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Oliver H. Myers

Little Aden folklore [avec 4 planches].

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# LITTLE ADEN FOLKLORE

(with 4 plates)

BY

OLIVER H. MYERS.

“Giants and the genii,  
Multiplex of wing and eye,  
Whose strong obedience broke the sky  
When Solomon was king.”

## INTRODUCTORY.

Though it is primarily with the peninsula of Little Aden that these notes are concerned, tentacles necessarily stretch both in and out to Bîr Aḥmad <sup>(1)</sup>, Laḥaj and Aden, and one or two separate notes about Aden alone are added.

No one could be more conscious than the author of the fact that these notes are more notable for their omissions than for what they tell, but it is his hope that the very lacunae, by lashing to fury the professional anthropologists may stir one of them to make serious studies through the huge fertile field of the Protectorate, as well as the Colony. Eye witness descriptions of customs of daily life, of births, weddings and funerals, which there was no time or opportunity to record, are wanting. A map, giving all the local names, which are of considerable mythological and historical interest, was started but could not be completed owing to the misguided enthusiasm of a Bedawi officer. However, the Aden Protectorate Levies have undertaken its completion and with their superior equipment, the result is bound to be an improvement on anything the author could have achieved in his spare time and will doubtless be already available. Meanwhile a rough sketch map is shown here (pl. IV)

<sup>(1)</sup> Transcription used :

أ ي و ق غ ع ز ط ل ص س د ذ ح ج ا ت . ا

giving the approximate positions of the sites mentioned in this article. I am grateful to S/Ldr. Sweet for making a fair copy of this. What it has been possible to do has all been done on occasional Sunday afternoons and during



Fig. 1. — Al-Gūḥalah, with bairaq.

four days special leave kindly granted by Brigadier D. Roberts. I am grateful for much encouragement by Sir John Hathorn Hall, ex-Governor of Aden, and Mr. Charles Inge; for assistance from the 'Aqils of Fuqum and Buraīqah, my driver Maḥmūd Ṭāriṣ and his cousin el-Gūḥalah, Maryam bint Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Sa'īd al-Hinaidi; to M. Ch. Kuentz and Majors Evans-Pritchard and

S. Rice for kindly reading the typescript and making many helpful corrections ; and to Capt. Gibbon and Sgt. E. Dickens for the photographs.

PHYSICAL BACKGROUND.—The coast of the Western Aden Protectorate is a long flat sandy and gravelly plain backed by mountains, and it is clear that at present the sea is slowly receding. From the coast volcanic peninsulas stand up at intervals, joined to the mainland by sandy isthmuses. The two best known are Aden and Little Aden, holding between them Aden Harbour. Aden is a large extinct volcano with the old town 'Adan set in the Crater. Little Aden is rather more complex, being roughly divided by a sandy plain running through the oldest Crater, probably much older than Aden, with the core, Gabal Aḥḍar, standing in the middle. Gabal Iḥsân on the East, is a high almost unscalable cone. Gabal Muzalqum (for Muzalqah, slippery, or Muḍalqah, pointed) on the west is clearly a much later crater. The Western part is much larger than the Eastern, and is the part joined by an Isthmus to the mainland. The place is now almost entirely arid, supporting only a few stunted thorns, though it is said that when man came it was covered with trees which have all disappeared as firewood. The two centres of habitation are Buraiqah, near the Eastern extremity, and Fuqum, at the West end. The wells, Bir Ḥarîqah at Fuqum and Bîr Nâsir at Buraiqah, produce only brackish and purgative water and the people depend on sea-borne water for drinking. Two reservoirs were built by the British about 50 years ago, but are not of great assistance. There are no natural products other than fish, occasionally pearls, and building stone.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.—A few Palaeolithic stone instruments, not yet identified, have been found. Along the shore of the isthmus and the bay between it and Aden are a number of raised beaches showing signs of an intensive, or more probably lengthy, "strand-looper" occupation probably of the late Neolithic or Chalcolithic period. Some also exist on the sand of the old crater and in the bays. Near both Fuqum and Buraiqah are remains of settlements of the Islamic and earlier periods. At Fuqum the stone superstructure of a tomb can be seen and there is a rock with an old Arab inscription (see below). An old settlement at Buraiqah is underneath the Police Post : the deposit contains innumerable cockle-shells (*Qahwi*) and a number of whelks

(*Dūla*) and is at least two feet in depth. It is said that decayed iron swords and daggers have been found. Above Buraïqah on the small plateau there are two series of small circles. The older one has a deposit of about nine inches of wind-blown sand beneath which are fragments of bone and shell. The newer circles have no deposit except a few shells on the surface. They are said to have been constructed during the fighting with Bedu about a

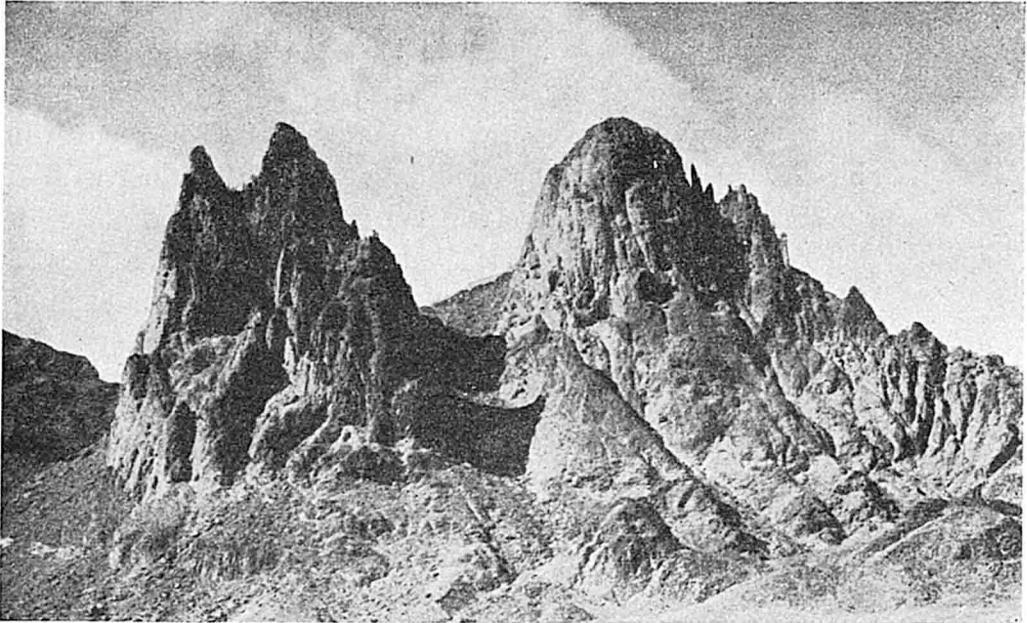


Fig. 2. — Gabal Muzalqum.

hundred years ago. The Wâdi aš-Šarîf has Islamic remains round the alleged grave of the Šarîf. No excavation has been done, fortunately not even illicit, other than that being done by the Aden Settlement in the “strand-looper” sites for shell, which they burn to obtain lime. The Wâdi Masîfi, so-called because of battles with the Bedu in ancient times, used to hold a third settlement, called Qaryat Munâsirah. The Šeiḥ led the whole settlement with him to the shores of the Red Sea near Šeiḥ Sa’îd, as there was not a living to be made. I have not been able to arrive at any date for this exodus.

There is an ancient cemetery to the North of the road from Fuqum to Buraïqah on a hillock near where the road has been roughly metalled. The graves

are marked with a headstone and a rough oval of stones and may be Islamic. In any case the cemetery is abandoned and of some considerable age.

**THE PEOPLE.**—The people are entirely different from the Bedu of the Highlands. They are of medium stature, well-built, round-faced, slightly platyrrhine and with slightly everted lips (no measurements have been taken). They are dark-skinned, with wavy or curly hair. There are a few Hajjûr

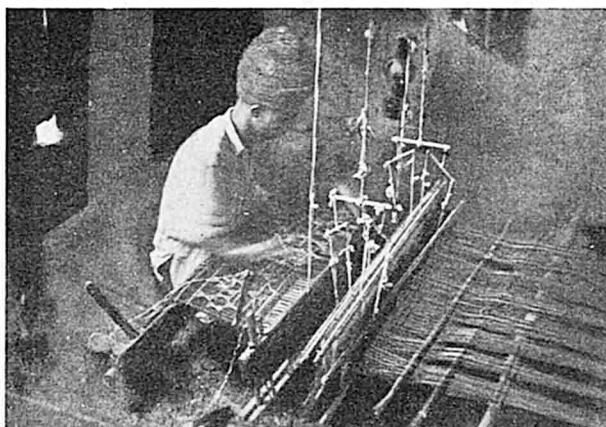


Fig. 3. — 'Ali Šu'ia weaving silk at Lahaj.

in each village, and the type, which is very marked, may be the result of admixture, but may on the other hand be derived from aboriginal negrito and proto-Australoid stock. They are mostly of tribes which are *ra'iyah* (client) of the bigger tribes inland and probably, therefore, earlier conquered stock<sup>a</sup>.

**THE MATERIAL CULTURE.**—The most important thing about this is that there is a very definite culture, which, despite their nearness to “civilization” the people have not lost. They make their fishing nets and their own boats, except for canoes which they obtain as roughed out dugouts from India. They weave their own mats and baskets and these are strong serviceable objects which keep out ants and cockroaches, and are made in natural colour decorated with red and green. They closely resemble a type reproduced in Old Kingdom pottery from Upper Egypt (G. BRUNTON, *Mustagedda*)<sup>b</sup>. They build their houses

<sup>a</sup> and <sup>b</sup>, see «Corrigenda and Addenda» p. 223.

of wood lattice-work, in rising-sun, criss-cross, concentric diamond, and "union-jack" patterns, and paint them with brilliant colours. Their clothes are mostly of materials woven at Laḥaj, or printed at Šeiḥ 'Uṭmân, though some imported Indian stuffs are employed. Most fishermen, however poor, have a silk turban, though these cost from Rs. 60-90 in wartime. The girls, however poor, have a string of gold beads of local pattern (mostly collared melons), or a gold wire nose-ring set with seed pearls, or earrings reminiscent of Pompeii. The pottery is hand and wheel-made from Laḥaj and Šeiḥ 'Uṭmân. Part of this culture has all the appearance of being of great antiquity while other parts are accretions from various periods. The basket-work and matting are probably practically unchanged since Neolithic times and the same may be said of the hand-made pottery. The wheel-made pots are some of them Roman in form with glazed patterns common in Egypt in about the xvth century A. D. The other elements exhibit various origins. The net making was learnt less than one hundred years ago. They were taught how to make the wood huts by people from Aden. To-day also makes its contribution for Buraïqah, owing to its bumboat trade, is better supplied with matches, American cigarettes, high class soap, etc. than anywhere else in Aden, and has all sorts of foreign products. The walls carry pictures of the King and Queen, of a Hindu Goddess or an Egyptian film star. Viewed as a whole, it is an integrated and distinctive culture.

Apart from occasional sales of baskets and shells to visitors, the 350 souls of Fuqum are entirely dependant upon fishing for a livelihood. To this Buraïqah adds the bumboat trade and smuggling, and has a population a little more than double.

**SOCIAL LIFE.**—Being in the Colony, the villages have no ruler other than the British Government. In the past their material welfare has been mainly in the hands of the Aden Settlement but now, to their benefit, they are coming directly under the Aden Government. Their position has saved them from the tyrannical interference and mismanagement of the local rulers, while the neglect they have suffered has allowed them to develop a suitable way of life which is a compromise between the old tribal life and modern private enterprise. The reservoirs at Buraïqah are repaired by communal effort. It is

also customary at Fuqum, where they are all of one tribe, to allow any member of the village enough fish for his own household from any catch. The remainder belongs to the catchers, in the proportion of half to the owners of the boats and half to the fishermen with them. A suggestion that the Government would supply cement and gadgets for a water tank, together with skilled builders, if the villagers would supply the stone and other labour, was accepted

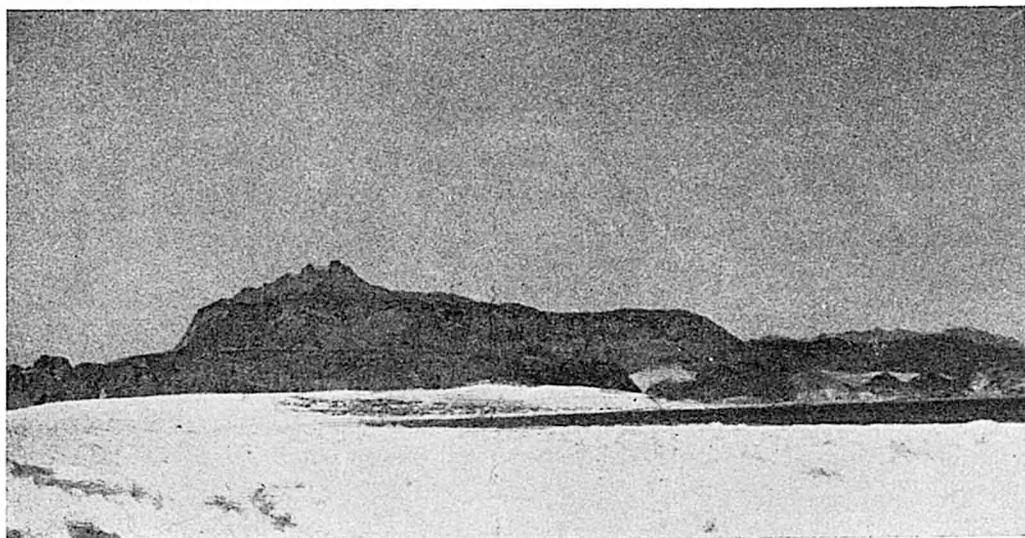


Fig. 4. — Gabal Ihsân with Buraiqah village on the dune below.

without demur or discussion as a perfectly natural and easily workable arrangement. At Fuqum when they see persons arriving over the pass from Buraiqah during the hot weather they send children out with water to greet them at the foot.

The affairs of the villages are managed by *‘Aqils* (headmen) one at Fuqum and at Buraiqah two, one for the fishing and one for the village. The Government today pays each *‘Aqil* about 15/- a month, but this is a recent arrangement and the *‘Aqils* have managed the village affairs with little Government assistance since the place was annexed.

Though predominantly Islamic, the people's outlook is very different from that of the interior. As it is hoped to show, pagan survivals are very strong, though they have been integrated with Islam and there are small mosques

in each village and Quranic schools. At Fuqum the outlook towards women is much freer and more tolerant than elsewhere, they do not veil, talk quite freely with you and are even more lightly clothed than European women, except for the headcloth, wearing only a semi-transparent dress with an additional loin cloth tied round the outside. Young girls, like boys, wear only a kilt and baby girls a girdle and apron of leather strips, decorated with cowries and other charms. Small boys go nude. Everyone, including women live half in and half out of the water, women going in clothed — at least in daylight. They are a relatively clean people and have few human parasites. The outlook at Buraïqah was the same till a Faqi (Classical Arabic *Faqîh*) visited them and told them their customs were wicked, since when they have conformed more with normal Islamic standards. Outside influence is also stronger there than at Fuqum as has already been seen in the material culture.

