The Nomadic Alternative

World Anthropology

MOUTON PUBLISHERS · THE HAGUE · PARIS
DISTRIBUTED IN THE USA AND CANADA BY ALDINE, CHICAGO

The Nomadic Alternative

Modes and Models of Interaction in the African-Asian Deserts and Steppes

Editor

WOLFGANG WEISSLEDER

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General Editor's Preface

A traditional subject matter for anthropology is a continental area, like Africa, Asia, Oceania, and South America, or a subcontinental area like South Asia, the Far East, the Andes, and the Caribbean. In one such area interdisciplinary scholarship has studied peoples and cultures in their broad geographic and historic interrelation. The present book began with a proposal to cut boldly across the continents to define and explore "new" contiguous areas. Scholars who had never faced each other would get new perspectives on old subjects even as they together defined new ones. Credit certainly belongs to the editor of this volume, Wolfgang Weissleder, who extended his vision from his personal scholarly center in Ethiopia westward across the deserts and grasslands of Africa to the Atlantic and eastward and northward through all of those fabled lands to the Pacific. The occasion for this effort and its climax in a meeting of scholars had to be a great international congress.

Like most contemporary sciences, anthropology is a product of the European tradition. Some argue that it is a product of colonialism, with one small and self-interested part of the species dominating the study of the whole. If we are to understand the species, our science needs substantial input from scholars who represent a variety of the world's cultures. It was a deliberate purpose of the IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences to provide impetus in this direction. The *World Anthropology* volumes, therefore, offer a first glimpse of a human science in which members from all societies have played an active role. Each of the books is designed to be self-contained; each is an attempt to update its particular sector of scientific knowledge and is written by specialists from all parts of the world. Each volume should be read and reviewed individually as a separate volume on its own given subject. The set as a whole will indicate what changes are in store

for anthropology as scholars from the developing countries join in studying the species of which we are all a part.

The IXth Congress was planned from the beginning not only to include as many of the scholars from every part of the world as possible, but also with a view toward the eventual publication of the papers in high-quality volumes. At previous Congresses scholars were invited to bring papers which were then read out loud. They were necessarily limited in length; many were only summarized; there was little time for discussion; and the sparse discussion could only be in one language. The IXth Congress was an experiment aimed at changing this. Papers were written with the intention of exchanging them before the Congress, particularly in extensive pre-Congress sessions; they were not intended to be read aloud at the Congress, that time being devoted to discussions – discussions which were simultaneously and professionally translated into five languages. The method for eliciting the papers was structured to make as representative a sample as was allowable when scholarly creativity – hence self-selection – was critically important. Scholars were asked both to propose papers of their own and to suggest topics for sessions of the Congress which they might edit into volumes. All were then informed of the suggestions and encouraged to rethink their own papers and the topics. The process, therefore, was a continuous one of feedback and exchange and it has continued to be so even after the Congress. The some two thousand papers comprising *World Anthropology* certainly then offer a substantial sample of world anthropology. It has been said that anthropology is at a turning point; if this is so, these volumes will be the historical direction-markers.

As might have been foreseen in the first post-colonial generation, the large majority of the Congress papers (82 percent) are the work of scholars identified with the industrialized world which fathered our traditional discipline and the institution of the Congress itself: Eastern Europe (15 percent); Western Europe (16 percent); North America (47 percent); Japan, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand (4 percent). Only 18 percent of the papers are from developing areas: Africa (4 percent): Asia-Oceania (9 percent); Latin America (5 percent). Aside from the substantial representation from the U.S.S.R. and the nations of Eastern Europe, a significant difference between this corpus of written material and that of other Congresses is the addition of the large proportion of contributions from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. "Only 18 percent" is two to four times as great a proportion as that of other Congresses; moreover, 18 percent of 2,000 papers is 360 papers, 10 times the number of "Third World" papers presented at previous Congresses. In fact, these 360 papers are more than the total of *all* papers published after the last International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences which was held in the United States (Philadelphia, 1956).

The significance of the increase is not simply quantitative. The input of scholars from areas which have until recently been no more than subject matter for anthropology represents both feedback and also long-awaited theoretical contributions from the perspectives of very different cultural, social, and historical traditions. Many who attended the IXth Congress were convinced that anthropology would not be the same in the future. The fact that the next Congress (India, 1978) will be our first in the "Third World" may be symbolic of the change. Meanwhile, sober consideration of the present set of books will show how much, and just where and how, our discipline is being revolutionized.

The Congress produced books on a variety of geographic areas, both on land (different parts of Africa, Asia, and the Americas) and sea (the maritime Atlantic and Pacific separately) and combinations such as the circumpolar region. Readers of the present book will also be interested in a variety of volumes in this series on related archaeological, ecological and historical subjects and on a range of topics from religion, aesthetics and folklore to the politics, economics, and social problems which cut across continents.

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Table of Contents

General Editor's Preface v

Introduction xiii
by *Wolfgang Weissleder*

SECTION ONE: ECOLOGY

The Culture Areas of the Middle East 3
by *Raphael Patai*

The Ecology and Politics of Nomadic Pastoralists in the Middle East 41
by *Emanuel Marx*

The Environmental Adaptation of Nomads in the West African Sahel: A Key to Understanding Prehistoric Pastoralists 75
by *Susan E. Smith*

Ecology and Social Organization Among Nigerian Fulḅe (Fulani) 97
by *Charles Frantz*

Characteristic Features of Nomadic Communities in the Eurasian Steppes 119
by *A. M. Khazanov*

The Problem of Origin and Formation of the Economic-Cultural Type of Pastoral Nomads in the Moderate Belt of Eurasia 127
by *S. I. Vajnshtejn*

SECTION TWO: ETHNOGENESIS, EVOLUTION, AND CONTINUITY

Ethnic Communities with Survivals of Clan and Tribal Structure in Central Asia and Kazakhstan in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries 137
by *T. A. Zhdanko*

Early Elements in the Ethnogenesis of the Uzbeks 147
by *K. Shanijazov*

Historical Stratification of Generic and Tribal Names and Their Role in the Ethnogenetic Study of Turkic Peoples of Eastern Europe, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia 157
by *R. G. Kuzeev*

Some Basic Problems of the Ethnogenesis of the Turkmen 167
by *S. G. Agadzhanov* and *A. Karryev*

Family-Group, Family, and Individual Property Categories Among Nomads 179
by *S. M. Abramzon*

The Formation of National Cadres of Industrial Workers in Cattle-Breeding Districts of the Soviet Eastern Republics: The Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic 189
by *Sh. Annaklychev*

SECTION THREE: STRATIFICATION, AUTHORITY, AND POWER

The History of Sovereignty Among the Kel Ahaggar 201
by *Marceau Gast*

The Traditional Power of the Mósì Nānámtsè of Upper Volta 215
by *Jean Bigtarma Zoanga*

Conservatism and Change in a Desert Feudalism: The Case of Southern Baluchistan 247
by *Stephen Pastner*

Kinship Terminology and Feudal Versus Tribal Orientations in Baluch Social Organization: A Comparative View 261
by *Carroll McC. Pastner*

The Promotion of Suzerainty Between Sedentary and Nomadic Populations in Eastern Ethiopia 275
by *Wolfgang Weissleder*

Biased Symbiosis on the Tana River 289
by *Norman Townsend*

Changes in the Family Structure of the Pamir Nationalities in the Years of Socialist Construction 297
by *L. F. Monogarova*

Problems of Social Change Among the Asiatic Nomads 305
by *G. E. Markov*

SECTION FOUR: COGNITION, VALUES, AND RELIGION

The Segmental System: Native Model or Anthropological Construction? Discussion of an Iranian Example 315
by *Jean-Pierre Digard*

The Gnawa of Morocco: The *Derdeba* Ceremony 319
by *Viviana Paques*

Marriage and Marriage Rites Among the Kazakhs in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries 331
by *Kh. Argynbaev*

Interaction of Cultures Among Peoples of the U.S.S.R. 343
by *Yu. V. Arutyunyan*

Ethnic Traditions in Agriculture in the Northern Caucasus 351
by *B. A. Kaloev*

Settlement and Traditional Social Institutions of the Formerly Nomadic Kazakh People 361
by *G. F. Dakhshleiger*

Patronymy Among the Peoples of the Caucasus 371
by *A. I. Robakidze*

Tradition and Innovation in Family Rites in the Northern Caucasus 379
by *Ya. S. Smirnova*

Cultural Diversity, Conflicting Ideologies, and Transformational Processes in Afghanistan 387
by *M. Jamil Hanifi*

The Mimouna Festival Among the Moroccan Jews 393
by *Issachar Ben-Ami*

Biographical Notes 397
Index of Names 405
Index of Subjects 411
Index of Names of Places 419

Introduction: Notes on a Discussion

WOLFGANG WEISSLEDER

The ICAES session on pastoral and nomadic peoples of the hot and cold steppelands of Africa and Asia was faced with the organizational problem of assuring an orderly presentation and discussion of widely disparate material, deriving from a vast expanse of the earth's surface and dealt with under a variety of scientific orientations. What seemed at first hopeless – and what may, in the end, prove to have been impossible – was approached through a clear-cut, if sometimes arbitrary, division of topics into four major subject headings. For each of these, one scholar present at the session volunteered to act as sectional chairman and discussant.

As the four sections gradually gained definition, they also established the table of contents of this volume. Ecology, a matter of first-line contemporary concern, was dealt with in its widest sense, ranging far beyond narrow definitional confines of environment and technologies. Professor Charles Frantz, U.S.A., conducted the discussion. Professor T. A. Zhdanko, U.S.S.R., dealt with questions of ethnic development and with sedentarization as process and policy. In a third section, relationships of peripheral nomadic societies with centralized power structures and their orderly integration and safeguards of subgroup autonomy were taken up by Mr. Jean Bigtarma Zoanga, Upper Volta. Finally, cognitive determinants of nomadic culture were discussed under the guidance of Dr. K. C. Malhotra, India.

