SULTAN AND IMAM:
AN ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC DUALISM IN OMAN

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PREFACE

The system of transliteration used in this study is that employed by J. G. Lorimer in his Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia, Vol. 2, published in 1908. Lorimer's system is not one of those in current usage. However, this study is based primarily upon data in Lorimer, and any serious use of the study will eventually have to refer to his work. It was decided, therefore, to utilize Lorimer's spellings in order to avoid the necessity of converting between transliteration systems.

The author wishes to thank many people in the Department of Oriental Studies and in the Office of Arid Lands Studies for discussion and comments on the form and content of this study. Particular thanks must go to Mr. Justin Wilkinson (Arid Lands Information Center), Ms. Yukiko Kawahara, Prof. William Wilson, and Prof. William Royce (all of the Department of Oriental Studies). Finally, this work would not have been possible without the encouragement and assistance of Prof. Michael E. Bonine.
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ABSTRACT

In 1900 Oman was divided into two distinct political entities, reflecting two very different forms of socio-economic organization. Spatial patterns of settlement and markets in the coastal Sultanate reflect the foreign-trade orientation of the economy. Patterns in the interior Imamate were distinguished by a number of mini systems, rather than a single coherent system as on the coast. Long-distance trade models can explain coastal patterns, but models emphasizing local ecological and socio-economic factors must be used to examine the interior.

The internal structure of the two systems is as different as their spatial organization. The urban dominance of "rent capitalism" characterized coastal Oman. Ownership of rural land and water by urban landlords is common, but is unusual in the interior, where land and water rights of individual villages are quite evenly distributed among inhabitants of the village.

The roots of this dichotomy go back to before the rise of Islam. The Persians introduced the basic elements of the coastal organization, while Arab tribes brought alternate socio-economic forms to the interior. The rise of Islam soon helped crystalize the differences. Oman's particular form of Islam provided the ideology to allow the interior to resist the economically more vigorous coast until well into the twentieth century.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Arabian Peninsula is one area of the world about which relatively little is known in the West, and Oman is certainly one of the least known regions in the Peninsula. This is a somewhat surprising situation, since coastal Oman, at least, has not been at all isolated for the last thousand years. Omani ports played major roles in the Indian Ocean trade throughout the Islamic era. Even from a "Europocentric" point of view, the country has not been isolated. Coastal Oman has interacted vigorously with the various European countries which have penetrated into the Indian Ocean and Persian/Arabian Gulf (hereafter referred to as Arabian Gulf) area over the last four centuries. The Sultan at Masqat ruled over a widespread maritime empire during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Oman was the regional power in the Indian Ocean, one the British dealt with extensively. In 1833 Oman also became the second Arab country with which the United States opened treaty relations (Peterson 1978, p. 151; Nyrop et al. 1977, p. 33; Phillips 1967, p. 105).

Nevertheless, by the beginning of the twentieth century, knowledge of Oman had receded to the extent that only a handful of experts on Arabian affairs knew anything about the country beyond
its name. In 1926, the chairman of the Central Asian Society, whose "members include people from all parts of Asia, Africa, and Europe" could say quite truthfully in introducing a lecture on the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman: "I fancy most of you, like myself, are blissfully ignorant of those delectable regions" (Eccles 1927, p. 19). Most of the world remained blissfully ignorant of Oman for the next several decades. Oman's importance in the Indian Ocean area had declined, the Sultans of the mid-twentieth century had imposed almost complete isolation on Oman, and there was really no compelling reason that the rest of the world should notice Oman.

This situation changed in the 1950's. There were two immediate issues which brought Oman to the attention of the rest of the world. The first was the occupation of Baraimi oasis by the Saudis in 1952. They were driven out by the joint forces of the Shaikh of Abu Dhabi and the Sultan of Muscat in 1955, but the dispute went on for some years. Whether the Saudi move was prompted by the desire to reassert old claims to the area (zealousness in the cause of Wahhabism), or because ARAMCO wished to expand its concession area is undoubtedly open to interpretation. Various viewpoints seem to correlate with the sides taken in the dispute (Phillips 1967, Ch. 7; Townsend 1977, pp. 60-61; Halliday 1974, pp. 280-82).

At any rate, Oman was brought to the attention of the rest of the world as a potential source of oil. At the same time, it was being recognized that this country in southeastern Arabia was not
the same as Saudi Arabia, but differed in religion, culture, politics, and history from its rich and seemingly fanatic Wahhabi neighbor. Furthermore, the peculiar divisions within Oman were pointed out. Not only was Trucial Oman quite separate from the rest of Oman, but the rest of Oman was divided into coastal Sultanate and interior Imamate. The Imam was prepared to send forces to aid the Sultan in driving out the Saudis after their occupation (Peterson 1978, p. 164).

The second issue brought the "Oman Question" to the floor of the United Nations, and pointed out very vividly the dichotomy within Oman. The Imam Muhammad bin Abd Allah al-Khalili died in 1954, and the Sultan of Masqat took the opportunity to invade the Imamate. The probability of oil discoveries in the interior made it imperative to settle the centuries-old issue of the unity of Oman. This invasion succeeded temporarily, but it caused widespread resistance to the Sultan by interior tribesmen. The new Imam's forces drove the Sultan's troops out, and the fortunes of each side rose and receded for several more years. The issue was finally settled militarily in 1959 when British forces captured the Imamate's stronghold in Jabal al-Akhdhar. Debate over whether there were one or two Omans continued in the U.N. until 1971, when one Oman, the Sultan's, was finally admitted (Phillips 1967, Ch. 8; Peterson 1978, pp. 180-87; Halliday 1974, pp. 281-85).

These two incidents in the 1950's very dramatically brought certain factors in Oman to the attention of the world, but these
factors had been basic themes in Omani history for over a mil-
le­num. Oman is Ibadhi, not Sunni (nor Shi'i) like its neighbors.
Interior Oman has always jealously guarded its independence.
Coastal Oman has usually been under varying degrees of influence or
control by outside powers. Oman's history has always been one of
competition, and often conflict, between two vastly different
entities. This duality was even symbolized by the name of the
country, the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, until 1970 (Peterson
1978, p. 33, n. 1; Wilkinson 1971, p. 361). The Sultanate was
formed from the fusion of the Batinah coastal plain and its port
cities, symbolically Masqat, and the interior of the country, Oman.
Even within the last few years, one of the major problems in Oman's
efforts to develop has been "der traditionelle Gegensatz zwischen
dem an der Küste residierenden Sultan und den binnenwärts
orientierten Stammen" (Scholz 1978, p. 505).

Wilkinson (1977, p. 17), in preparation for a discussion of
population distribution in Oman, notes that "... we must first
obtain some idea of the main economies of the region, and see how
these have given rise to two quite different forms of socio-economic
organization." He goes on to describe "the maritime economy" (p.
19), "the divorce between the economic systems of maritime and
interior Oman" (p. 25), and "the agricultural economy" (p. 27).
This kind of dual organization reflects a number of basic

1. "the traditional antithesis between the Sultan residing
on the coast and the inwardly oriented tribes" [my translation].
differences in Omani society. Coastal Oman has always been very trade oriented and thus open to foreign influences. Although the Batinah is densely populated with villages, the coastal urban areas are the focus of social and economic life, and these urban areas are very cosmopolitan, detribalized, and tolerant of foreign ideas and presence. The interior of Oman is oriented toward self-sufficiency rather than trade, and thus is very inward looking. Society is quite homogeneous, almost completely Arab. The tribe and agricultural villages made up of one or several tribes are the basic mode of organization.

Aspects of this dichotomy between the coast and interior are quite well suited to analysis using a number of geographic theories and models developed over the past several decades. This study will concentrate on determining the forms of spatial organization and the economic relations within each of these areas. Models for describing the spatial forms of foreign trade-oriented societies may be generally referred to as dendritic mercantile systems. Parallel models were first proposed by Johnson (1970, pp. 83-92) and Vance (1970) to account for the inability of classical central place models (cf., e.g., Christaller 1933; Berry 1967) to adequately describe market place distribution in these situations. Smith (1974; 1976b) and others (e.g., Schwimmer 1976) subsequently fused Vance's mercantile model into Johnson's dendritic model as a relatively common special case. Smith (1974; 1975; 1976a; 1976b) has also been instrumental in developing other spatial models; in
particular, models applicable to subsistence tribal societies, which she calls extended network systems.

The application of such models is quite useful in understanding the traditional economic systems of Oman. Aside from the supposed virtues of simply gaining more insight into traditional forms of economic organization, there are several practical reasons for studying the Omani situation. The first concerns the pressing need to understand the local socio-economic context in which modern development efforts take place. Models and techniques which may have worked in the West or in one particular Third World context may be totally inapplicable in another context. Bonine (1980a, p. 2) notes that:

"only by understanding the structure of the traditional society and economy will the proper geographic areas, target populations and individuals be selected for the projects which are supposed to diffuse innovations throughout the country over time. Even for local, regional projects the socio-economic conditions must be known if the project is to maximize its implementation—or even to be successful in some cases."

In particular, Gilbert argues that spatial planning strategies must be adapted to the cultural and economic conditions of the country or region in which they are to be applied (1976, pp. 10-15). The first step in adapting spatial planning to local socio-economic conditions is necessarily a certain awareness of the spatial structure of the local region.

A second, related reason to examine the spatial structure of Oman's traditional economy goes beyond simply adapting to local
conditions. Development efforts often are most effective when they build upon already existing structures. At the very least, one must have an idea of the functioning of the traditional existing system before one can even decide if this existing structure should be utilized or not. Funnell (1976) shows the critical role which small service centers play in regional and rural development, and notes that "development of trade goes hand in hand with the growth of the small centers" (p. 83). In other words, the market is one of the functions of these service centers. Appalraju and Safier (1976) carry the argument further and show that development plans often incorporate the construction of planned spatial networks of what they call "growth centers." These growth centers are essentially economic in character. Furthermore, they show that in some cases the national government decides to utilize the preexisting spatial economic structure. Kenya is the example they cite (Appalraju and Safier 1976, pp. 158-62), and other details of the spatial aspects of Kenya's development policy are presented in Taylor (1974).

It is within this framework, then, that the present study is undertaken. The analysis of Oman's traditional socio-economic structure should contribute to the knowledge of the foundations upon which the Sultanate must build. The data used here, as noted in Chapter 2, is based upon turn of the century sources. However, it is also noted that Oman's stagnant economy did not really begin to undergo any significant changes from that situation until after 1970, and the Sultanate is still in the very early stages of
development. The basic data is supplemented by reports ranging from the first half of the nineteenth century to the most recent research on Oman. Because "Oman" has had such widely varied interpretations over the period, the term is used for roughly the northern part of the present Sultanate of Oman. The position of Oman within the international Indian Ocean-Arabian Gulf trade network is briefly reviewed, as is the situation in the interior.

Data on market places provide the basis for determining the existence of the hierarchical ordering of settlements (Chapter 3). Five levels of markets are discerned, from the largest bazaars at Masqat and Matrah to small markets with only a handful of shops. Chapter 4 analyzes the spatial distribution of these markets. Coastal Oman fits into a dendritic-mercantile model, which is characterized by organization in which trade patterns are vertical within the hierarchy. Horizontal links between centers of the same hierarchical level have not developed, so that the spatial pattern is tree-like. The development of such patterns is attributed to the predominance of foreign trade, which orients the system toward outside contacts rather than the development of internal trade. Interior patterns, on the other hand, are characterized by the lack of a coherent system. A number of local markets have developed on the boundaries of various divisions within Omani society. These divisions are primarily ecological (highland-lowland), political (the two major tribal confederations), and social (settled-nomad).
Chapter 5 examines the internal structures of the two types of spatial organization. The framework for looking at the coastal system is the theory of rent capitalism, in which urban bazaars and merchants play a major role. Masqat is the import-export center while Matrah organizes domestic trade. Coastal ports channel goods between the interior and Masqat-Matrah. The role of foreigners is very great in the two largest ports and declines down the hierarchy; in subordinate ports they still play an important role, but they are not found in the interior markets. Absentee landlordism is common in the coastal system, partially because the flow of profits to the merchants allowed them to buy up rural land and water. This phenomenon is not very common in the interior, which is characterized by a more egalitarian tribal social structure. Land and water rights are usually corporately owned by tribal groups, and benefits are fairly equally distributed.

Chapter 6 examines Omani history to show how the dual organization originated. The major factors influencing duality developed their basic configurations around the time of the rise of Islam. These factors include Sassanian settlement patterns, which formed the basis of the coastal system, and the influx of Arab tribes into the interior, which introduced alternate forms of social organization. The development of Ibadhi doctrine in Oman in early Islamic times provided the ideological basis for the maintenance of tribal organization in the interior. The two systems have usually remained separate since then, often in conflict with each other.
The final chapter briefly examines the usefulness of Oman as a case study for evaluating the effectiveness of the geographic models. The general applicability of the models in diverse situations is upheld, but several details are noted which may require slight modifications. Further, Omani development policy and practice are summarized to see how they are following or diverging from the traditional patterns. In general, it seems that Omani development is relying quite heavily upon the existing socio-economic patterns, although this may not always be because of conscious policy decisions. However, the net effect of this reliance upon traditional forms under new modern conditions is to cause the rapid evolution of Oman's spatial structure into new forms.
CHAPTER 2

DATA, DEFINITIONS, AND THE OMANI SITUATION

Oman has remained relatively isolated throughout most of the twentieth century, both because of its economic insignificance and because of the isolationist policies of the Imams and many of the Sultans. For this reason, very little data has been compiled on Oman since the turn of the century which could be used in spatial or economic analysis of the country. Those few Westerners allowed into Oman prior to 1970 tended to be either from oil companies or personal friends of the Sultan. Those who wrote about Oman were interested primarily in the political history and composition of the country (e.g., ARAMCO 1952; Phillips 1967) and made few comments on economic matters such as the location of bazaars or land tenure patterns. Since 1970, research has begun on such questions (e.g., Wilkinson 1977), although too little has been done yet to gain an overall view of the traditional patterns throughout the country.

However, throughout the nineteenth century, Oman was of the utmost strategic importance to Great Britain. Furthermore, until the late nineteenth century it was politically and economically one of the most important countries of the Indian Ocean. The British stationed political officers throughout the Arabian Gulf region, including Masqat, where extensive data on many aspects beyond purely
political affairs were compiled. The culmination of these British intelligence activities was J. G. Lorimer's *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman, and Central Arabia*, published in 1908 and 1915. Volume 1 (1915) consists of 2,741 pages covering the history of the entire region from approximately 1600 to the end of the nineteenth century. Volume II (1908), subtitled *Geographical and Statistical*, contains 1,952 pages covering nearly every town, village, tribe, and natural feature of the region.

Lorimer was an official of the Government of India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and served for a time as Political Resident in the Persian Gulf. His Gazetteer is based upon reports filed by government officials stationed in the Arabian Gulf and Oman, travelers' reports, and extensive field research by Lorimer himself (Anthony 1976, p. 58). Nearly 800 Omani settlements are described in the geographical and statistical portion of Lorimer (1908). The information provided for each of these includes number of houses and tribe(s) associated with each settlement. The location of bazaars or smaller markets is noted, usually along with their size and the type of trade and handicraft specializations. Administrative districts, traditional geographic divisions, and trade patterns are all described, and Lorimer notes the location of forts occupied by the Sultan, the location of his administrators, and tax revenues. In addition, the ethnic composition of settlements is discussed if it is not entirely Arab. Lorimer "is easily
the most comprehensive reference work on the area as it existed up to the end of the nineteenth century" (Anthony 1976, p. 58).

Lorimer's work only became available in the mid-twentieth century; prior to that it had been restricted to British government circles (Kelley 1966, p. 13). Only occasionally is the Gazetteer used to extract data on a particular area. Ehlers (1975b, Sections 2.2.3.1 ff.), for example, analyzes the settlement patterns and agrarian structure around Dezful in Iranian Khuzistan. He is then able to study the evolution of the Dezful hinterland since the turn of the century, which greatly aids in understanding the modern situation. However, the mass of detail has for the most part not been utilized. Most writers, if they refer to Lorimer at all, use him only for descriptions of a few individual places or for the historical sections, without trying to systematize data on a whole region.

Lorimer, therefore, forms the core of the data used in this study to analyze the socio-economic structure of nineteenth and early twentieth century Oman. However, there are a great many other reports which supplement and verify data found in the Gazetteer. Some of the most useful sources after Lorimer are reports from S. B. Miles. Like Lorimer, he was an official of the Indian Government and held the post of Political Agent at Masqat from 1872 to 1886 (Kelley 1966, p. 14). Miles published numerous articles describing his travels throughout Oman (e.g., 1877; 1896; 1901; 1910). He also wrote a book on the history and geography of the Arabian Gulf.
region, which deals mostly with Oman (1966). Miles was exceptional among travelers of the day in that he noted more consistently the location of bazaars, forms of land tenure, and trade patterns.

Eccles (1927) and Cox (1925) were also both India Government officials. Both provide data on coastal Oman, particularly Masqat and Matrah, and both describe journeys they undertook in the interior. The U.S. Navy (1931) discusses the ports all along the Omani coast, including Sur and the Batinah ports. Thomas served as a wazir to the coastal Sultan in the 1920's (Landen 1967, pp. 176, 409). He left a record of several journeys throughout Oman (e.g., 1931) as well as a history of the Al Bu Sa'id dynasty (1939). Bent (1895a; 1895b) and Stiffe (1897) are particularly useful for first-hand accounts of Masqat and Matrah. The missionary Zwemer published accounts of some of his trips in the country (1902; 1911). Several reports of the Persian Gulf Political Residency and Maskat Political Agency are available (Government of India 1901; 1902; 1903; 1904) and provide data on foreign trade relations and political conditions.

Certain analyses in this study are based upon data from the half century centered on 1900. In particular, bazaars and markets must be documented within this relatively short time period in order to assure that they are contemporary. The only exceptions are those which can be documented for both earlier and later periods, which then implies continuity through the period in question. In practice, only one small market out of 36 falls in this category.
Bilad Bani Bu Ali's market is known to exist in 1845 (Ward et al. 1847, p. 106) and in the mid-1970's (Scholz 1977a, pp. 112, 121). Additionally, only data on market and bazaar sizes within about ten years of Lorimer (1908) are usable for deriving the hierarchy in Chapter 3. This rules out any major growth or decline of particular markets distorting the results. Actually, nearly all bazaar sizes come from Lorimer himself, as do figures on the size of settlements.