At weddings the bride is painted in designs in black on the face, neck, forearms and lower legs<sup>a</sup>. The leg and arm designs consist of lines parallel to the limb joined by circles and give the impression of lace stockings and gloves. The festivities, consisting mostly of dancing, may last anything from four to eight days. The bridegroom pays the parents of the bride about Rs. 200 (£ 16) and they spend double that on ornaments and clothes for her. In the old days at Buraïqah men and women used to dance together at wedding ceremonies but the Faqi (theologian) told them that this was wicked and so it was stopped and now, according to my informant, they dance separately. (I think this is doubtful and I know that at Fuqum they still dance together). If the girl is 16 years old or more she goes straight to her husband's house, but if she is below that age (they sometimes marry at 9 and 10) she remains with her mother till she has grown up. This custom is called *turîh*. There is much inter-marriage in the villages, but children are still counted to their father's tribes.

When a child is born there is no ceremony, but after seven days, if it is a boy, an invitation is given to people to drink coffee and a sheep is killed. Before killing it the father passes the animal seven times round the child's head and dabs a spot of *şubr* and *murr* (aloes and myrrh) on the forehead, the tip of the nose, and the chin. This ceremony accompanies circumcision. Girls are circumcised, but there is no ceremony. This account is from one

source only and the seventh year appears to be the more usual time for circumcision.

When a man dies the body is washed and the mouth, nose and ears filled with wool. The hair is tied up in a knot and the body clothed in white. The body is laid on the left side, lightly flexed, left hand under the head and the face towards Mecca. The tomb is a loculus tomb. (I was informed that the English are buried either with a sword or a revolver and a handful of gold. “Do they think there are vegetables to buy there or what?”). After the body is washed, no woman must see it or the coffin, or she will be *nages* — unclean, until she dies. Therefore there is no following of the funeral by women<sup>a</sup>.

If you have a *figah* (C. A. *fuj'ah*)<sup>(1)</sup>, a fright which brings your heart to your mouth, then you are held while others burn the stomach, above the navel, with a hot iron, leaving a transverse scar about 2" long by 1/2" wide. If you are alone when startled you come to others after 4 or 5 days to do it for you. There is no disgrace about it and people have many scars one above the other.

If a young man stoops like an old man, you feel the vertebrae till you find the one that hurts and then apply a red hot iron. If this does not succeed the first time, then you do it again. The stooping is called *hallas*, and the burning “ironing”.

If a child is ill, there is tied above the elbow of each arm a string or leather band with a written charm in a wallet of leather<sup>b</sup> and sometimes shells also, but these are, I think, only for girls.

In the event of someone having a sick headache, an iron is heated in the fire and when it is red-hot the person stands on it. This makes them leap two or three times and perhaps be sick, the headache is then cured. A girl of about 11 did this simply as a demonstration.

Persons are said to have the ability to remove headaches by stroking the head with both hands from the back to the front, so bringing the pain to a point between the eyes and then removing it. (The same system was practised by a clairvoyant on a Scots friend of mine in London in about 1918)<sup>c</sup>.

Both gums and the lower lips of women are tattooed blue with a mixture of milk and lamp black and this is said to be done to prevent the teeth falling

<sup>(1)</sup> C. A. = Classical Arabic, this abbreviation is used throughout.

out. Designs, usually decorative crosses, are tattooed on the arms, the pattern is about 3" long by 2" wide. Tattooing is locally called *raqam*.

The faces of girls and women are smeared thickly with a yellow substance called *hird*. (See LANDBERG, *Glossaire Daïinois*, II, p. 406).

Of childrens' games on land I saw only hoop, bowling and hopscotch, here called *taw* or *tuf*. The ground is slightly different from ours. In the water they play like fish, girls and boys can swim above and under the water as soon as they can walk properly. The mothers often have difficulty in keeping the babies out of the sea. The commonest game is played by four people, two on the shoulders of the other two, the two couples each trying to dislodge the other rider.

FOLK-HISTORY.—There were no people on Little Aden except a few wandering Bedu when the ancestors of the present inhabitants came, but it was covered with trees so thickly "that a man could hardly pass between them and the gazelle were so plentiful and tame that you could catch them with your hands" and the wells gave sweet water (especially Bîr Nâsir) and there were *Ibil* or *Baqar* (camels) and *Gamal* (cattle) and *Kabaš* (sheep).

Buraiqah was settled by persons coming from the Mukullah area and from Bîr Aḥmad :

*Šâlih Sa'îd Bailâl and Dâli of the Hinaidi*

*Ḥaj 'Ali Abu 'Abûd of the Rašîdi*

*'Abdullah bin 'Abûd of the Suba'i*

*Al-Gibaili of the Gibaili*

*Hâdi al-Ḥaj of the Muṣafrah.*

When they settled there were only about fifteen houses at Buraiqah. All this happened in the time of the "grand-fathers" of persons still living, probably between eighty and a hundred years ago. The Suba'i and Baḥsan (for ba-Ḥasan) came originally from Dîs, near Mukallah. The Muṣafrah came from Wâdi Mu'adan near the Yemen and have recently had a message from their tribesmen to return to their home where there is land for them. They will not go.

Little Aden was under Haidara al-Mahdi (1833-1850) and later his son the 'Aqrabi chief of Bîr Aḥmad, and the people payed taxes to them; a rupee

a month from each dhow owner and Naḥūḍah. They were not protected however, as Bedu (or according to one version Himyar!) came and sat on the hills above and fired upon them with matchlocks. These guns were so bad that the combatants usually put them down and fought with stones. Later the 'Aqrabi Šeiḥ demanded an additional tax of Rs. 1 per month on each woman who loaded stone into the dhows and the people protested to the British



Fig. 5. — Village school at Fuqum.

Government who bought Little Aden (this happened in 1869 and the Home Government were the instigators of this move). At first it was necessary to send escorts of soldiers with people from Little Aden to Šeiḥ 'Uṭmān. (It was not till 1888 that a strip of foreshore was bought connecting Aden and Little Aden.)

One aged informant, who claimed to be 121 years of age, stated that the Suba'i and the Baḥsan from Dīs near Mukallah were the first to settle at Ḥast-al-Mā' (the place of water, cf. C. A. *ḥasy*, spring) the original name of Buraiqah, and that the other tribes were later arrivals. This is quite possible

as fishermen move along the coast considerably and the Bedu are so exigent, levying a “protection” tax of fish, that the fishers are often forced to move. Not being afraid of the sea this does not worry them. There is considerable argument about priority. The Rašîdi and Hinaidi also claim this and it is probable that both tribes as well the Muqwâri would have wandered down there as Bedu when they were *ra'iyah* of the 'Aqârib. The Rašîdi certainly guarded the shrine of the Wâli.

All informants were agreed about the sweetness of the water of Bîr Nâsir and the trees and gazelle on the peninsula when it was first settled.

(The old man made one or two interesting statements among a number of inaccurate accounts of the past. He stated that when the British came, all water for Aden was brought by dhow from Hiswa and that the “tanks” were so blocked with rubbish that water only stayed a little time before soaking into it. He stated that there were certainly no dhow-building stocks at Ma'alla and that only one man, called apparently Sâdi, lived there : that Crater (old 'Adan) consisted of only a cluster of 11 or 12 houses round the 'Aidarûs mosque and that Sirah fort and the walls of Crater were built by the British).

The recent history of Fuqum is simpler as the people are all one tribe, the Maşâfrah, but there is an interesting legend about its history in the old days before the present settlement.

“In the beginning”, in Himyar times, the people of Fuqum did not know right from wrong and they lay with their mothers and sisters as they willed. There came a good man with a sword (for this was the days before gunpowder) and discovered this dreadful state of affairs. He awaited his chance, for he was alone, and finally a game of *şari* (possibly from *şara*, *yaşîru*, to return home) gave it to him. This game, the description of which I did not fully understand<sup>a</sup>, appears to be in the nature of Oranges and Lemons. As I understood it there is one party in the house and one outside. A man comes in from outside and if he slaps someone that person has to go out with him, if the intruder is slapped he has to stay in. The losing side calls out “Where is N?” and the winners reply “He is dead”. The Holy man in the course of this game managed to get the men, one by one, outside the house and either to kill them or make them prisoner. His replies were therefore usually truthful. There were so many dead that they put them into a common grave and it is

this grave of which the fallen superstructure shows today. He also inscribed his deeds on a large boulder at the east end of the Bay. This inscription I copied and photographed and M. Wiet kindly looked at it for me and also



Fig. 6. — Close-up of upper half of inscribed stone at Fuqum.

Professor Alan Wace and ‘Abdul-‘Azîz Effendi Marzûq; they have suggested the following reading and translation :

- (1) لا [أ] له الا الله محمد [رسو] ل الله
- (2) اللهم اغفر لمحمد بن عمرو
- (3) بن الخليل الرحا . . . . .
- (4) محمد . . . . .

“There is no god but God, Muḥammad is the Apostle of God. O God, pardon Muḥammad Ibn ‘Amr Ibn al-Khalîl ar-Rag... (or ar-Rah... or ar-Rakh...) . . . . . Muḥammad (?) Muḥammad”.

The stone would therefore be an ordinary tombstone, though the people say there is no grave there but describe the stone as *muqaddas*, "Holy". It could possibly commemorate the grave of the pious man who performed the massacre, but is much more likely to be unconnected with that incident and to have been taken into the story at a later date, a frequent occurrence in folklore, especially in Arabia.

The inscription has since been slightly damaged by the Aden boy scouts. It is in decorative lettering. An Arabist might well be able to read it faced with the stone and given the above clues as to its meaning.

The people attribute the stone circles on the hills to the Himyar and some are certainly so. They do not appear to have any tradition about the equally or more ancient raised beaches.

'Abdullah Hâdi al-Ḥaj, son of the original settler, who, among others, recounted the above story, gave this account of the settlement :

"Long ago our people lived at Wadi Mu'adan and then they came down to Buraïqah. When I first knew it there were about 40 houses in all, and they were all tents. Before my father there were only Bedu on the Island and all fishing was done with hooks, my father was the first to make nets and to teach the others to use them." (This could be true of his own tribe only.) "Later there was a dispute between my father and the others and so he and four houses moved to Fuqum, now look! we are a town. Our position, before we moved, was much improved when the British took the place from 'Abdullah Haidara al-Mahdi'. (According to sources in Buraïqah the Maşfâri settlement was at Ṭaqaiẓ not at Buraïqah.)

RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION play a big part in the people's lives, Buraïqah has four praying places and two mosques. It might not be fair to say that superstition takes a higher place, but it is certainly more understood of the multitude and holds a nearer, warmer place. It is chiefly with this subject that these notes are concerned. There has been lamentably little time to check the various stories and versions and anyone who can give the time to a proper study may find much to correct in details of fact and in the commentary, which is purely tentative. That study should be soon, for the war has done much to weaken the old practices. It has been necessary to make such comment

as is given without a single book of reference to hand, though a recent reading of W. Robinson SMITH, *Kinship and Marriage*, London 1902, has been of much help.

The official religion is Sunni, Shâfi'i. Linked with this is a very strong saint-worship, the big saint of Little Aden being Al-Wâli al-Ġadîr<sup>(1)</sup> and this again is interlocked with Jinn propitiation and worship.

Each Jinn, except the Ma'agiz (miracle-worker) who is in a class by herself, and the Hajjarah, is a servant of the Wâli and in turn has many shayaṭîn to serve her or him. Each has a stone, usually a large square block similar to Allah and Allat of pagan times, which is used as an altar on which the offerings are poured or placed and a strong sweetness blows downwind from this stone. Some Jinns have, or are, also a whole hill or hillock beside which the altar stands. Their relationship to the stone and hill are difficult to grasp, but perhaps no more so than some points of Christian doctrine. The Jinn is the hill, she is the stone, but she is independent of either and may appear under many forms. One person said "The name is the name of the stone for what man can tell the name a Jinn really has with God, God He knows."

The worship of the jinns as might be expected is mainly to bring fish to the fishermen, though personal requests, some bad, some good, are also made.

As so many of them are his followers and as he is the most important being of the peninsula, it is proposed to describe the Wâli first among the spirits.

AL-WÂLI AL-ĠADÎR<sup>(2)</sup>.—The tomb of this Saint is at the opposite end of the bay in which lies Buraiqah. The building which is square with a corbelled dome has also a prayer house on the south side and an ante-chamber south of this. The tomb proper contains the graves of the Wâli and his son. The former, under the silk covering, has the usual wooden box covering. In the east end there is a hole through which can be seen what appears to be a stone sarcophagus without a lid and with a hole, equally at the east end, much worn by hands passing through. The very fine dust which collects inside

<sup>(1)</sup> An example of the part played in their daily lives by the saint is exemplified by a woman who had difficulty with a shop about her sugar supply and interpolated her tirade

with frequent cries of : "The Ġadîr is the Government here."

<sup>(2)</sup> Perhaps for Qadîr, strong. Q and Ġ are often confused in this area.

is much valued as a cure for various ills but only works with the pure in heart<sup>(1)</sup>.

Near the tomb is the Birkat Ġadîr, a water store with a small dome which is filled by dhow to supply drinking and washing water, especially at the time of the festival which takes place soon after mid-summer each year and lasts for two days and nights. (Alternatively it is said always to take place in the month of Ša'bân.) It is held according to the lunar calendar.

The place is in the charge of a Maṣṣab, who is hereditary. The present holder is one 'Abîd Hâdi 'Ali and the following account of the Wâli was obtained from him. The variations were given by a lay inhabitant of Bu-raiqah.

The Maṣṣab's brother Sâlim bin Hâdi is also a servant of the Wâli as are Fâris 'Abdu, Šeiḥ Sâlim 'Alim and 'Awaḍ 'Abdu Šeiḥ. They are all of the Rishaidah tribe who have charge of this Saint. Before the occupation the Rishaidah came down from Bîr Aḥmad to attend to the shrine.

The Maṣṣab has to pay for the transport of the water to the festival and to provide food for the poor and for the band which plays at the festival. In return each visitor contributes something to him. His brother or son sits in the tomb and receives the gifts. Men and women are equally admitted and no objections were raised against Christians entering. The main feature of the festival is the procession of the standard accompanied by dancing and music which finishes with its entry into the tomb accompanied by everyone who can squeeze in. The dancers are *magadîb*, 'the enchanted ones'.

The Wâli's original name was Aḥmad bin Aḥmad az-Za'iliya and his home was at Luhayyah, North of Hudaidah.