A contrasting, not to say contradictory, pair of principles reemerged throughout the discussion, reminiscent of a dichotomy of approaches to nomadic societies once stated by Professor Willy Kraus (1969:8). At one end of a continuum of attitudes, nomadism might be viewed as a socio-economic stage totally out of tune with the requirements of modern developmental policy. Where it still exists it must be considered an obstacle or countercurrent to a path of change generally accepted to be

inevitable as well as desirable. Nomadism is characteristically pre-industrial and inherently at odds with its institutions. Seen in this light, nomadism is something to be overcome, and serious discussions of its intrinsic merits as a way of life become academic at best but futile in any practical sense. As a topic of policy, nomadism could then be treated rationally only with emphasis on methods of promoting sedentarization and establishing the most effective means of transition to agriculture or stationary forms of animal husbandry, keeping specific time and space factors in mind. (In fact, it was stated that the nomadic way of life does not promote high levels of cultural activity, as it does not promote the improvement of health or of hygienic conditions.)

The polar opposite of this attitude was expressed, overtly and covertly, with equal frequency and weight of conviction. In a variety of ways the point was made that wide regions of the world are most effectively exploited by nomadic peoples whose technology, in arid and semiarid zones, can play an important part in the production of animal proteins. The frequently mentioned incapacity of nomads to become successfully integrated into larger political communities was viewed with doubt. To the contrary, the spontaneous and gradual modification and transformation of nomadic society was accepted as a distinct possibility, while the expedient of forcible sedentarization to achieve permanent structural change and abandonment of the nomadic life style was treated with scepticism or was rejected outright.

Both programmatic points of view, stated above in their more extreme forms, reentered the discussion in a more-or-less guarded manner, whether ecology, power and authority, ethnogenesis, or cognition and value systems was the ongoing topic. Concern with the direction which the transformation of pastoral nomadism is to take in the future is an undercurrent through many of the papers of this volume and was evident in the background of all scholarly discussion of its existential realities. Thus, for instance, the ecological approach taken by several authors and discussants reached beyond the exclusive consideration of ecological variables to take up the cause of nomadic populations squeezed in the trammels of a marginal environment and a hostile or un-understanding policy. As thought was given to ways in which peoples more fortunately endowed could come to the aid of those faced with recurrent or endemic crises, the definition of ecology was readily expanded to encompass social and political factors. This was held to accord well with traditions of anthropology, leading back at least as far as the anthropogeography of F. Ratzel. Ever since, there has been a return to the inclusion of noncultural and nonsocietal variables closely interrelated with culture and society. The most recent wave of interest merely restates old definitions of ecology in a broader, more inclusive sense. Physical anthropologists, archaeologists, and social-cultural anthropologists are thought to be

able to converse with one another precisely because of a common interest in events at the subhuman, subsocial, and subcultural level of phenomena. Everything in man and in the environment which supplies his subsistence must in some way be considered relevant in anthropology. Ultimately this must include everything from landform, rainfall, runoff patterns and the storage of precipitation in wells, lakes, rivers, or canals, and diseases of soil, plants, and animals to human physical constitutions, disease, and metabolic success or failure. Ecology can hardly be regarded as a discrete and separate field of study. As anthropologists we can lay a preemptive claim to most of the crucial variables which to others may seem to coalesce into a new science.

Anthropology, however, having contributed much, also has much still to do, especially in the area of nomad studies. The hope was therefore voiced that the broadest possible coverage be given to the biological as well as the sociocultural dimensions. This hope was realized in a number of the papers, which interrelate classical ecological variables of the natural environment, i.e. biotic and biological factors, with social and cultural data.

Limitations of time permitted no more than identification of levels of phenomena that relate to the pastoral-nomadic way of life or mention of a few of the ideas that have been expressed in the literature of the last decade. More definite answers were demanded to the question of whether specific pastoral life styles and their social, economic, political, or even ideological systems correlated with the domestication of and the pasturing practices with regard to specific herd animals, so that sheep raisers, for instance, would predictably exhibit some general distinctions of social structure when compared with reindeer or camel nomads. This question was addressed at various stages of the discussion, frequently tied to another: is nomadism dead or moribund everywhere or should it be treated as a still-viable alternative in ecological situations which favor or are best exploited through spatial mobility? A case from South America, where large-scale herding of domesticated animals has not been part of traditional cultures, was mentioned. The nomadic or at least seminomadic pattern is making an appearance among certain groups of Quechua (Aymara) Indians who raise llamas. Inhabitants of some small Caribbean islands, where attempts to grow cotton have met with little success since the days of slavery, are turning more and more to cattle raising. The implication is that a move toward pastoralism or even semi-nomadism in areas of poor or depleting soils should come as no surprise.

Though none of the papers in this volume deal with it specifically, discussion expanded and elaborated the previous point beyond pastoral nomadism itself. Forms of mobility for which an adequate terminology still seems lacking in anthropology are represented in modern industrial society by population sectors engaged in such activities as dam building,

pipeline construction, or oil drilling. This work force tends to move from site to site, creating a new kind of nomadism in which huts, trailers, cabins, or prefabricated housing represent a new form of habitat. When accepted as a distinctive type of exploitative relationship to primary resources, such practices might constitute a new variant of nomadism. In this regard, the Middle East, where resource-industrial nomadism is very topical, would commend itself to anthropological research. For instance, would traditional forms of nomadic life permit themselves to be grafted onto the contemporary expressions of an emerging technologizing society?

The broadening of the term nomadism to include industrial mobility was not accepted without objection. Industrial mobility, it was stressed, is basically opportunistic in nature and lacks some of the salient characteristics of nomadism: the rhythmical and cyclical, almost predictable, shifts of location, with territorial limits or band or lineage structure defining the migrating group.

Nevertheless, there remains the signficant fact that industrial society is not as fully sedentary as we may be tempted to regard it, but that it generates its own form of mobility. Seen over the long course, world populations may in fact be on the road to increasing rather than diminishing geographical mobility. While millions of nomads are being sedentarized in some regions, other millions of historically sedentary people are becoming at least partially nomadic. Hitherto sedentary individuals have left their places of residence to work abandoned mines in the US and Canada, urged on by the inflated prices of gold and other metals and minerals. Thus, even mineral exploitation can have its variable and cyclical phases. Industry, especially resource industry, is developing a growing need for an adaptive labor force, in a sense, as nomadic populations adaptively relate to their changing resource availability, be it grass or water, or agriculturalists relate to the requirements of seasonal crops. For some time, industrial societies have tended to produce stable labor forces and less-stable residential patterns. We used to call this "neolocality," but it may reflect a more pervasive ecological dimension. Though the shift should be expected to be most noticeable at the level of the proletariat, it is no less apparent in high managerial and administrative strata.

In absolute numbers, with a world population doubling every fifteen to twenty years, there will be more millions of nonsedentary peoples than there ever were in the past. In time, we may find the experience of traditional nomads to have held lessons and models for far more complex societies.

Spatial proximity and symbiosis between sedentary and nomadic peoples took on the weight of a *sine qua non* for the definition of pastoralism or even nomadism in some of the contributions. Not only in the

realm of economic exchanges but also in the political sphere, a measure of balance and equilibrium between the two was seen as a potential outcome of continuous interaction, even though it would take the form of ongoing competition and contest.

The discussions generated a verbal contribution, not included among the submitted papers, by Dr. K. C. Malhotra, who offered it as an example of symbiotic interaction between fixed and mobile peoples, taking place mainly in the realm of cognitive determinants. Some little-reported nomadic Indian subcultures function as necessary adjuncts to sedentary societies. They embrace a great variety of occupations: hunters, trappers, fishermen, blacksmiths, basket weavers, and entertainers such as acrobats, magicians, snake charmers, puppeteers, monkey trainers, singers, and dancers, as well as philosophers, teachers, fortune-tellers, palmists, and lowly beggars. Only a few of these groups, such as sheep raisers and cattle breeders, directly contribute to the food inventory. The integrative role of these traditionally mobile population groups within a, for the most part, immobile society is little understood. We do not know how to range them on the functional-structural scale of food-producing, semiparasitic, or parasitic members of the greater society. Nor can they as yet be assigned a place in the *jajmani* system, that essential aspect of caste organization in traditional and modern India. No serious studies tell us of the role which these wanderers play in the life of village India, and no data indicate what impact changing social and political atmosphere, directed industrialization, and improving means of communication have upon them. It is very apparent, however, that the present forms of their nomadism are fast disappearing and that a process of settling down is under way as traditional modes of occupation are threatened.

Fairly representative of the problem is the case of the Nandiwalla, whose involvement in the life of settled communities also sheds light on ideological reciprocity in their relationships with members of a complex peasant society. The Nandiwalla moved from Andra into Maharashtra about eighty years ago. Their language is Telugu but they are also fluent in Marathi. Though nomadic and economically dependent on cattle, they cannot be called pastoralists. Their main income-producing occupation is the display of bull oracles: Nandiwalla buy bulls from farmers and train them to respond with simple "yes" or "no" signals to any question that is put to them. Bulls are, of course, sacred vehicles of the Lord Shiva and are worshiped as such, especially by the women. They ask very specific questions of the oracle, such as whether they will give birth to a son, a matter of great importance in a patrilineal or virifocal society. If the bull's answer is borne out, in the future the women will receive its oracular pronouncements with all the more respect and esteem. A larger amount of money or possibly a cow will be given to the Nandiwalla who trained it.

The migrations of some of the Nandiwalla groups have now been mapped and can be predicted. Each group controls a territory inherited from its ancestors. Incursions into the territory of another group are punished through a very powerful caste system. The economic gains which the Nandiwalla derive from the villagers among whom they move flow back into the community in which they originate. Excess money earned through the oracles is lent at interest to farmers, who can then use the capital for sinking wells or for other small agricultural-improvement projects. This ethnographic example was chosen to present the case for "nonecological" nomads in the fuller context of a total economic and ritual network, in a symbiotic rather than a competitive relationship with sedentary population sectors. Unanswerable so far is the question of what the future holds for such integrational networks and whether they can be successfully modernized and absorbed into the mainstream of sociocultural changes. If not, will the result be more landless laborers, increasing the already staggering number of unemployed?

