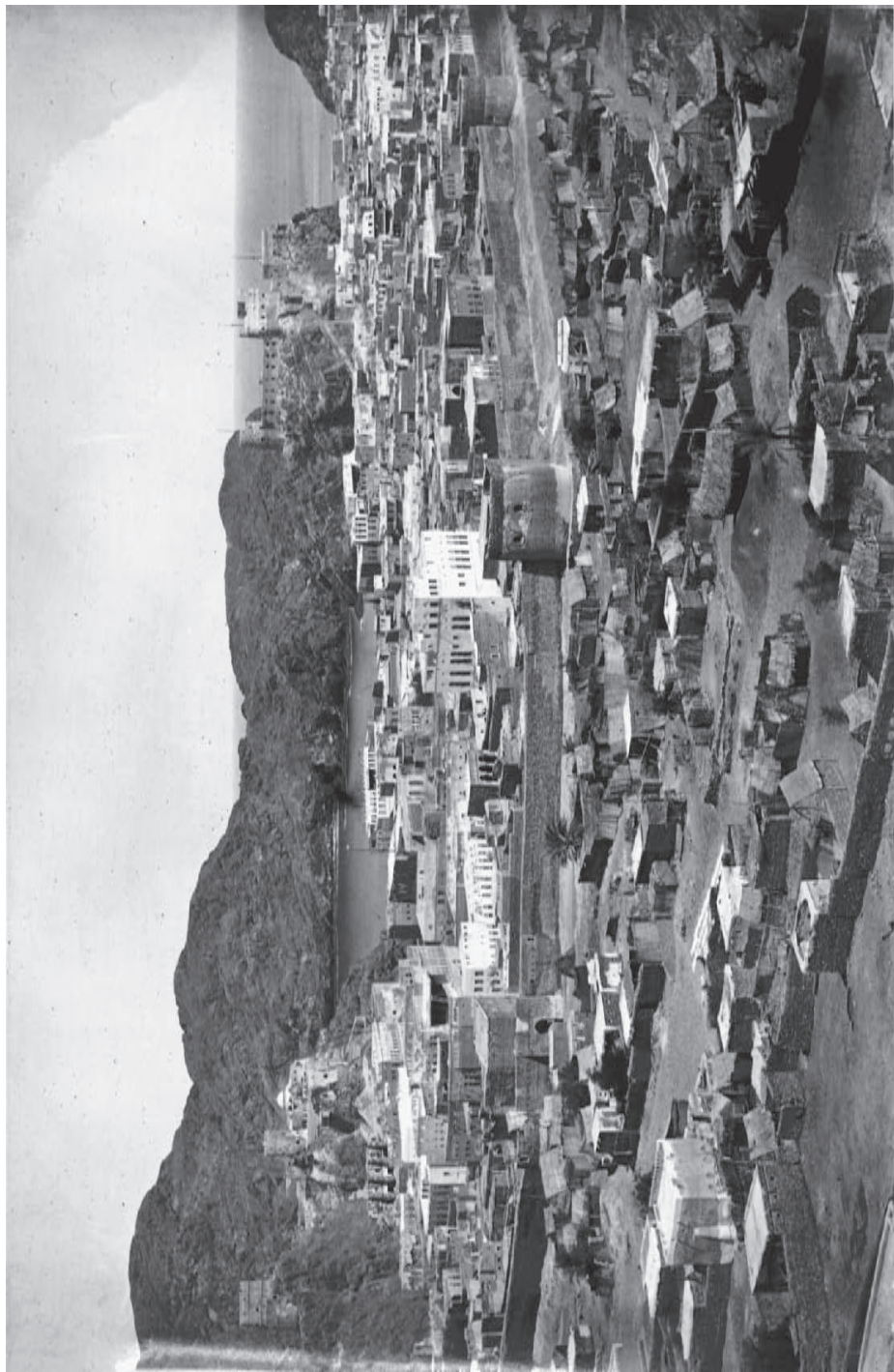
66. The Muscat area's expansion from 1970 to 1990.



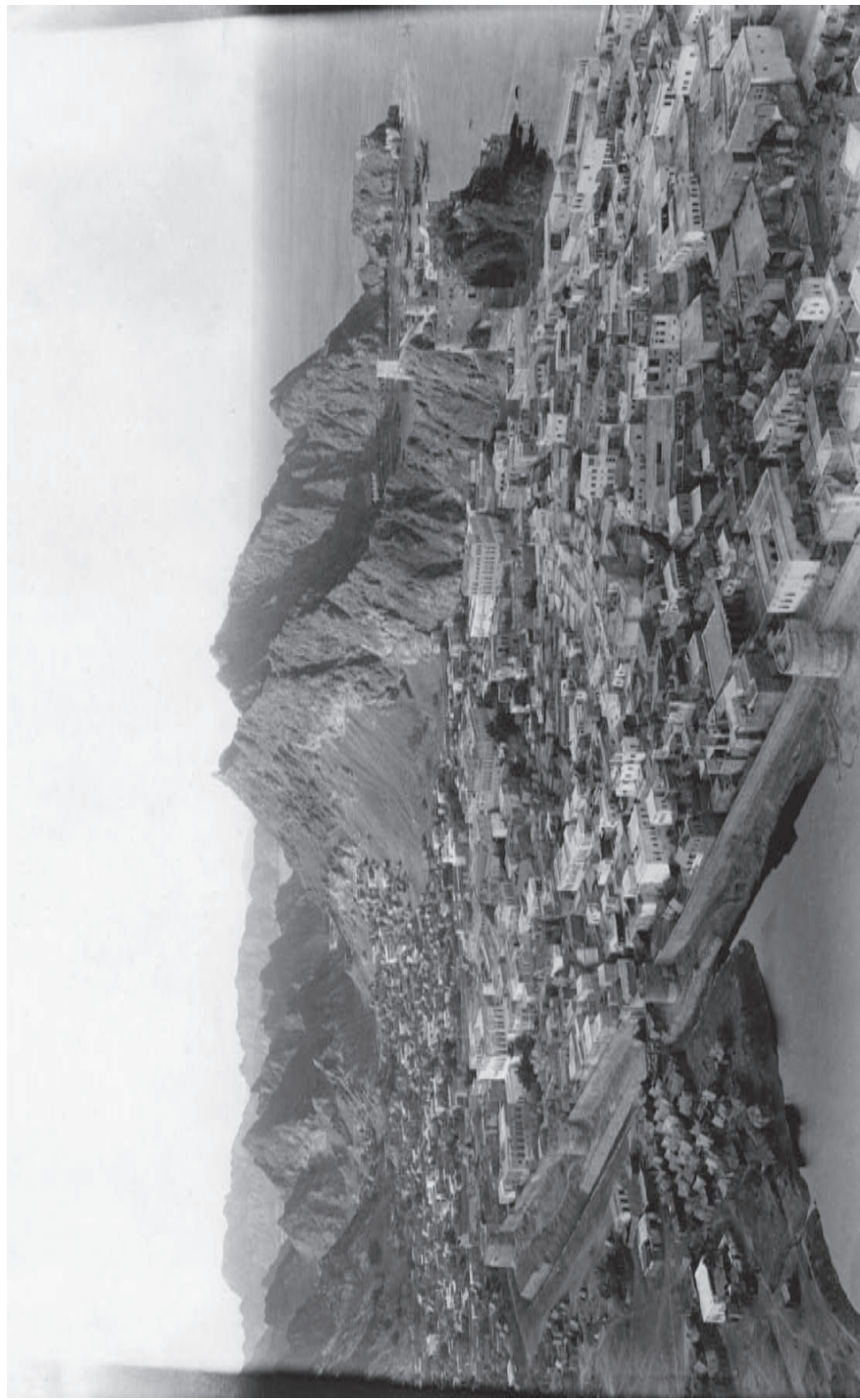
67. The Muscat waterfront in the 1880s, as seen from Fort al-Mirani.