<sup>(1)</sup> The Venerable BEDE, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Book IV, chap. III, Trans. Thomas Stapleton, Ed. Phillip Hereford, London 1935, p. 196, referring to St. Ceadda's tomb and the miracles performed there, says, "The place of the sepulchre is covered by a wooden tomb, made like a little house, having a hole in the side, at which they that come thither for devotions' sake are wont to put in their hand and take out some of the dust. The which they put into water

and then give it to drink to sick beasts and men, whereby the grief of the sickness is anon taken away, and they restored to their joyful desired health." Throughout the book there are descriptions of cures by the dust from Holy tombs and sites of martyrdom, by the clothes of dead Saints, and by chips of wood from tombs or memorials of Saints and martyrs. This belief is very widespread and seems to be of very early origin.

One day the 'Aidarûs<sup>(1)</sup> went on the pilgrimage by dhow and when returning to Aden from Mecca he stopped at Luhayyah. In that town he sought hospitality in the house of Aḥmad az-Za'îliya who invited him to enter, killed a sheep in his honour and told his slave to prepare the meal. The slave said "There is no fire-wood" but az-Za'îliya replied "Take straw and plait it and cook the meal." The slave took straw and with his two feet beneath the grill he started to plait it, and by the power of his master the heat rose from his two feet and cooked the mutton. The 'Aidarûs passed through the kitchen and saw the sheep cooking with nothing but the heat rising from the feet of the slave and realised that he was in the house of a really Holy man, but he said nothing when he returned in the reception room. After they had all fed together 'Aidarûs begged permission to leave and when he had received this he begged a parting gift of this host. The host replied "What have I, a poor Bedawi, that I can offer to you, 'Aidarûs al 'Aidarûs?" "You may give me your son Aḥmad". And so Şeiḥ Aḥmad az-Za'îliyah agreed that he might take the boy.

The 'Aidarûs took the boy with him to Aden where he grew up and strengthened in his house and when he had grown, his foster-father gave him a fishing boat, a ḥûri, and he settled on Sîrah Island where he fished for his own consumption and for the house of 'Aidarûs. He married a girl (whose name is not known) and his wife became pregnant and bore him a son.

One day a Sûri<sup>(2)</sup> trader came from Baṣrah with his dhow bringing a cargo of dates which he sold to 'Aidarûs. The trader (whose name is likewise unknown) stayed two months at Ma'alla scraping his ship and then, wishing to return to Sûr, he asked 'Aidarûs for the price of his dates, but the latter had not yet obtained the money from his trading and asked the merchant to wait a little longer, but the latter said that he wished to sail. After much remonstrance he agreed to wait longer while 'Aidarûs collected the money and he let his dhow sail back to Sûr without him.

<sup>(1)</sup> According to legend at Aden the 'Aidarûs lived in the latter half of the xvth century.

<sup>(2)</sup> The distance from Aden to Sûr is 1300 miles. The Sûris are great dhowmen and

pirates. The date trade from the Persian Gulf is of great importance to the people of the Aden area and has probably been so ever since ships could sail the route.

At the end of Ramadan, two days before the 'Īd, 'Aidarūs produced the money, but the merchant wept and said "What shall I do with the money now? Like all men I want to spend the festival with my family and they await me at home". 'Aidarūs replied "Take your money and God willing you will pass the feast at home". The merchant protested that it was far too late for him to reach Sūr for the feast, but 'Aidarūs persuaded him and he took the money and found it to be correct. Then 'Aidarūs said to him "Prepare to depart and at four in the afternoon<sup>(1)</sup> return to me". The merchant did as he was told and 'Aidarūs wrote for him a small note and told him to take this to Aḥmad bin Aḥmad on Sīrah Island. The merchant did as he was told and when Aḥmad read the note he said "You shall be at home for the feast".

They said the sunset prayer together and went down to Aḥmad's hūri (fishing canoe with a sail). The merchant, seeing so small a boat, was afraid, but Aḥmad said "Go on, get into it, place your bundle (containing the money) on your knees and put your face in the bundle and do not look up". The merchant did as he was told and the boat went like lightening to Sūr. They left Aden at six in the evening and were at Sūr at nine at night.

As they entered the harbour, the merchant raised his eyes and recognised his home and his dhow and the ships of his friends and said "It is Sūr, I am home". The hūri glided to the shore and the merchant turned to Aḥmad and invited him to his home, but Šeiḥ Aḥmad said "I cannot do that for I have no permission from the 'Aidarūs to stay". The merchant insisted; nevertheless the Šeiḥ refused and remained in his boat.

All the merchant's friends collected round him at his home and asked him whence he came, and when he replied "from Aden", they asked who brought him and he answered "A certain man". They asked "When did you leave Aden?" and when he told them at six o'clock they were astonished for they knew him to be a truthful man. He said "The man who did this for me is on the shore". All the people determined to have this man for their Šeiḥ and at four in the morning they all went down to the shore and there they saw the boat, but Aḥmad hid himself from them by lying on the bottom. They took a boat to catch him but he left in the hūri like lightening and escaped

<sup>(1)</sup> All times are given according to the European reckoning.

and the Sûris returned disappointed to their homes, and Aḥmad came to Gabal Iḥsân and there he died on the foreshore.

Now, the 'Aidarûs knew in his heart that Aḥmad was dead and that his body was at Gabal Iḥsân, so he told six men to go to Gabal Iḥsân in a dhow and he gave them a *quṣarah* (basketwork bundle) of dates and a pot of ghee (*semnah*) and said "This is for Wâli al-Ġadîr. You will find his body and his hûri on the beach and you will bury him, and the dates and semnah you will distribute to the poor whom you find there".

When the men arrived they found the body lying on the shore already shrouded for burial and the grave already dug by the power of the Wâli. They said to one of the poor "Go to the boat and bring the dates and the semnah for the funeral of the Wâli", but immediately dates appeared scattered all over the rocks and semnah all along the water edge so the Naḥûdah said "Fetch me a cooking pot from the dhow" and he filled this with ghee from the shore and he collected dates from the rocks in his skirt and he left untouched the gift of the 'Aidarûs. They buried the Wâli and returned to Aden, and the naḥûdah returned to the 'Aidarûs his dates and ghee. 'Aidarûs said to him "Why did you not give them to the poor?" and the naḥûdah showed him the other dates and ghee which he had collected and said "The sea brought forth ghee and the rocks brought forth dates".

'Aidarûs told everyone that Aḥmad bin Aḥmad az-Za'îlîyah, buried at Gabal Iḥsân, was a very powerful Şeiḥ and said "You must all trust in his mercy".

All this happened before the building of Buraiqah, perhaps about 300 years ago, but that is only a guess of the Maṣab, who does not read and does not know how long ago it all happened.

When the son of the Wâli died, the 'Aidarûs ordered his burial in his father's tomb.

There are two variations on this story which are perhaps of interest. The Wâli fell out of a hûri and was swallowed by a whale which swam straight to Little Aden and stranded itself on the beach. A man came to cut it open to obtain liver oil<sup>(1)</sup> with which to treat wood and found the body inside and took it out and laid it on the shore. In the night the people saw a great

<sup>(1)</sup> The fishermen take shark's liver oil so that they may see better when fishing at night, an interesting empirical discovery of its vitamin content and consequent properties.

light like a flame rising from the body and they approached it and it said "I am Aḥmad bin Aḥmad az-Za'īlīyah". The reason Aḥmad died was because the merchant denied him in saying only "A certain man". (The maṣṣab says no, it was just the will of God.)<sup>a</sup>

The Wāli has a spiritual army officered by five or more *ṣayātīn* (devils, but probably 'spirits' should be read), each of whom has innumerable lesser spirits under his or her command. These officers are also freely referred to as Jinns. They are discussed in detail below. Their names are ad-Dirbah, al-Girf or Abu Qiyāma, Ku'abain, ar-Rādiyah and perhaps also as-Salil al-Kabīr, and Naqīli. Buraiqah may also have been of this party before she was quarried away.

Should a man in a fit of rage speak evil of the Wāli, the Wāli sends a soldier devil who enters into the person and drives him mad. His relatives then send for the maṣṣab who holds the sick man's little finger in a bent position and then the devil cries out and tells what wrong the person has done. The maṣṣab then says "Who are you?" and the devil replies by his name and says by which officer he was sent. Then the maṣṣab says "That is enough, Go!", but the devil replies "I want sweets" (sometimes he asks just for sugar). The maṣṣab replies "All right, you shall have it, only leave this man". The devil then asks if it is really the maṣṣab speaking and upon being reassured he comes forth, leaving the man in good health, and the man does not know what has happened to him. Afterwards sweets are thrown on the altar (the Arabic word meant only "place" but see pp. 200-201) of the officer to whose regiment this devil belongs, and in the night they are taken by the devil.

On festival days the first offering is made to the Wāli and then offerings are sent all round to his Jinn officers "just as you eat first and your servants eat what remains". There is no particular person specified to carry to each jinn, but the maṣṣab directs one of those present to bear the offerings.

It is extremely dangerous to make any obscene suggestion during the festivities of the Wāli or at any time in the neighbourhood of his tomb. One man who winked at a woman during the 'Īd has been blind in that eye ever since. Another time a man led a woman away for illicit sexual intercourse and the couple fell to the ground senseless and were smitten together.

The manşab came and put a sheet over them. Later, he draped the *bairaq* (flag) round the culprit over his right shoulder and asked him if he repented. The man did so and having promised a gift they were released from their shame.

*Ad-Dirbah* appears to mean “She of the Obscene Tongue”. She is a rounded rocky outcrop about thirty feet high sloping back from the sea. The altar is a natural, roughly cubical stone on the south side on which the offerings are poured. She also had a mustarah which has been despatched to the British Museum. (See note 1 on p. 205). The Jinniḡah has been reported to have been seen under the following forms :—a woman dressed all in black “like the Englishwoman’s ghost which walks Telegraph Bay at Aden”, like a dog, like a sheep four times human size with a human face and one forefoot missing<sup>a</sup>. She is the only one of the Wāli’s officers who has been seen. She can be made to appear by a certain woman about whom it was difficult to obtain information and whom I suspect of being the mother of my informant. On these occasions the woman herself becomes transformed, her mouth spreads from ear to ear, her eyes become like balls of fire, and her breasts hang down below her navel. She is so terrifying that you look away and when you look back she has gone and you see the normal woman again. The fact of this “medium” being in mourning was given as the reason why I could not be shown this.

According to one story, when the various manşabs and manşûbât assemble for a festival, after a period of dancing they can call upon any one of the spirits, who then possesses any woman present, either in the congregation or among the manşûbât<sup>b</sup>, and so appears to everyone. This also I could not see, probably as I was insufficiently known to the people of Buraiqah. This would seem to be a witches sabbath.

*Ad-Dirbah* is said to be the particular charge of the Da’isi who arrived at Little Aden later than the other peoples. The manşab is said to be Şāliḡ bin Nāsir of Sūr, and ar-Rādiah is also in his care—but this information is from one source only.

*Al-Girf or Abu Qiyâma*. *Al-Girf* is a sandstone rock belonging to the fossilized dunes referred to above. It is also locally the generic name for this stone (C. A. *Jurâf*, soil brought down by the torrent). *Abu Qiyâma* (The

Redeemer)<sup>a</sup> is the hill at the foot of which this stone stands. The military recently built a small hut on the top of al-Girf. According to one story they suffered much illness until they moved away. According to another it was decided that they were doing no harm but the contrary as they gave drinks of water to people passing that way. There is some doubt as to whether this jinn is in the charge of the Rašidi or the Maşfari, probably because the latter appear to have lived nearby before they moved to Fuqum. ‘Abîd Hâdi ‘Ali, manşab of the Wâli is also manşab of the Girf. I did not inspect the site of this jinn at close quarters.

*Al-Ku‘abain.* (The name means the two firm breasts)<sup>b</sup>. It is situated at the foot of a rocky promontory. It is said to have been a stone of girf about 4' × 2'6" × 2'6". It has recently been broken and removed by an Arab contractor for stone. It is said that he knew perfectly well what it was but took it because it was conveniently near the sea. The site is still visited, however, and there were tracks of three visitors on the day I visited the Ṭaqaiz. It is said that the sand moves up and down on the shore of its own accord. (The description given would tally with sand moving over gas escapes as at Little Vesuvius.) The following story seems to show that the site is one of the entries to the underworld of the jinns.

It is said that one ‘Ali am<sup>(1)</sup>-Hasûn goes to the rocks at night and talks to his friend ‘Ali am-Haddu (?) who is held prisoner by the jinns. I questioned him about this and he stated that about twenty years ago “‘Ali am Haddu was fishing and he was the best of fishermen and swimmers. In the morning his hûri was found floating empty in the midst of the circle of his nets. He had been taken by jinns. He could not have been eaten by a shark since such an accident could not happen without leaving some trace in the nets. He was searched for by the police and all the men of the village but no trace of him was found. I have never heard his voice, that is a lie, but I have been with the other fishermen to Ku‘abain and there we have heard the jinns and the beating of drums when there was no man there”. (Whatever they hear, or think they hear, it is unlikely to be an echo as they are familiar with this phenomenon.)

<sup>(1)</sup> In Southern Arabia the definite article *al* is often pronounced *am*.

The manṣab is Sâlim Huwaidi, and Ku'abain is in the charge of the Muqâwar (or Muqwari) who were *ra'iyah* of the 'Aqârib, but it is said to be tended by Şâlih bin Nâsir.

*Ar-Râdiah*. Is this spirit a poltergeist? (Perhaps "The Willing One" or more probably "The Wicked One"). The altar is not a cubical block but a stretch of flat sloping rock on the foreshore, washed by the sea. The



Fig. 7. — 'Ud al-Ma'agiz, with quarried face of Ar-Râdiah in background.

prominence is now being quarried away. The 'Âqil said "all our rocks are being ruined, but what can we do? It is the Government". However I am sure that feeling is not strong in the matter.

It is possible that ar-Râdiah is dead, "since a man was once quarrying stone there and all at once blood ran, though there was no man, and this is the sign of a jinn, that there is blood and no man". The form of the jinnîyah is unknown but she makes her presence felt by throwing stones at passers-by. She also is said to be in the charge of the Da'îsi.

*At-Taqaiz*. (Presumably a Himyari name). This is a girl stone, probably formed on the foreshore as there is much sea-shell in it. It is only about

2' × 18" × 0'. Four red, volcanic, roughly cubic stones are slightly below it at the foot of a small slope and it is said that these surrounded it until children rolled them away. The stone stands in the midst of an old strand-looper site with sherds, a quantity of broken stone, and much shell broken into very small pieces.

It belongs to the Maşâfrah, who lived in this area before they went to Fuqum, but it is said to be looked after by Şâlih bin Nâsir. No-one knows if it is a jinn or a jinnîyah, or what form it has. The Maşâfrah say that when they arrived they were told by the Bedu about it and "followed in their tracks".