The nature and organization of the ICAES sessions on African and Asian nomadic peoples precluded any degree of prescriptive programming. For this, if for no other reason, this volume must submit to Neville Dyson-Hudson's reproach that nomadic studies seem always to have had a "curiously inchoate, noncumulative character" (1972:2). The contributions to this volume stand as a repertoire of evocative themes awaiting convincing systematization, a lexicon with little grammar or syntax. The papers and the discussions which they generated could do no more than underscore the need for ever more rigorous research into the total ambience of nomadic/sedentary life on the one hand, and the creation of a powerful and unifying theory of the nomadic alternative on the other. Can this be accomplished before the problem disappears with the demise of the last nomadic society – or before nomadism has shown itself to be the predominant life-style of the future?

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SECTION ONE

Ecology

The Culture Areas of the Middle East

RAPHAEL PATAI

1. In recent decades a consensus has crystallized among anthropologists and other area specialists concerning the landmass to which the designation "Middle East" should be applied. To put it as briefly as possible, the Middle East is today understood to comprise the territory bounded by the Atlantic Ocean in the west; the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea, the Kara Kum and the Kyzyl Kum deserts, and the Alai Range in the north; the Indus Valley in the east; and the Arabian Sea, the Ethiopian highlands, and the southern reaches of the Sahara in the south. When I first suggested in a 1952 paper that these should be recognized as the appropriate boundaries of the Middle East (Patai 1952), my suggestion was at variance with the dominant, much narrower, view of the delimitation of the area. Subsequently, however, the basic cultural unity of the area in question became more and more generally accepted, and thus the Middle East came to be considered as comprising all of North Africa down to the Sudan, the Arabian Peninsula, the Fertile Crescent, Asia Minor, the Iranian Plateau, and the adjacent lands as indicated above. This is the sense in which the term "Middle East" is used by, among others, anthropologist Carleton S. Coon (1965), sociologist C. A. O. van Nieuwenhuijze (1971), historian Sydney N. Fisher (1968), and political scientists Benjamin Rivlin and Joseph S. Szyliowicz (1965).

Ten years after the publication of the aforementioned paper I returned to a discussion of the subject (Patai 1962). In the intervening decade, continuing study of the Middle East convinced me that the term "culture area," borrowed from the well-known work of Americanist Clark Wissler (1922) and Africanist Melville J. Herskovits (1924), cannot properly be applied to the Middle East as a whole for two reasons: (1) the Middle East, occupying some seven million square miles, is not much smaller

than the continents within which the anthropologists mentioned distinguished numerous culture areas; (2) beneath the overall similarity characterizing "Middle East culture" there are too many strongly pronounced local variations, which become most apparent if one compares widely separated parts of the Middle East, e.g. Río de Oro (the "Golden River") with the Turkmen-Uzbek area traversed by the poetically famous "Golden Road," or Asia Minor with the southeastern part of the Arabian Peninsula. Because of these considerations, as well as an overall structural comparability between the Middle East and continental Europe, I suggested in 1962 that the former be designated a "culture continent," which term would indicate both the huge size of the geographical area concerned and the existence of internal variations among its constituent regions (Patai 1962: 15, 40–47).

Once it is agreed that the Middle East is a culture continent comparable to Europe or to the aboriginal continent of America, the question inevitably arises as to whether it is feasible to present portraits, or at least thumbnail sketches, of the culture areas contained in it. In general, the problem of how to subdivide culturally the vast land area of the Middle East has received scanty attention. As to that part of the Middle East which lies in Asia, it is so small in relation to the huge Asian continent that in an all-Asian perspective it can easily appear as one single culture area. In any case, only one relatively recent study is known to me which discusses the possibility of determining the culture areas of Asia. This study, by Elizabeth Bacon (1946), distinguishes only two areas, which cover the Asian part of the Middle East as well as much of the rest of Asia. One of the two, termed "Southeast Asian Sedentary," was stated to extend "from the Mediterranean to central India, and [to be] also found in the oases of Turkestan." The other, the "Pastoral Nomadic," was defined as extending "from Manchuria to Palestine and from Siberia to the Arabian Sea" (Bacon 1946: 122–123). The untenability of thus lumping together Central Asian and Middle Eastern nomadism into one single culture area was pointed out by me (Patai 1951: 401–414) and subsequently readily admitted by Miss Bacon (1954: 44, 53ff.).

The African part of the Middle East received attention from Africanists who, however, were somewhat at a loss as to how to treat this part of Africa, which is so evidently different from black Africa south of the Sahara. As early as 1894, A. de Préville attempted to divide North Africa into a northernmost belt of *cavaliers* [horsemen], a belt of *chameliers* [camelmen] comprising most of the Sahara, a third narrow belt of *chevriers* [goatmen] to the south of the former, and a belt of *vachers* [cattlemen] occupying roughly the area between the 12th and the 16th parallels north, across the whole width of Africa (de Préville 1894). More than a decade later came Jerome Dowd's superficial division of North Africa into a

"camel zone" and a "cattle zone," which deserves no more than passing mention (Dowd 1907).

The first serious attempt to delineate the culture areas of Africa was made by Melville J. Herskovits in 1924. Although he called his study "A preliminary consideration of the culture areas of Africa," he seemed to have considered it satisfactory enough to repeat it with practically no change in 1930 and again in 1948. As far as the division of the northern part of Africa is concerned, Herskovits's attempt is far from satisfactory. To mention only one detail, he draws a dividing line right across the middle of the Sahara, thereby assigning the Tuareg to two different culture areas. Like Herskovits, the German Africanist Richard Thurnwald paid little attention to North Africa in his classification of African social systems into nine types, two of which, he found, had representatives also in North Africa (Thurnwald 1929).

Wilfrid D. Hambly's mapping of the culture areas of Africa in 1937 represents some advance, inasmuch as he divides the Sahara into three subareas: (1) the Tuareg, (2) the Tebbu, Tibbu, and Teda of Tibesti, and (3) the Arabs of the Libyan oases (Hambly 1937: 325ff.). George P. Murdock (1959) does not map culture areas but attempts an ecological classification, on which basis he finds that North Africa comprises three types: (1) "north African agricultural civilizations" (Berbers and Saharan Negroes), (2) "east African pastoralism" (including the Beja), and (3) "north and west African pastoralism" (Bedouin Arabs, Tuareg, Baggara, and Fulani) (Murdock 1959: 111–133, 314–318, 392–421).

The unsatisfactory nature of all these attempts to classify North Africa into culture areas becomes evident as soon as one has a closer look at the actual situation (see Figure 1). It becomes readily apparent that, apart from one or two areas, no region in the Middle East exhibits the cultural and ethnic homogeneity which formed the basis for delimiting culture areas in America or black Africa. In the Middle East, each culture area (perhaps with the exception of areas 1 and 15, and to a lesser extent area 6) is characterized by the presence of several ethnic groups with different languages, religions, and/or life patterns. A Middle Eastern area is a patchwork quilt composed of irregular assortments of different materials, with pieces of the same material appearing in several different parts, alternating with one or more other types of patches. Given this configuration, the *degree* of internal variety becomes a significant characteristic of every area, over and above the differences in culture between one area and another. Thus, to mention only one example, apart from the obvious cultural differences between areas 1 (the Nile area) and 23 (the Turkmen-Uzbek area), the fact that area 1 is almost entirely homogeneous while area 23 shows a patchwork-like pattern of at least five different ethnic groups becomes an important characteristic differentiating the two. In other cases two areas may be distinguished by different proportions of

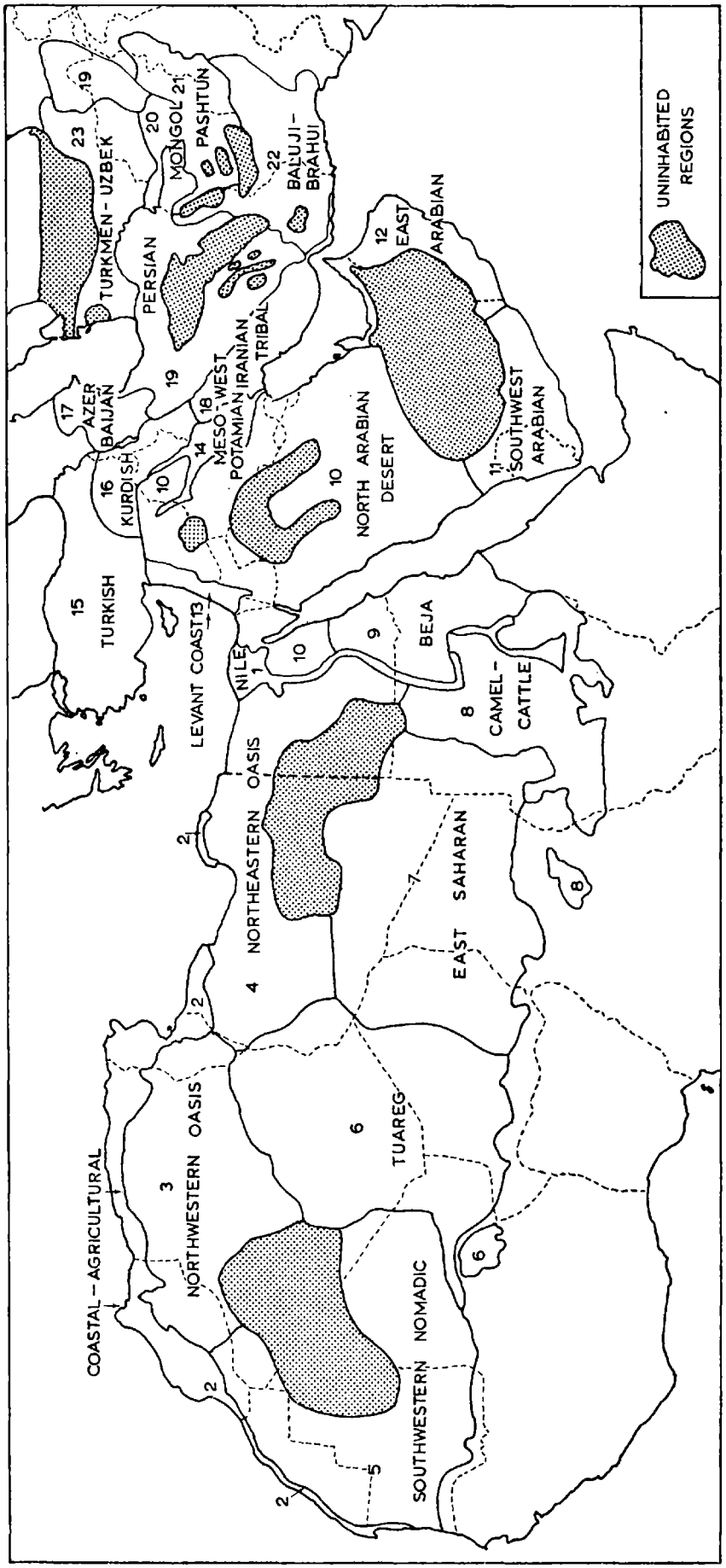

Figure 1. The culture areas of the Middle East

the same two or more ethnic elements found in both, just as in human genetics the incidence of two or more antigens (e.g. in blood groups) is used to differentiate between populations. Thus the proportion of settled versus nomadic populations or of Arabic-speaking versus Berber-speaking groups can be factors distinguishing between neighboring culture areas.