68. A sea-level view of the British Consulate and Bayt al-'Alam Palace, taken about 1908.



69. A view of Muscat from Burj Bustu, taken about 1870. Al-Bab al-Kabir is at center left.



70. A view of Muscat Intramuros, taken by Percy Cox in 1905 from Burj al-Sa'ali. The drainage pond on the south side of the wall and the utility of the moat is clearly visible. The ruined *gharayzah* may be visible in the center between the two large Al Bu Sa'id houses (see detail on following page).



71. The ruins of the Portuguese monastery or *gharayzah*. This 1905 photograph (a detail from Fig. 70) appears to be the only existing photograph of the building which was demolished sometime in the first half of the 20th century.



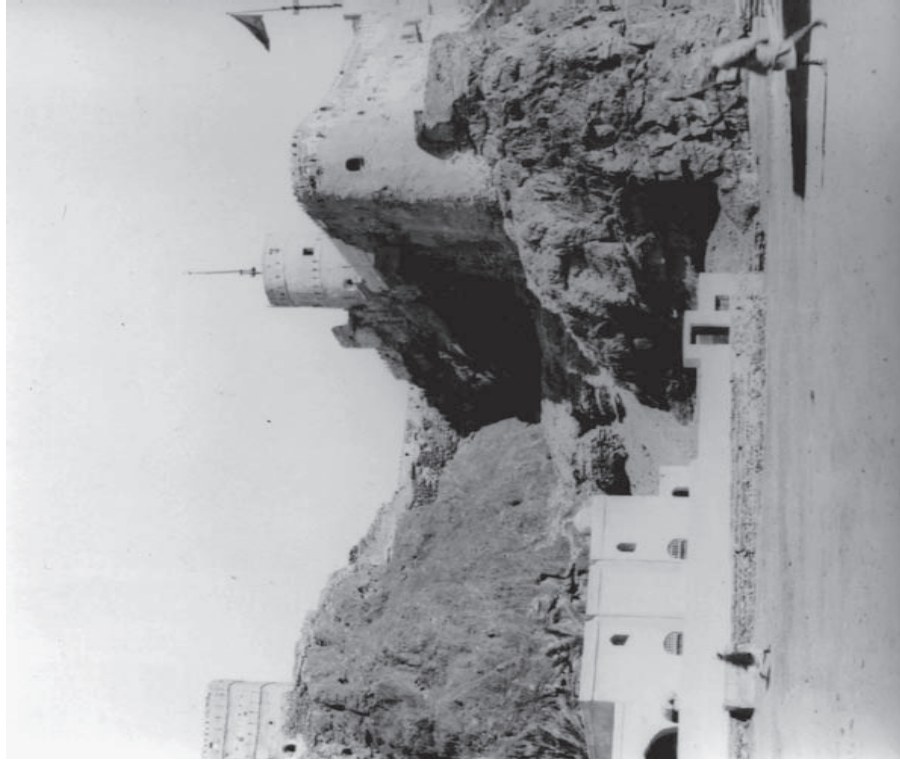
72. Bayt al-'Alam Palace and Fort al-Mirani in a photograph taken by Percy Cox about 1905 from Fort al-Jalali. The customs house and jetty is at center left with the *harim* facing it. The old Portuguese *gharyzah* can just be glimpsed behind the palace.



73. Fort al-Mirani in the 1880s.



74. Viewed from the same angle in 1918, this photograph may have been taken just inside the ruins of the old *gharayzah* (visible on the left). Bayt Gharayzah is in the middle left and the Khawr Mosque is in the middle center.



75. Fort al-Mirani about 1925, after the demolition of the *gharayzah* ruins.



76. The view in 1975 after completion of the new Khawr Mosque and during reconstruction of Bayt Gharayzah (out of the picture on the left).



77. Jemadar Lashkaran of the old Muscat Police examining in 1967 an unusual mid-19th-century American cannon held in Fort al-Mirani.



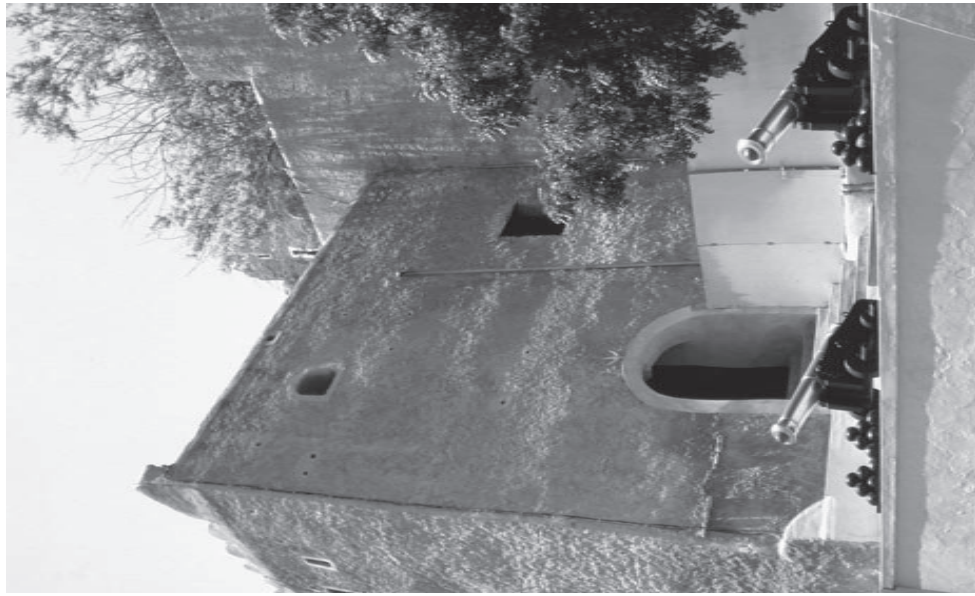
78. The fort in 1970, with the busy Khawr Jetty, constructed in the mid-20th century, beneath it.



79. The Khawr beach below Fort al-Mirani in 1970. The area was normally used by fishing boats but is occupied in this photograph by boats selling locally grown mangos. The Khawr Mosque can be seen in the background on the left.