For other aspects of Oman's socio-economic structure, a much wider range of data may be used. The 170 years from 1800 to 1970 were not a period of dynamic change in Oman. Rather, they were a time of stagnation and gradual decline in the coastal economy. Major development in the interior can normally come only when the two systems are united and capital from the trade network can be diverted inland. "At the height of the cycle the people are united under a strong Imam, the Omanis profit from control of the coast, and the benefits of overseas trade feed into the country's economic system" (Wilkinson 1977, p. 124). Aside from recent decades, the last period of unity in Oman which lasted more than a few years was under the Ya'ariba Imamate from about 1650 to 1725. Major development on the coast tends to occur at times of favorable trade conditions and aggressive commercial expansion policies. The early Ya'ariba Imamate was one of these periods (cf., e.g., el-Ashban 1979), but also the early rulers of the Al Bu Sa'idi dynasty were able to expand Omani trade during the end of the eighteenth and

Without any impetus to change, the basic patterns in the Omani economy simply remained static. Trade volumes may have dropped, but trade patterns remained. Some of the shops in the bazaars may have closed, but this situation was faced by all bazaars. The relative position within the economic structure was not affected. Landen, for example, notes that in the coastal system, the Batinah towns declined along with Masqat and Matrah in the nineteenth century (1967, pp. 123-27). Neither part of Oman, then, was in the kind of situation in which growth and evolution of the economy would be expected. The economic stagnation which began already in the early nineteenth century simply served to freeze the basic configurations which had preceded.

Under such conditions, then, observations from before the last quarter of the nineteenth century can contribute to an understanding of Oman's economy at the turn of the century. Wellsted, who traveled throughout Oman in 1835-1836, provides much useful information (1837; 1840; 1978). Ruschenberger describes several ports, particularly Masqat (1838). Ward and his companions (Ward et al. 1847) and Cole (1847) are useful for descriptions of Sharqiyah and Ja'alalan in the southeastern interior. Carter (1851) describes the coast of Oman south of Sur. He is particularly useful in describing aspects of the Bedouin economy along the coast, which are essentially the same forms found by Scholz in the early 1970's
(1977a). Pengelly (1861) and Palgrave (1864) both give first-hand accounts of coastal areas and additional information on the interior. Pelly (1863) is very useful for trade patterns. Jayakar (1877) gives a very detailed account of the demography of Masqat, and Ross (1873) is useful in supplementing Lorimer's discussion of tribal political divisions.

Recent fieldwork in Oman is also relevant, provided that it looks at aspects of the traditional socio-economic structure. The Omani economy began to change significantly only in 1967 when oil exports began. Even then, the Sultan was determined to hold back any development as long as possible, and Oman did not really begin to develop until after 1970 when Sultan Qabus bin Sa'id came to power (cf., e.g., Scholz 1976, p. 91 ff.; 1977b, p. 34 ff.; Sultanate of Oman n.d., p. 2). A survey carried out by the Government of India in 1969 also makes it clear that Oman's economy in that year did not significantly differ from the turn of the century economy (Government of India 1970) as examined in this study. Only a handful of modern publications examine the traditional economic structure of Oman. The major works include examinations of the water and land tenure systems and village structure in the interior (Wilkinson 1977; 1980). Work on the Bedouin economy has been published by Scholz (1976; 1977a), and economic specialization in irrigation systems maintenance by one interior tribe has been documented by Birks and Letts (1976). Birks also has studied how
agricultural villages cope with drought (1977) and the economy of the Shawawi (mountain nomads) (1976).

The question of reliability of the data must be briefly addressed. Nearly all data used in the basic analyses of Chapters 3, 4, and 5 are first-hand accounts by travelers or researchers. There is little reason to doubt the validity, particularly since the body of data is nearly always consistent between travelers. The only qualification is in cases of actual settlement size or bazaar/market size. Most of these figures are estimates, as can be seen by the patterns in Figures 3.4 and 3.5. These quantitative values are used primarily in the derivation of hierarchies (Ch. 3), and it should therefore be realized that hierarchical boundaries may be somewhat indefinite. However, the situation and classification of any individual settlement is not very critical to the construction of the spatial and economic models. Rather, the overall patterns are significant. Yoffee's observation (1977, p. 147) on the applicability of models to the situation in ancient Mesopotamia is equally applicable here:

The ensuing model, of course, is not to be regarded as a final summation, but as a first attempt to explain the relationship between socio-economic and political changes in the latter part of the Old Babylonian period. As more data becomes available, or as better interpretations of existing data are realized, the model will be refined. Protestations that not every single idea in the model can be correlated with a single textual 'fact,' however, will not be regarded as fatal criticisms of the model as a whole.

Any discussion of spatial patterns in Oman must first define spatially the term "Oman" itself. Yet, this is not an easy
endeavor. "Oman" has been and still is a concept with a multitude of applications. In its widest sense, "Oman" is the entire southeastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula, and includes the modern political entities of the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.). Cordes and Scholz (1980), for example, simply call this area Southeast Arabia and avoid the term "Oman" in a spatial sense. However, they are clearly treating the area as a single unit.

In modern political usage, "Oman" usually refers simply to the Sultanate of Oman, and this is how the term is used by Peterson (1978) and Townsend (1977). Historically, however, the Sultanate of Oman often included much of the East African and parts of the Persian and Pakistani coasts, but did not extend into the interior of southeastern Arabia (Anthony 1976, pp. 72-73). The most common geographical definition of "Oman" places its landward boundaries along the eastern fringes of the Rub' al-Khali and its extensions. This definition includes the present U.A.E. and the northern part of the present Sultanate, but excludes Dhufar (Lorimer 1908, p. 1368; Anthony 1976, p. 70; Wilkinson 1971, pp. 362-63). "Oman" may also sometimes refer only to the interior of the northern part of the present Sultanate. Politically, this usage was applied for the territory of the Imamate (as in Skeet 1974).

In the narrowest geographic sense, "Oman" refers to a single district of the interior, centered on the major towns of Nizwa, Bahlah, and Izki (Lorimer 1908, pp. 1369-76; Anthony 1976, p. 73).
To further confuse the issue, Jau and Muhadhah, two districts which were independent of Trucial Oman (present U.A.E.), the Imamate, and the Sultanate in Lorimer's time are named "Independent Oman" by him (1908, pp. 931, 1117, 1368). "Trucial Oman" refers to the present U.A.E. (Lorimer 1908, pp. 1425-51). Finally, the term, "Gulf of Oman" refers to the extension of the Indian Ocean between southeast Arabia and the Persian-Pakistani coast. It is bounded by the Arabian Sea on the east and the Arabian/Persian Gulf on the west. "Oman Promontory" refers to the Musandam Peninsula (Lorimer 1908, pp. 1368-69; Anthony 1976, p. 72).

This study is concerned with examining the dichotomy between the coastal Sultanate and the interior Imamate. Dhufar has historically never been closely associated with either, and was actually only acquired by the Sultanate in the late nineteenth century (Halliday 1974, Ch. 10; Phillips 1967, pp. 14-17, 74-82). It is therefore excluded from the scope of this inquiry. Similarly, Trucial Oman, the present U.A.E., is a separate economic system, has had no close political contact with either the Imamate or the Sultanate (Lorimer 1908, pp. 1425-51), and is therefore also excluded. The two districts of "Independent Oman" may have been politically independent but economically they were tied to the ports of Trucial Oman, and therefore they are grouped with that system (Lorimer 1908, pp. 260-65, 931-33, 1117-21).

What remains is an extensive area between the Gulf of Oman and the deserts inland. Reference to Figures 2.1 and 2.2 will help
Figure 2.1. Traditional Divisions of Oman.
Figure 2.2. Geographical Regions in Oman.
locate the districts which are considered to be part of "Oman" as used in this study. The Batinah of Lorimer (1908, pp. 283-93) coincides with the present designation of the Batinah coastal plain. This low-lying sandy coastal plain extends over 150 miles along the northeast coast of the Sultanate. Although the district itself ranges from 10 to 50 miles in width, the agriculturally productive area is a narrow strip right along the coast. Population density is quite high along the coast, but there is then very little settlement inland until the wadis of the mountain foothills are reached (Scholz 1976, pp. 86-87; Wilkinson 1977, pp. 17-18).

The next three of Oman's traditional administrative divisions actually overlap two distinguishable geographical regions. Western Hajar (Lorimer 1908, pp. 609-12) is made up of the mountainous region west of Wadi Sama'il and the seaward facing foothills and wadi region. Jabal al-Akhdhar, the most imposing feature of the mountains, reaches 10,000 feet in places and contains extensive plains around the 6,500 foot level. The foothills region fades into the Batinah with no distinct boundary (Cordes and Scholz 1980, pp. 3-4; Scholz 1976, p. 87; Anthony 1976, pp. 38-39, 49). Eastern Hajar (Lorimer 1908, pp. 604-09) occupies the mountainous region east of Wadi Sama'il, except for the area around Masqat, which is called the Masqat district (Lorimer 1908, pp. 1189-96).

Dhahirah (Lorimer 1908, pp. 427-30; Anthony 1976, pp. 25-26) is the westernmost of the interior districts. Three other interior divisions, from west to east are: Oman (Oman Proper in Lorimer
1908, pp. 1369-76; Oman Province in Anthony 1976, p. 73), Sharqiyyah (Lorimer 1908, pp. 1763-68; Anthony 1976, p. 103), and Ja'al'an (Lorimer 1908, pp. 882-85; Anthony 1976, p. 50). Badiyyah is treated separately in Lorimer (1908, pp. 195-96) and appears in Figure 2.1; but it is, as Lorimer notes, a part of Sharqiyyah. The cores of all four of these districts lie in a region made up of foothills interspersed with numerous wadis. To the southeast each region blends into an area of desert which is penetrated by the shallow wadis from the foothills (Cordes and Scholz 1980, pp. 3-5; Scholz 1976, pp. 86-88).

As already noted, Oman at the turn of the century was in the midst of a major economic depression. The basic causes for coastal Oman's economic decline and stagnation have been analyzed in detail several times (e.g., Landen 1967, Ch. 4; Scholz 1976, pp. 90-91; 1977b, pp. 26-30) and will only be briefly reviewed here. The fragile unity between coast and interior forged under the early Ya'ariba Imams was disrupted by increasing conflict between the two parts. Dynastic struggles intertwined with the old socio-economic and regional differences as one branch of the Al Bu Sa'idi family came to represent the interior against the Al Bu Sa'id of the coast. These conflicts were already common by the end of the eighteenth century. Two new factors were added in the early part of the nineteenth century. The de facto transfer of the Sultan's capital to Zanzibar in 1820 meant that the Sultan's economic activity and capital were concentrated in East Africa, to the detriment of
coastal Oman. Also, around 1822 the British began to suppress the slave trade, which was an important component of Oman's commerce. This pressure on Oman culminated in the Sultan's ban on the trade in 1873.

The situation slowly deteriorated as the nineteenth century progressed. Competition from European ships had already hit Omani shipping, but the introduction of steamers in the mid-1800's all but finished any long distance shipping by Omani vessels. The British-sponsored separation of Zanzibar from Oman in 1861 cut off the economic center of gravity from the country. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 made the journey from Europe to India much shorter and greatly reduced Masqat's value as a way station. As the Indian Ocean came under increasing British domination, commerce shifted from the traditional silver standard to the British gold standard. The Maria Theresa dollar (M.T. $) used in Oman was based on silver, and Oman was drained of currency when silver prices plummeted in the late nineteenth century. Finally, Omani handicraft industries had been nearly eliminated by the end of the century because they could not compete with European and European-sponsored Indian manufacturing.

Oman at the turn of the century, then, although still within the Indian Ocean network, had become relatively insignificant economically. The coast was still firmly tied to the Indian Ocean trade, but the volume of the trade was not great enough to support prosperity for more than a few merchants. This Indian Ocean trade
was firmly in the hands of the British, who controlled India and other areas in the network. Thus, coastal Oman was tied to the British Empire economically and politically, and this translated into heavy dependence on Britain. The British held "a commanding trade position; amenities of extraterritorial privileges; assurance that no foreign power could obtain land; quasi-legal power of recognition and subsidy control; a British agent and agency; [and] precedents of occasional British intervention in aid of the Sultan against foreign or internal aggression" (Busch 1967, p. 21; cf. also pp. 10-21; Landen 1967, pp. 156-59).

The interior was relatively immune from the situation on the coast. Its economy was still based upon subsistence agriculture, which was affected very little by the international economic system. Politically, the interior was de facto independent; in fact the Imamate had been revived in 1868 and would be revived again in 1913 to challenge the Sultan (cf. Ch. 6). Local tribal shaykhs otherwise held power in the interior. They had no particular interest in encouraging economic interest outside of agriculture, and the British had no interest in the interior as long as it did not threaten their position on the coast. The Sultan had little power to do anything even if he were interested in the interior. The period covered by the data used in this study thus presents an opportunity to examine the economic duality of Oman at a time when the two systems were relatively static and functioning separately.
CHAPTER 3

HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE

One of the primary methods used in this study to analyze Oman's socio-economic structure will be an examination of the spatial distribution of the bazaars and markets. However, in order to make some sense out of their locations, there must be some measure of the relative importance of each market within the set of markets present in Oman. Geographic theory postulates that this set of markets should be hierarchically ordered. The usual rigorous means of distinguishing hierarchies is to analyze the frequency distribution of the number of functions (kinds of retail goods offered) which are present within a settlement (cf., e.g., Haggett 1966, Ch. 5; and Berry 1967, Ch. 2 for general discussion; and Bonine 1980b, Ch. 2 for a specific case in central Iran). Alternatively (or usually in conjunction), purchasing patterns can be mapped so that a graphic representation of the hierarchy can be viewed directly (e.g., Berry 1967, Ch. 1; Bonine 1980b, Ch. 5).

For turn of the century Oman, extensive data are available neither on the number of functions in the markets nor on purchasing patterns. The data that are available include descriptions of over 700 settlements falling within the boundaries of Oman. These range in size from only 1 or 2 houses to 2,680 houses at Matrah. Thirty
bazaars or markets are noted, and an additional six can be added from travelers' reports. The sizes of 22 of these markets are given. Table 3.1 is a list of the documented bazaars, their size if known, the size of the settlement, and references to each bazaar or market in the literature.

Empirical studies of market center distribution have shown that the number of functions in a market center corresponds to the number of establishments, and that the number of establishments corresponds to settlement size (Berry 1967, pp. 35-40; Haggett 1966, pp. 115-16). These quantities, then, can be used to determine a tentative hierarchy when other kinds of data are lacking. It should be noted that there is still much discussion on all methods of determining hierarchies, and indeed on whether hierarchical ordering actually exists in the real world. It would serve no purpose here to reopen the debate on these questions, as ample discussion can be found in the literature (e.g., Berry 1967, Ch. 2; Marshall 1969, Ch. 3). It should simply be noted that regardless of the actual existence of hierarchies, the concept has proved to be a very useful tool in the geographic analysis of marketing systems, and it is useful in looking at the Omani situation.

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 establish that the general correspondence between settlement size and bazaar/market size does hold for the Omani case. (The two figures are simply the same data plotted using different scales in order to show the patterns more effectively.) One settlement, Hisn Sama'il, does quite clearly
### Table 3.1. Documented Bazaars

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<th>Bazaar</th>
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<th>Size of Settlement (houses)</th>
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<td>500</td>
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<td>Miles 1910, p. 168</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Lorimer 1908, p. 18)³</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afi</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lorimer 1908, p. 1114</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ali, Bilad bani bu</td>
<td>600</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ward et al. 1847, p. 106</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Lorimer 1908, p. 64)³</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awabi</td>
<td>50+</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>Lorimer 1908, p. 186</td>
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<td>Bahlah</td>
<td>545</td>
<td></td>
<td>Palgrave 1864, p. 148</td>
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<td>Miles 1910, p. 177</td>
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<td>(Lorimer 1908, p. 209)³</td>
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<td>Pengelly 1861, p. 33</td>
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<td>Kalhat</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>120-130</td>
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<td>Masqat</td>
<td>340+</td>
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<td>Bent 1895b, pp. 876, 878</td>
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<td>340+</td>
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<td>400</td>
<td>Lorimer 1908, p. 1811</td>
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<td>Eccles 1927, p. 22</td>
<td>Miles 1877, p. 51</td>
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<td>U.S. Navy 1931, p. 69</td>
<td>(Lorimer 1908, p. 1851)\textsuperscript{a}</td>
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<td>Tasawir</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Lorimer 1908, p. 1671</td>
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<td>Tiwi</td>
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<td>320</td>
<td>Lorimer 1908, p. 1906</td>
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<td>Wasil</td>
<td>300</td>
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<td>Cole 1847, p. 109</td>
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\textsuperscript{a} In cases where Lorimer is cited in parentheses, the bazaar was not noted by him. However, the settlement size is from the page cited in this reference.

\textsuperscript{b} Settlement size given in population only. This has been divided by five, the average occupation per house according to analysis of data in Lorimer.
Figure 3.1. Settlement Size vs. Bazaar Size (linear-log.).
Figure 3.2. Settlement Size vs. Bazaar Size (log.-linear).
violate the correspondence. However, it is in the center of a very densely packed cluster of villages (cf. Figure 4.7) and therefore has as much population within a few miles as does any other settlement with the same size bazaar. Figure 3.3, which plots the number of houses within a hinterland of five miles in diameter vs. bazaar size, shows this clearly:

The next step is to determine whether or not any hierarchy is apparent in either the frequency distribution of city size or bazaar size. Both Berry (1967, Ch. 2) and Marshall (1969, Ch. 3) discuss methods for determining the existence and structure of hierarchies. It is doubtful that the 22 data points available here are a large enough sample to allow rigorous statistical analysis. At any rate, Marshall has shown (1969, pp. 60-64) that using different techniques, two independent researchers may come up with two entirely different hierarchies for the same data. This suggests that hierarchies, if indeed they exist, can be subjectively determined by the researcher regardless of the precautions taken.

Hierarchies in the Omani data (if indeed they exist) have been determined by reference to certain incongruities and major breaks in the data distribution. However, the final placement of the boundaries must finally depend on the judgment of the researcher. The frequency distribution of market size shown in Figure 3.4 clearly shows a gap between sizes of up to 20 and over 40. Therefore, 0 to 20 shops is taken to be the size of a bottom level market in the market hierarchy. The top level includes only the two
Figure 3.3. Hinterland Size vs. Bazaar Size (log.-log.).