Secondly, it will soon be noted that the differences among Middle Eastern culture areas are far less pronounced than those within the culture areas of native America or black Africa. The latter two continents did not have the historical experience of being politically and culturally dominated by one single ethnic group. Yet this is precisely what happened in the Middle East. Not merely once, but several times in its long history, the Middle East, or major parts of it, were ruled by *one* power and exposed to what today could be called the "cultural imperialism" of one ethnic group. Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Phoenicia, Persia, Greece, Rome, and Byzantium, one after the other, filled this role of politico-cultural dominator in the Middle East. Surpassing them all, the Muslim Arabs, emerging from their arid peninsula in the seventh century, not only conquered and ruled practically the entire Middle East, imposing upon it their religion and to a more limited extent their language, but also settled there and intermingled with the local populations. Hence, what is surprising when one looks at the Middle East from this historical viewpoint is not that its many areas are as culturally similar as they are, but that despite these unifying influences so many differences have survived. It is the historical sequence of influences, emanating one after the other from a series of cultural and political centers, that stamps the Middle East with the character of a culture continent.

II. What, then, in concrete terms, are the cultural features which make for this overall similarity? Obviously, only a very brief enumeration is possible in the present context. Moreover, such an enumeration is made especially difficult by the unprecedented cultural changes which are taking place today all over the Middle East, albeit at greatly disparate rates. In presenting such a list of features, I am following, with certain modifications, a list I presented in 1962. These, then, are the consistent cultural features of the area:

1. A basic ecological dichotomy, corresponding to the geographical dichotomy of the desert and the cultivated land: on the one hand, camel- or sheep- and goat-breeding tribes following a pastoral nomadic mode of life, and, on the other, settled villagers practicing agriculture.

2. The presence of transitional or intermediary types of societies ranging from seminomadic tribes in various stages of sedentarization to almost completely settled tribes.

3. The use of the black hair tent by all nomadic and seminomadic

tribes and the presence of tightly clustered villages all over the settled parts of the Middle East.

4. Patrilineal descent, whether actual or assumed, as the basis of social organization among the tribes as well as in the villages.

5. Rudimentary occupational specialization among both nomads and villagers: almost all of the former are engaged in pastoral pursuits, while almost all of the latter are agriculturists.

6. Much of the interrelationship between nomads and villagers taking the form of raids by tribal groups who regarded the villagers as their legitimate prey, at least in the past; recently, this form of interaction has been suppressed by the state governments and replaced by commercial exchange with the local towns as its focus.

7. A monopoly on leadership in all fields (religion, education, art, politics, business, etc.) held by the numerically small urban upper and middle classes, resulting in a considerable cultural gap between town and country.

8. A triple class structure, pronounced in the towns, rudimentary in the villages, and almost nonexistent in the nomadic tribes. However, among the nomads there is a great emphasis on rank differences between "noble" and "vassal" tribes.

9. Westernization centered in the towns and strongest in the upper class, less advanced in the middle class, and incipient in the lower class.

10. The extended, patrilineal, patrilocal, patriarchal, endogamous, and occasionally polygynous family as the basic social and economic unit in nomadic camp and village, with the individual subordinated to the family. In the city, the Western-type nuclear family becomes more and more prevalent.

11. In traditional circles (as above), participation by the individual in social groupings larger than the family not on an individual basis but through his family membership.

12. In the town, such associations as guilds (now largely defunct) based on occupation, though membership is often inherited.

13. Indications everywhere of a dual organization.

14. On he local level, in camps and villages, social control and political leadership based on family ies and influence, with the powers divided between headman and council.

15. On the higher level, in the capitals and other central towns, the spectacle of the traditional feudalistic, oligarchic, and at times despotic rule slowly being either mitigated by newly introduced Western forms of government or transformed into dictatorships with capitalistic control and a disproportionate accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few "great" families.

16. General poverty, subsistence-level life, and a high incidence of disease, high birth and death rates, and low life expectancy, with the situation somewhat better in the Westernized sectors of the towns.

17. Very high rates of illiteracy, which still stamp the Middle East as an illiterate culture.

18. A great preoccupation, on the other hand, with folklore: folk poetry, folk song, folk tales, folk music, riddles, and proverbs, and great emphasis on oral expression in general.

19. The tribal population's adherence to the old, local, traditional, customary law (known as *'urf* in the Arabic-speaking areas) rather than the Muslim religious *sharī'a* law, which, however, is gradually being displaced in the more Westernized countries by modern Western law.

20. A strongly marked double standard of sexual morality, with great emphasis on premarital virginity, female chastity, and modesty.

21. Veiling of women, practiced sporadically but most prevalent in conservative urban circles.

22. Honor, hospitality, generosity, kin-group loyalty, sensitivity to shame ("face") and insistence on revenge; these are predominant values which strongly influence behavior patterns in direct proportion to the general conservatism.

23. The esthetic element permeating everyday life, its forms and areas of expression being determined by local tradition.

24. An all-pervasive religiosity, comprised of elements of belief, ritual, custom, and morality.

25. Intense belief in and reliance on the one and only God, accompanied by a belief in demons and spirits, and by saint worship in the towns and villages; ancestor worship is absent.

26. Finally, a widespread broad outlook on human existence, comprising a firm belief in reward and punishment in the afterlife, an acceptance of one's fate, and a relative indifference to adversity.

III. The Middle Eastern culture continent as a whole is characterized by the foregoing twenty-six common features. Unless otherwise stated, these features can be assumed to be present in each of the culture areas discussed. In attempting to characterize the culture areas of the Middle East, I must point out that, in order to make the description of the individual areas manageable, only a few basic features could be selected for presentation. The features selected include the political control to which the area is subject; the estimated number of its inhabitants; the ethnic groups; the subsistence economy; the religion(s); the language(s); and, finally, those special features in which the area differs from the general Middle Eastern pattern.[1]

[1] The approach utilized by Murdock (1967) in his *Ethnographic atlas* in determining his "classification by clusters" could not be used because most of the very large number of features (some 50) listed there are identical for either the entire Middle East or major parts of it; or data are unavailable for most of the ethnic groups of the area. Moreover, Murdock's classification by clusters lumps together such far-apart and disparate groups as, for example, Egyptians and Moroccans, or Jordanians and

1. *Nile Area*

Political control: Egypt (the Arab Republic of Egypt) in the north and the Sudan in the south. The population of the area can be estimated at 39 million, of whom roughly 35 million are in Egypt, and 4 million in the Northern and Blue Nile provinces of the Sudan.

Ethnic groups: in the north, Arabic-speaking Egyptians, including 7 percent Copts. In the south, Nubian-speaking Barābra (singular Barbarī), numbering some 200,000 and including the Kunūz (singular Kenūzī) between the First and Second Cataracts in southern Egypt, and the Sukkūt and Maḥas between the Second and Third Cataracts in northern Sudan. The Danāqla (or Danāqīl, singular Danqalī) between the Third and Fourth Cataracts are linguistically and physically related to the Kunūz but do not consider themselves Barābra. South of the Fourth Cataract live the Gaaliyyin (Ja'alyyīn), Shayqiyya, and other Arab tribes with a strong Nubian component. The ancestral home of the Nubians in the Wadi Halfa area south of the Egyptian frontier has in recent years been inundated by Lake Nasser, created by the Aswan High Dam, and the people have been relocated along the Atbara River near the Ethiopian border. In the Northern province of the Sudan some 20 percent of the total population is Nubian and 80 percent Arab. In the Blue Nile province, to the south, more than 86 percent is Arab, with the remainder West African speaking a variety of African languages.

Subsistence economy: this is one of the world's oldest and most intensively cultivated areas of irrigated riverain agriculture. The high fertility of the land, annually replenished (until the construction of higher and higher dams) by the silt deposited during the summer floods of the Nile, made possible an extremely dense population concentration, with villages many times larger than in any other area of the Middle East. This, moreover, is the only area in the entire Middle East in which nomads are totally absent. Paralleling the huge triangle of the Nile delta in the north is a similar triangle in the south, to the south of Khartoum between the Blue Nile and the White Nile, the so-called al-Jezīrah, with irrigated agriculture practiced in both.

The religion of the people is Sunnī Islam, whose Ḥanafī School enjoys official status. Popular religion stresses the veneration of saints, whose birthdays are celebrated at their tombs in great annual festivals (the so-called *mawlīd*s). The Copts of Egypt are monophysite Christians who represent the remnants of the country's pre-Islamic Christian population and, on the whole, are more educated and urbanized than the Muslims.

The language of the area is predominantly Arabic as far south as the First Cataract, and again south of the Fourth Cataract. Arabic is spoken

Yemenis (Murdock 1967: 19, 21), and is thus not useful in an attempt to delimit smaller areas.

by both Muslims and Copts (the latter gave up their Coptic language centuries ago) in the special Egyptian Arabic colloquial which differs to some extent from the Arabic of areas 10 and 13, and more so from that of the North African Maghrib (areas 2, 3, and 4). The Nubian peoples inhabiting both banks of the Nile between the First and Fourth Cataracts speak Nubian dialects. Nubian is an east-Sudanic language belonging to the Nilo-Saharan family.