80. Unloading cargo at the Khawr Jetty in 1967. A British India steamship can be seen in the background.



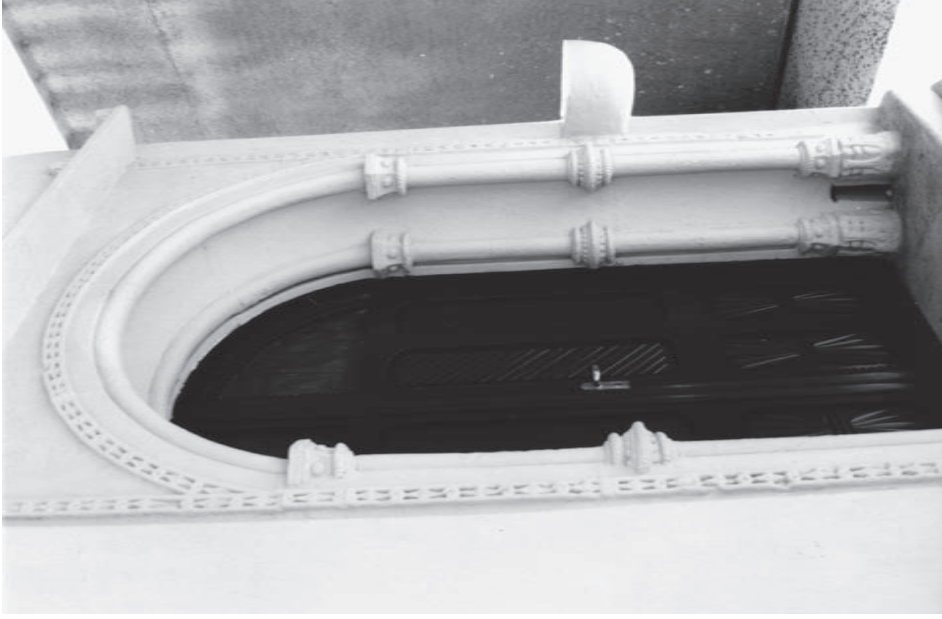
81. The main entrance to the fort in the 1990s.



82. The same entrance from the inside.



83. The interior entrance to the fort in the 1990s.



84. The entry to the Portuguese chapel, the dome of which can be seen in previous photographs of the fort.



85. The Portuguese inscription above the door of the interior entrance.



86. The inscription over the door of the Portuguese chapel.



87. Fort al-Jalali from the harbor in 1999, highlighting the inaccessibility of the location. The cannon can be seen clearly through the embrasures.



88. Fort al-Jalali's gun deck in 1995. The British Library holds a similar view from the 1920s but its reproduction is not possible.



89. Al-Sirah al-Gharbiyah, the western defenses guarding the entrance to Muscat harbor, in 1998.



90. A 1996 view of the defenses from outside the harbor entrance.



91. Al-Sirah al-Sharqiyah in 1996. The defenses are situated on Muscat Island, where visiting ships over the centuries followed the tradition of painting their names on the side of the island.



92. Al-Rawiyah fort in 1918 when it still retained its upper story. The *birkah* (cistern) sits to the left of the fort and the wooden structure of the *zajirah* well is visible behind it.



93. Al-Rawiyah fort in 1997, long after the disappearance of the gardens and now surrounded by suburban encroachment.



94. The fort from another angle with the disused well in the foreground.



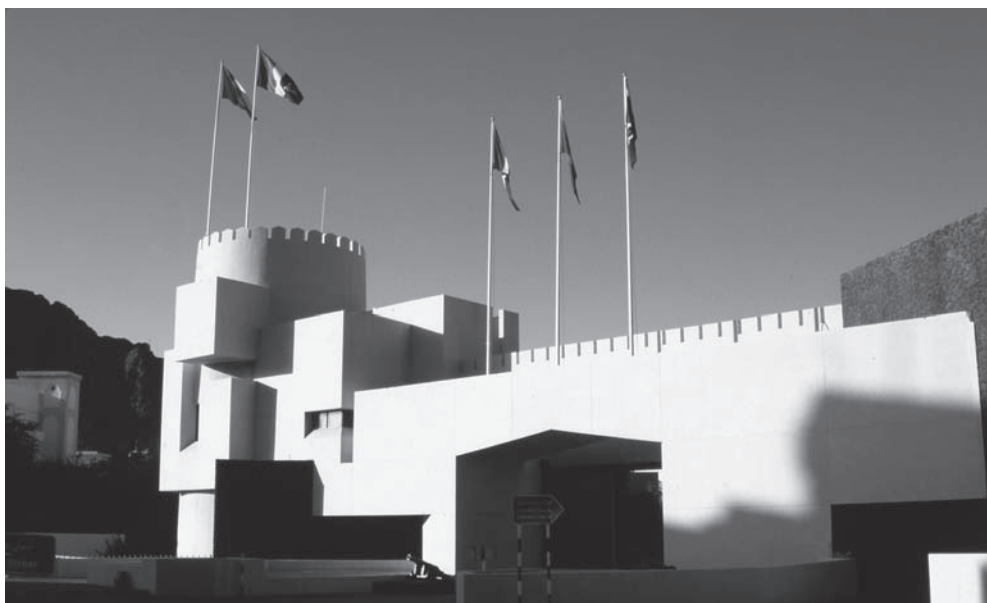
95. The main gate of Muscat, al-Bab al-Kabir, in 1904 or 1905. The French flag flying above the consulate at Bayt Faransa can be seen in the background.



96. The gate about 1912 before it was widened for motor vehicles.



97. The gate in 1966, after widening and the addition of a traffic island.



98. The rebuilt gate and watchtower in 1999.



99. The interior of al-Bab al-Kabir about 1900.



100. Guards inside al-Bab al-Kabir gate about 1900.



101. The entrance to al-Bab al-Kabir from inside the walls in 1904 or 1905.



102. The small gate, al-Bab al-Saghir in 1966. The gate provided direct entry into the *sug* and featured a walkway over the moat.



103. A view of 1918 looking towards al-Bab al-Kabir in the distance. Bayt Nadir is on the left, al-Wakil Mosque is on the right, and the house later occupied by Sayyid Ahmad b. Ibrahim Al Bu Sa'id is between the mosque and the gate.