* within 2½ mile radius of the settlement
Figure 3.4. Frequency Distribution of Bazaar Size.
huge bazaars of Matrah and Masqat. Both cities contain well over 300 shops in their bazaars, with a high level of functional diversity (cf. the citations under Masqat and Matrah in Table 3.1). Sohar, with 200 shops, is too large to include with markets of 40 to 100 shops. However, it does not seem large enough to class with Masqat and Matrah, particularly since Sohar is partially dependent on those two cities in its shipping patterns (cf. Chapter 4).

There is no apparent break in market size distribution for sizes between 40 and 100, so other factors must be considered in determining if and where a break should be made. The frequency distribution of settlement size was plotted (Figure 3.5) and shows a minimum between 80 and 100. The exact break was arbitrarily selected at 85. The second level of settlement size was determined by reference to bazaar size, and set between 400 and 450. This is approximately the midpoint of settlement size in the gap of bazaar size distribution on Figure 3.2. (Figure 3.2 is the same as Figure 3.1, but uses a different scale to show this gap more clearly.) The scale was changed to plot the larger settlements in a frequency distribution again (Figure 3.6). This graph is used in conjunction with Figure 3.7 to determine a step in the hierarchy at between 800 and 900 houses in settlement size. This area may show a minimum in the frequency distribution, but also it is the size where only half the settlements are known to have markets. On Figure 3.1 the population correlates with about 70 shops for bazaar size, or approximately what would be expected if there is to be a step in
Figure 3.5. Frequency Distribution of Settlement Size.
Figure 3.6. Frequency Distribution of Larger Settlement Sizes.

Figure 3.7. Percentage of Settlements known to have Bazaar vs. Settlement Size.
level between 40 and 100 in Figure 3.4. The population of the two largest cities, Matrah and Sur, are taken as a separate level. The resulting divisions of settlement size and bazaar size roughly correspond as shown in Table 3.2.

Once these determinations have been made, they can be used as guidelines for estimating the size of those markets for which no figures were given. Figure 3.8 shows graphically the general boundaries which one would expect given the hierarchy as determined above. Only the lower three levels are included, and the undetermined markets are shown placed in the levels proposed for them.

The size alone of two towns, Khaburah on the coast and Nizwa in the interior, allows them to be put into the third level immediately. However, Marshall (1969, p. 64) notes that in determining any hierarchy, account should be taken of the spatial relationships as well. Reference to the location of these two cities, then, confirms their placement in the hierarchy to some extent. Khaburah is in a position similar to Barkah's, and should be classed with it. Nizwa is also centrally located with respect to interior population and markets. Perhaps it is better located than Ibra, which has a market size of 90; although Ibra is smaller than Nizwa. Quryat, Suwaiq, and Bahlah are placed in the second level by virtue of their size. The two coastal cities are in comparable situations spatially to Sib, Saham, and Masna'ah. Bahlah in the interior is in a less advantageous position that Nizwa or Ibra in that it is not very centrally located in its district with respect to population.
Table 3.2. Settlement Size vs. Bazaar Size—Proposed Hierarchy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement Size (houses)</th>
<th>Bazaar Size (shops)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 85</td>
<td>no markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 - 400</td>
<td>0 - 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450 - 800</td>
<td>40 - 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900 - 1,600</td>
<td>80 - 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sohar 1,430)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 2,000</td>
<td>over 300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3.8. Settlement Size vs. Bazaar Size.
Ibri is another interior market which had to be estimated to some extent. Travelers' reports give its bazaar size as somewhere between 60 and 80 shops (Miles 1910, p. 414). Although the criteria of population alone may seem to require the upper end of this range (by reference to Figure 3.8), Dhahirah is much more sparsely populated than either "Oman Proper" (Nizwa) or Sharqiyah (Ibra). It does not seem justifiable on these grounds to place Ibri in the same level as Nizwa or Ibra. Bilad bani bu Hasan provides an example of an interior market with higher population than expected for its market size (or smaller market than expected for its population). Sib shows a similar case for the coast. Ibri's bazaar is therefore estimated to be no more than 70 shops, and is placed in the second level.

Four of the markets assigned to the first level of the hierarchy (0-25) fall well within the bounds of that level as shown in Figure 3.8. Tasawir, Khadhra, and Hibra are all described by Lorimer as small (1908, pp. 1671, 1373, 1114 respectively). Fanjah, right on the borderline in settlement size, is also described as having a small market (Lorimer 1908, p. 1670). Miles (1910, p. 160) spent a night in Fanjah, but did not find anything about the place of enough significance to mention. Bilad bani bu Ali and Adam are somewhat large for the category, but still smaller than either Liwa or Dhank, towns known to have small markets. Ward (1847, p. 106) describes the market in Bilad bani bu Ali as "very poor." Nearby Bilad bani bu Hasan, with 40 shops (Lorimer 1908, p. 679), Ward
calls "very good" (1847, p. 104). Adam is simply called a "convenient market for the Bedouin," and is an oasis far away from any concentration of settlements (Miles 1910, pp. 165-68).

The most difficult market to place is that at Afi, a settlement with 1,000 houses. Despite its size, Afi is in a situation similar to Hibra, Fanjah, and Tasawir. Afi seems, along with Hibra, to have exactly the same relation to Nakhl, a nearby large market, that the two small markets Fanjah and Tasawir have to the large market at Hisn Sama'il.

The bazaar at Sur cannot be ranked with any certainty because there is no counterpart to Sur in Oman. It is certainly a major trade center in the Indian Ocean transit traffic, and to some extent Sur also serves as the port for much of the interior. The population is nearly as large as Matrah's, which could indicate a market on that scale. On the other hand, Sur does not have a system of secondary ports as does Masqat-Matrah. At any rate, Sur's bazaar must certainly be at least as large as Sohar's, for it is classed by most observers (for example, Eccles 1927, pp. 21-22) with Sohar, Masqat, and Matrah as one of the primary ports of Oman.
CHAPTER 4

SPATIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUALISM

Having gained an idea of the relative importance of each market, the next step is to examine the spatial distribution of the markets and hierarchical levels. The markets are all mapped in Figure 4.1. It is worth noting that 16 of 36 markets known in Oman, or about 45 percent, are on the coast. Leaving out the smallest markets, which undoubtedly are very locally oriented, 12 of the remaining 21 larger markets (57 percent) are on the coast. Also apparent is the fact that the largest bazaars, Masqat and Matrah, as well as Sur, are very asymmetrically located with respect to other markets.

Sea trade patterns are mapped based on descriptions in Lorimer (1908, pp. 285, 286, 971, 1002, 1565, 1811, 1812, 1824, 1839, 1849, 1851). Figure 4.2 clearly shows the subordinate position of the Batinah coastal towns to Masqat-Matrah in terms of trade. It also clearly shows that Sur is not part of the Masqat-Matrah system, but rather has its own overseas trade. Nearly every coastal market of the Batinah and two of the markets on the eastern coast carry on trade with Masqat-Matrah, as well as with the Arabian Gulf. These ports are first and foremost linked to Masqat-Matrah, rather than to the general Arabian Gulf commerce. This is evident
Figure 4.1. Location of Markets.
Figure 4.2. Patterns of Sea Trade.
from examining the volume of trade. For example, in 1863 Bushire, a port near the head of the Gulf, recorded imports from Masqat valued at 229,220 rupees, while it imported only 11,250 rupees annually worth of dry lemons from all other Omani ports. Recorded exports from Bushire to Masqat were valued at 107,000 rupees, while there were no exports to any other Omani ports recorded (Pelly 1863, pp. 97-98, 103-04). The combined total of all trade between Bushire and the Omani coast is only 3.3 percent of the value of trade between Bushire and Masqat.

Political organization partially reflects these trade patterns. The coastal ports were usually controlled by the Sultan at Masqat. The main customs house was in that city, and most goods had to pass through Masqat before they were shipped further (e.g., Miles 1877, p. 51). Customs income at Masqat and Matrah amounted to M.T. $300,000 annually around the turn of the century, while the customs from all other Omani ports was around M.T. $25,000 (Lorimer 1908, pp. 1422-23).

Of course, not all trade was legally shipped. Wudam, for instance, shows up on Figure 4.2 as a point of trade in the Batinah which carries on commerce with the Gulf, India, and Yemen, but not with Masqat. Wudam became one of the smuggling centers in Oman during the nineteenth century (Landen 1967, pp. 122, 152). The volume of trade of such ports cannot be ascertained. Certainly it was much less than the volume passing through Sur, the largest port in Oman relatively free of the Sultan's control. At Sur, Lorimer
estimated that the annual revenue would be around M.T. $50,000 if the Sultan could enforce his authority (1908, p. 1422).

Figure 4.3 shows the inland trade networks which are noted in Lorimer and several other accounts (Lorimer 1908, pp. 18, 31, 195, 266, 285-86, 289, 429-30, 550, 576, 615, 679, 690, 741, 757, 971, 1002, 1028, 1080, 1115, 1124, 1179, 1372, 1568, 1645, 1672, 1824, 1851, 1873, 1880; Cox 1925, p. 207; Miles 1877, p. 52; Miles 1896, pp. 528, 535-36; Miles 1901, pp. 471, 480, 495; Miles 1910, pp. 163, 414, 416). With very few exceptions, the hinterland of each port is confined to a local system of wadis on the seaward side of the mountains. This can be demonstrated both from descriptions of the trade area of each port, and by noting the port for each inland area. For example, Barkah's hinterland is described as follows: "Barkah . . . is the port of the villages in Wadis Lajal and Ma'awal and partially of those in Wadis Tau and Bani Kharus and also of the town of Nakhl" (Lorimer 1908, p. 266). This pattern is confirmed under entries for the various hinterland areas: "The trade of Wadi Lajal is with Barkah" (Lorimer 1908, p. 1080); or "the trade of Wadi Bani Kharus is partly with Barkah and partly with Masna'ah" (Lorimer 1908, p. 1029).

The most striking aspect of the coastal system of ports and hinterlands is that the trade flow within the network is entirely vertical. Goods move from Masqat-Matrah to subordinate port to the hinterland via a wadi route. There is no horizontal trade between hinterlands, nor is there trade between the subordinate ports. Such
Figure 4.3. Interior Trade Patterns.
organization persisted until after 1970, when Oman first began to implement its development program. It is described by Scholz (1978, pp. 510-11), where he presents a schematic drawing of the network and analyzes changes in it brought about since 1970.

This kind of network can be understood as a type resembling the mercantile model outlined by Vance (1970). "The fundamental dynamic of the mercantile model of settlement is the operation of forces external to the local system . . ." (Vance 1970, p. 153). Major centers are oriented primarily toward the international trade network. Smith (1974), in summarizing Vance's model, notes that "expansion of trade proceeds along single avenues from port cities into the interior, upon which subcenters are established. Hence centers and transport routes develop in a linear fashion, becoming separate branch-like systems rather than an interconnected grid" (p. 178). In the mercantile model, Masqat-Matrah is the major center oriented toward the external system, or the "point of attachment" in Vance's terminology (1970, p. 150 ff) between Oman and the Indian Ocean trade network.

Vance's model itself is seen by Smith (1974, p. 178) as one type of dendritic system. Dendritic systems are characterized by organization in which "all lower-level centers are tied to a single higher level center in a chain that is entirely vertical without horizontal links" (Smith 1974, p. 177). These systems "seem to occur mainly in colonial or recently colonial societies where marketing is not only imposed by conquest, but imposed by an outside
group involved in the international market and import-export trade" (Smith 1974, p. 178). Throughout history this coastal system in Oman has often been under foreign domination and was actually more or less a British client during the time of Lorimer's data.

However, foreign political domination is not the key factor. Rather, the foreign orientation of the merchants and the trade is what determines the nature of the marketing orientation. The coastal ports of Oman are the only settlements in the country where one can consistently find significant foreign populations. In Masqat "the merchants are chiefly Banyans [Hindus] from India and Persians" (Bent 1895a, p. 112). In Barkah "the ready cash is all in the hands of the Banyans . . ." (Pengelly 1861, p. 33). At Khaburah, trade is "in the hands of twenty-five Khoja traders . . ." (Miles 1966, p. 456); at Suwaiq "there are eleven Banians here who control the trade . . ." (Miles 1966, p. 457); and descriptions of every port contain variations of these examples. The Hindus tend to control the import-export trade and are the primary bankers. Persians and Khojas make up a large proportion of smaller merchants and shopkeepers, although a few of them also own major import-export firms (Lorimer 1908, pp. 266, 1034, 1109, 1178-79, 1185-87, 1198-1200, 1567-68, 1646, 1811-12, 1824, 1839, 1851; cf. also Chapter 5).

1. The Khojas are Shi'i originally from India. At the turn of the century, the main body of Khojas in India were Isma'ili and were followers of the Agha Khan. However, most of the Khojahs in Oman had become main-stream Shi'i (ithna 'ashari) (Anthony 1976, p. 56; Allen 1981, p. 51 ff).
In Vance's model, and in the cases to which the dendritic model is usually applied, the international trade system expands into more or less of a vacuum in the interior. Oman has been attached to the Arabian Gulf-Indian Ocean trade network at least since the third millennium. In these early times it served primarily as a source of raw materials to the more highly developed partners in the network (Speece 1979). More recently, Persian penetration proceeded in Oman in accordance with Vance's theory. However around the first century A.D. during a period of Persian occupation, the Arab tribes of the interior began moving into Oman from southwest Arabia. At the time Islam arose these tribes rallied to the new religion and were able to use the new situation to gain control of Oman from the ruling Persians. Except for several brief occupations by foreign invaders, since 630 A.D. the tribes of interior Oman have been able to maintain their independence from any political domination of the coast.

The historical situation surrounding these events will be examined in more detail in Chapter 6. Here it should simply be noted that this separate cultural and political entity in the interior was also able to successfully resist the penetration of the coastal economic system. The interior thus developed a socio-economic system which was distinct from the coast. These differences translated to differences in spatial organization.

Figure 4.3 indicates that the markets of the interior show no particular integration. This is not simply a reflection of lack
of data, or of the failure of observers to note trade patterns. Many discussions of these interior markets note that inhabitants of the immediate hinterland as well as of the town itself patronize the market and they point out local patterns. The Ibri bazaar is the local market for Dhahirah (Miles 1910, p. 414), and Nizwa serves the surrounding hill country (Miles 1901, p. 480). Inhabitants of small villages near Khadhra bin Daffa patronize the small market in that town (Lorimer 1908, p. 1372).

In addition to local patterns, long distance and foreign trade are noted where they exist. For example, Lorimer notes that Dhahirah exports wheat and fruits to both Sohar and Sharqiyah (1908, p. 429). Sharqiyah district channels most of its foreign trade through Sur (Lorimer 1908, pp. 195, 615, 1849). Sur is also the port for Ja'alan, either directly (Lorimer 1908, pp. 679, 1849) or via the small coastal village of Lashkharah (Lorimer 1908, pp. 65, 885). Even Sur, which is the primary port for most of the interior, is very little involved in import-export activities. Rather its prosperity is based almost completely upon its role in the transit trade (Wellsted 1837, p. 104).

One other indication that the interior is not integrated into the Indian Ocean trade network is the fact that the foreigners associated with the trade are not found in inland markets. The population of these inland towns are entirely Arab, and the organization of the towns is based upon tribal affiliation (Lorimer 1908, pp. 209, 679, 756, 757, 1367). Even the major markets on the
coastward side of the mountains have the population characteristics
of interior towns (Lorimer 1908, pp. 186, 1359-60, 1603-04, 1663).
These towns must therefore be considered at least partially part of
the interior. With interior social organization but coastal trade
links, the coastward foothills are actually part of the fuzzy
boundary area between the two areas.

The interior also has a separate set of physical constraints
upon settlement. In the Batinah, the water table is shallow, wells
may be sunk anywhere, and settlement is quite dense along the whole
coast (Wilkinson 1977, pp. 17-18, 73-74). Market centers are free
to locate anywhere along the coast, and they have located at the
mouths of major wadis which are the main routes inland. However, in
the interior of the country, settlement is based first and foremost
upon the availability of water and suitable land. Cultivation
depends entirely upon irrigation from man-made channels and tunnels.
These tap the subsurface flow of the seemingly dry streambeds as
well as the water table of alluvial fans (Wilkinson 1977, pp. 74-
76). Because average annual rainfall nowhere exceeds 200 mm in Oman
(rainfall patterns are summarized in Speece 1981, Section 2.1), only
soils near wadis (streambeds) and bajada zones are cultivable.
Settlement is largely restricted to linear patterns along these
wadis.

Given the differences in trade patterns, social composition,
and physical setting, it becomes difficult to describe the situation
in interior Oman using a model based upon penetration of the Indian
Ocean economy. The interior system must be explained using models which can accommodate the social organization and physical constraints. Actually, it is somewhat misleading to speak of one system at all; the interior is distinguished by a number of local marketing mini-systems which have not integrated into a wider system. Within the constraints placed upon these mini-systems by the location of suitable land and water, the major factors in location of markets are social and to some extent ecological boundaries.

Development of markets on such social and ecological boundaries is fairly common, and the theoretical basis for understanding such locational factors was developed by Polanyi (1957, Ch. 5). The phenomenon can be seen in such diverse settings as the ancient Mediterranean world (Revere 1957, p. 52), and the ancient Indian civilizations of Central America (Chapman 1957, p. 116). Chapman notes that "trans-shipments naturally developed from the earliest times on the borders of ecological regions, such as highland and plain, desert and jungle, forest and savannah" (1957, p. 116). Reference to Figure 4.4 will show that the markets at Rustaq, Awabi, Nakhl, and Sama'il are found right on the border between the inhabited mountain region and the sparsely populated foothill buffer with the coast. One factor in their location is certainly that they facilitate trade between the mountain population and the Batinah coastal system. Bahlah and Nizwa are in a similar position inland. A number of the smaller interior markets are
Figure 4.4. Location of Markets with respect to the Mountains.
situated near the boundary between the inhabited inner foothills and the desert region frequented only by Bedouin.

However, the location of interior markets shows a most striking correlation with the socio-political divisions evident within Omani society. Even markets which fall on ecological boundaries are probably more oriented toward facilitating exchange across socio-political boundaries. The bazaars of Rustaq and Nakhl certainly fit this category. They help bridge the gap between cosmopolitan coastal ports and tribal interior villages as much as they do the gap between coastal plain and mountain area.