2. *Coastal Agricultural Area*

Political control over this very narrow and very long area is exercised (from west to east) by Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. A population estimate is very difficult to arrive at, since the area comprises minor parts of no less than five political entities whose total combined population in 1970 was about 15 million. However, as a guess one can say that probably at least two-thirds to three-quarters of this number live within the area.

Ethnic groups: there can be little doubt that genetically most of the present-day inhabitants of the area are descendants of the Berbers, the original native inhabitants of North Africa, whom the Greeks called *barbaroi* and the Romans *barbari*. The Berbers, in general, are lighter in color than the Arabs. After the Arab occupation of the North African Maghrib all Berbers adopted Islam and most of them gave up their original language for Arabic. Today only those groups are called Berbers who have retained their old language, spoken in many different dialects. Most of the present-day Berbers live outside our area (assimilation has always been less strong in the hinterland than on the coast; see areas 4, 5, and 6).[2] Within our area, where the Arabization of the Berber speakers still proceeds quite rapidly, the major ethnic groups are as follows (again from west to east): Imragen (or Hawāta, or Shnāgla), Oulād bū Ayta, Foykat, and Lammiar of the coast of Mauritania and the former Spanish Sahara; these are Arab or Arabized Berber tribes engaged in sea fishing and paying dues to the nomadic Moorish warriors and *marabouts* who own the fishing grounds. The southwestern Atlantic coastal plains of Morocco, the Anti Atlas, the High Atlas, and the Sous River region are occupied by 3 million Shluh (Shlöh), who are sedentary cereal cultivators or seminomads and partly or wholly Berber-speaking. The Atlantic coastal region of northern Morocco is inhabited by about 1.3 million sedentary Arabic speakers, with another 1 million detribalized Arabic speakers in the urban areas. To the east of them, in the mountains of

[2] The total number of Berbers, i.e. groups whose colloquial is or until recently was Berber, in all of the North African part of the Middle East can be estimated at about 10 million.

central Morocco, live the transhumant Berāber (approximately 500,000), who speak a dialect of Tamashek Berber. Near the northernmost tip of Morocco, down to the Mediterranean, are several Berber sedentary agricultural or mountaineering tribal groups who are in a rapid process of Arabization and are known under the names of Jebāla, Ghumāra, Ṣenhāja, and Riffians. East of the Riffians, as far as the Algerian border, are located several Berber Ruāfa or Tamashek-speaking groups commonly referred to as Zenāta. Along the entire coast of Algeria live sedentary Arabized Berber Algerians, in whose midst the Berber Kabyles, also sedentary cultivators, constitute a compact sector along the coast. In the Aures mountain area of eastern Algeria live the Berber Shawiyya (Chaouia), who are sedentary cereal cultivators. In Tunisia the Arab Tunisians in the north and the Sahel (also the name of the northeastern coastal plain of Tunisia) are sedentary cultivators. In southern Tunisia many of the Arab Arad are likewise sedentary cultivators. In Libya a settled agricultural Arab population lives along the Tripolitan coast in the west and the Cyrenaic coast in the east, but not on the central Sirtican coast. Berbers live in the Jebel Nefūsa of Tripolitania near the Mediterranean.

This area occupies that narrow coastal belt of North Africa extending from Mauritania to Libya, in which sufficient rainfall makes dry-farming possible. Thus the subsistence economy in the area is based primarily on extensive cultivation of rainfed lands with irrigation applied only exceptionally. Nomads, few in number, practice transhumance and thus utilize lands unsuited for agriculture. The majority of the people live in villages, the minority in cities, the largest of which are strung along the seashore.

The religion is predominantly Sunnī Islam of the Mālikī school. A small group of Ibādhis lives on the Tunisian island of Jerba, where they form about half the population and call themselves Wahbīs. They are an austere, puritanical sect. In the eastern, Libyan, part of the area, Senussi sectarianism is strong, although its influence is on the decline in the modernizing sector of Libyan society. In the west of the area there is widespread veneration of saints, with annual pilgrimages to their tombs. All over the area among untutored people, old folk-beliefs survive, expressed in a fear of *jinn* [spirits] and the evil eye, and a belief in *baraka* [mysterious beneficial power] possessed by *marabouts* [Muslim holy men]. Religious brotherhoods (*tarīqas*), with centers (*zāwiyyas*) which are a combination of monastery and clubhouse, exist all over the area, but are increasingly discouraged by the respective governments. In Algeria the Ramaniyya, Qādiriyya, and Tijāniyya brotherhoods have a combined membership of close to 400,000 in a total population of about 2 million adult male Muslims.

The language generally spoken in the area is the Maghrib Arabic dialect. Berber languages are still spoken by many of the Berber inhabitants

of the area, especially in the former Spanish Sahara, the Rif region in Morocco, and the Qusūr Mountains and the island of Jerba in Tunisia. However, the Arabization process of the Berbers is proceeding everywhere. As a result of the decades of French domination of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, much of the instruction in schools is still in French, and French is still the language of the urban elite. French culture vies with Arab culture for the loyalty and sentimental attachment of the upper classes, and the major cities, notably Algiers, exhibit a high degree of French-oriented Westernization.

3. *Northwestern Oasis Area*

Political control: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. A population estimate of this area is even more difficult to arrive at than one for area 2. Perhaps 2.5 million may not be too far off the mark.

Ethnic groups: the Berber–Arab dichotomy (see area 2) exists in this area as well. Since most of the area falls within Algeria, it can be mentioned that the 1966 Algerian census listed more than 3 million, or 17.9 percent of the total population, as Berber speakers. An earlier (circa 1960) estimate by French experts put them at 30 percent.

Perhaps more important than the linguistic dichotomy is the nomadic/settled division in the area. Among the nomads, who graze their camels, sheep, and goats in the desert and steppe, there are more Arabs than Berbers; among the settled cultivators, who concentrate on date culture in the oases, the majority are Berber. The most important pastoral nomadic tribes are the Atta, the Dwī Menīa, the Benī Gīl, and other Berber tribes of southeastern Morocco and western Algeria; the Hamyan, the Oulād Sidi Shaykh, and other Bedouin Arab tribes of the Algerian steppe near the Moroccan frontier; the Bedouin Arab Oulād Na'īl of the central Atlas region of Algeria; the Hamāma and related Bedouin Arab tribes of the interior steppe of Tunisia; and the large Bedouin Arab Chaamba (comprising many tribes which differ in rank) and others of the Algerian Sahara.

Among the settled cultivators in the oases and along a few rivers, the most important are the Berber Drāwa and Filāla of Morocco; the Berber Figuig (Fajīj), who inhabit a group of seven walled villages (*qṣūr*) in southeastern Morocco near the Algerian frontier and cultivate date palms and fruit trees; the Berber Touat, Mzab, and Wargla (Ouargla) in Algeria; the Arab Laguat (Laghouat), Ziban, Ruārha, and Swāfa in Algeria; the Arab Gafsa (Qafsa) and Jerīd of Tunisia; and the Berber Benī Wazīt, Benī Ulīd, and Oulād Bellīl (the latter consider themselves of Arab origin) tribes of the Ghadames (Ghdāms) oasis in the western Libyan Sahara. In the past, many of these oasis peoples owed their fortunes more to the trans-Saharan caravan trade than to cultivation.

The subsistence economy of the area, as indicated above, is partly nomadic herding and partly oasis cultivation. The latter is generally irrigated agriculture and arboriculture. In the past, the oases were often worked by Negro slaves for their nomadic masters. The slaves have long been officially liberated, but many of them still work the oases as *ḥarāṭīn* [agricultural serfs] for absentee masters.

The religion of the area is Sunnī Islam; however, several of the Berber groups belong to the Ibādhi sect, notably the inhabitants of the Mzab and Wargla oases. Among the nomads, Islamic observance is rather lax. The Qādiriyya and Tijāniyya brotherhoods (compare area 2) have adherents here as well.

Family structure differs from the general Middle Eastern type in that most of the Berbers are monogamous.

4. *Northeastern Oasis Area*

Political control: Libya in the west, Egypt in the east. The population can be estimated only very roughly at about 1 million.

Ethnic groups: the Berber speakers constitute a smaller proportion than in area 3, perhaps 10 to 20 percent. In Tripolitania (western Libya) live the nomadic Arab tribes of Riyāh (Ria), Busayf, Hasāwna, Hutmān (Hotma), Megārha (Maqārha), Urfilla (Ourfellah), Zintān, and others; on the Sirtican coast and to the south of it, the nomadic Arab tribes of Jamāʿāt, Qadhāghfa, Oulad Solimān, and others; and in Cyrenaica (eastern Libya), the Senussi, who are mostly nomadic Arab tribes. The Western Desert of Egypt is the domain of, among others, the nomadic Arab Saʿadī tribes with their tributary Murābiṭīn. The population of the large oases includes the Berbers of the Libyan Forgha, Jofra, Zella, and Jalu oases, and of the Egyptian Sīwa oasis (circa 4,000 inhabitants); and the Arabs of the Libyan Fezzan, Kufra, and Wanyanya, and the Egyptian Bahariyya, Farāfra, Dakhla, Kharga, and Selīma oases.

The subsistence economy is the by now familiar dual one of nomadic pastoralism and irrigated cultivation. In the east (in Egypt) the buffalo makes its appearance, but it is unknown west of this area.

The religion of the area is Mālikite Sunnī Islam with Ibādhis found in the west in Tripolitania, in Jebel Nefūsa and Zwāgha, and the Senussi sect or religious order predominating in the central part, including the Sīwa oasis. The Senussiyya was founded as recently as the middle of the nineteenth century, but by the eve of World War I, it had achieved effective political and commercial control over the whole eastern half of the Sahara, and after World War II (in 1950) its head became the king of Libya. Since the overthrow of the Libyan monarchy in 1969 the sect has lost influence. Nevertheless the Senussi *zāwiyya*s (compare area 2) are

still important centers of religious life, and in many places replace the mosques. The *marabouts* are as influential here as in area 2, and the belief in their *baraka* remains strong. Many Berbers of the area still adhere to the Khārijī sect.