104. The same scene as the photograph above in 1975.



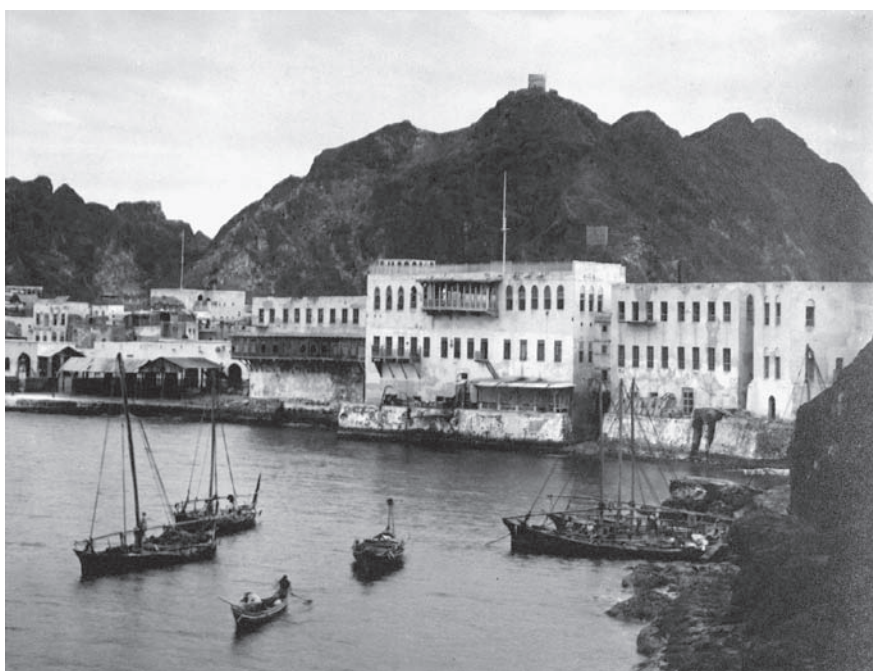
105. The same scene as the previous page in 1986.



106. Muscat *suq* in 1899.



107. The small street in front of Bayt Faransa in 1904 or 1905. Bayt Faransa is in the distance with the steps leading up to the door. The building on the left must have been demolished sometime in the first half of the 20th century.



108. Bayt al-'Alam Palace in the first decade of the 20th century. The *harim* (harem) is on the left side and Bayt al-Barza, where the Sultan received guests, is to the right. The customs house can be seen on the far left.



109. The early stages of the demolition of Bayt al-'Alam in 1971.



110. The new Qasr al-'Alam palace under construction in 1975.



111. Qasr al-'Alam palace in 1997 seen from Bumat Salih.



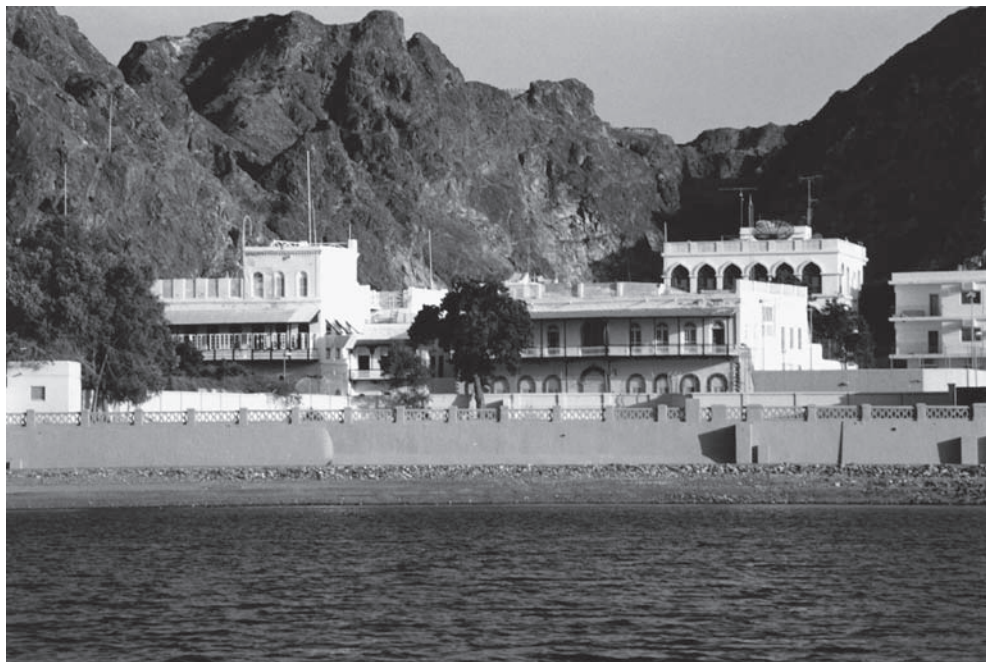
112. The finished palace from Fort al-Jalali in 1998, showing its extensive lawn on reclaimed land.



113. The British Consulate and Fort al-Jalali about 1905. The Consulate, or Agency, was constructed about 15 years before this photograph.



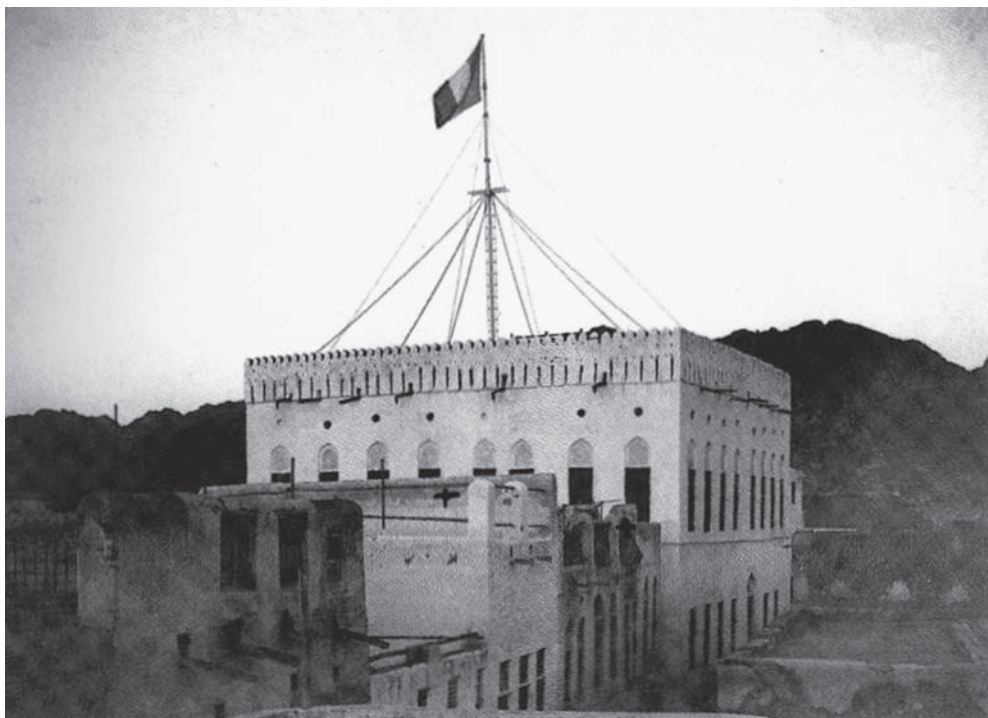
114. The British Embassy compound in 1995.



115. The British Embassy compound in 1998 after the demolition of the old Consulate building. Behind, Bayt Mughub can be seen on the left and Bayt Nasib in the center; both buildings had been vacated by the United States Embassy a few years previously.