*Buraiqah* was a jinnîyah, a rocky head<sup>a</sup> between the present village and ar-Râdiah. She was quarried away to build modern Aden and has now been forgotten by all but the oldest men and *Buraiqah* is taken to be the name of the village. It is a reasonable guess that she was also an officer of the Wâli (The name might mean "Little Lightening" or "Little Shining One").

*As-Salîl al-Kabîr* is an island rock. Nothing further was discovered about it, except that it is or contains a Jinn. (The name means "The Big Island".)

*An-Naqîli* is a rock between ad-Dirbah and the Wâli and is said to be a servant of the Wâli. He was also described in English as a "standby for the Wâli" and the name appears to be connected with transposition or transformation.

In pre-war days the village would jointly subscribe about Rs. 50 (£ 3-15-0) for dates, sugar, etc. for offerings to all the jinns. Nowadays food is too expensive and difficult to get and the jinns are dying for lack of food and the fishing correspondingly poor.

One old man was sceptical on the subject and said that in the beginning there were no jinns, these were all invented by old women. (But see the same old man's account of the fire jinns on p. 215.)

*Al-Hajjarah*, though not a servant of the Wâli, may fittingly be mentioned here. The name probably means a female of the Hajjûr<sup>b</sup>, who are a black-skinned people found in many parts of the Protectorate and thought to be either African immigrants or original negrito stock. (Can there be any connection with Hagar the mother of Ismael?) One person only mentioned casually that this was the first jinn. She has an altar about 4' high by 3' square, at the base of Gabal Ahḍar on the east side. The altar is darkly

stained over a great part of its surface from the offerings and I saw date stones and withered herbs upon it together with fat which had been dropped hot and had congealed. The sweet smell from the sugar is carried down wind some distance. This jinnīyah belongs to the 'Abīd (Hajjūr) who, in the village, are said to be descendants of slaves. Aḥmad ibn Ninga is the present manṣūbah. He is the son of 'Alīyah bint Ḥāmis, who was manṣūbah till her death.

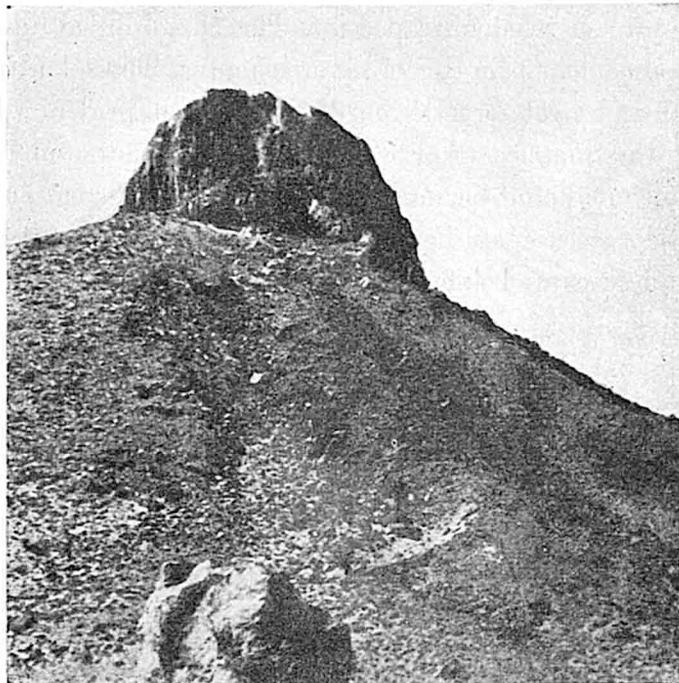


Fig. 8. — General view of Al-Hajjarah altar and Volcanic cone (Gabal Alḥḍar).

*Al-Ma'agiz* is the most important jinnīyah of the area and is entirely independant of the Wāli. The name seems to mean "Miracle Worker". According to her followers she is Šarīfah and Šeiḥah of a group of *šayāṭīn* who belong to God. According to the Gūḥulah, her manṣūbah, she is older than the Wāli, but no-one knows how old. Before the Prophet? After the Prophet? God, He knows. One man placed her capture in the time of Šāliḥ Sa'īd, only two generations ago, but an older man who knew Šāliḥ called this absurd and said that it was Šāliḥ Sa'īd's grandfather, while a still

older man said she was brought originally from Waht—"in the beginning" This is the story of her capture.

In the beginning there was no Ma'agiz. One day a man went fishing in Little Aden. He made a praying place in the sand, prayed and started back, carrying his fish to sell in Bîr Aḥmad. On the way he saw a 'jinniyah' walking with her sister. Her breasts were thrown over her shoulders and she was fluffing up her hair, so she did not see him and he flung his arms round her and captured her. Her sister escaped into the sea. He tied her up and took her home and shut her up in one of his two houses, where he gave her sugar and dates. Then he got a camel and tied her up behind him and went all around among the Sumûrat (thorn trees) and told her that she must choose her tree and he would shut her up in it. She chose a tree and there he took her food and clothes. Then he arranged a festival for her at which she is offered food and sugar and dates and clothes and a sheep. The tree is near Bîr Am-Duraimiyah.

It was found that the Ma'agiz had a husband Muṣaibah<sup>a</sup> (C. A. The Little Ghost) who was secretly visiting her in her tree. One day the people drove his camel away and caught him and put him in another tree nearby where offerings are also brought, sugar and dates and grapes. (I have given the list of offerings as given me each time but I think the additions and omissions are entirely casual and arbitrary on the part of the teller.)

One day, four of the Aqârîb of as-Sailah came and cut down the tree of the Ma'agiz and carried it away for firewood, so she killed all four.

To-day there is a small shrine built of wood (which I have not seen) called the 'Aṣā' or 'Iṣwah which is on or near the site of the tree, probably the latter. It contains a hollow volcanic stone called the *mustarah* or *sittâr*. The whole is called a *mazâr* and the festivals *ziârat*. Connected with the cult there are also standards with red and white flags called *bairaq*, a drum (*ṭabalah*), and a kettle ("kitli") in which the coffee is made. It is specifically stated that this particular kettle be used. Prior to the introduction of kettles a pottery *dallah* was used for this purpose.

At Buraïqah there is an 'Ud (pole) in the sand dune above the village and this is a *naqbah* as opposed to the 'Aṣā'. If the Ma'agiz visits this then no man can pass near it at night without his hair standing on end, it is so ter-

rifying. A few days after the *‘Īd al-Adḥah*, the *‘Ūd* was seen to have a new Bairaḡ of green and white material, and hot fat had been poured on the ground below it. The house of the *manṣūbah* in *Šeiḡ ‘Uṭmān* is also a *mazār* which enables her to hold festivals and to work her miracles at home; a convenience to herself and to those in need of healing. The Bairaḡ are kept at

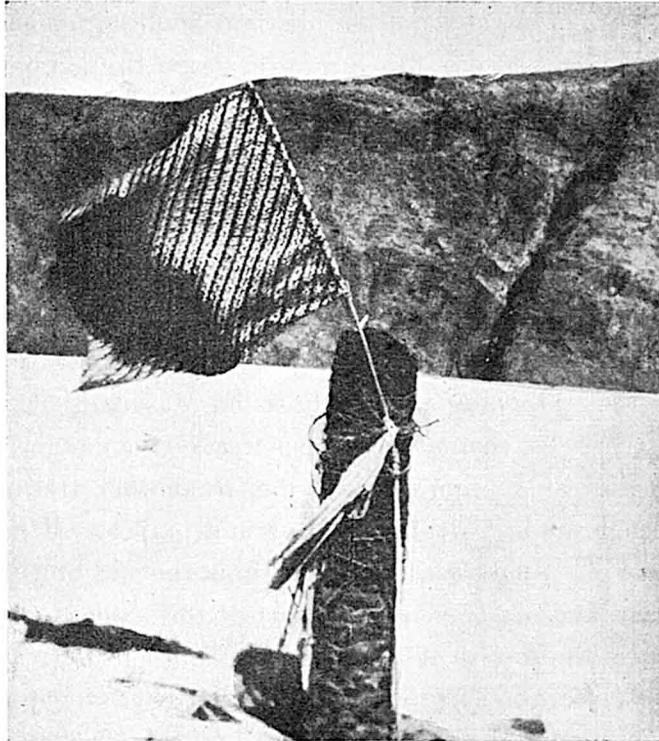


Fig. 9. — *‘Ūd al Ma‘agiz*, with *Gabal Iḥsān* in background.

her house together with the *ṭabalah* and *kitli*, though a flag flies at the *‘Aša* and the *naḡlah*.

The present *manṣūbah* is Maryam bint Muḡammad Ṣāliḡ Sa‘īd Bailūl al-Hinaidi, called al-Ġūḡalah; the succession has been Ṣāliḡ Sa‘īd, Muḡammad Ṣāliḡ his son, then ‘Ali Bailūl, Ṣāliḡ’s nephew, then Matrah abu Ṣāliḡ and Ḥaḡrah abu Ṣāliḡ, Ṣāliḡ’s daughters acting conjointly, and finally Ṣāliḡ’s granddaughter Maryam. According to the *Ġūḡalah*, all *manṣabs* are called *Ġūḡal* and the first of all was ‘Ali *Ġūḡal*. Others say that Muḡammad was

the first to be called al-Ġūḥal, but are totally unable to give the reason or the meaning of the word. In classical Arabic Ġuḥûl means lizard, scarab, or queen bee, Ġuḥâl means venom<sup>a</sup>. One of the other client tribes of the 'Aqârib (now moved to Hiswah) is the Ahl Ji'alân, "The People of the Scarab".

The appointment appears always to pass in one family and the Ma'agiz belongs to the Hinaidi tribe. However, the new manşab is chosen at a *ziârah* by the inspiration of the congregation. Some people have tried to stake a claim to the position, but this has not been admitted. The successor may be chosen while the manşab is still alive<sup>b</sup>.

The only initiation ceremony to which the manşûbah would admit was that her aunt took her by the wrist and said "Now you are the manşab". Apart from presiding at the festivals of the Ma'agiz, and taking care of the shrine, the main activity of the Ġūḥalah is healing, in which capacity she is known as a *Zâr*. She neither foretells the future nor hunts out thieves. (The only people locally reputed for fortune-telling are the Danaqils of Somaliland.) The Ġūḥalah heals by spitting or blowing on the affected part. The healing force is that of Allah and the Ma'agiz and she says "Oh God! Oh! Ma'agiz! heal this man and give him good health". The sick man promises certain gifts to the Ma'agiz in the event of being cured. When healed he brings these to the Ma'agiz. Apart from a present for herself they include dates, etc. and these are thrown into the air in the *mazâr* and disappear, being caught and carried off by the *şayatîn* soldiers<sup>c</sup>.

It appears that there is some degree of incarnation of the Ma'agiz in the Ġūḥalah who is sometimes herself referred to as the Ma'agiz and sometimes as the Jinniyah or the Şaitanah. In this connection it seems that the Ma'agiz sometimes appears to persons by way of possession of the Ġūḥalah, a phenomenon which is probably produced after a long period of dancing. It is said that she only has to call the Ma'agiz and the latter is bound to come to her at once wherever she may be. The Ma'agiz can, however, appear independently. The village 'Âqil of Buraiqah, 'Abdullah Aḥmad Faraj, told me that she had appeared to him once when he was in bed. She grasped the lintels of his door and he was terrified and called out "Ya Ġadîr, Ya Ġadîr!" Her face was so terrifying that he cannot describe it. Despite this cry there does not appear to be any antagonism between the cults. The manşabs are friendly

and related by marriage. The Ġūḥalah was at first most anxious to stress the fact that everything she did was done by the power of Allah.

There is a great annual festival, temporarily suspended during the war, which is held at Duraimiyyah when the first dates arrive from Baṣrah — the most popular season for all these festivities. It is attended by persons from all round. The Ġūḥalah takes the drum, kettle and flags there and provides a sheep (*kabšah*) and food and drink to the attendants. The coffee having been made in the kettle it is poured into the *mustarah* or *siṭṭar*<sup>(1)</sup> as an offering to the Ma'agiz and the Ġūḥalah stirs it with her finger before the others can drink<sup>(2)</sup>. Afterwards, the members of the "manṣabian" family drink and then the public. The Ma'agiz must be fed before the others may eat. I have been unable to discover if any meat is given to her, either as a burnt offering or otherwise, though the sheep which is eaten by those present is obviously a sacrifice in origin. It is said that the people eat dates, sugar, sweets, meat and rice "all mixed up" and never feel ill.

The feast lasts two days and nights, during which there is *li'ab*, literally play, but locally dancing. Men and women dance together but if any person makes an indecent suggestion he will fall senseless to the ground or have violent pains, such as cramp in the stomach<sup>a</sup>. It seems that the dances are the same that are used on other occasions, except for the *Tana'as*<sup>b</sup> which can only be danced by the Ġūḥalah. They are done at weddings and practically any occasion which will provide an excuse. They are less frequent now, largely owing to puritanical influences working against the participation of women. One man said to me "It is much more pleasing to dance with a woman on either arm" and I cannot but agree with him.

The following are the dances which I witnessed myself. There are many others, such as the *gibbah*, which may, however, not be associated with the

<sup>(1)</sup> The stone is *muqaddas*, Holy, and if it were not for the name *siṭṭar* it would be tempting to regard *mustarah* as an error for *mastarah*, derived from *sarra* and having reference either to the mysteries or to the navel-like shape of the stone. It is only possible to guess why the stone should be called "butcher". The local meaning of 'Aṣa' or 'Iṣwah is shrine.

The origin of very many local words lie in Himyaritic. The name *Duraimiyyah* probably refers to the abundance of hares in the region.

<sup>(2)</sup> Fifty years ago, when my father accompanied the Governor on visits to Protectorate rulers, as a special honour, the Sultān would stir the Governor's coffee with his thumb—the nail of which was usually in mourning.

Ma'agiz and dances vary much from district to district. I am sorry that I am not able to reproduce or to describe accurately the music. It is by no means easy to catch even the time, so varied and highly syncopated is the drumming. Moreover, in the *raqilah* at least, there are three cross rhythms working, the singer, the drummer, and the whistling of the dancers. This makes what would otherwise be quite a simple dance, fairly difficult for the beginner.

During all the dances members of the audience clap in time to the drums and a spectator will sometimes step along in front of the dancers, leaning forward and clapping hard with his hands in front of his face. This is done to add fire to the dance.

All the time there is the usual *pagaïe* of people stopping and starting and lighting cigarettes and ordering the crowd of children back with a loud voice, thereby intimidating, purely temporarily, some of the smallest girls.

1. *Raqilah*. Men and women alternately (or men only) dance in a line. The two outer dancers salute inwards. The dance consists of two hops up and down on each foot alternately. The knees are brought up high at the beginning and the end. The line sometimes forms into a circle at the end of the dance. Each person holds his neighbours by the waist. As they dance, the dancers make a sort of whistling noise, half way between a whistle and the noise of a train, thus : —Tchi-Tcheee-tchu-tchu, tchi-TCHEEE-tchu-tchu, and it is time to this that the dancing takes place. The time appears to be 8/8. (C. A., *raqala* = to march quickly.)