The language is predominantly Arabic, which has almost entirely replaced the Berber languages. In Libya 90 percent of the population is Arabic-speaking. The Arabic spoken in Tripolitania and Fezzan belongs to the Maghrib group (compare area 2). In Cyrenaica the Arabic resembles the dialect of Egypt. In the south of Libya (area 7) some Sudanic languages are still spoken. The inhabitants of the Sīwa oasis and of Sokna and al-Foqa in northern Tripolitania speak Berber.

The family structure is of the general Middle Eastern type but is modified somewhat due to the greater prevalence of homosexuality in some oases (e.g. in Sīwa).

5. *Southwestern Oasis Area*

Political control: Mauritania, Mali, and Algeria. The number of inhabitants cannot be estimated with any reliability, but it seems to be around 600,000.

Ethnic groups: this area is much poorer in oases than areas 3 and 4, and consequently its total population is both smaller and more nomadic. Enumerating counterclockwise the major tribes of this horseshoe-shaped area surrounding one of the largest uninhabited desert regions of the world, we find in the north the totally Arabized and largely sedentarized Tajakant (singular Jakānī) and associated tribes of western Algeria and northern Mauritania; the Berber nomadic Tekna of southern Morocco and the northern part of the former Spanish Sahara (Río de Oro); the Bedouin, fully Arabized Oulād Delīm and the powerful, noble Regeybāt (or Rguibat, singular Rguībī) of Mauritania; the Bedouin Arab Trārza and Brākna, including the Tasumsa, still partly Berber-speaking, and other minor groups in southern Mauritania; the largely Arabized Berber semisedentary sheep-herding and millet-cultivating Duwaysh in southeastern Mauritania; the Arabized Berber Bedouin Zenāga in the Hodh region of Mauritania and east-central Mali; and the Bedouin Arab Berābish and Kunta in Mali north of Timbuctoo. All the population elements identified in the above listing as Arabs are actually Maure, or Moors, who are basically of Arab-Berber origin with varying degrees of Negroid admixture, increasing toward the south. They constitute about half the area's population, with one-third Berbers in the northwest (the Tekna) and one-sixth Negroid peoples in the south, including the Fulbe or Fulani, who number some 50,000.[3]

[3] The total number of Fulani, scattered all over the western Sudan, is about 5 million.

The subsistence economy of the area is based primarily on animal-herding (mostly sheep and goats, camels and cattle), with 70 to 75 percent of the population nomadic or seminomadic – one of the highest percentages in the Middle East.

The religion is Islam, with the Qādiriyya and Tijāniyya brotherhoods quite strong (compare areas 2 and 3).

The language is the Ḥasaniyya Arabic dialect, which manifests varying degrees of Berber influence. Some tribes still speak only Berber, others are bilingual.

This area is characterized by hierarchically structured social systems, most pronounced in the south. At the top is the white Moor warrior nobility (designated as *ḥasan*); next come the primarily Arab religious groups (*zwāya*); then follow the white Moorish commoners, primarily Berbers with an admixture of Negro blood; and at the bottom of the ranking order are the black Moors, mainly Berbers, but with a greater proportion of Negro blood due to interbreeding with Negro slaves. In the whole of Mauritania 54 percent of the population are white Moors, called *bīdān* [whites], and 27.5 percent are black Moors. The remaining 18 percent are black agricultural people living along the Senegal River just to the south of the border of our area.

6. *Tuareg Area*

Political control: Algeria in the north, Mali in the southwest, Niger in the southeast, and Libya in a small eastern corner. The population of the area can be estimated at less than 1 million, of whom the Tuareg (singular Targūī) account for 300,000, while the rest are Negroid serfs and slaves.

Ethnic groups: this sparsely inhabited central part of the Sahara desert and the Sudan belt is dominated by several Berber-speaking Tuareg tribal confederations: the Azjer or Ajjer (numbering about 6,000) and the Ahaggaren (about 5,000) in the north; the Ifora or Ifogha (about 5,000) in the southwest; the Aulliminden or Iullemmedden (about 100,000) in the south; and the Asben or Kel Air, embracing the Kel Geres and other groups (about 30,000), in the east. Several additional tribes occupy smaller areas along the bend of the Niger River: the Antessar and the Tengeredif (about 40,000) along its north bank, and the Wadalan, the Gossi, and others (100,000) south of the river. The Tuareg groupings in general comprise two hereditary classes of nomads: the noble, ruling Tuareg (*imajeghen*), and the vassal Tuareg (*imghad*) who pay rent or tribute to the former. Outnumbering them are the Negro slaves (*iklan*), at least two or three of whom are owned individually by each Tuareg family and used as house-workers, with the females also serving as concubines; and groups of Negroid serfs, known as *ḥarāṭīn* (singular *ḥarṭānī*), who are engaged in

sharecropping, cultivating the oases for their nomadic noble or vassal overlords, or living with the latter in their tribal groups and camps as herdsmen.

The subsistence economy of the Tuareg is based on camel (or sheep and goat) herding. It is supplemented by the products of the oases, their property, worked for them by serfs or slaves. In physical type the Tuareg are taller, slimmer, and lighter-colored than their Arabic-speaking neighbors (areas 3 and 4). In fact, they are among the tallest people in the world and are thin and sinewy. However, a large minority among both nobles and vassals show signs of Negroid admixture as a result of Negro concubinage.

The religion of the Tuareg is Mālikī Sunnī Islam, adherence to whose tenets is, however, rather lukewarm. Moreover, their religious practices incorporate numerous unorthodox magical elements.

The language spoken by the Tuareg is Tamashek, a form of Ṣenhājan Berber, which comprises various dialects. This is the only area in the entire African Middle East in which Berber languages still predominate. The Tuareg language is unique in possessing an old script, called Tifinagh, which is generally known and used only by women for such purposes as sending love messages or writing love poems.

The relationship between Tuareg men and women is also unique in the Middle East. Women enjoy a higher status there than elsewhere. There is great freedom as far as premarital relationships between young men and women are concerned, and romantic love affairs, in which women, as a rule, take the initiative, are frequent. It is the men who wear the veil (the *lithām*, usually dark blue or black), while the women go unveiled. Ritualized social gatherings (called *tendi* and *ahal*) take place with the participation of large numbers of men and women. Descent is matrilineal. Monogamy is universal, the preferred marriage is within the clan, outside the first degree cousinship, and outside the camp community. Divorce is unusual. All this suggests pre-Islamic survival. Other archaic features include the use of animal hides dyed yellow or red as tent coverings, rather than the black hair tent cloth generally used by nomads all over the Middle East.

7. *East Saharan Area*

Political control: Libya in the north, Niger and Chad in the south, and the Sudan in the east. The population can be only very roughly estimated at 2.3 million, of whom more than half live in the Sudanese part of the area.

Ethnic groups: this is the only area in the Middle East which is inhabited almost entirely by Negroid peoples, the so-called Saharan Negroes. Some Arab tribes are found near the southern border of the

area, and, for the last 150 years or so, also in the Kufra oasis in its north, which until 1813 was occupied by the Saharan Negro Teda. Most of the area constitutes the wandering territory of the nomadic Saharan Negro Teda (in the north) and Daza (to the south of the Teda). These two tribal groups, also referred to as Toubou (Tūbū), number about 200,000 and roam freely across the frontiers of Niger, Chad, and Libya. One-third of the Teda are fully nomadic; two-thirds of them and all the Daza are seminomadic and regularly return to their villages during the rainy season (from July to September). The Teda mainly tend camels; the Daza also raise horses, donkeys, sheep, and goats. Both of them comprise several subgroups, which, however, do not consider themselves (as Arab tribes usually do) descendants of a single, often mythical, ancestor, but rather trace their origins to one single locality. Close to the southern borders of the area are found the Daza tribes of the Kreda (the most numerous), the Bulgeda, the Kanemba, and the Kawar. In the southeastern corner of Libya are located the Bideyāt, a Sudanese group of Daju origin which, however, has largely adopted Arabic speech. Across the Sudanese frontier are the non-Arab tribes of the Zaghāwa, the Nubian Midobi, and the Berti, the Berkid, the Fūr, and the Daju, about 54 percent of whom speak Arabic and 42 percent Darfurian. North of Lake Chad are found the Arabic-speaking Solimān.

The subsistence economy of the area is determined to a large extent by the amount of rainfall. In the north, rain is minimal, and the scanty vegetation of the desert enables only camel nomads to exist, with the exception of the Kufra and other oases, in which irrigated agriculture and arboriculture are pursued. Toward the south, rainfall increases, favoring seminomadism based on sheep and goats, with the raising of cattle gaining importance farther south. The southernmost outskirts of the area receive sufficient rain to make them savanna rather than desert, and in their eastern and western extremes considerable numbers of people engage in agriculture.

The religion of the area is almost entirely Islam, although some groups adopted it as late as the eighteenth century. Some tribes, moreover, in the northeast of the area (e.g. the Bideyāt), are still partly pagan, partly rather indifferent Muslims. In the southern tier of the area, pagan elements are still found interspersed with Islam.

Language, side by side with religion, is an important differentiating factor in the area. While Arabic, together with Islam, continues to spread, and constitutes the *lingua franca* of the area, some tribal languages still hold their own. These as a group are called "Kanuric" by Murdock (1959: 129) and "Central Saharan" by Greenberg (1955). Language and tribal identification go hand in hand: the Toubou groups which speak the Tedāga dialect refer to themselves as Teda; those who use the Dazāga dialect call themselves Daza.

8. *Camel–Cattle Area*

Political control: almost the whole of this area lies within the Sudan, except for a disconnected small western section located in south-central Chad and inhabited by the seminomadic Arab Hemat (Haymad) and related tribes, all of which show a substantial Negroid admixture. The population can be estimated at a few hundred thousand. Of the total population of the Sudanese Northern and Kordofan provinces, the Arabs constitute some 60 percent, or about 2.5 million.