Similarly, the inland zones of foothills and desert are reflected in the economic base of the populations in these zones. The inhabitants of the foothills are primarily settled agriculturalists, oriented toward subsistence cultivation. In the desert areas, only nomadic Bedouin can be found. Most of the smaller markets follow closely the line dividing these two socio-economic zones (this line is mapped by Scholz 1977a, pp. 102, 112; 1977b, p. 31). Descriptions of some of these markets make it clear that they are primarily provision markets for Bedouin. Adam "forms a convenient market for the Beduin to resort to for provisions and other necessaries" (Miles 1910, p. 169). Descriptions of the Dhank market and the goods sold in it also suggest orientation toward trade with the Bedouin (Miles 1910, p. 418; Cox 1925, p. 209). Badiyah district, in which Wasil is situated, contains as many
Bedouin in temporary camps as it does Hadhr (settled people) in villages (Lorimer 1908, pp. 195-96).

One aspect of social organization in the interior transcends the differences between settled and nomadic Omanis. The two great political factions are based upon tribal rivalries (Wilkinson 1977, pp. 224-28). The configurations current at the turn of the century took their names from the leading tribes on opposing sides in an early eighteenth century civil war (Kelly 1972, pp. 107-08; Bathurst 1972, pp. 104-05). However, the Hinawi-Ghafiri groupings have been present throughout Omani history under different names (Wilkinson 1977, pp. 224-26). In a wider context, such moiety groupings can be found in nearly every Arab society in the Middle East (Patai 1962, Ch. 7).

Of the nine larger inland market towns, six are located right on the boundary of this traditional tribal political division, while the other three are very near it. Ibra, for example, consists of two main quarters. One is Hinawi, the other is Ghafiri, and the bazaar is actually in two parts—one in each quarter (Lorimer 1908, pp. 756-57). The Hisn Sama'il market is under the walls of a fort which marks the border (Lorimer 1908, p. 1663; Miles 1901, p. 495). In Nizwa, the bazaar is on a wadi which separates the two major quarters, one of which is Hinawi, the other Ghafiri (Lorimer 1908, p. 1365; Miles 1910, pp. 177-78). Tribes of both factions also inhabit Bahla (Lorimer 1908, p. 209), Nakhl (Lorimer 1908, pp.
The relationship of these markets to traditional political divisions may be seen in Figures 4.5-4.10. Figures 4.5, 4.7, and 4.10 also show that the remaining large markets of the interior, Ibri, Awabi, and Bilad bani bu Hasan respectively, lie very near the boundary. In fact, the Hinawi inhabited village of Salaif "is practically a suburb" of the Ghafiri occupied Ibri (Lorimer 1908, p. 47). Several of the smaller markets, such as Hibra and Adam, also straddle the boundary. Part of Fanjah is actually a small neutral territory occupied by a tribe which remains outside of the two tribal factions (Lorimer 1908, pp. 554-55, 1670).

The location of markets on this kind of political boundary is known elsewhere. In the Berber areas of Morocco, for example, the territories of the two moieties tend to coincide with the mountain chains, and markets are located in the valleys between these chains (Benet 1957, p. 198). Such locations allow for exchange on neutral ground, where the rules of tribal rivalry may be temporarily put aside.

Careful examination of Figures 4.5-4.10 will reveal five towns of some size which lie on the political boundary, but for which no market is documented. This raises the question of whether the theory outlined here is inadequate or whether nineteenth and early twentieth century reports are incomplete. No information is available on the large villages just below Rustaq (Figure 4.7) or on
Table 4.1. Legend for Figures 4.5-4.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Settlement Size (houses)</th>
<th>Bazaar Size</th>
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<td>0 - 20</td>
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<td>over 2,000</td>
<td>over 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>△</td>
<td>undetermined</td>
<td>documented in Scholz (1977a, p. 112)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>△</td>
<td></td>
<td>tribal confederation boundary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.5. Northern Batinah, Northern Western Hajar.
Figure 4.6. Dhahirah.
Figure 4.7. Central Hajar and Batinah.
Figure 4.8. Oman Proper.
Figure 4.9. Masqat District, Central Eastern Hajar.
Figure 4.10. Sharqiyyah and Ja'alat.
Tana'am (near Ibri, Figure 4.6). However, in the case of Izki and Manah (Oman Proper, Figure 4.8), markets are documented by Scholz (1977a, p. 112). Furthermore, Scholz also notes markets in several large villages which lie on the fringe of the desert. The theory would expect to find markets in many of these towns to facilitate trade between Hadhr and Bedouin.

Scholz's market locations in Sharqiyyah and Ja'alain correspond almost exactly to the travelers' reports (Figure 4.10 and Scholz 1977a, p. 112). The single difference is that Scholz does not show a market at Wasil but adds one to nearby Mintirib. Thesiger states that Wasil's falaj dried up and its palms all died (1950, p. 152), which is the reason that this shift occurred. Because of this close correlation, it is likely that the discrepancy in Oman Proper is due to the fact that Lorimer and others simply failed to comment on a few markets. If, however, Scholz's markets are newly established since the early twentieth century, the theory still holds. The markets have appeared exactly where one would expect to find them.

Thus, the dichotomy between the coast and the interior can be analyzed through geographic models which explain the location of markets. The coastal Sultanate is an integrated dendritic system with its major orientation toward the international market. The "point of attachment" to this outside market is the system's major ports of Masqat-Matrah. Goods flow through this "point of attachment" to subordinate centers spread along the coast. These are
located at routes into the interior, and their trade is along these routes.

The interior Imamate, on the other hand, is distinguished by a number of local marketing mini-systems which have not integrated into a single wider system. These have not developed because of any connection to foreign trade. Rather, they serve to facilitate interaction across local boundaries of various sorts. Larger inland markets may occur on the boundary of mountain and foothill regions. These larger markets also nearly all occur on the boundary between the two traditional political factions in the tribal interior. Finally, many of the smaller inland markets are found in the areas where settled agriculturalists meet nomadic Bedouin.
Spatial organization of marketing is only one manifestation of the differing socio-economic structures in the Omani interior and on the coast. Some of the other factors, such as the ethnic composition of towns in the two areas, have been touched upon in Chapter 4. Other factors which must be explored are the nature of commerce within individual market towns, and the nature of each market town's relationship with its hinterland. Particular structures appropriate to one system do not necessarily hold for the other, and in fact they are more likely to differ. In the coastal system of Oman, all of these various factors are aspects of an economic form called rent capitalism.

The theory of Rentenkapitalismus has been developed by German geographers over the last several decades (e.g., Bobek 1938, 1959, 1974, 1979; Ehlers 1975a, 1976, 1979; Wirth 1973), and the concept is seen as a sort of missing link between feudal economic organization and industrial capitalism. Some proponents of the theory (Bobek 1959) claim nearly world-wide applicability and see rent capitalism in nearly every country where industrial capitalism has not yet developed. In practice, however, the theory was evolved primarily to explain the situation of Islamic cities, and nearly
every discussion has focused on the Middle East. Analyses of the relationship between Middle Eastern cities and their hinterlands reveal that in most cases the ties were not strictly feudal, which was seen as agrarian production organized and controlled by the rulers (Bobek 1959, pp. 274-79). On the other hand, traditional Middle Eastern cities were clearly not characterized by industrial capitalism.

Rent capitalism, the stage between, is a system in which commercial pursuits predominate. Accumulation of capital is the primary goal, but this capital is put to personal use, and not reinvested in improving production. One of the major characteristics of this stage of economic development is the splitting and commercialization of the various activities and inputs involved in production. Each production factor is treated as a good which can be owned, exchanged, sold, or rented separately. They are put on the market and manipulated to accumulate wealth. For example, in agriculture the basic production factors are land, water, seed, animal power, and labor. The party owning and contributing each factor theoretically receives 20 percent of the harvest. A landlord owning and contributing all but labor would receive 80 percent. The result is a flow of wealth into the city from rural areas, since landlords live in the cities.

Key factors in rent capitalism are bazaars and merchants and traders. Ehlers (1975a, p. 47) argues that ties to the town through these institutions and people are actually more important than the
surplus flows to the landlords. Farmers are chronically short of food and cash in the season just before the harvest. The stored crops or money from sale of the previous harvest has run out, and the farmer must turn to the merchant in the bazaar for credit. Credit is granted on the basis of the prevailing prices, which are high because of widespread shortages. Repayment is taken on the basis of prevailing prices at the time of repayment. Since this is just after harvest, prices are low and a substantial proportion of the crop goes to the merchant, leaving the farmer a little shorter for the coming year. The cycle continues until the farmer is deeply indebted and totally dependent on the merchant. Those who have land eventually lose it as debt payments.

This kind of system gives the city a parasitic role, in which the city takes surplus production from its hinterland without returning anything. Wirth (1973) argues, however, that the heavily parasitic characteristics of rent capitalism are actually only a late development. Cities are not only consumers, but usually did provide much to their hinterlands in return. The organization of cottage industry is by city capitalists, who provide raw materials and equipment for production. Even in agriculture, it is the city capitalists who initiate reclaiming of land, invest in irrigation systems, provide new trees for orchard plantings, and many similar services. The parasitic aspect became dominant only when the western industrial economy began to intrude into areas of rent capitalistic economy. The influx of cheap manufactured goods so
depressed wages in the traditional cottage industries that farmers no longer had the supplemental income they needed to maintain a viable farm. This is when the cycle of indebtedness became particularly serious.

Oman by the latter part of the nineteenth century had entered this late phase of rent capitalism. The country had entered a severe economic depression, the causes of which have been noted in Chapter 2. The factor pertinent to the discussion of rent capitalism in Oman is the fact that the handicraft industry in the country was depressed. Landen (1967, pp. 144-45) notes that although Oman had never been an important center of manufacturing, many handicraft industries in the country were of local importance. He states that "the vitality of many of these enterprises was destroyed after cheap Western manufactures invaded the local market during the nineteenth century," and notes that "by the end of the century [Western manufactures] had captured much of the local market" (p. 145).

Landen cites the cotton fabric industry as one of his examples, and figures from the Maskat Political Agency certainly support the contention (Table 5.1). Masqat was exporting M.T. $150,000 worth of cotton fabrics per year in 1876. These were not transit shipments, because only M.T. $19,000 worth of cotton cloth was imported in fiscal year 1876-77 (Government of India, Foreign Dept. 1877). Cotton fabrics made up around 13-15 percent of total exports. The political agent stationed at Masqat in 1901 noted that
### Table 5.1. Cotton Fabric Exports.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Value of Cotton Fabric Exports (M.T. $)</th>
<th>Value of Total Exports (M.T. $)</th>
<th>Source of Figures</th>
<th>Cotton Fabric as % of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1875-76</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>1,032,450</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876-77</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>1,161,750</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-01</td>
<td>4,640&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1,359,893</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-02</td>
<td>4,400&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1,641,076</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902-03</td>
<td>700&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2,506,515</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903-04</td>
<td>500&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2,509,840</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>. These figures are for cotton fabric and raw cotton combined.

**Sources:**
"there was formerly a brisk trade with Zanzibar in a certain line of piece-goods embroidered in Maskat, and popular in Zanzibar. This class of goods is said to have now gone out of fashion, having been ousted by a cheaper article manufactured in Europe" (Government of India, Foreign Dept. 1901, p.85). Table 5.1 shows that this observation was part of a broad trend, and that by the first years of the twentieth century Masqat was exporting hardly any cotton fabric.

According to Landen, the depression strengthened the position of the Indian merchants in Oman (1967, pp. 133-43). The Indians had the most extensive contacts with merchants in India, which was Oman's major trade partner. Western economic influence largely entered Oman via India, and the Indians in Oman were in a position to act as brokers for the new interests. However, regardless of the extent to which Indians strengthened their economic dominance, the predominance of foreigners was inherent in the Omani situation anyway.

The economic form in coastal Oman was rent capitalism, in which merchants play a major, if not the major, role. The spatial organization of coastal Oman was that of a dendritic system. In it foreign trade, and the merchants who carry on foreign trade, are the deciding factor. "One expects a sharp, perhaps ethnic break and rigid class distinctions between rural and urban classes and between economic middlemen and the major merchants, their economic positions
related to the spatial positions within the system" (Smith 1975, p. 100 [my emphasis]).

As already noted, foreign populations are a major component in coastal towns. In Masqat the majority of the population is non-Arab and the Arab population is quite small (Jayakar 1877, pp. 102-03; Lorimer 1915, p. 1185; Eccles 1927, p. 21). There is disagreement over whether there are more Africans or Baluchis in Masqat (Jayakar 1877, pp. 101-02; Eccles 1927, p. 21 respectively). Lorimer notes that "Baluchis appear to be numerically the strongest element; next to Baluchis are probably negroes and half-caste Arabs . . ." (1908, p. 1185). However, while a few Baluchis are petty traders (Lorimer 1908, p. 1185), most trade at all levels is in the hands of other smaller foreign groups. Persians are primarily "shopkeepers, fishmongers, and makers of quilts and bedding" (Lorimer 1908, p. 1185; compare Bent 1895a, p. 112 and Wellsted 1978, p. 17).

The majority of trade, however, is controlled by Indians, in Masqat's case, Hindus. The Hindus control trade in food (Cox 1925, p. 196), particularly the grain market and grain imports from India (Wellsted 1978, p. 21; Lorimer 1908, p. 1185). They also control imports of coffee (Wellsted 1978, p. 24; Lorimer 1908, p. 1185), sugar (Lorimer 1915, p. 1185), and exports of dates (Lorimer 1908, p. 1185) and dried fish (Ruschenberger 1838, p. 75). Hindus monopolize the pearl trade (Wellsted 1978, p. 21) and the import of
Indian cloth and piece goods (Wellsted 1978, p. 21; Lorimer 1908, p. 1185).

According to the rent capitalistic system, the merchants of the bazaar should also be involved in a great number of activities besides trade. The bazaar functions as a financial and credit center, and place of handicrafts and manufacturing. Merchants also tend to be the major landlords so that the bazaar is the center from which investment in the agricultural sector comes (Wirth 1974-1975, pp. 214-18). All these aspects certainly apply to Masqat. The Hindus control commerce not only through trade, "but by their operations as bankers, brokers, and moneylenders . . ." (Miles 1966, p. 468; cf. also Pengelley 1861, p. 33). They have also moved into shipping and own most of the large dhows (Bent 1895b, p. 874) and the insurance companies which cover ships and cargoes (Ruschenberger 1838, p. 83). In addition,

land holdings were closely linked with the banking functions of the Banian community as many lands transfers were the result of mortgage foreclosures. Land, houses and date palms were about the only collateral that the local population had to offer in return for a loan that would tide them over to the next date harvest. The level of indebtedness was high and foreclosures a regular occurrence (Allen 1981, p. 47).

Hindus may have become landlords through investment of bazaar profits in real estate and water supply, but they had by no means gained controlling interest in the agricultural areas of the coastal system. The royal family is the largest land holder. However, regardless of who the owners are, Masqat's ties to the
hinterland are rent capitalistic, and throughout areas tied to the coastal system, property is owned by landlords resident in Masqat. For example, a joint stock company which included the Sultan's wazir and several Indian merchants purchased a spring from Arab owners at Birain, just inland from Matrah. The company already owned land at the village, and invested in construction of a falaj to improve productivity (Miles 1896, p. 523; Lorimer 1908, p. 17).

Landlords may even invest in founding new villages; at Hail al-Ghaf inland of Qurayt a wali of Masqat purchased land from tribesmen and financed the new village. It eventually became an exporter of fruits and vegetables to Masqat and other markets (Miles 1896, p. 534; Lorimer 1908, p. 603). Similarly, the village of al-Hajar in Masqat district was founded by a landlord, who purchased a spring from tribesmen and financed construction of a falaj. Miles visited the village a few years after its founding, and found that it had become "fairly profitable to its enterprising founder" (1896, p. 536). Figure 5.1 shows the extent of holdings throughout Oman which can be documented as belonging to landlords resident in Masqat. All of these holdings are held by Hindus, Khojas, officials in the Sultan's government, or the royal family. They consist primarily of date groves, gardens, water sources, and in some cases entire villages (Lorimer 1908, pp. 17, 322-23, 550, 603, 714, 716, 1034, 1191-94, 1372, 1424, 1663, 1836-37; Miles 1896, pp. 523, 534, 536; Thomas 1931, p. 127).
Cities (cf. Figure 2.1 for key)
△ Property Owned by Masqat Landlords

Figure 5.1. Rent Capitalistic Ties to Masqat at the Turn of the Century.
Matrah's social composition is similar to, although not exactly like, Masqat's. About half of the population is Baluchi, the African element is relatively small, and Arabs make up a more substantial proportion of the inhabitants. A few Persians reside in Matrah, as well as Khojas and Hindus. However, while there are only a few Khojas in Masqat and many Hindus, in Matrah the reverse is true. The Khojas are numerous enough to inhabit an entire large walled quarter in the center of town. Trade is concentrated in the hands of these Indians as at Masqat (Lorimer 1908, pp. 1197-1200; Miles 1966, p. 461). The monopoly is all the greater because there are no royal family or administration officials to provide competition.

Following Smith's contention that in dendritic systems there may be sharp, perhaps ethnic distinctions between groups in various economic positions within the system (1975, p. 100), one might wonder if the different composition of merchants in Matrah indicates different economic functions. This question is part of the wider problem of why the two largest bazaars in Oman are right next to each other. In fact, they are very different in function. Masqat is the import-export port, and "nearly the whole of the commerce of Oman passes through the hands of the merchants at Maskat . . ." (Wellsted 1978, pp. 317-18). Matrah, however, is "much frequented by the Imam's [the Sultan's] vessels, but seldom by those of others" (Wellsted 1978, p. 32). Bent calls Matrah the "trading center" of Masqat (1895b, p. 875), and Cox calls it the "commercial port" of
Masqat (1925, p. 197). Both are obviously referring to domestic trade.

Landen has already noted (without any theoretical framework) the separate complementary functions of these two cities (1967, pp. 141-42). Import-export is centered at Masqat and dominated by Hindus, while domestic trade centers on Matrah and is dominated by Khojas. Polanyi argues that foreign trade and domestic marketing are two entirely separate concepts, and that many societies organize them separately (1975, pp. 152-54). Foreign traders may be "strictly enjoined to make use of the services of a broker in order to prevent the fusing of bazaar trade [domestic market] and foreign trade into anything in the nature of general marketing" (p. 153). Arnold (1957a) analyzes an actual case of such functional separation in eighteenth century Dahomey, and concludes that the effective purpose for the separation was to insulate the native population from contact with foreigners.