2. *Haqfah*. Similar, but the dancers descend to a squatting position and jump right up again. The dancers approach the drummer at the end and sometimes wind into a circle. Men only, I think. Music apparently the same as No. 1. (The name is Zabidi.)

3. *Muzaridi*. Two men dance round facing each other, squatting down and flinging their legs out in the manner of Russian dancers. As they do this, they clasp their hands under the thighs, just above the knee. It is said that it can be danced with daggers. Time 6/8, no singing. (C. A. *zarada* = to tie a cord.)

4. *Šarraḥ*. Two men dance side by side, then opposite each other, then circling round. The steps are a straight run of three or four steps, one or

two chasses and a hop turn, but they can be much varied, sometimes a man chasses completely round the ring or back and forth. The song is different from Nos. 1 and 2. The time appears to be 8/8 but is sometimes broken. (C. A. *šarraḥ*, to be happy.)

5. *Dihaiḥ*. Two lines face each other and advance forward stamping their heels in front of them. A man dressed as a woman dances out into the middle and whirls round. Time 8/8. (Origin of name Himyarite?).

6. *Al-ʿArūsah ʿala muḥanna*. All the dancers form one line in a semi-circle or circle round the drummer. Music and song apparently similar to the Raqilah. The title would seem to refer to the decoration of the bride with henna at the wedding.

7. *Zīr*. A woman squats down with a cloth over her head and holds the forward part of this so that two points are formed looking rather like horns. She sways from side to side and then finally rises up still waving the horns. The steps are difficult to see. Time 8/8. The title means “the wooer”.

8. *Tanaʿaš<sup>a</sup>*. A dance done only by the Ġūḥala (at least at festivals when she is present, it may perhaps be done by other manṣūbāt or manṣabs at their festivals). The dark and the crowd made it impossible to see the steps, nor would I care to guess at the time, the drumming was so furious. (C. A. to lift someone up from the ground, said of God.)

There is a local dance, the *Zubīri*, which is performed at the festival of the Wāli al-Ġadīr as well as on other occasions. It is danced by a man and a woman side by side, advancing and retreating, rising and falling, and usually leaning backwards as they dance. The right forearm and hand of the man are linked with the left of the woman. Sometimes they separate and dance towards and around each other. The woman in the dance appears to be always a professional, but any man in the crowd joins her as her partner.

It was stated that though the music is traditional the words are always improvised for the occasion. It is said that in the old days there were verses that could kill people; these would be the well-known Higa.

*Šeiḥ Abu Ḥabān<sup>b</sup>*. The Arab name for Square Island, to the East of Gabal Iḥsān, in the harbour mouth, is Abu Ḥabān and on it is the bairaq of Šeiḥ

Abu Ḥabān. (C. A. *Haba*, to drag oneself along the ground on the belly (of a child) or to slip along the ground before reaching the target (of an arrow.)

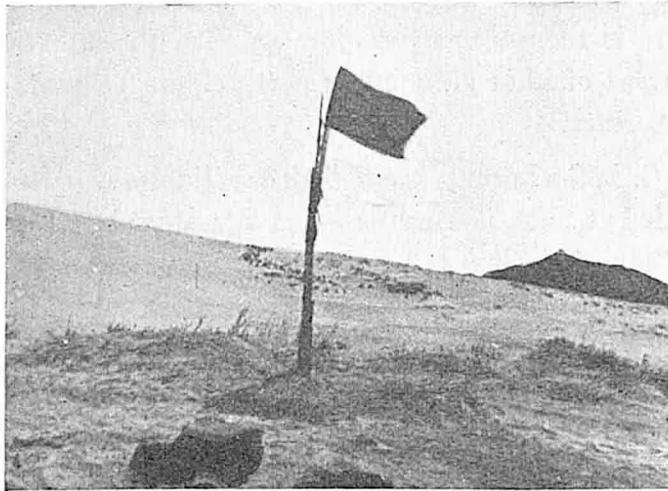


Fig. 10. — Somali man and woman dancing the Zubiri at the fete of Šeiḥ Aḥmad ben 'Alī.

There is no Arabic root Ḥabāna. The form here, probably Himyarite, obviously means “snakes”). He was a Šeiḥ who lived long ago on the Island

and his tomb is there. He is the Master of Snakes. According to my informant an English soldier was bitten by a snake there, but the troops bought the Šeiḥ a new flag and tended his grave and all the snakes have gone.

I was unable to visit this site to see if there really is a grave of some local Saint Patrick or if it is simply the shrine of an ancient snake god. The man who gave me the above information also stated that snakes are more dangerous in the water than out of it and sometimes they get into dhows but never stay



*‘Īd of Mušimmir, between Hajjarah and Ma’agiz. Note bones and burnt stones.*

there. They can be killed by shooting at them with a revolver with the eyes shut and God will direct the bullet to the snake “like a depth-charge to a submarine”.

*Al-Mušimmir* (C. A. *Šammara*, to draw up the sleeves or to gird oneself) stands on the East side of a small recent cemetery of about twenty graves, North of the dune on which stands *Buraiqah*. It is a simple red and white *Bairaq*. *Al-Mušimmir* is said to be a Šeiḥ and a Wâli. The site is just across the Wadi from *Al-Hajjarah* and when I visited it just after the ‘Īd al-*Aḍḥah* the *Bairaq* was new. On the North were animal bones from a recent meal and three stones on which a fire had been made. It was explained to me that the fire had been made by children playing there and that dogs

had carried the bones down from the village, yet there is no kindling anywhere nearer than the village and it is difficult to see why the children should have come so far; moreover the bones showed no signs of having been gnawed. People do not cook meals in the open on Little Aden since no place is more than 1 ½ hours from the nearest village.

A Saint of this name is known elsewhere in the Arabic World.

*Šeiḥ Al-Makhârma* and *Šeiḥ Al-Bailûl* have their tombs close together on the Fuqum road about a mile from Buraïqah. Haidara Muḥammad, a Ḥakimi from Šeiḥ Sa'îd is their manṣab as they are *šâmi* (lit. a Syrian but locally anyone living west of Khûr al-Amîra or north of the Yemen). They have a festival and offerings.

*Am-Nawâb* (C. A. the Regent) is a Šeiḥah or a Jinnîyah. Her home is given as in the north but there is a naqbah near Bîr Aḥmad or Bîr Duraimiyah. She has a manṣûba who lives at Buraïqah called Fuṭaimah bint 'Abdullah bin Šâliḥ of the Rišaidah. Her father was the previous manṣab and is buried near the Wâli al-Ġadîr. She is the strongest *zâr* (healer) of the neighbourhood and is very powerful. At one time my informant started to tell me that she was the most powerful of all the manṣabs and that if a festival could be arranged with her all the *šayaṭîn* could be called up. Enquiries from others produced meagre information or else they professed complete ignorance including the Ġûḥalah to whom she must be related and very well known. My informant also later did everything to avoid answering questions about her and claimed that she was just a healer. There was certainly great reluctance and fear connected with her, far stronger than any connected with the Ġûḥalah. At a guess I would say she is the leading witch of the district.

*Ḥagar u 'Ûd*. This is a pile of stones about 3' high by 6' in diameter which stands on the south of the pass from Fuqum to al-Wâli al-Ġadîr, roughly south of the east end of Gabal Muzalqum. Each passer-by must throw a stone on it as he passes and say "Insh'allah fi kull sanah ḥagar wa na'ûd" (D. V. every year a stone and we will return') or according to one informant "...sanah na'ûd wa Rabbi an-nâs"<sup>a</sup> ("year we will return, by the Lord of the people"). All are unanimous that there is neither jinn nor šeiḥ nor tomb—only ḥagar wa 'ûd! The meaning appears to be "stone (v. a.) and

return” and by implication “forget and die”. The absence of any pole, though these exist at so many shrines, seems to eliminate this meaning for ‘Ūd. Šeiḥs tombs on which passers throw stones are a well-known phenomenon throughout the Near East, and also cairns to which well-disposed persons add stones so that travellers will not lose the track. These sometimes have names according to their shapes. This seems to be a sort of half way house between the two.

*Šeiḥ Sa’d* has a nabqah and ‘Ūd, about 50 yards inland from the inscribed stone at Fuqum to which leads a well-worn path. This was only erected about 1908 by the manṣab of the shrine at Dīs who visited Fuqum and instructed them to erect it. He is said to have lived long, long ago at Dīs. If the fishing harvest is successful then he is rewarded by the sacrifice of a ram and some rice etc., but if the harvest is poor, he gets no festival. There is dancing at his fête. It may be noted that Sa’d is a known pre-Islamic pagan deity (V. Roberston СМГН, *op. cit.*, p. 44 footnote).

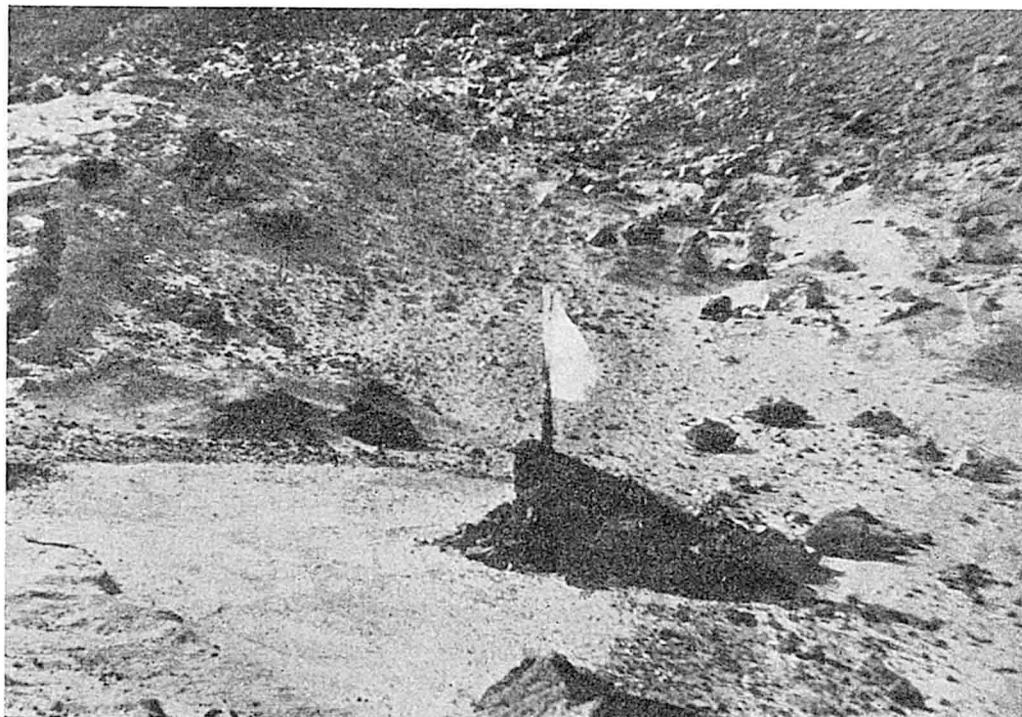
There are two minor Šeiḥs at Fuqum, ‘Awaḍ Muḥammad and another, who died in fairly recent times and whose details I did not record.

*Al-Qabḥa* (C. A. “The ugly, detestable, abominable or hideous one”). This is the shrine of a man who died only five or six years ago and is buried near the Wāli. When alive he was a man of low caste, a servant of the Āl am-Ḥusain who live beyond Rās ‘Imrân. The shrine is placed on the site of his house. It consists of a grass and matting hut, recently repaired, about 10’ in diameter and about equal height, inside which is a slab built of stone and plaster, about 6’ long and 3’ wide by 2’ high. It had been broken up some time ago by Maḥmūd Târiš and others, who said it was a false shrine, and has since been roughly repaired. Beside it was found a small plain pottery incense burner, like those of Roman Egypt, with a piece of incense charcoal in it.

Each time this man is mentioned the villagers laugh shame-facedly. Some of them said it would be a great blessing if I was interested in such things if I would take it all away. But this attitude has not stopped its recent repair. The villagers visit and push their offerings into the sand by the slab, where they are obviously eaten by crabs. Some small empty baskets were seen

lying about the shrine. It seems as if this wizard works mostly for evil though love potions can be made from the dust of the shrine which will reconcile husband and wife as well as draw together lovers. It is said that he can stop the milk in a mother's breast and I gather he is employed more for curses than blessings.

There remain a few miscellaneous Šeiḥs, jinns, and other marvels of the



Nagbah and 'Ūd of Šeiḥ Sa'd.

neighbourhood to mention briefly before discussing the possible implications of the above beliefs. One or two of the following notes do not necessarily bear on the general problem but have been added by way of record. The list is incomplete even for the peninsula of Aden.

*Al-Wāli sīd 'Umar al-Ḥabašī<sup>a</sup>*. An important local shrine of very recent origin, as there are living at Buraiqah persons who carried him to his tomb.

*Abu Harbah* (the Father of a javelin). His grave is near Hiswa and consists of nothing but a flat shield-shaped grave on the ground. He has however a *ṭabala* said to be of great antiquity which was presented to the *Šeiḥ* at *Sûr* during his travels. When he was far away he fell ill and flung his javelin into the air and said “Bury me where it falls” and it fell at Hiswa and he was



General view of shrine of Al-Qabiḥ.

buried there. I could find no information about the present whereabouts of the javelin. If the drum is given a gift of money it can be heard for miles but otherwise it only makes a faint noise. The drum was seen but not tested<sup>a</sup>.

*Šeiḥ Abu Riḥân Šāhib al-Wādi*. His tomb is at Aden in the *Wādi* beyond *Moršag*. Long ago there lived a Saint in the *Wādi* and his friends asked him how they were to know his successor. He said that a man would come in a dhow and would wash his body and that a green bird would then settle in his hair and this man was to be his successor. A little while afterwards

an Ethiopian came over and became the Saint's disciple and when the Saint died he washed his body and all came about as the dead man had predicted. The disciple is Abu Riḥān. (The name could be translated Saint Basil of the Valley.)

*Sīdi Hāsīm of Šeiḥ 'Uṭmān<sup>a</sup>* died in recent years. He is on the way to becoming an important Šeiḥ and his festival is celebrated four days after



Hiswa village.

the festival of the sacrifice. He is said by those who knew him to have been a great jester in his lifetime.

*Šeiḥ Abu 'Alī* has the same manṣab as Abu Riḥān. He is believed in only by fishermen. His shrine is at the foot of the path up Sirah Island and his festival is at the time of the arrival of the first dates from Baṣrah.

*'Abdullah bin Ḥasan* is a very powerful Šeiḥ whose tomb is on the Aden side of Laḥaj<sup>b</sup>. He cannot bear that any Sultans—that is members of reigning families—should go near his tomb and if they venture they must dismount a mile away. He has two stones and persons of legitimate birth can walk between them, but those whose mothers were unfaithful are trapped by the two stones drawing together and catching their feet. The manṣab can make a fire of big logs and when these are flaming and red hot he piles them up

against himself and stands in the midst without being burnt. Neither the site nor the manşab was seen by the writer.