Ethnic groups: in the Dongola region to the north are the Arabized Nubian Kerārīsh, camel nomads; between the 18th and the 15th parallels to the west of the Nile live the Kabābīsh, the Hawāwīr, the Keriat, and the Shayqiyya; to the east of the White Nile live the Battāhīn and the Shukriyya. All of these are camel nomads and reveal varying degrees of Negroid admixture; they occupy a large area in the Kordofan province of the Sudan. To the south of them are the Anag and other Arabized Nubian tribes of the hill country of central Kordofan; the Fezāra and related groups who are cattle and sheep nomads in central Kordofan; the seminomadic Hamar (Homr), Bedāwiyya, Ḥasaniyya, and Gimma to the west of the White Nile, and the Rufā'a to the east. South of the former live the cattle nomad tribes of the Habbāniyya, the Messiriyya, and the Selīma. The cattle tribes are collectively referred to as *baqqāra* (also spelled *baggara*) [cattle herders], whose traditional weapon is an extremely long-bladed spear. In contrast, the camel nomads who predominate in the north are called *jammāla* [camel herders]. Most of the Sudanese Arabs claim either Guhayna or Gaaliyyin affiliation, the former being primarily nomadic and the latter mostly settled (see also area 1).

The subsistence economy, depending on climatic conditions, makes a greater population density possible as one proceeds from north to south. On the southern fringes of the area, as in neighboring area 7, agriculture plays an increasing role.

The religion is Islam, and, in contrast to their western neighbors, the *baqqāra* are fanatical Muslims and a warlike people.

The language of most of the tribes (over 90 percent) is Sudanic Arabic, which differs dialectically from the Egyptian Arabic of the north.

Family life differs from the general Middle Eastern pattern in that there is a higher incidence of polygamy and an initial matrilocal residence, both features indicating persistent pre-Islamic African influences. The Middle Eastern black hair tent is frequently replaced among the nomads by other types of temporary shelter.

9. *Beja Area*

Political control: Egypt in the north and the Sudan in the south. The population was estimated in 1969–1970 at 1.67 million, of whom only 40,000 live in the Egyptian part of the area; the rest inhabit the Sudanese part. The Beja speakers, who numbered about 650,000, or 50 percent of the total in the Kassala province of the Sudan in 1955–1956, are the dominant group in the area.

Ethnic groups: the northern, or Egyptian, part is occupied by the ʿAbābda (singular ʿAbbādī), numbering about 20,000. They are Muslim nomadic pastoralists, mostly Arabic-speaking. To the south of them, in the Sudan, are the Beja people, most of whom belong to one of three groups (from north to south): the Bishārīn, the Amarār, and the Hadendowa. These descendants of the original indigenous inhabitants of the area have lived there ever since early Pharaonic times. Most of them are nomads, herding sheep, goats, camels, and cattle, although one of the two divisions of the Bishārīn are settled along the Atbara River on the southwestern border of the area.

The subsistence economy is nomadic, with sheep and goats tended all over the area, supplemented by camels in the north and by more cattle than camels in the south. Due to the generally poor grazing conditions, the tribes must break up into small groups in search of pasture. In addition, some occasional cultivation is practiced by the women.

The religion is Islam. The conversion of the Beja peoples to Islam took place between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries. Following Muslim custom, the Beja adopted Arabic personal names and took to claiming Arab descent.

The language spoken by the ʿAbābda in the north is mostly Arabic, which has replaced their original Cushitic tongue. The Beja, on the other hand, have largely retained their old northern Cushitic (Hamitic) language, designated by the Arabic term *tu-Beḍāwiyye*. This language, used by half the total population of the Kassala province, is spoken by each of the three Beja groups in a different dialect. About 36 percent of the province's population speak Arabic, and about 11 percent speak various West African languages.

In physical type, the Beja are Caucasoid, with copper red or deep brown skin. They display some pre-Islamic or non-Middle Eastern cultural features, such as the use of grass or palm-leaf mats to cover their tents, initial matrilocal residence, and bride service. Their social organization is relatively egalitarian: there are neither slaves nor nobles. On the other hand, the Beja are characterized by extreme conservatism and pride.

10. *North Arabian Desert Area*

Political control: mainly Saudi Arabia; minor parts are controlled by Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Kuwait. Population estimates are extremely difficult because of the area's political fragmentation and because no census has ever been taken in Saudi Arabia. The total population of Saudi Arabia can be estimated at 7 million, to which must be added about 1.5 million nomads and seminomads in the other six countries named, resulting in a total estimate of 8.5 million.

Ethnic groups: the area is inhabited almost exclusively by Arabs, i.e. by people whose mother tongue is Arabic and who consider themselves Arabs. Apart from this general awareness of being Arab, there is an almost equally important feeling of loyalty to the specific tribal group of which one is a member by birth. This loyalty is most pronounced among the nomads, less so among the villagers, and least among the townspeople, many of whom have become Westernized and minimize the importance of genealogical identification.

The Arabian Peninsula is the original home of the Arab tribes who, beginning in the seventh century, conquered all the countries which today form the Arab world and, in the process, imposed much of their own tradition upon the native populations. Tribal identification and loyalty were two of the foremost elements of that tradition and, to a considerable extent, they still are. In our area the number of tribal groupings is so large that only some of the most important can be mentioned.

In the Syrian desert two major tribal confederations rank first, both of them comprising noble camel nomads: the ʿAneze (or ʿAnaza), whose tribal territory extends over parts of Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, and the Shammār, in Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Important tribes in Jordan are the Benī Ṣakhr and Benī Ḥasan; on the Iraqi–Saudi border, the al-Zafīr; in the Kuwait–Saudi region, the Muṭayr; in Ḥijāz Province of Saudi Arabia, the Ḥarb and the Hudhayl; in the central Nejd, the ʿUtayba; in southern Saudi Arabia bordering on the uninhabited Rub al-Khālī [Empty Quarter] desert, the Yām, and to the east of them the ʿAwāmir. In addition to these noble tribes, there are numerous smaller, weaker, nonnoble tribes who are their vassals, as well as tribal splinter groups of the generally despised Heteym (Hutaym) and Ṣolubba, who serve the noble tribes as tinkers, smiths, etc. On the outskirts of the desert, close to the cultivated and better-watered regions, are the sheep and goat nomads, considered as ranking beneath the camel nomads but above the vassal tribes.

The entire tribal population of the area and many of its settled inhabitants claim either southern (Yamanī, Qaḥṭānī, or Ḥimyarī) descent or northern (Qaysī, ʿAdnānī, Maʿadd, Nizar, or Muḍar) genealogy. These dual descent traditions influence alliances and allegiances.

The nomads in general look down upon the settled people (the so-called *ḥaḍarī*) because the latter have submitted to the yoke of agricultural labor, while to the nomad the only activity befitting a free man is tending his herds and flocks.

The subsistence economy of the nomads is based mainly on their animals. Each group of related extended families moves from place to place within its own territory, the migration being determined by the seasonal conditions of rain, pasture, and well water. Theirs is a unique adaptation to the hot desert and steppe region which occupies the major part of the Middle East and which, without them, would be entirely uninhabited and unutilized (see also areas 3 through 9). The deserts and the steppes can, of course, support only a very sparse nomadic population. The oases in the desert are like green islands inhabited by settled people practicing agriculture and arboriculture. In recent decades efforts have been made by the governments to settle the nomads and induce them to switch to sedentary cultivation by providing them with deep wells in areas formerly arid and uncultivable. Many of the major cities of the area are located on or near the borders between the desert and the cultivated land.

Following World War II, an entirely new economic dimension developed in the area, especially in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq, as well as in area 12, with the exploitation of oil by large American and European companies. This resulted in the industrial employment of tens of thousands of local tribesmen, in billions of dollars in revenue for the governments, and in an inevitable modernization for considerable segments of the population.

Religion: the peninsular core of this area is the birthplace of Islam and of Arab culture, which spread from here throughout the Middle East from the seventh century onward, the religion reaching farther afield than the Arabic language. The holy cities of Mecca and Medina have remained the religious centers of Islam and attract hundreds of thousands of pilgrims annually from all over the Muslim world. In Saudi Arabia, Sunnī Islam is the ruling religion, with the puritanical Wahhābī sect of the Ḥanbalī School predominating. Saint worship is found only on the outskirts of the area.

The southern part of this area, together with areas 11 and 12, contains the least Westernized and most conservative population elements of the Arab world, retaining such features, outmoded or discarded elsewhere, as slavery, large harems maintained by rulers and the rich, an autarchic monarchy, punishment by bodily mutilation, and the like. Only Muslims are allowed to set foot in Mecca – a unique restriction among the holy places of the world.

11. *Southwest Arabian Area*

Political control: the Arab Republic of Yemen and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (better known as Southern Yemen). Although no census has ever been taken, the area has an estimated population of 7 million, of whom 5.5 million are in Yemen and 1.5 million in Southern Yemen.

Ethnic groups: most of the people of the area are Arab in both descent and language. The tribal traditions are still very strong, and the genealogical claims of being either of southern or of northern descent (compare area 10) play an important role in political affiliations, tribal alliances, and the like. In Yemen, the most important upland tribal groupings are those of the Ḥāshid and Bakīl confederations north of Ṣan'a (both claiming southern origin). Other "southern" tribes are the Hamdān, the Khawlān, and the Murra. "Northern" tribes are the 'Absiyya, the 'Anaza, the Benī Ismā'īl, and the Benī Qays. In Southern Yemen, the Yāfa' (Yāfi') and Hamdān confederations are both of "southern" stock, as are the 'Abdalī, the Aqrabī, the Faḍlī, the 'Awlaqī, the Dhiaybī, and others. The Hadhramaut Valley, one of the most fertile regions of Southern Yemen, is inhabited by a large number of tribes (some estimates run as high as 1,300) of whom the Kathīrī and Qa'aytī groupings are among the most important. All these groups claim "southern" descent. Among the tribes, but not a part of them, live the Sayyid, who claim descent from the Prophet Muḥammad and wield great influence as religious leaders, keepers of the shrines of saints, and mediators in conflicts.

Subsistence economy: the hot, humid, and sandy coastal lowlands are very sparsely populated except for a few seaside towns. Most of the population live in the highland region in numerous towns and villages, where they practice agriculture, made possible primarily by the summer monsoon rains in Yemen and by irrigation in the Hadhramaut Valley in Southern Yemen. Farther inland, on the edges of the great Rub' al-Khālī desert, live nomadic tribes herding sheep, goats, camels, or cattle.