116. The extension of the palace precincts into al-Waljat Quarter and on the site of the former British and American embassies during construction in 2005.



117. Bayt Faransa in use as the French Consulate at the beginning of the 20th century.



118. The interior of Bayt Faransa at the same time.



119. Bayt Faransa in 1999 after restoration as the Omani-French Museum.



120. Bayt 'Abbas in 1995.



121. Bayt Mawzinah in 1999, with Bayt Nadir on the right and a Baharni *ma'tam* (religious building) on the left.



122. Interior courtyard of Bayt Mawzinah, restored to serve as a museum but never used.



123. Bayt al-Kharajiyah, probably in the 1950s. It was so named because it served as the office and residence of the Sultan's British "foreign ministers" in the 1940s and 1950s.



124. Bayt al-Kharajiyah in 1995 after restoration. Ironically, it served as the headquarters of the Diwan's Project and Maintenance Department, which subsequently carried out its demolition about 2005.



125. The house of a Muscat prominent merchant, Khimji
Ramdas, in 1969.



126. An unidentified door in the mid-20th century.



127. The residence of the American Mission (formally, the Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church of America) and later known as al-Amana Center, in 2004.



128. The Grindlays Bank building just outside al-Bab al-Kabir in the 1960s.



129. A 1904 or 1905 view from the roof of Bayt Faransa, looking over al-Bab al-Kabir (center) to the farms beyond.



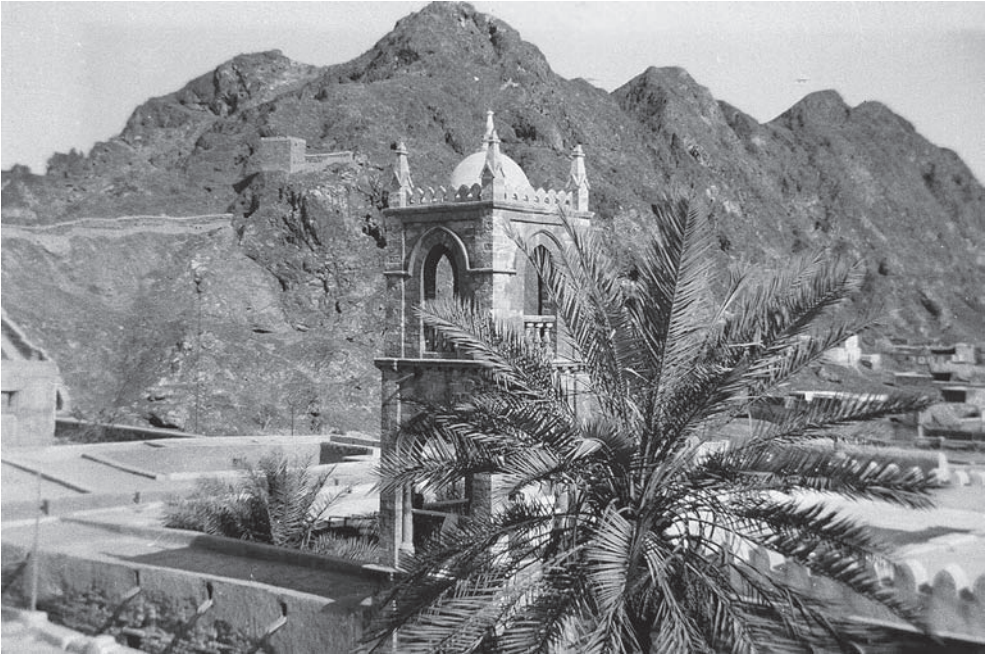
130. The old Khawr Mosque in 1966. Bayt Gharayzah is to the left. Both buildings were subsequently demolished and rebuilt in a modern style. The area in the foreground was used for selling firewood.



131. The 'Ali Musa Mosque in 1997. This was one of the three principal Sunni mosques of Muscat.



132. The second Sunni mosque, Nasib Khan, in 1986. The Grindlays Bank is to the right.



133. Al-Zawawi Mosque, the third of the three principal Sunni mosques, constructed at the beginning of the 20th century. The date of the photograph is unknown.



134. Al-Zawawi Mosque in 1986. It was demolished in 2005.



135. A 1994 photograph of the tombstone on the grave of Hamad b. Sa'id, the first Al Bu Sa'id ruler to reside in Muscat.



136. One of the oldest graves in Muscat, photographed in 1994 before it was damaged even more extensively. According to the inscription, it belongs to ('Abd) Allah b. Sulayman b. Khalfan b. Hamzah (?) 'Ali b. Mas'ud al-Rustaqi, and dated A.H. 1108? (c. A.D. 1696).



137. The ruined al-'Ubbad Mosque in 1994, at the isolated end of Muscat's al-Wadi al-Saghir.



138. A platform associated with a Hindu cremation site at Kalbuh in a 1996 photograph.



139. The old Christian cemetery in 1998. The cemetery is tucked away in two coves behind Muscat and Sidab.



140. One of the unidentified graves in the Lughan Quarter of Muscat. (See also fig. 33).



141. More graves from Lughan,



142. Another grave.



143. One of Muscat's remaining gardens in 1995. It survived because it has been maintained by the Diwan to provide landscaping for public properties.



144. The wooden superstructure or *turkbah* of a *zajirah* well, still standing in 1995.



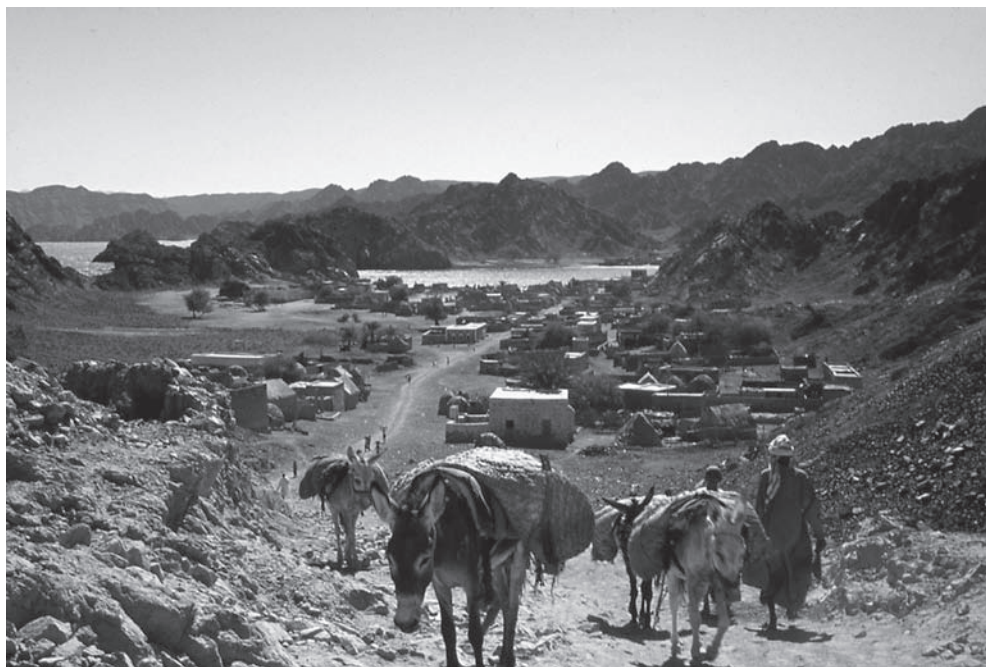
145. The old dam of Muscat in 1995.