*The Door of Hell.* This existed on the top of Sîrah Island before the Fort was built there and it is said that smoke used to come out of it. The same old man who swore that all the jinns in Little Aden were old wives' tales said that he had seen five fire jinns jump into the well when the fort was being built by the British and anyone who says he did not is a liar; they were white, green, yellow, red and black respectively. Many people say that if a rope were lowered down the shaft it came up burnt. It may well be that some slight volcanic activity survived into historical times, and during excavations near Şeih 'Utmân village a thin, burnt level was found 2 metres down in the clay, which seems to be the result of the last, feeble eruption. The Door of Hell is mentioned in the XIIIth century by Yâqûz, *Geographical Dictionary*.

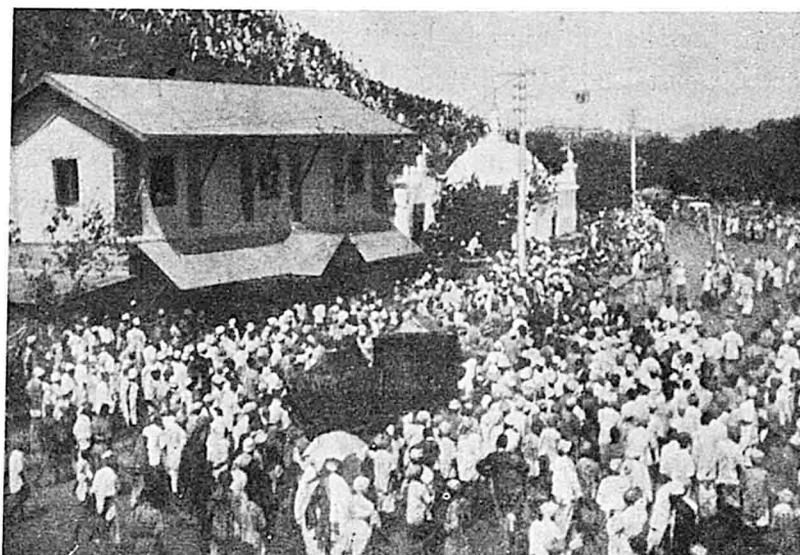
*Miscellaneous Jinns.* Before the British came to Aden there was a jinn on top of Şemsân which made a net and cast it into the sea from there and pulled up the fish. The mark of the net, it is said, can be seen on the top of the mountain to this day. (An officer reported to me that one of the peaks of Şemsân has an altar on top with steps leading up to it.)

Râs 'Imrân, the next volcanic peninsula westwards from Little Aden, is full of jinns, especially the parts that are islands at high tide, so much so that no-one can go there alone unless he be an eater of pork. If a man so ventures, he hears the jinns calling him "Oh N! Oh N!" and if he answers, he is carried off or else drops down dead at the sight of them. At night they can be heard mopping and mowing. They are reputed to be hideous with very long arms. About five years ago a man was carried off and was found three days later on top of the mountain<sup>a</sup>. The people of Râs 'Imrân are not afraid of them as they themselves are descended from jinn, being *Mogadiş*.

About thirteen years ago a man appeared on the shore near Fuqum and his hair and beard were down to his waist and his nails were six inches long and his pubic hair was down to his knees. He had been held captive by the jinn for fifteen years in their underground caves. There, he said, they have all that we have, women and camels and sheep, trees and streams, but all their beasts and themselves are black. He learned when prisoner that when

a man is fishing there are two jinns, one inside and one outside the net, one frightening the fish in and the other scaring them out. If God is with the fisherman the outer jinn wins, otherwise the inner one wins and the catch is lost. The man is said to have been carried away from his home in the mountains where he has since returned.

*Rainmaking.* There was a Šeiḥ in the Yemen who prayed to God to bring rain. He always played on an ‘Ūd (lute) and some people said that



Procession of Šeiḥ Aḥmad ben ‘Ali of Tawahi.

this offended God. One Šeiḥ in particular attacked him so he arranged a challenge contest. The other Šeiḥ prayed but produced no rain. The lute player, however, playing all the time on his lute, prayed to God and thunder sounded overhead and the rain poured on the countryside.

*Trial by Ordeal.* There is a man who feeds to the suspected persons bread which sticks in the throat of the thief. There is a man with a water skin which he hands round to each to blow into in turn, but, when it comes to the guilty man, it is the skin which blows into him so that his belly swells up and he confesses. Another method is to sit round a nail driven into the ground and

an Arab sandal is spun round on the nail and comes to rest pointing at the guilty person<sup>a</sup>.

*As-Sayyid aš-Šarīf Bubakr bin ‘Abdullah al-‘Aidarūs of Aden* is the biggest saint of the neighbourhood and has a large mosque attached to his tomb. His history has mostly kindly been given to me by as-Sayyid Muḥammad ‘Aidarūs bin Sa‘īd ‘Abdullah ‘Aidarūs al-‘Aidarūs, the present representative of the line. It is hoped to publish it later when it has been properly translated. It is lengthy and not of particular relevance to the present subject.

#### CONCLUSIONS.

Incomplete as the above data may be, it still seems worth while to make some tentative comment, though this must be hypothetical and is rendered very incomplete by the absence of books of reference.

The first probability that emerges clearly is that there are present two, or more probably three stages of religion, successfully integrated as long as there is no intrusion of wahhabi puritan influence from without to sow doubt in people's minds.

At the top is Islam, and the position of Allah in relation to the other spirits may be compared with that of the Governor to the ‘Âqil. Of course Allah is incomparably greater, more admirable and more powerful than all the others, but he is equally remote and unattainable.

However, there are the men who showed His power and through whom He worked when they were alive and, though dead, their spirits are more powerful than any other spirits and infinitely more within reach than God himself.

On the third level are the jinns and jinnîyât who, though less powerful, and much less good and respectable, are really close to the people and can be seen and talked to and even ordered about—certainly bribed. The dividing line between the Šeiḥs and jinns is narrow and the making of the jinns into servants of the Šeiḥs has successfully formed the whole into one religion not, as far as these people are concerned, at variance with the “official” religion.

So much seems fairly clear. When we come to examine the jinns the matter is more complicated. It is suggested that we have here the remains of a much earlier integration, between the "official" religion of pagan days and the witchcraft of Neolithic times, which, with one marked exception, were probably not very different.

That difference is that the witchcraft belongs to the matriarchal and totemistic period of Arabian history, whereas the official pagan religion belongs to the patriarchal period. There seem to be strong survivals here of the earlier, witch and totem period.

In support of the last suggestion the following points may be cited :

a) The frequency of *manṣûbât*—priestesses.

b) The fact that so many of the spirits are themselves female.

c) The inheritance in certain cases through the female line of spiritual powers, as in the case of the *Hajjarah*.

d) The legend of the conversion at *Fuqum* which cites as the great crime of the people that they did not know right from wrong because they slept with persons within the forbidden degrees of relationship. Robertson Smith points out (*op. cit.*) that there was a great increase in the forbidden degrees when the swing-over took place from a matriarchal to a patriarchal system and that during the earlier state a man was prohibited only his mother and uterine sister. I would suggest that the inclusion of incestuous connections with mothers in the crimes at *Fuqum* is hyperbolic and the crimes were not so much against Islam, but against the patriarchal system<sup>a</sup>. It will be noticed that there is no mention of paganism or adding gods to God, the greatest crimes in Islam. The two stones in the shrine of 'Abdullah bin Ḥasan which test the chastity of the visitor's mother may, perhaps belong to the period of the introduction of patriarchy, though the spirits detestation of *salâṭin* might indicate that it belonged to the earlier stratum. (By this it is not meant that those two particular stones or even that very shrine—which may be a relatively modern edition of others that have disappeared—are of such antiquity. This place obviously requires study.)

e) The secret wooing of the Ma'agiz is significantly comparable with marriage under the matriarchal system, when the woman owned the home and the husband or husbands visited her, sometimes on a purely temporary, sometimes on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. The significance of the capture and imprisonment of the husband is elusive and might bear more than one interpretation.

Data linking the system with totemism is even more fragmentary, as might be expected of something so long since disappeared, but it is interesting to note that :

1. The tribe ruling over most of the *ra'iyyah* tribes to whom the jinns belong is called the *'Aqârib* or *'Aqrabi*, i. e. the scorpions.
2. One of the *ra'iyyah* tribes is called *Ji'alân*, scarabs.
3. The leading *manšûbah* is called *Gâhula* a word connected with venom, a queen bee, a lizard or a scarab. Further research into local tribal names would doubtless produce more evidence on the subject and on the matriarchal questions.

An interesting point is that, though the *'Aqârib* themselves have a totem name, they largely affect to have nothing to do with jinns. "What" said a Rašidi to me "would they have to do with Jinns? They are *Salâtin*". This, combined with the fact that the shrines are in the hands of the *ra'iyyah* tribes indicates that in this area at least we have to deal with the religion of a people who were conquered at a very early date, perhaps a matriarchal group conquered by a patriarchal, the witchcraft people overcome by the "pagans".

Another indication of the early date of the beliefs may perhaps be found in the jinn *al-Ku'bain*. Robertson Smith (*op. cit.*) suggests that Allât was originally a mother goddess and the mother of Allah and only became transformed into his daughter when the matriarchal system changed to a patriarchal. During some excavations carried out by Sir Robert Mond in Brittany an *allée couverte* was found of which the end stone carried a simple carving of two breasts and this was taken to represent the mother goddess.

Approached from a psycho-analytic angle, these childish forms of numinism support the same general hypothesis. The type of jinn represented in the *Šemsán* story or Aladdin is a simple phantasy, partially rationalised by a natural phenomenon, which shows the desire to be all-powerful like father. The capture of the Ma'agiz is the natural counterpart of such a phantasy when the mother rules the family and tribe and is the only real power in the child's early life.

Just as the mother-goddess cult links up naturally with matriarchy, so can witchcraft connect with the mother goddess cult. The degree of mother-goddess element in the jinniyât needs longer examination and a more intimate knowledge of the people. *Ku'abain* has already been mentioned and the reader will have noticed the long hanging breasts of the Ma'agiz and ad-Dirbah, a quite common phenomenon of primitive mother-goddesses. The rites in connection with the fertility of women need investigation. It may be pointed out that the gifts to the jinns of the sea to encourage them to bring better catches of fish may be considered strictly parallel to gifts to inland deities to bring better crops and yields from the herds, *i. e.* fertility.

Another indication of the primitive nature of the beliefs is shown even in the case of so recent an introduction as Šeiḥ Sa'd who only receives sacrifice if the fish harvest is good. This brings to mind Melville White's description in *Typee* of the islanders taking down one of their gods and giving him a good thrashing, because he had not helped them.

The fully pagan nature of the altars, offerings and sacrifices is apparent and so is the non-Islamic character of the "mixed" dancing. What is not clear is the reason for the propriety of these ceremonies, including the punishment inflicted by the jinn on any transgressor. This might be the result of a puritanising process belonging either to the introduction of Islam or patriarchy.

The active formation of deities from the spirits of living persons, as in the case of the Qabiḥ, and to a less extent Sîdi Hâsim, shows the strong hold which the earliest stratum of belief still has on the people.

The story of the capture of the Ma'agiz may be described as the conversion of a nymph to a hamadryad and may well have some ancient significance. Does it record the change over a tribe from fishing to hunting? Or the

adaption of a deity by a conquering hunting tribe? It must be remembered that the Hinaidi have only recently become fisherfolk (at least exclusively) and that there appears from the slender evidence available, to have been an interim after the strand-looper people when little fishing was done. Until our knowledge is more complete such questions can only be pointers for research. It would also be interesting to know what connections the Hinaidi have with India, the name meaning "Indian". It is only owing to shortage of time imposed by war conditions that it has been necessary to have such a small proportion of examples in relation to the interesting hypotheses they raise.

It may well be imagined that prolonged research in the back-waters of the Protectorate—as far away from Holy men as possible—would produce results of the greatest interest and importance. Little has been written to show the primitive nature of this area which is largely peopled by savages. Popular writers about the area have been too concerned with the somewhat superficial polish and civilization of the sayyids—that largely brutal and callous caste—to observe, or at least to record the simple people as they are, and the noble Arab gentleman legend, based chiefly on contacts a thousand miles to the North has obscured the truth about a most fascinating, very different, and widely variable people. The fisherfolk of the Colony described here are as different from a Yafi'i tribesman as is a Lebanese fellâh from a Ruwallah Bedawi.

Finally it may not be out of place to mention the charm and kindness of these fisherfolk, the only Muslims I have encountered (apart from those who have been Europeanised) with whom contact can be made on a family basis as it can be in religions other than the Hindu and Islam. Exceptional hospitality is always given by Arabs, whether Muslim or not, and by all Muslims; but there is always a barrier which is absent among these fisher people. Naturally they would not show, even here, the same trust towards people not well known to them, but in other areas it is not shown even to a man's closest friend. The fault common to all Arabs of reducing any area they enter to desert or near-desert as soon as possible is clear from their own history of Little Aden.

The free and friendly attitude of the people is disappearing under the influence of sayyids and faqis from the North and it is sad to think that just

as the most northern muslims are emerging from the more cramping aspects of puritanical Islam, those in the South are falling under it.

For this and other reasons I would make a plea that when the advancement of these people is considered it be very carefully considered indeed and to do so means having all the data to hand. At present there is broadly-speaking none on paper, though many people (who may be dead or gone tomorrow) know a very great deal.

The financing by the Government of a qualified anthropological expedition or expeditions to the different areas of the Protectorate (and Colony) is a venture that would yield heavy dividends in any future re-organisation. The speed with which the Near East and World are moving indicates that this re-organisation may suddenly be forced upon the authorities before they are ready, and plans will have to be improvised without satisfactory data. This is not to cast any aspersions on a few very able but greatly overworked administrators, who have neither the time nor the special training to carry out scientific research. Moreover, it is almost impossible for an administrator, almost inevitably having a penchant for some theory of Government, to take the completely impartial view of a disinterested scientific investigator.

Oliver H. MYERS.

Aden, 3 December 1944.

## CORRIGENDA ET ADDENDA.

[The following corrections and additional material were obtained during the Archaeological Survey of 1946/47. Owing to lack of transport it was not possible to extend the range of the observations as I had hoped. However, through the generous and unstinted assistance of Dr. Affara, it was possible to check all the previous work and to make the corrections and additions which follow, the great majority of which are due directly or indirectly to him.]

P. 181, a). There is a jinn near Fuqum who belongs to the Hajjûr and is known as "The Owner of the Trees", which may be further support for the suggestion that these people are an early stratum. His ziarah was four days after I left Aden for the second time and I was unable to learn more about him.

P. 181, b). BRUNTON, *Mustagedda*, Pl. LXIV/25. The pot has two holes at the top of the lid, for the suspension loop. Cf. the top basket in Pl. I.