Dendritic systems are almost always associated with traditional agricultural societies which have been penetrated by the international market (cf. examples cited by Smith 1974, p. 179). The separation of function Polanyi argues for, and the distinctions in social and ethnic composition that Smith expects, serve as in Dahomey to insulate the traditional society from the differing values of international commerce. In Oman, a series of these buffers smooth the transition between the mercantile Indian Ocean economy and the subsistence agricultural economy inland. The
physical separation of Masqat and Matrah and the corresponding social separation between Hindu and Khoja is only one level of these buffers. Neither Hindus nor Khojas generally venture inland (Miles 1896, p. 528); instead, brokers or agents are engaged. In some cases these petty traders are Baluchis (Miles 1896, p. 528), who are, the foreign group most integrated into Omani society. In most cases, however, the agents are Arabs (Landen 1967, p. 142).

On a purely local level, provision markets held just outside the walls of large cities can be conceived of as a form of buffer. These "suburb bazaars" (Vorstadtbazare) function as a place for local exchange between the city and its immediate agricultural hinterland. Such markets are held near the city gate on the road leading to the local agricultural areas (Wirth 1974-75, pp. 259-60). Masqat has one of these suburb bazaars just outside one of its gates on the road leading to local agricultural villages. It does not serve as a collecting point of goods destined for export, nor as a point of dispersal for goods to the interior (Lorimer 1908, p. 1181; Cox 1925, p. 196; Bent 1895b, p. 878).

On a wider level, the hierarchy of markets itself in the coastal system also serves as a buffer. The farther removed from Masqat-Matrah, the less contact with the international network there is. The subordinate coastal ports all have small populations of Hindus and/or Khojas, as well as Baluchis and Persians (Lorimer 1908, pp. 266, 1002, 1034, 1109, 1179, 1424-25, 1567-68, 1645-46, 1811-12, 1824, 1838-40, 1851). The Indians are traders and
merchants in the ports as they are in Masqat-Matrah. However, only a few act independently, notably at Sohar (Lorimer 1908, p. 1839). In general they are members of firms headquartered in Masqat-Matrah (Lorimer 1908, p. 1839; Landen 1967, p. 141) and do not deal directly with the international network.

Sohar is the only port which requires particular comment, since Wellsted ranked it next to Masqat in importance in the first half of the nineteenth century (1978, p. 229; compare Eccles 1927, p. 22). By the end of the century, Miles still singled out Sohar for comment, but noted that it had sunk almost to the level of the other Batinah ports (1966, p. 455). Sohar's prominence is due partially to residual historical greatness. It was the major Persian port in the country around the time of the rise of Islam, and it became the major Omani port again in the tenth century (cf. Chapter 6). However, Sohar also partially fulfills the functions of contact with areas outside the coastal system, as reference to Figure 4.3 will show.

In the inland markets associated with the coastal system, there is no hint of Indians, and only very slight influence by Africans or Persians (Lorimer 1908, pp. 186, 1360, 1503, 1663; Miles 1901, pp. 471, 473-74, 495; Miles 1910, p. 422). Rent capitalistic forms have penetrated to some extent (cf. Figure 5.1); landlords in Rustaq own 15 villages in the area (Miles 1910, p. 422), and the Sultan in Masqat owns land and date groves in Nakhil and Hisn Sama'il (Lorimer 1908, pp. 1360, 1663 respectively). In keeping with most
examples of the dendritic system, in which the international network extracts primary goods from an agricultural society (Smith 1974, p. 179), this area of Oman sends produce to Masqat-Matrah for export. Dates are the major commodity, coming, for example, from Awabi and Hisn Sama'il. Pomegranates are shipped from areas in Jabal Akhdhar to Masqat for export (Miles 1901, pp. 474, 495, 481 respectively).

This examination of the internal structure and functioning of coastal Oman now allows a more precise representation of the spatial organization discussed in Chapter 4. Figure 5.2 is a schematic representation of the markets and trade patterns mapped in Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. Masqat is the "point of attachment" to the international network. Matrah is complementary to Masqat, not duplicative; it organizes domestic trade. Coastal ports are subordinate to Masqat-Matrah and are entry or exit points inland. Several of these ports in turn have subordinate markets where population concentrations will support additional markets. These may be inland, or on the coast if the area is not of sufficient importance to rank with the majority of Batinah ports. Sohar functions as a contact point with outside systems for certain areas which are much closer to it than to Masqat-Matrah. Finally, two inland markets seem to have small dependent markets. It should be noted that some links bypass intermediate levels and go directly to higher order centers. Ehlers (1975a) and Bonine (1979; 1980b, Ch. 5) have shown that this is fairly common in the case of Iran, and in
Figure 5.2. Schematic Representation of the Coastal System.

Note: Symbols correspond to bazaar size as in Fig. 4.1.
fact is quite consistent with the ideas of urban dominance in rent capitalism.

It is nearly impossible to portray interior Oman with this kind of formalized structure, because the interior is not an integrated system. Nearly every other aspect of the interior stands in sharp contrast to the coast as well, from the form of land and water tenure to the nature of the interior's "port" at Sur. On the surface, it might seem that Sur serves the functions seen at Masqat and/or Matrah. Sur is the second largest town in Oman after Matrah (Lorimer 1908, p. 1847). It is the port for all of eastern Oman (Miles 1966, p. 475), especially Sharqiyah and Ja'alan (Lorimer 1908, p. 1849). After Masqat-Matrah and Sohar, it is the most flourishing port in the country, and customs revenues could potentially be as great as Masqat's (Eccles 1927, p. 22). There are a handful of Hindu traders residing in the town (Lorimer 1908, p. 1849).

However, despite these surface similarities, Sur does not occupy a position similar to Masqat-Matrah in any larger system. Even its physical structure is different. Masqat and Matrah are both well-defined walled urban conglomerations (cf. the map of Masqat and Matrah in Stiffe 1897, p. 660). Sur is actually a dispersed settlement consisting of a number of tribal quarters. The bazaar is in a separate quarter, a mile and a half away from the main ones (Lorimer 1908, p. 1848; Wellsted 1978, pp. 42-43). As already noted in Chapter 4, Sur's hinterland trade is "trifling" and
the town's merchants live almost entirely off of their role as middlemen in the Indian Ocean trade (Wellsted 1978, p. 44). Sur thus plays a role similar to Masqat as a transit port, but it is not very involved in import-export and has no need of a settlement like Matrah to organize its nearly non-existent hinterland trade.

The Sultan has nominal control over Sur, and "the Wali is appointed from Musqat, but has little jurisdiction, and this is mainly exercised by the Temeemeh of the Beni Bu Ali and Jenebeh tribes, who alone have authority over their people and are responsible for keeping order" (Miles 1966, p. 476). In the context of the Indian Ocean network, then, Sur is simply a "smugglers" port for those middlemen who needed a centrally located home port but wished to avoid the Sultan's customs duties. On a theoretical level, it is similar to a port of trade. These are neutral meeting grounds, usually under weak political authority, and having very little hinterland. Their purpose is to facilitate trade between larger entities in an international trade network (Revere 1957; Arnold 1957b).

The interior is not part of a wider "Sur system"; in fact it is not a single system at all but a series of small mostly local markets. In the context of Bobek's stages of economic development, the interior falls into the tribal peasantry stage (Bobek 1959, pp. 267-74). This kind of society is based upon kinship ties, and there is no formal structure of authority. Leadership is based upon individual charisma and the willingness of others to follow, which
makes wide political coherence minimal. Justice in such a society depends upon concepts of reciprocity and retaliation. This situation gives rise to a deep-rooted system of two concurrent parties, the moieties of Patai (1962, Ch. 7) mentioned in Chapter 4.

There is little specialization by individuals, but there may be specialization by region or by tribe. Nomadism, for example, is a specialized offshoot of tribal agricultural societies. Local trade may develop for exchange between these specialized regions or tribes, and there may be a small amount of trade outside local areas. Land tenure forms are based upon tribal ownership, with fairly equal usefruct rights for individuals.

There is hardly a need to demonstrate the tribal nature of Omani society outside the cosmopolitan towns of the coast; it has been amply discussed many times (e.g., Wilkinson 1977, Ch. 10 and passim). A few characteristics are simply reviewed here to show concurrence with Bobek's general stage. "Tribal organization is loose and haphazard. Some of the tribes are scattered territorially and have no local center; while others, though their domains are compact, are broken up into sections headed by chiefs who acknowledge no common authority" (Lorimer 1908, p. 1390). Lorimer goes on to describe the political division of the country into the two moieties, Hinawi and Ghafiri (1908, pp. 1389, 1391-1410; cf. also Ross 1873). The influence of this division on Omani history has been examined often (e.g., Kelley 1972).
Economic specialization in the form of nomadism is noted by Lorimer (1908, pp. 1389-90, passim), and by modern studies on Bedouin (Scholz 1976; Scholz 1977a; Cordes and Scholz 1980; Dostal 1968) and Shawawi (Birks 1976). Economic specialization of other kinds also exists; for example, the Awamir tribe of Oman Proper specialize in falaj work (Birks and Letts 1976). In addition, some of the towns have developed specializations. Maqniyat, in the mountains between Dhahirah, Oman Proper, and Western Hajar, is a center of camel and donkey transport (Lorimer 1908, pp. 1168, 1412), and Nizwa is a center of copperware and imports copper metal from India for its industry (Wellsted 1978, p. 177; Cole 1847, p. 115).

Land and water tenure is highly egalitarian. Islamic inheritance laws and Ibadhi principles are strictly followed, and greatly reinforce tribal tendencies. These all work against any capitalist or feudal form of tenure, and encourage small holdings (Wilkinson 1977, p. 212). Wilkinson stresses that capitalist tenure is introduced from time to time, but during any kind of upheaval tribesmen destroy the manifestations of the system, such as privately owned mills or factories, and the land and water rights revert to small holdings (1977, p. 211). His examination of privately held water rights in early nineteenth century Izki showed that virtually all of the over 300 water shares were owned by villagers themselves. The benefits of Izki's falaj were confined to Izki itself, and were very well distributed among the inhabitants (1977, pp. 214-15). Miles says that in the interior "the
construction of these underground watercourses is generally undertaken by the tribal communities in each town or village on a sort of joint-stock basis, each individual contributing his quota in money or in personal labour" (1901, p. 488). These observations are later backed up by Skeet (1974, p. 119).

Tribalism was reinforced by the nature of the natural environment and the intricacies of falaj organization, with the result being a tendency toward small, nucleated, self-contained settlements. Few of these developed any marketing structure beyond the local markets (Wilkinson 1977, p. 92; Ch. 5). Despite documenting some trade to the interior (cf. Chapter 4 and Figure 4.3), Lorimer asserts that "the trade of 'Oman [the interior] is limited, not so much by insecurity, bad communications and the difficulty of recovering debts in the interior, though these are not without their effect, as by the natural poverty of the country and the limited purchasing power of the inhabitants" (1908, p. 1414).

All of the markets in the interior at least partially serve the Bedouin population. The smaller markets are primarily places where Bedouin can sell animals and animal products and buy provisions. The best available descriptions of one of these Bedouin markets concern Baraimi, which is just outside the limits of Oman as defined in this study. "Baraimi boasts no bazaar properly so called; local trade is done almost entirely by barter at an open air market..." (Cox 1925, p. 207); and "there being no banians or other regular traders, there is no general bazar at Bereymi, but
every afternoon a market is held where the Bedouins assemble with their produce and animals for sale or barter with those who can supply their wants" (Miles 1877, p. 54).

Dhank in the Dhahirah is another of these open air markets with no shops (Cox 1925, p. 209); Adam in Oman Proper is "a convenient market for the Beduin to resort to for provisions and other necessaries" (Miles 1910, p. 168); and the description of goods sold at Bilad bani bu Hasan lists mostly provisions (Ward et al. 1847, p. 104). In addition, a Bedouin market is often held at the bazaar of the larger towns; for example, the Bedouin sell camels at Ibra and visit that market regularly (Miles 1910, pp. 414, 416).

Scholz' work on the Bedouin of Oman (1976; 1977a) includes data on markets. His discussion verifies the location and number of markets in all interior districts except Oman Proper, where several more were found than were mentioned by Lorimer and other travelers (cf. Figure 4.8). There seem to be various schedules for the markets, which does not affect the function as a Bedouin provision center. For example, the three markets in Ja'al an are all weekly (1977a, p. 121), as are Sanau and Mudhaibi in Oman Proper (p. 126). The larger markets in Oman Proper (Samad, Izkì, and Nizwa; Bahlah was not within the research area) are daily fixed markets (p. 126) which seem to be oriented toward the Hadhr rather than the Bedouin. All the markets of Sharqiyyah are also daily, and Scholz notes that no itinerant traders are found in that district (pp. 113, 121).
The smaller markets on the fringes of the settled areas are primarily oriented toward Bedouin-Hadhr exchange. The Bedouin trade not only products derived from their herds, but also dried fish. A portion of the Bedouin tribes of Oman Proper, Sharqiyah, and Ja'alân fish along the coast south of Ra's al-Hadd and transport the fish to markets in these districts. Larger markets may not be oriented toward Bedouin, but the Bedouin frequent them also to trade their fish and animal products. Tribes do not seem to be tied to any particular market, but visit many over a vast area. The Wahiba, whose territory extends from the coast around Masirah Island to Adam (cf. map in Scholz 1977a, p. 102) sell dried fish in the weekly markets at Sanau and Mudhaibi. They also sell at larger markets such as Samad, Ibra, Izki, and Nizwa (Scholz 1977a, p. 126). The Duru, in the desert areas of Dhahirah, use markets as far apart as Dhank and Ibri in Dhahirah and Nizwa in Oman Proper (Scholz 1976, p. 94).

If the smaller markets are oriented toward exchanging the produce of the Hadhr for the fish and animal products of the Bedouin, bazaars of the interior have wider functions. Most are local centers of industry. The bazaar at Ibri "contained shops and booths of every description, and presented a very lively appearance, all the artisans being evidently in full employment, the town comprising considerable indigenous industries and productions" (Miles 1910, p. 414). Manufacture of indigo dye and dying are specialties of Ibri (Cox 1925, p. 211; Lorimer 1908, p. 758). Bahlah
specializes in the manufacture of cotton and goats hair garments (Miles 1910, p. 173; Lorimer 1908, p. 209) and Nizwa in copper ware (Miles 1910, p. 177; Cole 1847, p. 115). The major industry at Ibra is weaving cotton and silk, which is imported from India (Lorimer 1908, p. 757).

The markets of the interior do not seem to be part of any wider integrated market structure (cf. Figure 4.3), which is in keeping with the very loose political structure. Scholz describes a kind of city-state organization in the interior in which the main settlement with its market and its hinterland are essentially self-contained (1976, p. 84). Even within districts, there is little apparent integration of the Bedouin-Hadhr produce and provision markets with the town bazaars, beyond the fact that some of these markets may be held in towns. As already noted in the case of Masqat, this kind of market serves different functions than the bazaar, even though often they may be held in the proximity of the bazaar (cf. Wirth 1974-1975, pp. 259-60). Such independence of the rural produce market network from the system of urban bazaars is also evident in other tribal societies of the Middle East, for example, in Morocco (Schmitz 1973) and Yemen (Niewöhner-Eberhard 1976).

The Bedouin markets of interior Oman are an example of an "extended network system" in Smith's terminology (1976a, pp. 314-23; 1976b, pp. 39-43). Such systems are characteristic of "independent 'tribal' societies" (1976a, p. 317) which are corporate and
egalitarian in nature (1976a, p. 368). The markets in an extended network system are quite often periodic rather than daily, and all markets in the network are roughly equivalent. Individuals or groups may visit a number of them. "No broader economic system is formed by the links of the network because no nodes become differentiated or hierarchically dominant, and therefore no higher level integration is attained" (Smith 1976a, p. 317).

Extended network systems may have ties with other systems; Smith cites the example of the Tiv in Nigeria. Certain Tiv markets serve as bulking centers to feed agricultural goods into the other (dendritic) Nigerian system (1976b, pp. 42-43). This is the case in the Yemen study, where one market in the tribal network is held in the town of Sa'da in conjunction with the bazaar (Niewöhner-Eberhard 1976). This allows goods from the hierarchically organized urban network, of which Sa'da is a lower order member, to enter the tribal system. At the same time, produce and animal products of the tribal system can enter the urban network. In Oman the markets held in the towns with bazaars serve the same function, but each town is its own small urban "system" without being integrated into a wider network.
The dichotomy evident between coastal and interior Oman in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is by no means of recent origin. This separation into two vastly differing entities with separate forms of social, political, and economic organization has been a constant theme in Omani history at least since the rise of Islam nearly 1,400 years ago. Some of the factors which have helped form this dual nature can be traced back even into remote pre-Islamic times. But the basic patterns of Omani duality are largely the result of the interaction of only a few important factors during the period when Islam was rising to prominence in the world. Islam became the force shaping this interaction.

Certain basic configurations were already being formed in the decades immediately before Islam came on the scene. Oman at that time was under the rule of the Sassanians. To this period of Persian control, and to an earlier period of Achemenid Persian occupation, Oman owes its vast system of underground conduits, qanats (Wilkinson 1977, Ch. 6). The Achemenids developed a network of qanats along the western bajada zone of the mountains. This development of Oman's water resources continued into Parthian times. The Parthians eventually lost control, and at about the same time,
Arab tribes began migrating into the area west of the mountains (Wilkinson 1973, p. 43; 1977, pp. 126-30). However, Persian control was reestablished over Oman quite early in the Sassanian period. By this time, the Persians had made major advances in qanat technology, and were now able to develop the water resources of the eastern valleys of the mountains, as well as bring down important water supplements to the Batinah coast (Wilkinson 1973, p. 43; 1977, pp. 130-33). It is this ancient irrigation system, then, which has been one major factor in determining settlement patterns of interior Oman even into modern times, and has remained of critical importance in agriculture up until the present (cf., e.g., Nyrop et al. 1977, pp. 370-73).

Oman's role in the Indian Ocean trade network was also already well established before the rise of Islam. The Sassanians had wide ranging commercial interests in the Indian Ocean area (Whitehouse and Williamson 1973; Hourani 1963, p. 43 ff; Wilkinson 1973, p. 42), including, of course, on the coast of Arabia. In Oman these interests took the form both of suzerainty over some of the Omani Arab controlled ports, and of direct occupation of other ports. Inland, the situation was similar. Some parts were settled by Persians, but other parts of interior Oman, those with large Arab populations, enjoyed relative autonomy. These Arabs had a trading port at Dibah (Wilkinson 1975, p. 98), and were able to develop their maritime interests around the entrance of the Gulf (Wilkinson 1972, pp. 73-74). The major Omani trading center, however, was
Sohar (Williamson 1974, p. 78), and this port the Sassanians controlled directly. It was the seat of the Persian governor of Mazun (Oman), and the site of the main Persian garrison (Wilkinson 1975, p. 99; Williamson 1974, p. 84).