146. The new Muscat dam, constructed in 1993 not far downstream from the old dam.



147. The village of Sidab, seen in the mid-1920s, from the pass leading to Muscat.



148. The same view from the pass in 1966.



149. A celebration on the Sidab beach in 1886.



150. Looking towards Muscat from the pass to Sidab at the beginning of the 20th century.



151. The ruins in 1990 of an 18th/19th-century farm belonging to the ruling Al Bu Sa'id family. The site was subsequently demolished during construction of the Rawdah Marina.



152. Another view of the ruined Al Bu Sa'id farm during the 1980s.



153. Loading sand on donkeys, possibly near Rawdah, for use in construction in the 1950s or 1960s.



154. Prehistoric graves a short distance inland from the beach and village at Bandar Jissah.



155. Bandar Jissah before the village was abandoned. The RMS Lawrence is at anchor in 1898.



156. Bandar Jissah in 1995 with the ruined village in the center.



157. A 1998 view of the ruined village of Bandar Jissah.



158. View of Muscat from Riyam Pass about 1908.



159. Riyam Pass at the beginning of its descent into Muscat. Undated but probably 1950s or 1960s and well after the road was built.



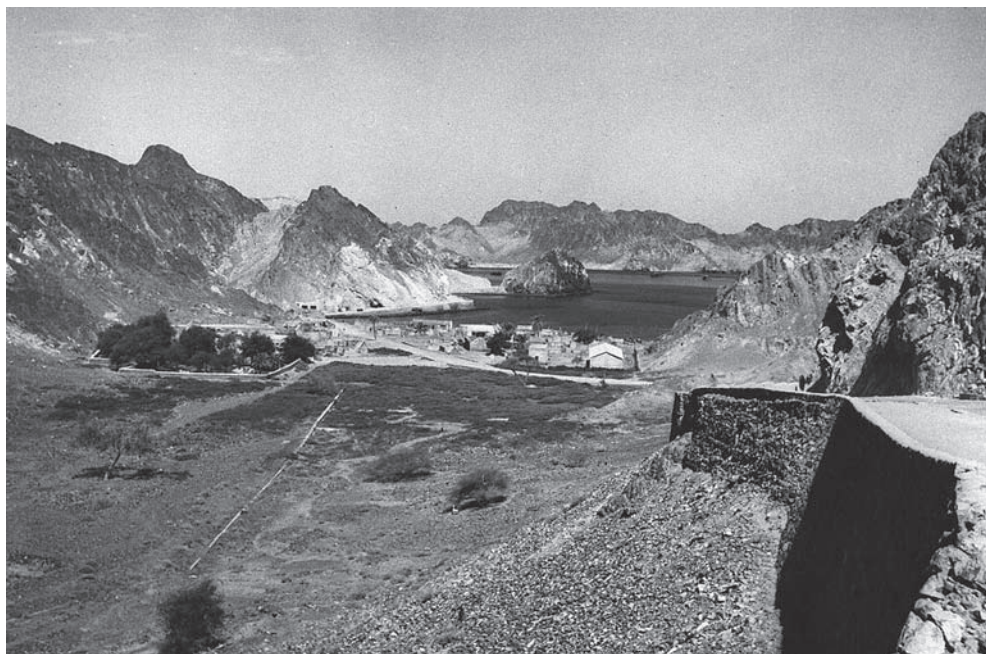
160. The other side of Riyam Pass as it begins the descent to Riyam.



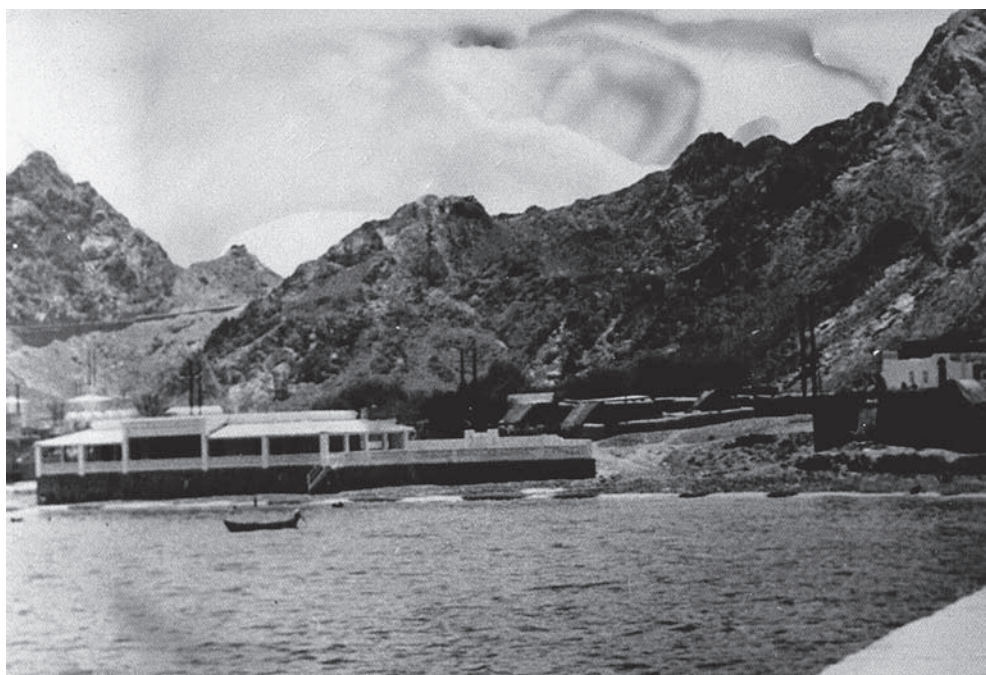
161. Riyam early in the 20th century.