The religion of the tribes and townspeople inhabiting the mountains and valleys of central, eastern, and northern Yemen is Zaydī Islam, a Shī'ite sect. In all other parts of Yemen and in all of Southern Yemen, the Shāfi'ī School of Sunnī Islam is followed. The Shāfi'īs comprise a servile class, the *akhdām*, descendants of African slaves, among whom African religious customs, such as the *zār* exorcism, survive.

The language of the area is Arabic, spoken in the specific Yemeni and related South Arabian dialects. Only the camel-breeding Mahra tribes, living in the desert on the borders of area 12, speak a number of languages unrelated to modern Arabic. The Mahra differ from the rest of the population in garb and customs also. They are, however, of "southern" descent.

Physically the people differ from those of area 10 in that they have darker skin and are smaller of stature. In the Tihāma coastal lowlands of Yemen the population exhibits a strong Negroid admixture.

Among the specific features of the culture of this area can be mentioned the addiction to chewing *qāt* (*Catha edulis*), a mildly intoxicating shrub grown in the hills of Yemen and enjoyed daily in separate circles by men and women. The tribesmen wear a large curved dagger, shaped like a capital J, in the front of their belts. There is an old architectural tradition of building high houses, with up to six stories. Among some tribes of the interior, the men wear only loincloths and no head coverings.

12. *East Arabian Area*

Political control: Oman, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrein. The estimated population is about 1.3 million, of whom 750,000 are in Oman, 350,000 in the United Arab Emirates, and 200,000 in Bahrein.

Ethnic groups: the majority of the population is Arab, claiming "northern" descent in the Emirates, partly "northern" and partly "southern" descent in Oman. Among the most important tribal groups are the "northern" Ghāfirī, who are partly Sunnī or Wahhābī, and the "southern" Hināwī, who are Ibādhis, both in Oman. Among the important tribes of the Arab Emirates are the Banī Yās, al-Manāsir, al-Dhawāhir, and al-'Awāmir of the sheikdoms of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. In the two coastal cities of Muscat and Matrah, Indians, Negroes, and Baluchis predominate. Baluchis are also found in the villages around the town of Mazim in the Dhahira section of northern Oman. The Qara of the Qara Mountains of Dhufar and the Shihūh of the Rās al-Jabal mountains of the north of Oman seem to be remnants of pre-Islamic aboriginal tribes.

Subsistence economy: this area, which lies between the desert and the sea, has traditionally based its economy on desert nomadism, on subsistence agriculture along parts of the seashore and in a few oasis villages, and on some maritime activity including pearl fishing. Only the southwestern part of the area, Dhufar, which lies in the monsoon belt, receives enough rain between June and September to sustain perennial streams and ponds. The nomadic peoples of the area wander from sheikhdom to sheikhdom and cross the frontiers between Oman and the Emirates and Saudi Arabia in search of pasture for their animals. The discovery of oil in about 1960 completely changed the economic picture (as it did in area 10) and thrust this remote and conservative corner of the Arabian Peninsula suddenly into the turmoil of modernization.

The religion is Islam, with the Ibādhī sect predominating in southern Oman and the Mālikī Sunnī and Wahhābī sects in the north and in the

Emirates. In Qatar, the native-born half of the population follows the Wahhābī sect (see area 10).

The language is Arabic.

The physical type is Mediterranean, with some Negroid and Baluchi admixture along the coast and in the towns.

13. *Levant Coast Area*

Political control: Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan. The population can be estimated at 11 million, of whom about 3.5 million live in western Syria, 2.5 million in Lebanon, 3 million in Israel, and 2 million in the northwestern part of Jordan.

Ethnic groups: ethnicity and religious affiliation go hand in hand in this area. The great majority of people in the Syrian part of the area, about 25 percent of the population of Lebanon (circa 650,000), all the Muslim Arabs in Israel (circa 220,000), and practically the entire population of Jordan are Sunnī Muslim Arabs. The Shī'ite Muslims are strongly represented in Lebanon (circa 600,000), with smaller groups in Syria (circa 20,000) and in Jordan (1,000 Chechen from the Caucasus). The Christians fall into numerous sects, mostly in Syria and Lebanon: some 265,000 Greek Catholic Arabs and 500,000 Greek Orthodox Arabs; some 520,000 Maronite Arabs; some 35,000 Syrian Catholic Arabs and 85,000 Syrian Orthodox Arabs; some 50,000 Armenian Catholics and 300,000 Armenian Orthodox; as well as several other Arab and non-Arab Christian denominations. The total of 1.75 million Christians represents 16 percent of the population, as against 7 percent Christians (Copts) in Egypt (see area 1).

The Alawis or Nuṣayrīs, a heterodox Muslim sect, number some 500,000, most of whom are concentrated in the Latakia province of Syria. The Druze, a semi-Muslim sect, number a total of 300,000, of whom 150,000 are in Syria, 120,000 in Lebanon, and 30,000 in Israel. In Lebanon there are also some 25,000 Sunnī Muslim Kurds, who differ from the other Sunnī Muslims of the country because of their Kurdish language (see area 16). Around the town of Hama in Syria there are some 50,000 Ismā'īlīs, a Muslim sect whose main center is in India. In the Golan area of Syria live some 35,000 Circassians, who are Sunnī Muslims and have only recently assimilated to the Arabs linguistically.

The majority of Israel's population (circa 2.7 million) are Jews, comprising ethnic groups differentiated from one another not by religion but by country of origin and cultural background. Some 40 percent of them are of European origin, some 50 percent are of Middle Eastern origin, and some 10 percent are the so-called Sephardim, who came mostly from the Balkans and Turkey and trace their descent to medieval Spain or

Portugal. The language of Israel is Hebrew, a Semitic tongue related to Arabic and Aramaic. Adding Christians and Jews, we get a non-Muslim population of close to 4.5 million, representing some 40 percent of the total of the area and making it by far the least Islamized area in the entire Middle East.

The subsistence economy has traditionally been agricultural, mostly rainfed but occasionally irrigated, with only a sprinkling of nomadic pastoralists. Cities (some of them, such as Jerusalem or Damascus, of great renown) have existed of old, either on the seashore or farther inland in the mountains. In recent decades, Jewish immigration into Israel has brought about large-scale industrialization and the introduction of a Western type of culture, which have had an impact on other parts of the area. Lebanon is the most Westernized, most urbanized, most industrialized, and most literate country in the entire Middle East apart from Israel, with an emigrant population overseas whose number is estimated to almost equal that of the Lebanese at home.

The religious and linguistic diversity of the area has been touched upon in connection with the ethnic groups. One may add that in this area a higher percentage of the people speak a European language in addition to their own than in any other part of the Middle East (primarily English in Israel and French in Lebanon).

14. *Mesopotamian Area*

Political control: Iraq and Syria. The estimated population is about 8 million, of whom about 7 million live in Iraq and 1 million in Syria.

Ethnic groups: the population is divided between Sunnī and Shīʿite Muslim Arabs. The Sunnīs are found in the Syrian part of the area and in the *līwa*s [districts] of Baghdad, Diyāla, and Dulaym in central Iraq; the Shīʿites predominate in southeastern Iraq, in its Kūt, Diwāniyya, Karbala, Hilla, Amara, Muntafiq, and Baṣra *līwa*s. There is a traditional distrust between the Shīʿites, who are the majority in Iraq, and the Sunnīs, who, although in the minority, occupy more leading positions in official and professional circles. While almost all the population is settled, nomadic traditions are strong and tribal identification stressed even in urban groups.

The subsistence economy of the area is primarily riverain irrigated agriculture, similar to but less developed and systematized than that of area 1. Date cultivation is an important branch of Iraqi agriculture; Iraq's 20 million date palms produce about three-quarters of the world's dates. The only industry of consequence is oil production, a recent development. The farmers working the alluvial plain of southern Iraq are mostly Shīʿite Arabs, who are, on the whole, less literate than the Sunnīs

of the area, who constitute the farming population above Falluja and Baghdad.

A special subarea is that of the Shī'ite Marsh Arabs of Muntafiq and Amara provinces of southern Iraq, with an estimated population of 350,000. The Marsh Arabs, so called because they live in the extensive marshes of the Tigris–Euphrates river system north of Baṣra, dwell in reed huts, are farmers, herd buffalo from shallow-draft canoes, and engage in fishing.

The religious dichotomy between the Sunnīs and Shī'ites has been indicated above. The religious minorities, of whom Iraq has an ample share, live mostly outside our area, in those parts of Iraq which belong to areas 10 and 16. In our area are found the four important Shī'ite shrines of the towns of Samarra, Kadhimayn, Karbala, and Najaf, to which Shī'ites come in pilgrimage from as far away as India. During the first ten days of the month of Muḥarram, passion plays, commemorating the death of Ḥasan ibn 'Alī in the battle of Karbala in 680 A.D., are performed at these shrines and are usually accompanied by outbursts of mass hysteria.

The language of the area is Arabic, spoken in several dialects.

15. *Turkish Area*

Political control: Turkey. According to the 1965 census, the number of people inhabiting Turkey was 31,391,000. The 1970 estimate is 35,230,000. Deducting the 2.5 million Kurds who live in southeastern Turkey (see area 16), we reach the figure of an estimated 32.7 million for the population of the area in 1970. Some 150,000 Turks live on the island of Cyprus, where they constitute about one-quarter of the total population, the rest being Greeks.

Ethnic groups: the area is solidly homogeneous, with Sunnī Muslim Turks constituting the overwhelming majority. Some 375,000 Arabs, mostly farmers but still tribally organized, live in the Hatay province (the *sanjak* of Alexandretta) in the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean which was annexed by Turkey in 1939. There are some 230,000 Christians and about 40,000 Jews. Among the Muslim ethnic minorities are the Yürüks (variously estimated at 50,000 to 1 million), most of whom live in the Taurus Mountain region in southwestern Turkey; many of them are still true nomads, others seminomadic cultivators, both of whom retain some archaic cultural features. There are also some 10,000 unassimilated Tatars in the area, settled in villages west of Ankara.

The Turks themselves differ in origin and physical features from their Arab and Kurdish neighbors. They hail from Central Asia, and, while they exhibit a variety of types, most of them (some 75 percent) are brachycephalic (broad-headed). Only 30 percent have dark hair, only 5 percent