Persian interest in settling Oman's coast and interior was directly related to their maritime trade interests (Wilkinson 1973, p. 41; 1977, p. 132). Their inland capital, Rustaq, was chosen for its easy access to the commercial, administrative, and military center at Sohar. It was around Rustaq that the major new land development in the interior was carried out (Wilkinson 1975, p. 99). Persians were settled in villages and towns, supported by the qanat building program, both here and along the coast, and administered by the same feudal system current in Iran at the time (Wilkinson 1973, p. 44 ff; 1977, p. 131 ff). This trade oriented coast, with its extensions inland, is a second major factor in Omani history, one which has also persisted into modern times.

The coastal organization established by the Persians was the forerunner of the coastal mercantile system analyzed in Chapters 4 and 5. In keeping with Vance's mercantile model and Smith's observation that these systems "seem to occur mainly in colonial or recently colonial societies where marketing is not only imposed by conquest, but imposed by an outside group involved in the international market and import-export trade" (1974, p. 178), the major center at Sohar was oriented primarily toward the external system, and expansion proceeded linearly into the interior, where a
secondary center was established at Rustaq. To quote Wilkinson on the Persians in Oman: "And it was in association with this maritime interest that the major colonization of the Batina littoral strip and of its mountainous hinterland came about" (1977, p. 132). Sohar, then, was the primary Persian "point of attachment" between Oman and the international network. From Sohar, settlement proceeded inland, to the secondary center at Rustaq, and then from Rustaq to smaller centers and rural areas.

We have then, very early in Oman's history, a mercantile system penetrating into the interior. Why, after over 1,500 years, is Oman not economically, socially, and culturally a united country? To begin to answer this, it is necessary to return again to the early periods just before the rise of Islam. According to Omani tradition, Arab migrations from the Yemen began around the end of the first century A.D., at which time the Arabs were able to defeat the Parthians and settle in Oman (Phillips 1967, p. 56). This first wave of Arabs apparently came into Oman along the southern coast and ended up in the desert fringe areas west of the mountains (Wilkinson 1972, pp. 71-73). A second wave soon began arriving in Oman via a northerly route through the oasis of Buraimi. Rather than competing with the first wave of immigrants, this new influx tended to move into the foothills and mountains on the western side (Wilkinson 1975, p. 98). Eventually they were able to penetrate into the heart of the Persian area, and the Persians found it necessary to come to some kind of formal understanding with them. In return for peaceful
relations, the Persians recognized as king of the Arabs the shaykh of the leading tribe which was now in their territory. The new "king," since he was nominally a Persian subject, gained Persian support in persuading the other tribes to recognize him. The title of this Arab leader was Julanda (Wilkinson 1973, pp. 41, 44 ff).

The majority of these Arabs remained nomads, but a good many began to settle in the Persian villages and towns. A few of these took up cultivation, but more often they became fishers, sailors, or minor traders in the coastal areas. Of course, those who settled in directly administered areas came under direct Persian rule, but the basic pattern of settlement and infiltration into the local economy was similar whether in directly ruled Persian areas or not (Wilkinson 1973, pp. 45-47). The important point about this process is that Arabs settling in the coastal areas tended to lose their tribal identity and ethnic purity (Wilkinson 1973, p. 41). In other words, they were being assimilated into the coastal system. The Arabs of the interior were not yet settling in any great numbers. Rather, they remained separate from the sedentary Persians, and retained tribal organization. Also, they were becoming a factor to be reckoned with (Wilkinson 1973, p. 45 ff). Thus by the time Islam was first introduced to Oman, the Arabs were already in the process of slowly becoming masters of the interior, without being assimilated into the existing system.

This great influx of Arabs into Oman, then, is another of the main factors which has shaped Omani history. In particular, it
introduced into the interior peoples not integrated into the Persian settlement system, and not especially interested in it. Even when they later began to settle down, the major considerations became land and water, rather than any connection to the coastal trade system. Oman now had the basic configuration which could cause two separate patterns of socio-economic organization to evolve, and the force which would shape this evolution proved to be the new Arabian religion, Islam.

The coming of Islam finally tipped the scales toward crystallization of this incipient duality in Oman. Thereafter, continued involvement in the affairs of the Islamic world caused these two systems, once crystalized, to evolve separately. In the year 8 AH (630 A.D.), the Prophet sent Amr ibn al-'As to Oman. (Phillips 1967, p. 7, citing al-Baladhuri, ascribes the mission to Abu-Zayd al-Ansari.) The Arab rulers in the interior, the Julanda, immediately accepted Islam (Wilkinson 1975, p. 99; Badger 1871, p. xi; Ross 1874, p. 118).

Aside from their spiritual reasons for embracing this new religion, the Arabs of Oman looked upon its arrival as an opportune time to drive out the Persians. They made the usual call to the governor of Rustaq to convert, and took the Persian inland center when he refused. Sohar was soon besieged also. Eventually the Persians sued for peace and were granted safe conduct to return across the Gulf (Miles 1966, pp. 31, 33 ff; Wilkinson 1975, p. 99; Ross 1874, p. 119).
Upon Muhammad's death, there was a minor revolt, but the local rulers supported the governor sent from Madina in quickly stamping it out (Miles 1966, p. 35 ff; Wilkinson 1975, p. 100). Thus, within a few years after the appearance of Islam, the Omani Arabs had become Muslims, and Oman was now in the hands of these Arabs. But this unification by the interior tribes and the entry of Oman into the Islamic world did not guarantee the end of the outside influences fostering development of the coastal system. The rise of Islam fostered a great increase in the commerce of the Indian Ocean area (Hourani 1963, p. 61), and Omani ports now became an important part of the Islamic world's vast commercial interests.

During the same time that Oman was becoming firmly enmeshed in this trade network, it also came to be heavily influenced by the politics of the Islamic world. Omani merchants became prominent in the ports of southern Iraq, such as Basrah (Wilkinson 1972, p. 74), and became involved in all of the affairs of the time. One of the issues which would have the most effect on Oman was the appearance of the Khawarij. This sect split off from the main body of Islam because of disagreement on the issue of Ali's arbitration of the caliphal office. The Khawarij had originally supported Ali's faction (which later evolved into the Shi'i) against Mu'awiyah's (which evolved into the Sunni). However, when Ali submitted to arbitration of the dispute, the Khawarij took up arms against both factions. They maintained that only God could arbitrate the issue of the Caliphate and that Ali had forfeited his rights by allowing
human arbitration. Their main forces were annihilated shortly afterward by Ali, though a Kharijite terrorist later managed to kill him (Hitti 1970, p. 182). However, after defeat by Ali at the battle of Nahrawan, Khawarij survivors apparently escaped to Oman (Phillips 1967, pp. 8, 20 n. F; Miles 1966, p. 48) and may even have set up a short-lived state there (Wilkinson 1975, p. 100). At any rate, they began spreading Kharijite philosophy in Oman.

This Omani branch of the movement eventually broke off to form its own sect. It took the name Ibadhi after a teacher of the doctrine who rejected some of the more radical political overtones. Extensive discussions of Ibadhi doctrine appear in Lorimer (1915, p. 2373 ff) and Badger (1871, p. 385 ff). The basic doctrinal points which are of interest here include the contention that Islam is not in need of a permanent and visible leader. Rather, such a leader, an Imam, need only hold office when the circumstances require it. In situations when an Imam is required, he must be elected, and may be any qualified Muslim. Any claims to hereditary rule are rejected. Also, all caliphs after Abu Bakr and 'Umar are regarded as usurpers. The movement spread among the interior tribesmen, who were interested in their traditional independence. It also attracted many Omani merchants, who were antagonized by certain restrictions on Oman's trade, first imposed by 'Uthman (Wilkinson 1972, p. 75; 1975, pp. 100-02). Not surprisingly, the spread of such views eventually led Oman into conflict with the Caliphate.
Various Kharijite groups reemerged soon after Ali's victory over them, and seemed to make much headway during the early years of the Umayyad dynasty. The Umayyads were understandably anxious to suppress these sects, and Oman was one area they regarded as needing suppression. Early in the dynasty, al-Hajjaj was able to reconquer Oman for the Umayyads after several attempts. However, he then used Oman as a place of exile for members of the sect from other areas of the empire (Badger 1871, pp. 1-6; Ross 1874, pp. 119-20; Miles 1966, pp.49-50; Wilkinson 1975, p. 101). Umayyad control was never particularly strong, especially in the interior, and this policy only added to the strength and growth of the Ibadhi movement in Oman. As the Umayyad dynasty was collapsing in its final years, Oman was ready for its own independent Ibadhi government.

The movement allied with the traditional elite, the Julanda, and elected a Julanda Imam. Abu al-Abbas as-Saffah, the first Abbasid caliph, soon reconquered Oman and killed the Imam, but Abbasid rule was also very insecure. By the time of Harun ar-Rashid, the Imamate had been restored, and this caliph was unable to retake Oman (Badger 1871, pp. 7-12; Ross 1874, p. 121 ff; Miles 1966, pp. 60 ff, 65 ff; Wilkinson 1975, p. 102). The Imamate government ruled until the end of the ninth century, by which time it was collapsing into civil war (Badger 1871, p. 19 ff; Ross 1874, p.129 ff; Miles 1966, p. 73 ff). In this conflict, one party which was predominantly Sunni appealed to the Abbasid caliph for aid. Mu'tadhid Billah commissioned Muhammad bin Nur, governor of Bahrain,
to conquer Oman. In 893 A.D., with the aid of the dissident Omanis, an Abbasid army was able to defeat the Ibadhis, who were unable to unite sufficiently to offer sustained resistance (Badger 1871, p. 22 ff; Ross 1874, p. 130 ff; Miles 1966, p. 78 ff).

To understand the effect of this conquest on Oman, one needs to examine the development of the dual society during the time of the Imamate. The basic Ibadhi concepts of community organization are discussed in Wilkinson (1977, pp. 137-40), where he shows that Ibadhi governmental structure was actually little more than an extension of traditional tribal organization. The Imamate did not do anything to foster any kind of lasting geographical unity in Oman. Tribes of the interior remained loyal to the Imamate because it was convenient and profitable to do so, especially since their temporary unity enabled them to hold the wealthy commercialized coast. However, the Ibadhi period did see a different kind of unity grow in the interior. This was social unity, as the Arab tribal society and the Persianized village culture began to fuse. As Arab tribesmen began to settle down and adopt a sedentary agricultural way of life, the two peoples became more comprehensible to each other. Ibadhi doctrine, with its stresses on egalitarianism, hastened the process, so that the society of interior Oman became a relatively homogenous, tribal, village culture (Wilkinson 1977, pp. 140-43).

Since it was based primarily on the availability of fertile land in conjunction with sufficient water supply, the settlement
pattern inherited from the Persian period persisted. But it was adapted now to the new conditions of the interior. The tribal, politically fragmented society was oriented toward agricultural self-sufficiency. "Its villages were never really affected by the changing fortunes of maritime trade, and commercial organization in the interior hardly ever rose above the level of the periodic market" (Wilkinson 1977, p. 144). Nor was the interior overly interested in maintaining trade relations with the coast, aside from diverting a little capital inland for purposes of agricultural development (Wilkinson 1977, p. 143 ff). Ibadhi influence "emphasized the dichotomy inherent between coastal and interior Oman and more or less isolated the latter into a self-supporting cultural and political unit" (p. 143). The interior then, by the end of the ninth century had become the isolated, tribal, extended network system described in Chapter 5. Although ruled for a time by the Imamate government, the coast was largely left to pursue its own interests.

Coastal interests continued to be trade. The ninth century was a time of great prosperity for the Omani coast. Sohar remained the major port, and the trade of Sohar and the rest of the coast continued to be based on connections to the Arabian Gulf-Indian Ocean networks, rather than on the meager trade with the interior (Whitcomb 1975, pp. 125-29; Wilkinson 1977, p. 143). Even for everyday needs Sohar did not look to the interior. It apparently got its food crops from its own agricultural hinterland in the area
near the city (Wilkinson, T. J. 1975; Williamson 1974, pp. 85, 90 ff). Sohar did export some resources, such as copper, but even the procurement of this copper did not necessarily entail much direct contact with the interior society. Some copper mines were very near Sohar's hinterland. Even at interior mines, archaeological evidence shows that material goods circulating in Sohar were fairly localized to the mine site only (Whitcomb 1975, pp. 126, 129; Goettler et al. 1976, pp. 44-45, 47). In contrast, these types of material goods, especially pottery, are found in areas of the coastal system even where there are no urban sites (Whitcomb 1975, p. 125). Archaeology thus tends to confirm the existence of the separate coastal and interior systems.

It was under the first period of Imamate government, then, that the evolving pattern of Omani duality was decisively set. Abbasid occupation did not do anything to change the situation. In fact, this occupation made it even less likely that the interior would change its orientation. The occupation troops destroyed irrigation systems in areas they controlled (Ross 1874, p. 132; Miles 1966, p. 88; Wilkinson 1972, p. 80), further depressing a fragmented subsistence economy that was not developing any trade or urban institutions on its own. Population also shifted to areas more defensible and thus outside Abbasid control. This of course means that they were even less accessible from the coast (Wilkinson 1972, p. 81). Conditions reverted to tribal government, and the history of the interior is so obscure for several centuries after
this that Wilkinson classifies the period as the "Dark Ages" of Oman (Wilkinson 1977, p. xiv).

If Oman's collapse into its constituent parts was an inevitable result of Ibadhi philosophies and policies, so too was the Imamate's collapse the inevitable result of its success in unifying interior and coast temporarily. The Ibadhi government had united the interior tribes by virtue of its fundamental Islamic values and egalitarian social policies. The united interior was able to dominate the coastal ports, and while these two areas were merged into one state, the whole country prospered. However, the very prosperity brought by this arrangement was a major factor in the decay of the foundations upon which the Imamate was founded. The Imamate, after all, was nothing more than tribal government extended to cover all Omani tribes. The Imam ruled primarily by force of example. When prosperity came, he and those tribes closer to power began to appropriate greater shares of the incoming wealth. Tribal rivalries flared up anew, and the Imam and Ibadhi institutions no longer seemed to embody tribal values and Islamic virtues. Wilkinson has discussed this sequence, which is cyclical in Omani history, and notes that "only when Oman was unified did this level of economic interchange [between interior and coast] tend to rise; but ... the intrusion of wealth into the interior in the form of capital investment automatically triggered off reaction in the tribal system, so that the new linkages between coast and interior were destroyed" (1977, pp. 143-44). Thus, the Imamate of the
interior collapsed, the coast fell prey to outside invaders, and Oman became an insignificant backwater.

The Abbasid occupation in 893 was not, then, a cause of Oman's splitting into two systems, but a result. However, this and subsequent occupations did cement the split, and Oman was unable to recover for several centuries. Tribesmen had fled from the occupied areas of Western Hajar to more inaccessible areas of the interior. The forms of the Ibadhi Imamate were preserved in these refuges for a time. However, the stability of the Imamate, already endangered by rising rivalries and tribal reaction against the economic consequences of mercantile capitalism, was shattered by the sudden change in fortune. Abbasid occupation lasted for only a few years, but by the time the Qaramitah invaded Oman only thirty years later, there had already been no less than eight Imams elected and deposed (Bathurst 1972, p. 91; Badger 1871, pp. xvii, 25-27 shows only seven Imams; but Ross 1874, pp. 132-33 shows that one was elected and deposed two separate times).

Interior affairs continued in this manner for another century. The country suffered a number of invasions which often reached inland areas. The Imamate continued to be the pawn to tribal politics, and the disunited interior was hard pressed to maintain its own independence, let alone to think of recovering the coast (Wilkinson 1972, pp. 79-80; Badger 1871, pp. xviii-xiv, 28-36; Ross 1874, pp. 134-40). Eventually even the form of Imamate government collapsed, and the interior further split into parts with
varying orientations. By the latter part of the twelfth century, the Nabahani rulers had established a somewhat centralized form of secular rule in central interior Oman, or approximately Oman Proper of Figure 2.1 (Wilkinson 1972, pp. 80-81; 1977, p. xiv; Bathurst 1972, pp. 93-94; Badger 1871, pp. xiv-xxi).

The Ibadhi 'ulama had too little power left to contest Nabahani rule, but by withholding their support, they ensured that these secular rulers were not strong enough to move out of central Oman (Wilkinson 1972, p. 80). The Batinah coast and southeastern Oman (Sharqiyyah and Ja'alan) were thus left to go their own ways for several centuries. Central Oman, cut off from both the Batinah and the southeastern ports, slowly degenerated in its isolation back to a completely tribally-oriented society. Moreover, the nearly complete sedentarization of the tribes by this time translated tribal affairs into concern for purely local matters. Horizons rarely extended beyond the small town which served as tribal headquarters (Wilkinson 1972, pp. 80-82; Whitcomb 1975, pp. 126-28; Badger 1871, pp. xiv-xxi).

Although the commercial coast could maintain a certain level of prosperity under nearly any conditions, regardless of unity with the interior, the series of invasions which continued for several centuries eventually took their toll. Following the 892 Abbasid conquest, the Qaramitah and the Abbasids each invaded Oman several times during the next half century. By shortly after 950 A.D., both of these states were in decline, and neither could interfere in Oman
any longer (Miles 1966, pp. 89-107; Williamson 1974, pp. 93-96; Badger 1871, pp. 27-34; Ross 1874, pp. 133-39). However, outside control of Omani coastal ports did not cease; the Buwaihids simply stepped in where they had forced the Abbasids out (Miles 1966, pp. 107-28; Bathurst 1972, pp. 91-93).

Previous invaders had caused some destruction on the coast, but in general the ports had prospered even under foreign rule (Williamson 1974, pp. 93-96). Sohar, for example, was still the major port, and still very cosmopolitan, reflecting its extensive trade relations. Arabs, Persians, and Jews were heavily involved in commerce. Industry flourished, and such goods as bricks, copper-ware, glass, and iron were all locally produced (Williamson 1974, pp. 87-88). The Abbasids had apparently felt it to be most profitable to integrate the Omani fleet into their own trade. To the Qaramitah, the Omani s were likely the major, if not the only, access to the wealth of this international commerce. The Buwaihids, however, looked upon the Omani fleet as unwanted competition at best, and as a naval threat at worst. They destroyed most Omani ships, and eventually destroyed Sohar as well (Williamson 1974, p. 96). After the Buwaihids, Seljuks and other Ghuzz Turks each held Oman's coast for a time from 1063 onwards, and the Mongols mounted their invasion in 1276 (Miles 1966, pp. 129-35; Serjeant 1973, p. 153; Badger 1871, pp. xx, 37-40; Ross 1874, pp. 140-41).