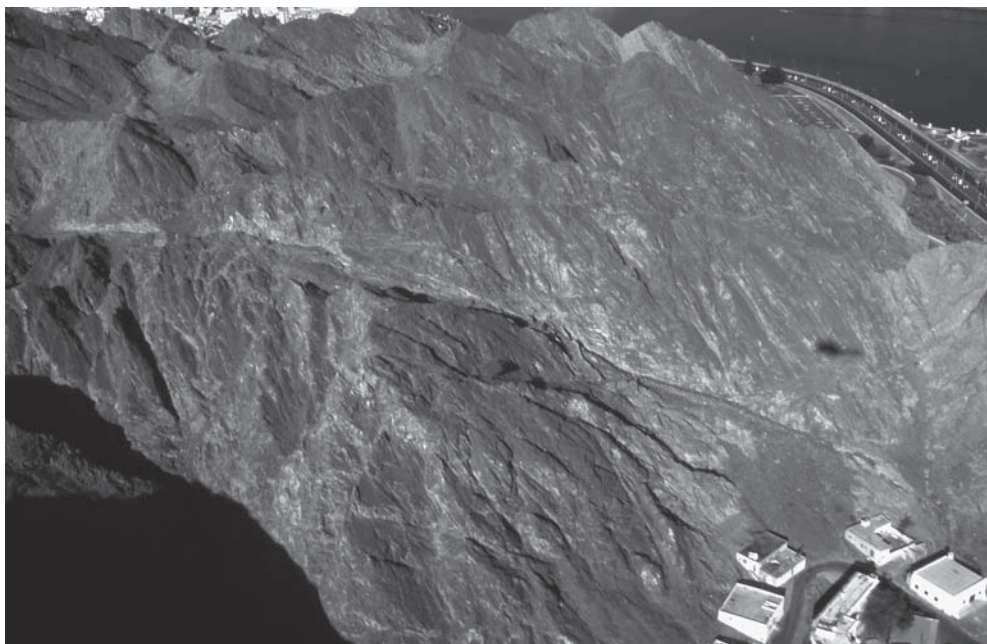
162. Riyam in the mid-20th century, after construction of the road to Muscat but well before the power station was added.



163. Another view of Riyam village at about the same time. (The view after construction of the power station may be seen in fig. 36.)



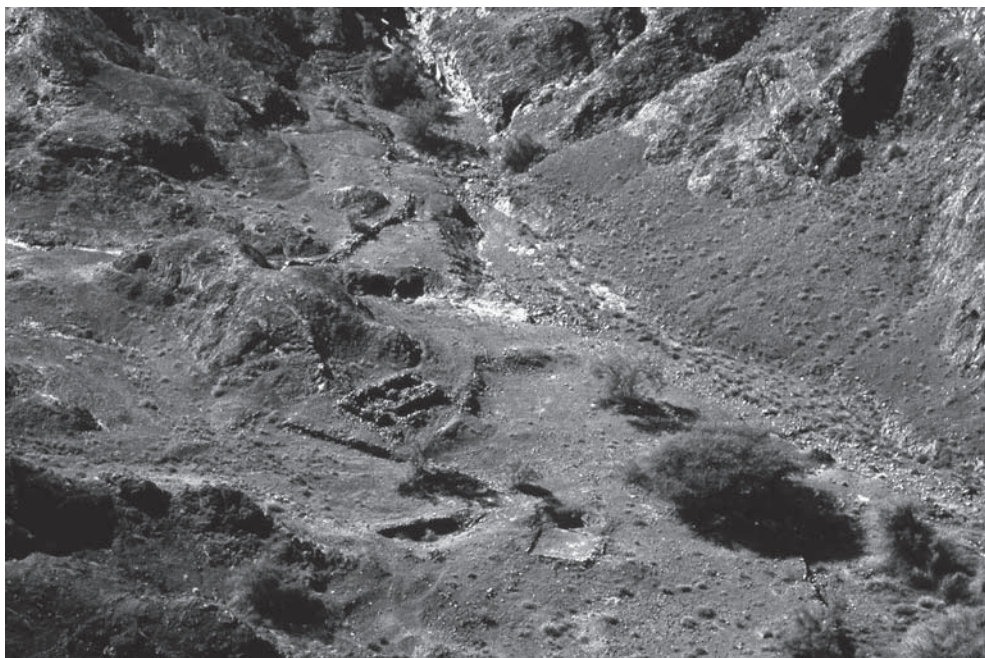
164. Riyam from the sea at mid-20th century. The road to Muscat can be seen ascending on the far left.



165. The old footpath from Riyam (at the bottom) to Matrah (just visible at the top) in the 1990s. The stone-stepped portion of the path is visible at center right.



166. A closer view of the steps.



167. An abandoned farm in a valley nestled in the ophiolite hills behind Riyam and Matrah. Foundations of a house, several small *aflaj* (water channels) and rock-lined gardens still exist, as well as a disused well (right foreground) dug out of living rock. Some maps identify it as Falaj Khalfayn but nothing is known of its ownership or age. This photograph is from the late 1990s.



168. Expanded Mina' Qabus from the direction of Riyam in 1998. The newest part of the port is the section on the far right, built on the site of Shutayfi village.



169. The quarters of Matrah.



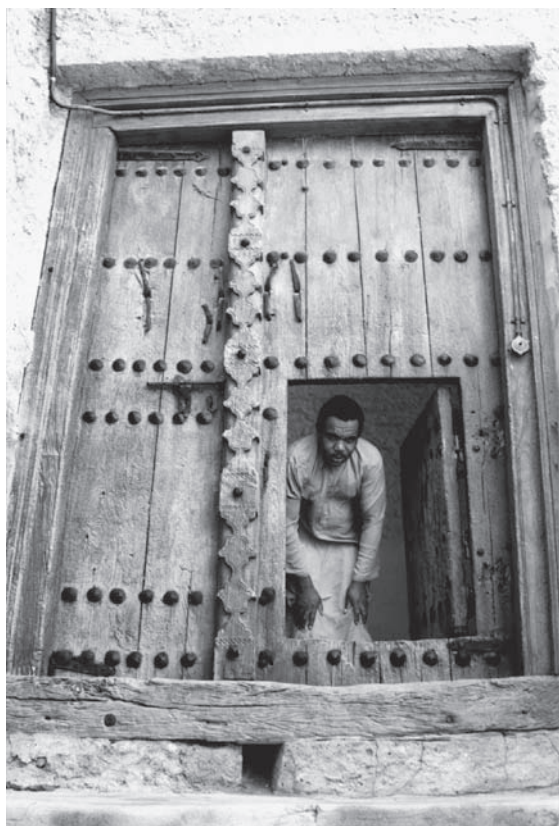
170. The old sea road from Riyam to Matrah in the late 1960s. Matrah Fort is silhouetted in the background.



171. Matrah's waterfront viewed from the fort in 1969, with the Customs jetty in the foreground.



172. Matrah fort from the landward side in 1969.



173. The main entrance to the fort.



174. The Matrah waterfront about 1925, taken from near Matrah Fort or Mutayrah.



175. Another view of about 1925, looking across the bay at Arbaq fort. This fort and promontory no longer exists, having made way for the new Sultan Qabus port in the early 1970s.