P. 184, a). The designs are called *ḥadab* and the paint is made from 'afas, a distillation of nuts.

P. 185, a). In the Protectorate the women throw water after the funeral, looking the other way.

P. 185, b). Money is sometimes placed in the wallet and this is dedicated to a Wâli to whom it is presented if the child is cured.

A good charm to protect children against jinns or the evil eye is a piece of pig's bone sewn into cloth and then in leather and tied above the elbow. This seems to confirm the theory that the pig was originally sacred.

P. 185, c). Women of the *aḥdam* sometimes suck the surface of the abdomen when there is pain there and bring blood.

P. 188, a). Şari. The derivation suggested is correct. The game is usually played at night. The inner group (I) may be inside a house or simply within certain limits. There is also an outer limit for the outer

group (O). One of the Os goes inside and touches an I; then all the Is burst out and try to catch an O, or as many Os as possible, within the outer limits. Anyone caught is 'dead'. If none is caught then the I touched is 'dead'. When only one I is left, if he catches an O he can not only call the O 'dead' but may also call a comrade back to life to make the game longer.

P. 196, a). The journey was performed on a raft, *ramâs*, which the Ġadîr made at Gabal Ihsân, where he lived and fished, and brought to Sirah Island for the purpose. The merchant was told to lie on the raft and was covered with a cloth. He was particularly warned that when he got home he must on no account reveal who brought him but must say it was God.

When he arrived in his home port (said by many to be Baṣrah) and had recognised his house, he was again warned by the Ġadîr on no account to reveal how he arrived and told that if he did so he would cause the death of the Ġadîr. The Ġadîr added that if he died he was to be wrapped in a shroud, placed on the raft, and the latter pushed out to sea.

The merchant's wife questioned him again and again and finally said she would return to her father if he did not tell her, so he broke his pledge.

The remainder of the story in this version is the same, except that the Ġadîr had built his tomb during his lifetime.

At the festival at the tomb dagger dancing is twice performed, both times across a little Isthmus at al-Girf. The same dancing was witnessed at the festival of the Wâli Daûd at Dâr al-Amîr. The dancers cut themselves with knives, both bodies and tongues, use a sheep's eye to pretend they can remove their own and replace it, and so forth. One will lie on the ground while the others pretend to stab him to death. The performance is gruesome and looks like mock human sacrifice. When seen it was performed by Hajjûr.

Of particular interest is the sea casting up not only the body of the Ġadîr but also dates and ghee. This saint has an important shrine at Massawa and another at Baṣrah. Information about both was promised but never received. It does not seem too far fetched a hypothesis that the Wâli al-Ġadîr was originally none other than the monsoon, which goes away and dies and then returns bringing fruit and fats and spices and whose secret it was important to guard. A tropical Persephone.

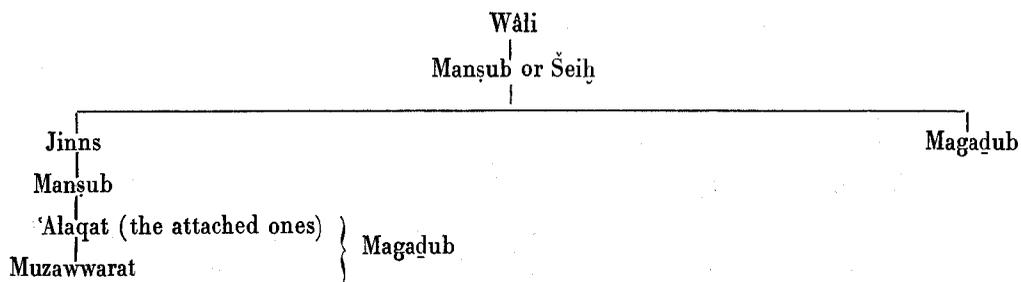
P. 197, a). Dr. Affara suggests the missing forefoot is only to emphasize abnormality, to prove the supernatural nature of the animal.

P. 197, b). The persons who may be so affected are all in some degree initiate. The possessed person is known as being *Istaḥmal*, and this name indicates that the spirit is thought to be within them.

The peoples attendant upon a particular spirit form a *zâr*. The *zâr* is locally believed to have been introduced from Ancient Egypt. All followers are said to be to some degree possessed by the spirit. There are various rites such as the *Zâr Ḥabiši* and the *Zâr Ḥusaini*, Ḥusain being a jinn who inhabits a mountain in the Subaihi territory.

When a person is sick, he or she goes to the *ʿArif*, a person who can discover the cause, and a ceremony called the *Ism* is held at which a sheep is killed and eaten and the *zâr* responsible named. Several *manṣubs* and *manṣubât* attend and when the spirit has been discovered the patient is advised what to do, to refrain from eating, handling or cooking certain foods, to keep clean and use certain perfumes, to abstain from sexual intercourse at certain times, and to attend all meetings of the *zâr*. (One possessed by the *Maʿagiz* may not eat meat or fish.) The patient is then one of the *muzawwarât* (or *muzawwarîn*) and has the right to dance at the ceremonies. The *muzawwara* are punished by the spirit if they do wrong, by illness or by crazy behaviour in public. Not all jinns have *zârs*.

The organisation is as follows :



From the brief description given by B. THOMAS, *Alarms and Excursions in Arabia*, London, 1931, pp. 261-262, it seems that local practices vary considerably.

P. 198, a) The name Abu Qiyāma may refer only to the way the hill sticks up out of the sea.

P. 198, b). But possibly from Mahri, *Qubain-Scorpion*. This and other South Arabian words are taken from Bertram THOMAS, *Four Strange Tongues from South Arabia, The Hadara Group* in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. XXIII, 1937.

P. 200, a). Perhaps a meteoric stone?

P. 200, b). Hājur is the Mahri for 'a slave'.

P. 202, a). The name may be Am-Šaibah, 'the Old One'; in fact this is the more likely derivation. Dr. Affara thinks that Ma'agiz may also be derived from Am-ʿaguz or that at least there is paronomasia between the two names. Compare the English expression 'the Old One' for the Devil.

P. 204, a). The Mahri word for an egg is Ġoḥol (*op. cit.*) and the egg-shaped water pots of the district are called Ġahlah or Qahlah.

P. 204, b). During a visit to Buraiqah the drum was at one time handed by the Ġūḥalah to a niece or cousin, a young girl of about ten, and I was told that she would be the successor in all probability.

P. 204, c). The expectoration or breathing is often followed by a blow. The name of Allah is not usually used, the Ma'agiz heals alone. The throwing of the offerings to the four winds is called *tanfih*, verb, *nafah*. The most usual offering for this is cooked meat, bread and dates mixed. At some ziaras the entrails are used for this.

P. 205, a). The writer was fortunate enough to attend part of the winter festival of 1946, which was held on Dec. 4/6th, the full moon being on the 8th. The first day was devoted to the Ma'agiz and the second, which was partially witnessed, to Am-Šaibah. The two Ūd were about 300 yards apart in apparently featureless desert and scrub, obviously once wooded. They were simply cut from a local tree. That of the Ma'agiz was protected by the ʿIšwah or, more definitely, *Qafaṣ*, constructed of locally cut boughs.

It is made of four uprights, two higher in front, and a roof of boughs with the bushy part forward so that it assumes, in a very crude form, just the shape of the shrine over the King of Egypt in the First Dynasty.

Both 'Ūds were 'dressed', that is wound round with bits of cloth, which in the eyes of the faithful were turban and fuṭah. At the foot of each were incense burners with incense and many little cups of tea and coffee. Having taken an Arab guide, we found that, as usual, he had no idea of the way, and arrived at midnight when people were beginning to sleep after about 30 hours of dancing and festivity. It seems that each spirit had been offered a whole sheep and it was said that one lady from Aden had poured a whole bottle of scent, costing Rs. 25, to the Ma'agiz. New flags had been presented for the occasion, one bearing the usual legend "La ilah illa . . . . rasul allah". It was alleged that the only reason that the name of the Ma'agiz did not appear on the Bairaq was because it was made by an Indian who knew no better. (I have seen a Bairaq at the ziarah of Sidi Hâšim with this inscription altered to read "...rasul lillah"—perhaps a Hindu one?) The total cost of offerings was said to have been Rs. 700 and was therefore probably about Rs. 250.

It seems reasonable to suppose that in the home of incense no other burnt offering was ever considered necessary. Food is supplied in the form of the *tanfih*.

The dancing was mixed as described and some Badu women took part. One woman danced a crazy *zir* (see p. 31) rather in the style of a European Music Hall idea of Egyptian dancing, and she was said to be *majnûna šuwayya* and was perhaps being punished as described in note on p. 197, *b*.

P. 205, *b*). It appears that the *Tana'as* can be danced by any of the Mu-zawwarat.

P. 205, *c*), n. 1. Locally the verb *satar* means to 'pour out an offering'.

P. 207, *a*). The name is said to refer to the rhythmical movement of the head, but is used only in connection with this dance.

P. 207, *b*). There is a town called Ḥabân between Ahwar and Mukullah.

P. 210, a). The correct rhyme is :

*Fi kull sanah ḥagar wa 'ūd,*  
*Fi kull sanah na'ūd*  
*Wa nūri an-nās*  
 or *Wa rūni an-nās.*

Stone and wood must be thrown.

P. 211, a). In Shahari *Qabīh* means 'peace' (*op. cit.*). Al *Qabīh* was known to Dr. Affara and his son is still alive. He was a close friend of 'Umar 'A. mentioned below. The *Āl am-Husain* are the muzawwara of the jinn Hussain. The shrine stands on the spot where he died.

Further powers held by the *Qabīh* are to delay a birth, or even to fix the foetus in the womb. One way of doing this, is to put a lizard in a bottle and bury it in the sand. As long as the lizard stays in the bottle, the foetus will remain in the mother, or the curse, whatever it may be, will remain operative. Another method, that practiced by 'Umar 'A., is to wring the neck of a young black kid and bury the body in a secret spot. This must be done stark naked at midnight. As long as the kid remains undiscovered, the curse continues to operate. The man who does this work is called a *zarrā'* and the curse is *zar'*. Although the border line is not clearly defined this appears to be considered locally as black magic, as opposed to the white magic of the *zar*.

Among the Yafa'i, if you wish to find antiquities, you must sacrifice a black cock or other black animal on the site, or the valuables will turn to pebbles before you find them.

P. 212, a). The shrine of *Sīd 'Umar* is near *Bīr Aḥmad*. There is a well near the tomb and at the festival his servants pull up the water and it is found to be all rosewater. They also pick up handfuls of sand from the desert which they turn to sugar and give to the public. Another *sīd*, a living one, comes to the *ziarah* and climbs to the top *Sīd 'Umar's bairaq* while it is held and, standing on the points of the crescent, waves another flag. Later, he enters the tomb and eating some sweetstuff coughs up yards and yards of thread which people bind round above their elbows.

P. 213, a). It seems rather that the grave is of the javelin and that the man never returned to his country. There is a joint guardianship by Sâlim Hâşal and Ğâma' Şubi. The former is village 'Aqil, chief toddymaker, and guardian of the drum. Ğâma' must bring him each year the offering of a sheep to Abu Ğarbah. If he fails to provide this he must walk three times round the fire at the festival and at the end of the third round he falls into the fire (but removes himself again quickly). The drum is made of foreign wood, apparently mango. It is sometimes hired out for weddings and when this is done there is at the end a raqilah as a 'drum's benefit' and everyone present must subscribe. The money is divided between Sâlim and Ğâma', the latter being manşub.

It seems likely that the foreign wood of the drum and the arrival of the javelin from a far land are again connected with the monsoon.

P. 214, a). Sîdi Hâşim seems to have taken over the ma'ana of Şeiĥ 'Utmân and this is confirmed by the fact that he started to build his tomb during his lifetime (cf. the Ğadir) but it kept falling down again, until he obtained permission to do so from Şeiĥ 'Utmân which he did in a trance state (*kaşaf*).

He was a friend of the political officer of the day and was encouraged in his project, presumably to give the newly built village an importance parallel with the old one, where Şeiĥ 'Utmân's tomb lies.

P. 214, b). 'Abdullah bin Ğasan's tomb is at MuĞellah. Salaţin may not visit it under any circumstances. There is said to be a gigantic snake which lives in the roof inside the tomb. The snake was pointed out to Dr. Affara but what he saw might have been dusty cobwebs or almost anything. 'Abdullah has a brother saint at Laġaj, Sufiân bin Ğasan.

'Abdullah was a servant to the ancestors of the present manşub. His sanctity was discovered when it was seen that he did not have to carry the full water pots back from the well, but chased them along the ground with a stick.

His fame spread and one day Captain Ğohar the Pearler, whose ship was leaking and about to founder, vowed to the saint his best pearl if he were saved. The leak stopped miraculously and Ğohar on landing brought his

pearl to pay his vow to the Saint. He found only a poor man ploughing and decided to go away again, but 'Abdullah knew his thoughts and said to his oxen "Gee-up! Plough-up!" whereupon the whole field was seen to sparkle with pearls and precious stones. The Captain explained his mission and Ġohar said "Chuck it among the rest!"

The two stones referred to on p. 214 do not belong to him but to 'Umar bin 'Ali of Waḥat. 'Umar's stones are said to have caught a girl recently and she could not be released till after much ceremonious drumming, offerings, etc.

Šeiḥ Ṣalāḥ of Waḥat also has a bastard trap, but made of two logs of wood.

P. 215, a). At Râs 'Imrân about two years ago, a woman and her child went down to the sands and when the mother's back was turned the child disappeared and has never been seen since. It is said to have been seized by the very dangerous jinns of this peninsula.

P. 217, a). The usual trial by burning the tongue with a hot iron is practised. A further method is for all the suspected persons to sit in a circle in the midst of which the 'judge' drives a large iron nail into the ground, blow after blow. Then all the suspects are told to rise but the thief cannot, he is nailed to the ground.

Capt. F. M. HUNTER, *An Account of the British Settlement of Aden in Arabia* (London, 1877) gives an account of 13 Ziarahs in Crater ('Adan) and one at Steamer Point (Tawahi).

A good example of telescoping is seen in a story which was recounted to me about the last named.

Aḥmad bin 'Ali of Tawahi is referred to in ABU MAḤRAMA, *Ta'riḫ Tuḡr 'Adan*, and he is said to have died about A. H. 563.

Informant, a fisherman, stated that Šeiḥ Aḥmad was known to his uncle and was alive when the English arrived. At that time only a few fishermen lived at Tawahi, Aḥmad bin 'Ali among them, and they dried their nets on the island where the isolation hospital stands. Ma'alla was all wilderness (cf. p. 188, but the European myth that Ma'alla is the oldest shipbuilding yard in the World will never be killed now) and no-one lived there.