Omani trade did slowly recover, but Sohar was not able to, and therefore the focus of the trade shifted. Qais had become by
this time the major commercial power in the Gulf, and often controlled parts of the coast (Wilson 1928, pp. 96-100; Yajima 1977, pp. 207-08; Serjeant 1973, pp. 155-56; Bathurst 1972, p. 93). With competition established as nearby as Qais, Sohar was not able to regain the volume of trade it had once had. Its major role had always been as a transit port, although it did serve as an outlet for some Omani products such as copper. In addition to the loss of transit trade, with access to the international markets cut off, the copper mines inland of Sohar ceased production (Goettler et al. 1976, pp. 45-46). The net result of this decline in Sohar's fortunes was even less incentive for coast and interior to maintain ties, and thus even less need to maintain Sohar's position.

The East Africa trade was still booming, and Oman was in a unique position to exploit this commerce. Omanis had been colonizing East Africa for several centuries (Phillips 1967, pp. 24-28; Bathurst 1972, p. 92; Coupland 1938, pp. 21-24). In addition, with the rise of an independent Egypt under the Fatimids, the Red Sea was becoming a major commercial avenue. Much of the India trade could now be diverted in that direction, rather than flowing up the Gulf (Yajima 1977, pp. 197-98). Oman's share of this trade came to be held by Kalhat. This port, situated in easternmost Oman, was in a much better position than Sohar from which to take advantage of the new situation (Bathurst 1972, p. 93; Whitcomb 1975, pp. 126-27).

Hormuz began to rise to power in the Gulf during the thirteenth century. It had been a minor port for some time and had, in
fact, supported its Ghuzz Turk overlords by taking Kalhat in 1243. In 1300 the coastal town of Hormuz was moved to the more secure island, and by about 1350 Hormuz had conquered Qais, Bahrain, and the Omani coast from Ra's al-Hadd to the Musandam Peninsula (Williamson 1972, pp. 57-59; Miles 1966, pp. 134-36; Wilson 1928, pp. 100-09; Serjeant 1963, p. 17; Badger 1871, pp. 37-39; Ross 1874, pp. 140-41). With trade routes secure under a single power, coastal Oman, and particularly Kalhat, prospered under the new rulers (Wilkinson 1972, p. 81; Badger 1871, pp. 37-38 n. 2). However, the interior was as isolated from this trade network as ever, and less able than ever to worry about coastal affairs. In 1406 the Imamate had been restored, and the struggle was growing between Imamate and secular Nabahani government (Wilkinson 1972, p. 82; Bathurst 1972, pp. 93-94; Badger 1871, pp. xx-xxi, 48-52; Ross 1874, pp. 140-43).

Upon the arrival of the first Europeans, then, Oman's dual organization was already centuries old. The trade oriented coast was prospering under the suzerainty of the paramount commercial power in the Arabian Gulf. Economically it was enmeshed in the international trade network focused on the Indian Ocean. The cosmopolitan character of the ports had been long established, from the Persian and Jewish merchants of tenth century Sohar (Williamson 1974, pp. 87-88) to the Hindu merchants who began to gain prominence in Kalhat by the end of the fifteenth century (Allen 1981, p. 39). Contact with the interior was minimal. Dealing with the unruly tribes there required more effort than was justified by the
resources available in the interior. Interior Oman, for its part, may have been interested in the coast, and the Nabahani held coastal areas briefly from time to time (Miles 1966, p. 134). But for the most part, the tribes were on the defensive against the invaders who held the coast. Additionally, they were divided, and often on the defensive against each other. The unifying factor of the Ibadhi Imamate was only beginning to reassert itself, and would not prevail until much later.

Since the time of the Crusades, Europe's appetite for the luxuries of the east had been rapidly increasing. Her outrage at what she considered the exorbitant prices of the Arab, Turk, and Italian middlemen was also building up strongly (Serjeant 1963, pp. 2-4; Miles 1966, pp. 137-39; Wilson 1928, pp. 110-11; Brady 1950, pp. 33-35). The Portuguese set out to take advantage of these factors, and they found a sea route into the lucrative eastern trade network. By 1486 they had rounded the tip of Africa. Eleven years later Vasco da Gama sailed into the Indian Ocean to begin a two year reconnaissance which took him along the East African coast and to India. Francisco d'Almeida followed soon after, conquered Sofala, Kilwa, Mombasa, and concluded a treaty with Milindi. The major Arab ports in East Africa were thus under Portuguese rule (Phillips 1967, pp. 30-37; Wilson 1928, pp. 111-12; Brady 1950, pp. 34-48; Coupland 1938, pp. 41-47).

The Portuguese were also establishing themselves in some of the most important Indian ports, notably Goa and Cochin (Serjeant
With growing control of both ends of the Indian Ocean, they were not about to leave the Gulf middlemen free to compete with them. Alfonso d'Albuquerque cowed the primary Omani port of Kalhat into submission in 1507. He then quickly proceeded along the coast, taking and usually destroying other ports such as Quryat, Masqat, Sohar, and Khor Fakkan (Phillips 1967, p. 37; Bathurst 1972, p. 94; Miles 1966, pp. 143-51; Wilson 1928, pp. 112-15). After dealing with these Hormuzi vassals, d'Albuquerque turned his attention to Hormuz itself, and finally received submission in 1515 (Serjeant 1963, pp. 15, 43-45; 1973, pp. 157-58; Wilson 1928, pp. 115-18, 120-21).

Portuguese control did not go uncontested. When they had first entered the area, the Arabs had informed the Mamlukes and the Turks of the situation. Egypt and its commercial ally Venice were quick to see the threat to their trade, and carried out an unsuccessful diplomatic offensive in Europe against Portuguese involvement in the Indian Ocean (Miles 1966, pp. 138-40; Hitti 1970, pp. 696-97). The Mamlukes were no more successful in their naval actions. For about ten years a Mamluke fleet operated in the Indian Ocean. It had both scored some victories and suffered several defeats before the Portuguese fleet destroyed it in 1509 (Phillips 1967, p. 36; Serjeant 1963, p. 15; Miles 1966, p. 140; Brady 1950, pp. 54-55). In 1517 the Ottomans took Egypt, and inherited the Indian Ocean battle against the Christians. The Red Sea and protection of the Hijaz was their first priority, and for a number
of years they did not interfere in Portuguese domination of Oman. But in 1546 part of the Turkish Red Sea fleet bombarded Masqat. Six years later Piri Ra'is captured and plundered Portuguese held Masqat and Hormuz. Until nearly the end of the century the Turks continued to harass the Christians. They routinely lost most of the naval engagements with the superior European fleet, but they were quite capable of destroying Portuguese coastal positions if that fleet was not around (Serjeant 1963, pp. 17-20; 1973, p. 158; Phillips 1967, pp. 40-43; Miles 1966, pp. 167-82; Wilson 1928, pp. 124-27).

The Omanis themselves showed no more eagerness to have Christians in the area than did the Mamlukes or Ottomans. There had been a number of revolts by the port cities beginning almost as soon as the Portuguese had arrived. However, individual ports were no match for Portuguese naval power, and the cities were always retaken (Bathurst 1972, p. 94; Miles 1966, pp. 156-63; Wilson 1928, pp. 123-24). Without any kind of coordination, such revolts were futile, and they gradually ceased. It had become obvious that the coastal cities of Oman were no more capable of changing the situation than the Ottoman navy was. However, by the first quarter of the seventeenth century, two new factors had arisen which would soon bring about the end of Portuguese rule in the Gulf area. One of these factors was in Oman itself. In 1624 Nasir bin Murshid was elected the first Imam of the Ya'aribah dynasty. His election was the culmination of a campaign led by his family against the Nabahani. After Nasir took office, he quickly wiped out the centers
of Nabahani or other opposition, and the interior was once again united under Imamate government. The Imam and the tribes turned their attention to the Christians on the coast (Bathurst 1972, pp. 94-95, 97; Miles 1966, pp. 192, 201-03; Lorimer 1915, pp. 399-400; Badger 1871, pp. 47, 53-62; Ross 1874, pp. 146, 153-59).

At this same time, the balance of power was shifting in Europe. Portugal was declining under Spanish rule which began in 1580 (Wilson 1928, p. 126). Even so, they may have been able to hold on to their possessions in the Indian Ocean longer if the English and Dutch had not appeared. The Portuguese trade monopoly was broken by these newcomers and much worse, the trade rivalry often flared up into open combat. The Portuguese fleet suffered a number of defeats at the hands of these other Europeans, and in 1622 the British helped Shah Abbas of Persia take Hormuz. Most of their other important positions inside the Gulf had already been lost, and they were left with only a few ports in Oman (Bathurst 1972, pp. 95-96; Wilson 1928, Chs. 9-10; Serjeant 1973, p. 159; Miles 1966, pp. 184-91). Nor did they hold these long. The new Imam had immediately cleared the Portuguese from their minor ports along the coast (Bathurst 1972, pp. 97-99; Miles 1966, pp. 203-04; Badger 1871, pp. 63-69; Ross 1874, pp. 159-62). By about 1640, only Sohar, Matrah, and Masqat remained to be recovered from them. Before he died nine years later, Nasir had taken Sohar and negotiated the evacuation and neutrality of Matrah in return for lifting his siege of Masqat (Miles 1966, pp. 194-95, 204; Lorimer 1915, p. 401; Wilson 1928, pp.
154-55). The next Imam finished the task (Miles 1966, pp. 195-98, 210-11; Wilson 1928, p. 155; Lorimer 1915, p. 402; Badger 1871, pp. 78-87; Ross 1874, p. 164), and all of coastal Oman with its all important ports was once more united under an interior Imamate.

Stable interior government holding the main sources of wealth once again set the stage for Omani prosperity. The Ya'arubi Imamate did not stop at the shoreline. It declared jihad against the Portuguese throughout the Indian Ocean. Portuguese ports in India were captured and plundered. In East Africa, the Omanis reestablished themselves everywhere north of Mozambique. During this eighty year vendetta against the Portuguese, Oman built up a navy which became one of the strongest in the Indian Ocean (Bathurst 1972, pp. 99-101; Miles 1966, pp. 212-25; Brady 1950, pp. 62-63; Coupland 1938, pp. 65-70; Badger 1871, pp. 87-88, 92). Not only did the Ya'arubi Imamate restore economic prosperity not seen since the first Imamate, but it also made Oman an important political factor in the area again. In fact, the combination of prosperity, control of trade, and the new navy made the Omanis the predominant political power in the Indian Ocean, able to compete with the Europeans on fairly even terms. But just as in the first Imamate, this very success held the seeds of Oman's ultimate decline. This Imamate of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was structured along exactly the same lines as had been the ninth century Imamate. The first Imamate had not solved the problems of success, and this second one did not seem to be making any changes. Omani history had
seen the cycle of strong Imamate, unity, prosperity, collapse, and stagnation. The stage was now set for a repeat performance.

The first Imam had been "a man of perfect integrity and an eminent example of justice personified" (Badger 1871, p. 74). He adhered so scrupulously to the austere tribal values that upon occasion "he was entirely without means to enable his household to keep the feast" (Badger 1871, p. 77). Under the second Ya'arubi Imam, "Oman revived... and prospered: the people rested from their troubles, prices were low, the roads were safe, the merchants made large profits, and the crops were abundant" (Badger 1871, p. 89). Much capital was diverted inland to restore the irrigation systems and plant date palms (Badger 1871, pp. 89, 92-93; Ross 1874, pp. 164-65; compare Wilkinson 1977, pp. 124-26). However, already by the second Imam "it is probable that strictures were passed on him as regards his Imamship on account of his engaging in commerce, as he had agents who were known to trade on his account" (Ross 1874, p. 164). The fourth Imam "amassed much wealth, and possessed many male and female slaves, for he was very greedy of wealth" (Ross 1874, p. 165; compare Badger 1871, pp. 92-93). By the time of the fifth Ya'arubi Imam's death, "There occurred a difference between the el-Ya'arabeh and the heads of the tribes" (Ross 1874, p. 165; compare Badger 1871, p. 99).

The Ya'aruba had become the biggest merchants in coastal Oman, and they had come to regard state resources as their own. They used their own and the state's incomes to purchase land and
water in the interior, so that they also became the largest landowners in the country, owning up to one-third of all date palms (Miles 1966, pp. 225-26). The Ya'aruba lost the support of the Ibadhi 'ulama and of most of the interior tribes, and the country dissolved into civil war (Miles 1966, Ch. 4; el-Ashban 1979). These civil wars are chronicled in Ross (1874, pp. 166-83) and Badger (1871, pp. 100-30). They lasted for ten years (1718-1728), but gave rise to the two major political factions of modern Oman, the Hinawi and Ghafiri. This kept the country unstable even after a Ya'arubi regained tenuous control. Within a few years the final Ya'arubi Imam was left with the coastal areas, while the interior was uniting under a rival. The Imam finally invited the Persians into Oman in an attempt to restore his position (Badger 1871, pp. 131-41; Miles 1966, pp. 250-53).

Nadir Shah had just come to the throne and was happy to oblige. He sent an army in 1737 which was successful in the field, but withdrew without having settled the issue. The Imam had lost even more ground, and was left with only a few port cities including Masqat and Sohar. Even Matrah had fallen to his rival. The Persians were invited back again in 1742 and became masters of the coast. The Imam had retired and died in seclusion after realizing that his allies were more interested in acquisition of territory for Nadir Shah than in restoring his position. His rival in the interior was killed fighting the Persians, and the country was left without a claimant to the Imamate (Badger 1871, pp. 141-51; Miles
Ahmad ibn Sa'id, a hero of the resistance to the Persians at Sohar, eventually emerged as the chief contender.

The Al Bu Sa'idi family had originated from the interior at the desert borderland oasis of Adam. However, Ahmad had made his career in the service of the Ya'arubi Imams, and eventually became governor of Sohar. From this position he became heavily involved in commerce (Thomas 1938, pp. 38-39; Miles 1966, p. 258). Ahmad ibn Sa'id led the struggle against the Persians, and eventually prevailed. He was elected Imam by virtue of his success against the foreigners (Badger 1871, pp. 152-57; Miles 1966, pp. 259-64). However, the basic antagonisms between the interior and the coast were not solved. Opposition grew in the interior and rebellions flared up. Ahmad's son was elected Imam upon Ahmad's death, but was soon declared deposed by the interior 'ulama. Nevertheless, this Imam, Sa'id ibn Ahmad, was able to retain the formal title, but after only a few years of rule retired in virtual seclusion at Rustaq. His son had usurped rule in Masqat, and was unconcerned with any pretentions to religious sanction to his rule. Sa'id ibn Ahmad died in 1821, and no new Imam was elected for nearly fifty years (Lorimer 1915, pp. 407-10, 417-19; Miles 1966, pp. 269, 276-84; Kelly 1972, pp. 108-10; Badger 1871, pp. 156-210).

The Ya'arubi Imams had built coastal Oman into a maritime power (cf. el-Ashban 1979) and the Al Bu Sa'idis essentially built upon that base. The title of Imam was dispensed with, the capital
was moved to Masqat, and the coastal rulers eventually took the title Sultan (Phillips 1967, p. 88). Coastal Oman was oriented toward the Indian and African trade, and East Africa actually became the economic center of gravity. The Sultan by the mid-nineteenth century often was spending more time in Zanzibar than in Masqat. Interior Oman was completely outside his interest. It was nominally under the Sultan, but in practice was virtually independent and subject to tribal politics (Landen 1967, pp. 58-75; Miles 1966, pp. 329-54; Lorimer 1915, pp. 450-56; Coupland 1938, Ch. 5; Nicholls 1971, Chs. 5, 11). Upon the death of Sa'id ibn Sultan in 1856, the maritime empire was split between his sons. Coastal Oman, deprived of one of its economic mainstays, entered a depression (cf. Chapter 2) and could no longer think of even nominal rule over the interior.

Rebellions by interior tribes against the coastal Sultan had already become common; Sultan Sa'id had suffered three between 1820 and 1834 (Lorimer 1915, pp. 452-55). In 1868 this opposition coalesced in the restoration of the interior Imamate, which soon united the interior and drove the Sultan from his coastal strongholds, including Masqat (Lorimer 1915, pp. 481-92; Phillips 1967, pp. 139-42; Landen 1967, pp. 294-320). With British aid the Sultan's son regained Masqat and the Batinah in 1871. However, Masqat continued to come under attack a number of times in the next several decades, and parts of the Batinah changed hands regularly. Nevertheless, the Imam had been killed in 1871, and the office left vacant, so that the interior tribes were unable to achieve any
unity. British aid enabled the Sultan to remain entrenched in Masqat and maintain tenuous control over the coastal ports. At times he was able to take advantage of the disunity in the interior to expand inland. Sometimes the interior tribes prevailed; in 1895 they actually held Masqat for a month although they were unable to take the two main forts from the Sultan (Lorimer 1915, pp. 492-543; Landen 1967, Ch. 8).

This seesaw conflict between interior tribes and coastal Sultan is the context from which Lorimer's data comes. At the particular moment that Lorimer wrote, the Sultan temporarily held the upper hand. Figure 6.1 shows the forts garrisoned by the Sultan's troops. Clearly they are positioned to control the coastal economic network. Interior garrisons are also positioned to hold economic centers. The tenuous nature of the Sultan's control in these interior areas is demonstrated by the ease with which he was ejected after the Imamate was again restored in 1913. Nizwa quickly fell and became the capital, and the Imam's troops took all major interior towns and several ports. British warships drove them from the ports, and British troops repulsed the attack on Masqat in early 1915 (Landen 1967, pp. 392-403).