176. Matrah town proper about 1925, looking towards Sur al-Lawatiyah.



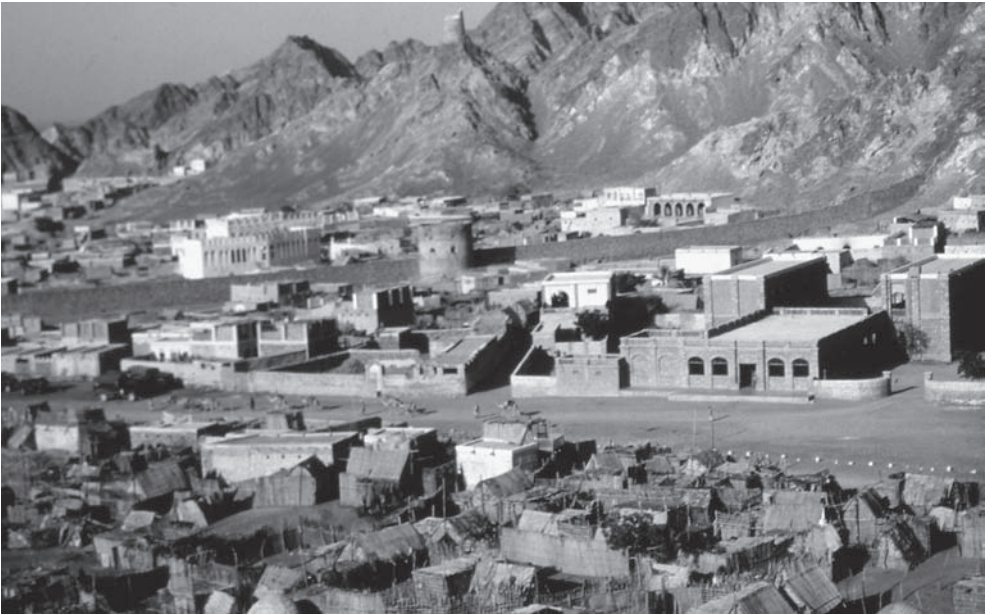
177. A 1925 view of the Matrah *barasti* suburbs. The mosque in the Lawatiyah cemetery can be glimpsed in the distant right and, in the center background, lies Jibru Pass leading to Wadi Bayt al-Falaj.



178. The view of Matrah in 1968 from Jibru Pass, coming from Wadi Bayt al-Falaj. The main road at this time followed al-Kharashif Pass to the east but the new trunk road built in the early 1970s follows the route in the photograph.



179. A view from the 1950s or 1960s looking at the old Darwazah gate, the town walls, and Matrah Fort in the distance.



180. Al-Rahmah Hospital of the (American) Arabian Mission, behind it, and the town wall with the tower by Bab al-Mitha'ib in the 1960s.



181. Al-Rahmah Hospital in 1996, shortly before its demolition.



182. Matrah's Bab al-Mitha'ib in 1996.



183. The main entrance to the *sugq* on the corniche in 1986.



184. Bayt Nasib in 1993, a house presumably built by Nasib Khan early in the 20th century, perhaps on earlier foundations. It was used as a residence until the early 1970s when it housed the British Council.



185. The first modern commercial building in Matrah, built by Talib b. Muhammad al-Zakwani shortly before 1970.



186. The Ramis Bun Building on the cornice, built in 1939 and photographed in 1996.



187. Street scene inside Sur al-Lawatayah.



188. The square quarter of Sur al-Lawatiyah originally possessed four towers, one at each corner. This residence, photographed in 1996, was built in the early part of the 20th century on the site of the northwest tower.



189. The tower on the southwest corner was restored by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture.



190. The tower on the southeast corner was reduced to rubble.



191. The northeast tower has disappeared as well. However, its circular shape has been preserved in a restaurant on the same site.



192. A number of devastating fires broke out in the poorer suburbs of both Muscat and Matrah in 1960 and 1964. They were believed to be arson but the culprits were never found, making it impossible to determine whether they were the work of opposition to the government, criminals, or someone mentally unbalanced.



193. Another view of the consequence of the fires.



194. More views of burnt areas.



195. Another view of the devastation.



196. A 1996 view of the section of the Lawatiyah cemetery outside Matrah town that contains a number of unidentified ancient graves. These graves are similar to the ones in Muscat's Lughan quarter.



197. A closer view of the same graves.



198. A photograph of Bayt al-Falaj camp by S.B. Miles, the British Political Agent in Muscat. The fort, still a summer residence of the Sultan at this time, can be glimpsed behind the trees on the upper left. In the center is one of the *falajs* (water channels) that give the area its name.



199. Bayt al-Falaj fort about 1925, shortly after its occupation by the Muscat Levy Corps, Oman's first permanently organized military unit. (An aerial view of the fort is in fig. 51.)



200. A Gulf Aviation DC-3 on the Bayt al-Falaj airstrip in 1968.



201. A Dakota of the Sultan of Oman's Air Force landing at Bayt al-Falaj airstrip in 1968 from the direction of al-Wadi al-Kabir.



202. Al-Wutayyah Pass, leading from Wadi Bayt al-Falaj to Sayh al-Malih, now Mina' al-Fahl. The pass and the hills on either side were the scene of a 1915 battle between Imamate and tribal forces on the one hand and Indian Army troops defending the *sultan* on the other.



203. Sayh al-Malih in the 1950s before Petroleum Development Oman made the site its center of operations and it was renamed Mina' al-Fahl. Al-Fahl Island lies on the horizon.



204. The first tanker (the “Mosprince” out of Kristiansand) to load crude oil at the Mina’ al-Fahl oil buoy in 1967.



205. The burnt-out hull of the “Antonella” out of Monrovia off Shati’ al-Qurm in 1970. The rusting remains may still be seen at low tide.



206. Sword dancing in Ruwi on the occasion of 'Id al-Adha, 1967.



207. A *barasti* shrine near the beach at al-Qurm in 1970.



208. Al-Saruj village in 1975. The settlement has disappeared completely because of extensive urban development.



209. Construction of a *barasti* structure in the 1960s.



210. Unloading a Dakota of the Sultan of Oman's Air Force at al- 'Udhaybah (Azaiba) airstrip in 1968. The airstrip was laid out by the oil company, then served briefly as the air force's center of operations before it moved to Bayt al-Falaj, and later became the compound of the J&P Construction Company.



211. In addition to al-'Udhaybah, the Sultan of Oman's Air Force also utilized an airstrip a few kilometers to the west at al-Sib (but not the same site later used for the present international airport). Upon Sultan Qabus's overthrow of his father in 1970, the various *shaykhs* of the Trucial Coast were flown into al-Sib airstrip to meet the Sultan for the first time. This August 1970 photograph shows the Omani troops saluting the departure of the *shaykhs*.



212. The meeting at al-Sib in August 1970. Sultan Qabus b. Sa'id is in the center. Shaykh Zayid b. Sultan Al Nahyan, the ruler of Abu Dhabi, is to the left and Sayyid Tariq b. Taymur, the uncle of the Sultan, is approaching to the right of the Sultan.



213. An old mud-brick house at Fath Al Bu Sa'id in Bawshar in 1970.



214. Another of Bawshar's old mudbrick houses in 1995.



215. Prehistoric beehive tombs on a hill above Bawshar's Fath Al Bu Sa'id village in 1996, shortly before the area was developed into a residential area.



216. A small mosque in Ghallah in 1970. Scraps of cloth have been fastened on the tree to bring luck.



217. The ruined fort of Hurayyis at al-Sib in 1971.