The Governor, Mr. Stace, and his wife came to see Šeiḥ Aḥmad's hut

and the Governor said he must clear out; whereupon Mrs. Stace fell down dead (*Yâbis halâs*). The Governor promised that if his wife were restored to life he would not move the Šeiḥ. Mrs. Stace was resurrected and the Governor himself marked out the reserved area where the tomb now stands. The fisherman added that the present manṣub is the son of the first one.

Annually the *kiswah* is brought from the fair in the market to the tomb. In these processions, which are general at Šeiḥ's tombs, the magadub work themselves into a frenzy and sometimes collapse, being carried into the tomb to revive.

‘Ali bin Aḥmad at Šeiḥ ‘Uṭmân is the son of Aḥmad bin ‘Ali. There is a well and some palms near the tomb. If you fall ill, either you bathe in the water of the well, or tie portions of palm leaf, called ‘*azuf*, above the elbow. A jinn lives in the palm trees and is the servant of ‘Ali.

There is a Šeiḥ Faraj of the ‘Abîd whose shrine is in a house in Šeiḥ ‘Uṭmân (new village). A Ṭamburah is carried by dancers to his place by slaves once a year. The ‘Abîd are said to be the modern African slaves, the Aḥdam descendants of the upper class Abyssinian invaders, and Hajjûr the slaves of the latter.

Dâr az-Zamâr is principal officer of the jinns of Šeiḥ ‘Uṭmân. The officers all meet in the mazâr courtyard of the tomb. The informant described being chased by Dâr az-Zamâr in 1914. He was returning from the sùq with sweets in his hand when suddenly he saw a great black column behind him about 12 feet high, so he started to run. He knew the jinn was pursuing him because he could hear the clanking of its chains and realising that it wanted the sweets he threw them down and escaped. When he entered the village some old men called to him “Did Dâr az-Zamâr get the sweets?” for they had heard the chains clanking and understood the meaning of this.

The same informant alleges that one night after rain he saw ‘Umar ‘A. standing stark naked in the midst of 300 jinns. When he knew he was seen, ‘Umar disappeared and all the jinns also except one old one with a long beard who was hobbling away on a stick. Informant chased the old man in the hope of getting much money, but the jinn dived into a pool of rainwater and disappeared.

Next day when informant was shopping, a sayyid met him and said ‘Why

did you interfere? You have caused trouble among the jinn, 7 of them are ill. Take 7 eggs and blacken four of them. Return to the spot where you saw 'Umar and throw the 4 black ones over your shoulder without looking, and cast the remaining three into the pool'. So he did this.

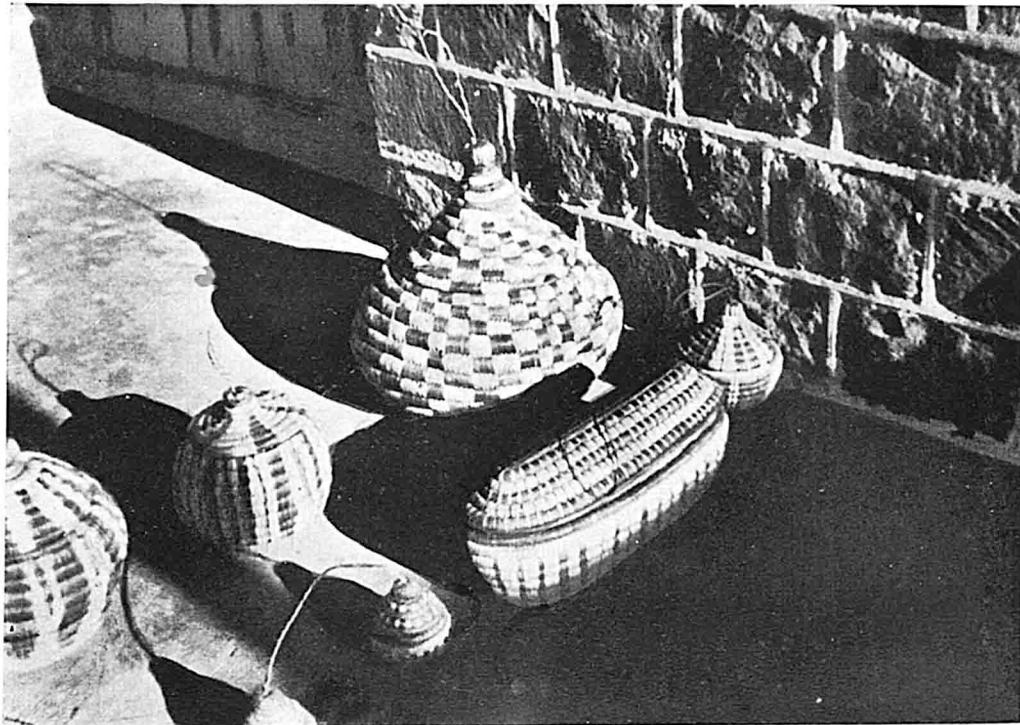
He also recounted two escapes from jinniyat, redounding to his own credit. In one case he recognised the jinniyah, who was feeding her baby, because her other dug hung down to the ground. In the second case, the jinniyah, who demanded sexual intercourse with him, appeared exactly like a woman with the same clothes, jewellery and ornaments, but he touched her arm and found it to be like cotton wool so he knew her for a jinniyah and pulled her hair till she ran away. Shortly afterwards she caught two men, one of whom has suffered ever since from fits, and the other of whom went mad and died 8 days later.

More recently, near the same spot where 'Umar was seen by the fisherman with the jinn, in the courtyard of the Hospital, there was a great outcry in the night, and a man was brought for treatment covered with scratches, together with several witnesses, including police, who had heard him fighting in the room (which had barred windows) and who had entered it to find it empty. The man described his battle with a jinn.

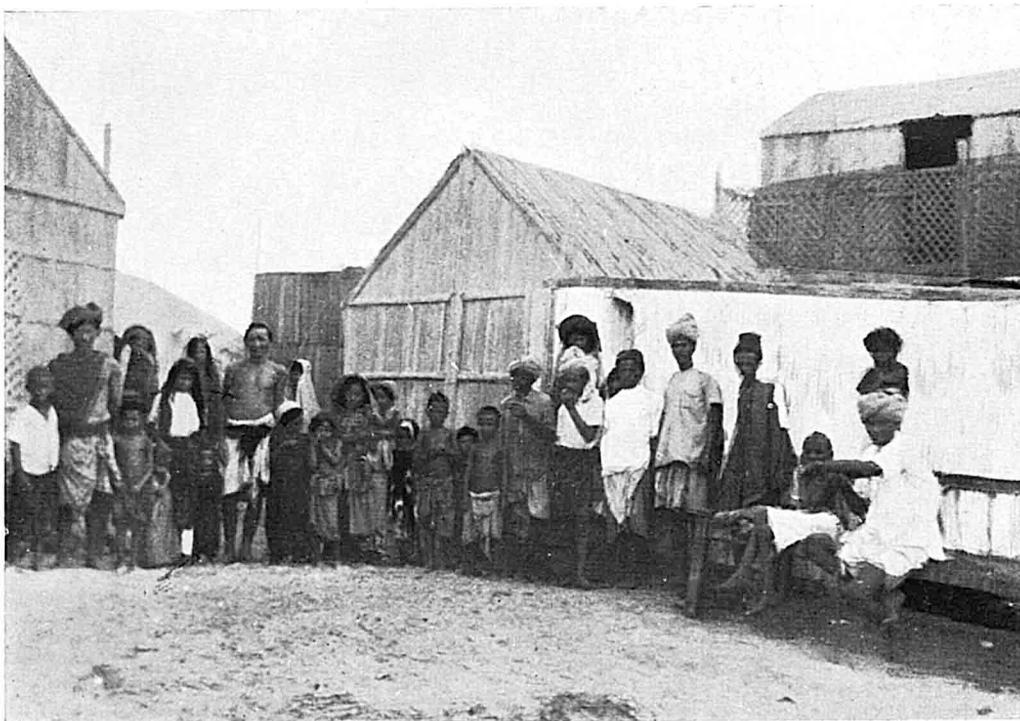
Among the Yafa'i, when a new well is dug, a column of stone is built up one side and a plank layed over it. An only son, also a first-born child is then lowered with a rope under his armpits and must descend to the bottom of the water. "Often", said my informant, a very reliable man, "when he is not a good swimmer, he is drowned, and then another must be found". Some years ago, one of the most respected citizens of Aden attempted this rite in an effort to find oil in Khormaksar, but he was stopped at the last minute. (The site had previously been 'salted' with a barrell).

This well rite is particularly interesting because a friend of mine was told many years ago in South Palestine that when a new well is dug the owner buys a boy child from someone with a very large family for £ 60 to £ 70, and then kicks it down to drown. Such a human sacrifice in the Holy Land seems incredible, and perhaps the story was only a folk memory, but evidently there is an Arabian tradition of sacrifice to wells, and it is understandable in such a land.

P. 218, a). We cannot ignore, however, the possibility that the people concerned were Karmathians, followers of 'Ali Ibn Faḍl al-Ahḍuni, who started proselytising near Aden. He taught the lawfulness of intercourse with daughters and sisters, preaching to this effect in poetry from the pulpit. He was poisoned in A. H. 303 and "as many of his followers, members of his family and persons who had embraced his sect, as As'ad ibn Ibrahim Ibn Ya'fur could lay hands upon were put to death". (Henry Cassells KAY, *Yaman, Its Early Mediaeval History*, etc., London, 1892, quoting Abu 'Abdullah Baha ad-Din al-Jinadi.)



Baskets.



'Aqil of Fuqum outside his house with villagers.

O. H. MYERS, *Little Aden folklore.*

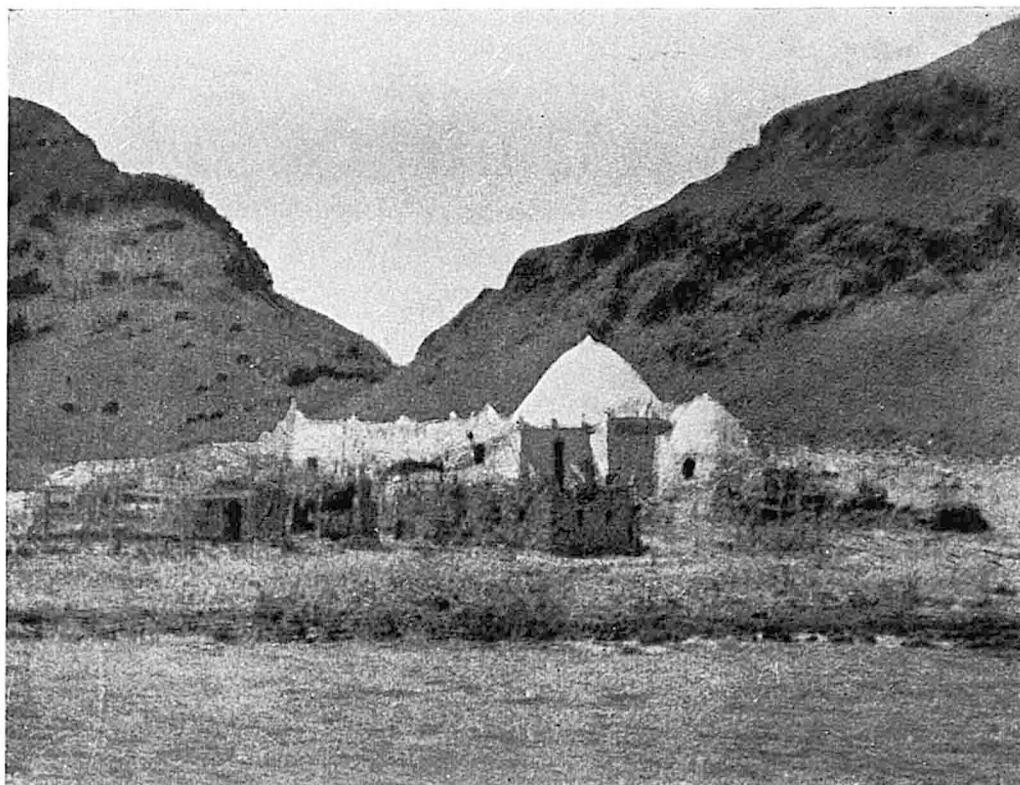
BIFAO 44 (1947), p. 177-233 Oliver H. Myers  
Little Aden folklore [avec 4 planches].  
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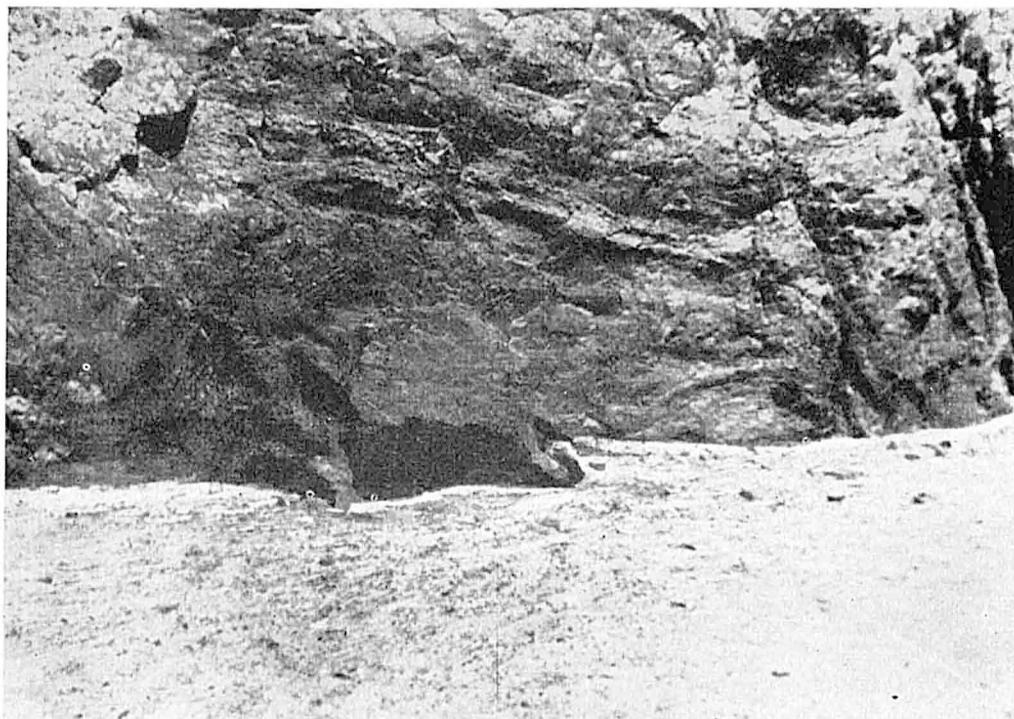


Superstructure of the tomb of the unbelievers at Fuqum.



Tomb of Al-Wāli al-Ġadir.

O. H. MYERS, *Little Aden folklore*.



Altar of Ad-Dirbah.



Offerings on altar of Al-Hajjarah.

O. H. MYERS, *Little Aden folklore*.