While the conflict dragged on negotiations were opened, and in 1920 the Treaty of Sib was signed, concluding peace between the two entities. This treaty was purposely somewhat imprecise about whether there were one or two Omans in political theory, but in practice it recognized the division. It guaranteed freedom of
Figure 6.1. Garrisons of the Coastal System.
travel and trade between the two entities, security of the citizens of each within the territory of the other, non-aggression and non-interference in internal affairs, and extradition of criminals from each (cf. Landen 1967, pp. 404-14). The peace prevailed until the mid 1950's, as noted in Chapter 1.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The 1920 Treaty of Sib was simply the latest formal recognition of the situation which had in fact persisted in Oman for nearly 1,400 years since the rise of Islam. The coast and the interior have been united only for a few relatively brief periods. Underlying the division into Sultanate and Imamate were the far-reaching differences in socio-economic organization—differences that encompassed a wide range of characteristics. The cosmopolitan nature of the coastal ports, particularly Masqat and Matrah, has been commented upon by nearly every traveler who visited them. The provincial attitudes and ethnic homogeneity of the interior towns have likewise always been evident. The Indian Ocean orientation of the coast and the subsistence nature of the interior economy have been taken almost as basic truths in the study of Oman for over a century, with few substantial efforts to analyze in detail the nature of these differences.

Traditional Omani duality, however, does translate into a number of striking differences in several spheres, including the two major aspects examined in this study. Spatial organization, the first aspect, is quite elaborately defined for the coastal system centered on Masqat and Matrah. Analysis of the hierarchical
ordering and spatial distribution of markets shows that Masqat-Matrah were the top level of a dendritic-mercantile system. The theory for such systems was developed to explain the spatial organization of societies which are oriented toward external long-distance trade. In Oman, Masqat was the international trade center for the system, while distribution and collection functions for domestic trade were turned over to Matrah. Trade with the rest of Oman was channeled from Matrah through the set of subordinate ports for areas which were within the coastal system. From these subordinate ports the connection inland followed a route up a wadi. In a few areas (those with sufficient hinterland population) markets developed inland on these routes.

The interior was not part of this dendritic-mercantile system, and trade with it was organized separately through Matrah or Sohar. The Imamate had quite different organization; in fact, it was characterized by lack of a coherent overall structure. The bazaars of the interior usually functioned as the center of a small distinct system without any substantial trade relations to other bazaars or to the international network. Therefore, the spatial distribution of interior bazaars and markets does not reflect any organization as part of a wider system. Rather, these interior markets are located so as to facilitate local trade across various kinds of boundaries. Location on ecological boundaries is particularly evident in the foothills between mountains and plains. Social boundaries are bridged by a string of small markets along the
fringes of the inhabited areas, where Bedouin meet Hadhr. Most bazaars are also located to facilitate contact between the two major political confederations.

The second major aspect examined in this study is the economic structure of the two systems, particularly the existence and role of foreigners in the coastal system, the forms of land and water tenure, and the nature of the relationship between the towns and their hinterlands. Dendritic-mercantile models predict a substantial role for foreigners in such systems. This is the case in Oman, where Hindu Indian merchants dominated the import-export trade at Masqat and Khojas tended to control the domestic wholesale trade at Matrah. Inland, where there is very little interest in foreign trade, foreigners usually are not to be found. The theory of rent capitalism is also quite useful in examining Oman, and it is also applicable primarily to the coastal system. Rent capitalistic theory accounts for the phenomenon of urban dominance evident in Masqat-Matrah's relations with the coastal system. This dominance includes landholdings in rural areas by absentee landlords, which increase the drain of rural resources to urban areas, especially Masqat and Matrah. These forms usually are not found in the interior. The villagers or townsmen themselves usually own shares in their land and water, and the benefits of production remain in the local area.

This kind of duality can be traced back in Omani history to its formative stages around the time of Muhammad. Settlement
patterns were to a large part determined by the Persian occupations in pre-Islamic times, since the Persians constructed the majority of the irrigation systems still in use today. The general spatial pattern of coastal markets was also already determined by the Sassanian involvement in the Indian Ocean trade. In the interior, two factors arose which prevented the extension of the coastal system inland: tribalism and Ibadhism. The Arab tribes had already moved into the interior by the time Islam arose, and they immediately embraced the new religion. Tribal social organization was already antagonistic to the mercantile capitalism of the coast, especially to the forms of land and water tenure associated with it. The development of Ibadhi doctrine gave the tribes an ideological basis for the interior's opposition, and this combination allowed the interior to remain distinct since very early in the Islamic era.

The examination of Omani spatial and economic structure is not only useful in providing the background against which current processes in Oman may be better understood. It also serves as a case study of the geographic models which are used in explaining the situation in turn of the century Oman. The coastal system in Oman provides one more example to the growing list of areas in which dendritic spatial systems prevail. Specifically, the dendritic system evident in coastal Oman represents the mercantile model. Two major characteristics of this model are the overriding factors: the dominance of a single urban center and the dominance of long distance trade. According to Kelley (1976, p. 221 ff) these two
factors account for all other characteristics of the dendritic mercantile system. These include: (1) descending levels of hierarchy with increasing distance from the highest level center; (2) the orientation of lower levels to one higher level center with little horizontal contact with centers of the same level; (3) draining of hinterland population, income, and resources to the higher level center; and (4) concentration of the political elite in the highest level economic center.

These dendritic mercantile characteristics all apply to Oman. In fact, it is quite interesting to note how closely Oman does conform to the model, since the model has seldom been applied to the Middle East. Several details in the Omani case, however, may serve to clarify certain points in the applicability of dendritic models. The first of these points is the often repeated association of dendritic systems with colonialism (e.g., Smith 1974, p. 178; 1975, p. 100; 1976a, p. 345; Schwimmer 1976, p. 128; Johnson 1970, p. 86). Some cases of dendritic systems do in fact occur in conjunction with colonial systems. However, nothing in Vance's model formulation requires this colonialism, and it is neither a sufficient cause nor a necessary factor in dendritic systems. Colonial administration is not always interested in economics. Certain colonial acquisitions are for strategic reasons, and the colonial administration is really not interested in the local economics. This was the case in Aden, where hinterland contact was actually discouraged (Halliday 1974, p. 265 ff). The British interest in
Masqat was also primarily strategic (Halliday 1974, p. 265 ff), and the functioning of Oman's domestic trade system was simply not of concern to them.

As noted in Chapter 4, the key factor in Oman's dendritic system is not political domination. The coast has certainly experienced periods of foreign political domination, but the system has persisted for centuries even without this foreign domination, and even when Oman itself was a dominant power in the region. The key factor is clearly the foreign orientation of merchants and trade, irrespective of the political regime. It would seem that colonialism, if it is to be retained at all in association with dendritic systems, should be expressed in terms of economic colonialism, or the modern concept of neo-colonialism. Even then it must be recognized as a special case, since it does not account for the persistence of the system in Oman throughout periods of Omani predominance in the Indian Ocean.

A second point is that dendritic mercantile spatial structures seem inherently to have rent capitalistic economic forms. Kelly (1976, pp. 221, 228-30) seems to imply this in discussing the characteristic of resource drains from the hinterland to the major urban center. However, she is one of the only researchers to stress this aspect explicitly, and she seems to be unaware of the development of rent capitalistic theory. Rent capitalism is certainly the economic form of the Omani coastal system, and spatially is confined to that system. Historically, it expanded into the interior when
the interior was united with the coast and coastal trade interests and capital began to penetrate. Rent capitalism retreated when ties between interior and coast were severed and interior tribesmen rejected such economic forms along with other coastal ties. More research is required to confirm (or deny) that rent capitalism is the economic form of the mercantile spatial model. Researchers on spatial systems must address the forms of local economic structure and those working on rent capitalism must note spatial organization and the role of long distance trade.

Another contention often advanced concerning dendritic systems is that they are primarily applicable to developing societies which have been penetrated by more advanced economies (e.g., Smith 1975, p. 100). Again, it is certainly true that the dendritic system is often associated with developing economies. However, this observation begs the question of exactly what is to be considered a developing economy and what is more advanced. One would be very hard pressed to argue that Oman's coastal economy has been developing for over 1,400 years in response to penetration by a more advanced Indian Ocean economy. It seems preferable to relegate penetration by a more advanced economy to the category of special cases, and to simply repeat the assertion that the key factor is the foreign trade orientation, regardless of the relative stage of the economy with which the foreign trade is conducted.

The long term persistence of separate forms of economic structure and spatial organization in the interior further
illustrates this point. According to Bobek's (1959) analysis, tribal society is certainly less developed than the stage of rent capitalism. Smith (1976a) also implies that a dendritic system is more developed than an extended network system, at least in terms of commerce. Yet clearly the "more advanced" coastal system was not successful in achieving any lasting penetration of the interior. In fact, politically it has often been the interior which has "penetrated" the coastal system. The Omani case shows, at the very least, that social and cultural factors may override purely economic considerations in determining the evaluation of economic systems. The Polanyi school, of course, has maintained this for several decades, and has demonstrated it for a number of societies (cf., e.g., Dalton 1975 for extensive references).

These and similar points relate to the usefulness of Oman as a case study to test geographic models. Alternately, one may consider the usefulness of the geographic models in understanding the background to current development efforts in Oman. The dual structure of the country has always been apparent to Omanis, and once the new government began its ambitious development programs after 1970, it made the integration between coast and interior one of its primary goals (Scholz 1980, p. 183; 1977b, pp. 34, 38 ff). The means of accomplishing this goal was to concentrate the development on the Capital Area (the area around Masqat-Matrah). The purpose of this was:
--To create a center for all parts of the country and all population groups, one that could serve as a distribution center, as a source of innovation and as a meeting point for all internal activities.

--To light a beacon for the "New Era" and modern development. Here the dynamic energy Oman is willing and able to expend was to be made manifest abroad, to Oman's foreign partners.

--To create a point of contact with the outside world where political and economic relations could unfold (Scholz 1980, p. 183).

A second means toward the goal was the opening up of the interior, in order to:

--involve the interior in the process of modernization from the very beginning;

--establish the prerequisites for economic initiative among the people and to provide incentives for the merchants of the Capital Area to become economically active in the interior as well;

--to [sic] establish modern centers where the population of the interior could find all of the important infrastructural establishments and thus did not need to move to the Capital Area (Scholz 1980, pp. 183-84).

It is apparent that in the application of these concepts the government is building upon some of the features of traditional organization in the country. In particular, modern functions are usually established in places that already had traditional markets, and (in the interior) the functions usually are located upon the various boundaries. For example, the government has built new suqs in Nizwa and Sanau (as well as in Sohar and Sur) (Scholz 1980, p. 261). On the coast, the Sultanate seemingly intends to utilize Sohar's traditional position by making it one of the major growth
centers (Scholz 1980, pp. 281-82). However, it should not be
difficult to see that the Sultanate's policy translates essentially
into the extension of the urban dominance aspect of the dendritic
mercantile coastal system into the interior. The dominating
position of Masqat-Matrah remains intact within the system, and the
Capital Area remains the point of attachment to the outside world.
The system is to extend to the interior, and in particular Masqat-
Matrah merchants are to expand their sphere inland. Centers are to
be established in the interior (the "growth centers" noted in
Chapter 1), but given the conditions set forth in the first three
quoted points, they can only remain very subordinate to the Capital
Area.

179-303) which has resulted from these policies is somewhat con­
fused. In one section he seems to imply that Oman is evolving into
a nearly classical central place system (1980, pp. 276-83). How­
ever, it is clear that Scholz has grossly idealized the situation.
In fact, many of the settlements appear on his map (p. 277) in one
level of his hierarchy, but are placed in other levels when he
discusses them in the following pages. Another separate section
(1980, pp. 297-301; cf. also 1977b, pp. 37-38) also idealizes the
development process, but this time it is clear that development is
proceeding more in accordance with the traditional dendritic struc­
ture. His fourth phase is particularly informative in this respect:
"Spatial expansion of the Capital Area; tendency toward linear
penetration of the entire hinterlands" (p. 297 [emphasis added]). An additional factor is that "the Hinterlands are opened up by additional asphalt roads and are bound ever closer to the Capital Area" (p. 300 [emphasis in the original]). Scholz goes on to say that "merchants in the suqs orient themselves even more strongly now toward the Capital Area" (p. 300).

The idealized version of this development has a final stage in which horizontal contacts appear between lower order centers, so that a kind of grid network develops in place of the dendritic tree-like pattern (Scholz 1980, pp. 298, 300-01; 1977b, pp. 37-38). This idealized version could be the basis for Scholz' finding the development of the central place system mentioned above. However, closer examination of many of the details in the process suggest that the opposite is happening. Oman does not seem to be developing a mature central place system at all. In fact, the urban dominance factor, which was already inherent in the traditional system, has become so overwhelming that it is breaking down the dendritic structure. The spatial system in Oman is evolving toward the kind of primacy model described by Bonine (1979; 1980b, Ch. 8). In this model, the primate city so dominates its hinterland that intermediate level markets in the hierarchy are simply bypassed. Villagers and even town dwellers neglect closer markets and travel to the city for all but very low order goods such as food staples.

Scholz himself notes this phenomenon. After discussing the predominance of the Capital Area, he states that "verbunden war
damit ein Bedeutungsrückgang aller Märkte im Hinterland\textsuperscript{1} (Scholz 1978, p. 510). A number of factors


He further notes that although many of the periodic markets for Bedouin-Hadhr exchange have become daily (1977a, pp. 121, 128), there is a decline in the number of functions which are actually available in them (1980, p. 260). He also lists a number of higher order markets which have stagnated because consumers are bypassing them to make purchases in the Capital Area. These include Sohar, Sama'il, and Rustaq (1980, p. 257). Scholz' schematic representation of spatial trade links to the Capital Area (1978, p. 511) looks very much like the patterns found by Bonine in central Iran around Yazd (1980b, Ch. 5).

\textsuperscript{1} "associated with it [Capital Area Predominance] was a decline in the importance of all markets in the hinterland" [my translation].

\textsuperscript{2} "have led to the situation in which the markets of the hinterlands have declined to a place for small mixed-wares traders. All goods with periodic or long term demand, as well as [in some cases] staples, are purchased within the Capital Area and transported even to the farthest village either by personally owned vehicles or by the numerous small transport contractors. [Even] the markets established in the hinterlands by the State have not been able to counter this development" [my translation].
Thus, the Omani government seems to envision development based upon the traditional spatial structure, and intends that this traditional spatial structure should eventually evolve into a mature central place system. Nevertheless, clearly the net effect of development policies is producing quite different results. This study is not really oriented toward detailed examination of spatial system development in post-1970 Oman, and it is therefore not possible to examine the causes of the phenomenon in detail. However, a very brief analysis is offered, which should be regarded more as a starting point for discussion than as a definitive statement of the causes.

One cause is the economic structure of the system itself. Rent capitalism is not associated only with dendritic mercantile systems but may be part of other systems in which urban dominance is a factor. In particular, rent capitalism is the economic form of the primate model (Bonine 1979; 1980b, Ch. 8). Investment by absentee landlords, usually resident in the Capital Area, is proceeding with new vigor under the new, post-1970 conditions. Most large farms with modern methods which have not been established by the government are held by these absentee landlords. Several specific cases of this kind of investment in the interior, as well as general observations, are noted in el-Rikaishy (1980, pp. 10, 30, App. III pp. i, iii). The differences in rent capitalism between dendritic-mercantile and primacy models seem to be only in the degree of urban dominance. During past periods of unity between
coast and interior, the interior was opened up to coastal capital. However, in the past the coastal elite did not have access to vast new amounts of capital as they have had during the last decade. Before, coastal capital could expand into the interior; now it can overwhelm the tribal tenure forms.

However, this vast change in the quantity of capital available to the coastal elite seems to be only a minor contributing factor which alone would probably not cause the rapid shift in spatial patterns evident in Oman. The most important factors are various aspects of the focus of urban infrastructure development on the Capital Area. Bonine (1979; 1980b, Ch. 8) shows that his primacy model in Yazd is caused essentially by political decisions and the state establishment of infrastructure which is oriented heavily toward the primate city. One important aspect includes the establishment of modern transportation, which often makes it easier or cheaper to visit the primate city than closer markets (Bonine 1980b, pp. 150-54). Scholz' discussion of the way development is ideally to proceed into the interior makes it clear that the transportation system is heavily oriented toward facilitating movement between the hinterland and the Capital Area (1977, pp. 37-38; 1980, pp. 297-301, cf. aso pp. 202-08).

All other forms of infrastructure development are likewise focused on the Capital Area. Of the 934.8 million Omani Rials (1 OR = U.S. $3.00) budgeted for the 1976-1980 development plan, fully 32.1 percent went to the Capital Area. However, since 27.1 percent
went to Dhofar, of the 681.2 million OR designated for the "Oman" of this study, 44.1 percent went to the Capital Area (Sultanate of Oman n.d., p. 34). Of the share going to the interior, however, a quarter (24.2 percent) was budgeted for extending the road network (Sultanate of Oman n.d., p. 71), which has just been shown to be oriented toward the Capital Area. Another 18.3 percent went to oil field development (Sultanate of Oman n.d., p. 95), which is in the desert and does not really affect the populated interior. Major infrastructure development is clearly concentrated in the Capital Area, and this reinforces the private sector's tendency toward investment and location there. Fully 84 percent of private investment was in the Capital Area from 1970 to 1975 (Scholz 1978, p. 508). Of the 8,128 registered companies and establishments in the Sultanate in 1978, 54 percent were in the Capital Area, but 80.9 percent of the 162 with capital of over a quarter of a million Omani Rials were located there (Sultanate of Oman 1979, p. 91).

Thus, new economic conditions and new influxes of wealth are rapidly altering Oman's spatial structure. The traditional dual nature of Oman is rapidly being eroded as the coastal system finally overwhelms the interior's tribally oriented economy. Although the interior has been able to repulse the coastal economy in past cases of its extension inland, conditions in the modern world are so vastly changed that there seems to be little prospect of yet another successful expulsion of the coastal economic forms and spatial structure. Two of the main foundations of the interior's ability to
maintain its own forms are rapidly disappearing. Ibadhi Islam may still appeal spiritually, but the concept of Ibadhism and the Imamate as a political ideology has all but died out. Modern opposition to the coastal capitalism has become secular and usually Marxist oriented (Peterson 1978, Ch. 7, especially pp. 186-87; cf. also Halliday 1974, pp. 280-89). The second prop, tribalism, is also rapidly declining. Peterson shows that the role of the tribes and tribal heads in national politics has become nearly extinct (1978, pp. 211-12). Birks (1977) and Wilkinson (1980) show that this deterioration of tribal structure is also rapidly progressing at the level of individual villages.

The coastal system itself is rapidly evolving away from its traditional dendritic spatial organization at the same time that it finally prevails in its centuries-old competition with the interior. Oman seems destined to enter a new phase in its spatial structure as it evolves into a primate type system. Whether or not and under what conditions spatial structures develop beyond the primate form eventually is still a much debated question in geography. The future course of Oman's evolving primate structure will depend upon processes which are still in the formative stages and decisions which have not yet been made.
Literature Cited


