



REFUGEE  
STUDIES  
CENTRE

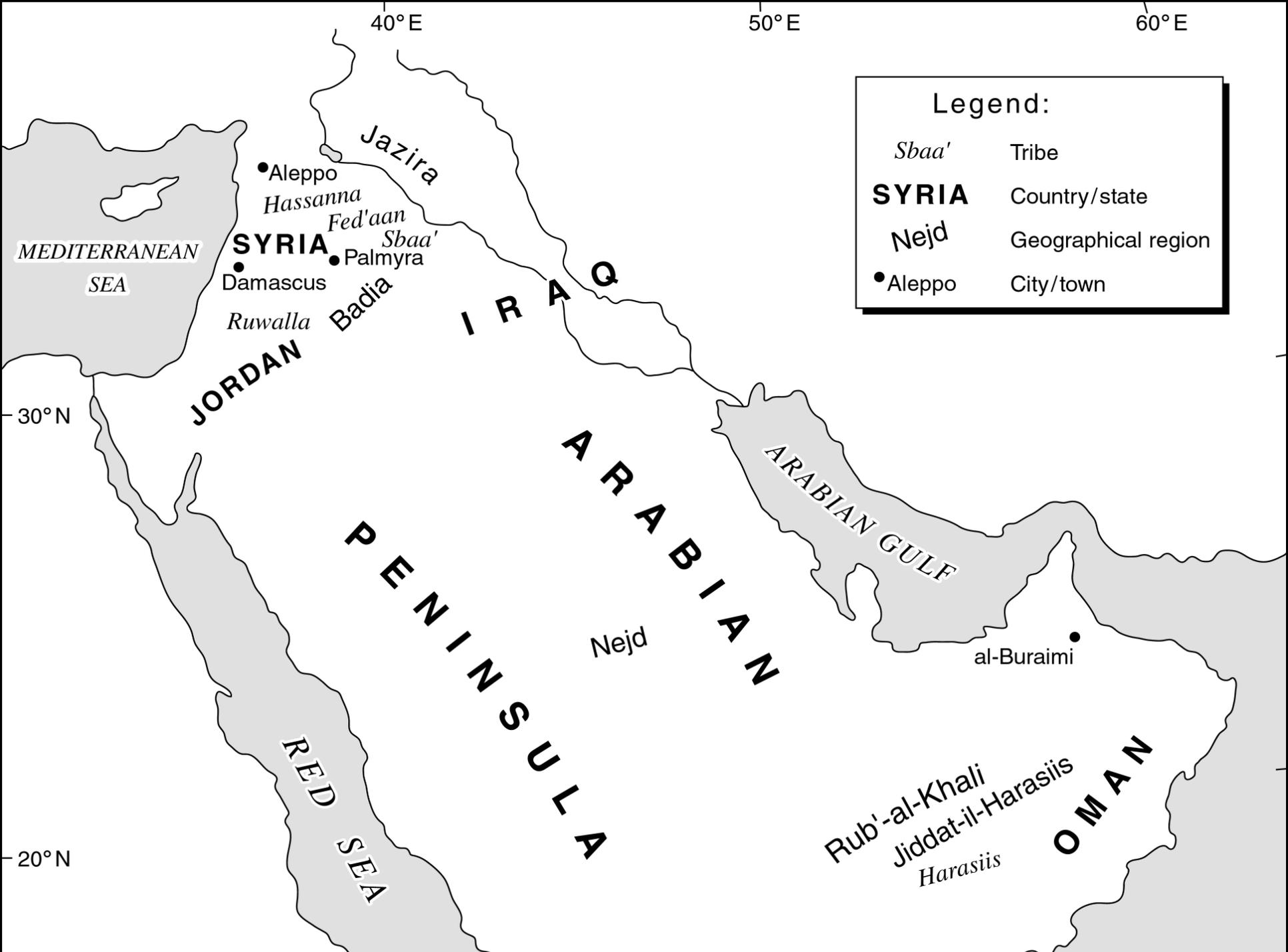
# Bedouin, Movement, and Environmental Change: The Harasiis of Oman

Language and Nature in Southern and Eastern  
Arabia

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**Legend:**

<i>Sbaa'</i>	Tribe
<b>SYRIA</b>	Country/state
<i>Nejd</i>	Geographical region
• Aleppo	City/town

40°E      50°E      60°E

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

JAZIRA

Aleppo

Hassanna

Fed'aan

**SYRIA**

*Sbaa'*

Damascus

Palmyra

Ruwalla

BADIA

JORDAN

I R A Q

ARABIAN GULF

al-Buraimi

Nejd

ARABIAN PENINSULA

RED SEA

Rub'-al-Khali

Jiddat-il-Harasiis

*Harasiis*

OMAN

30°N

20°N

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# ‘Bedouin-ness’, Mobility, and Environment

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- Bedu-Hadar distinction deep roots in Muslim history and historiography
- Identity and landscape of the imagined nation: hegemonic notion of the **new insiders** [government bureaucrats] casting the traditional inhabitants as ‘**outsiders**’
- Desert Environment – the landscape viewed as ***terra nullius*** - local inhabitants and their languages considered *interlopers, trespassers*

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# Herders in South East Arabia

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- Desert rather than semi-arid land (<50mm per year)
- Natural resources conflicts are **not** intertribal
- Conflicts mainly with conservation bodies and **extractive oil industry**



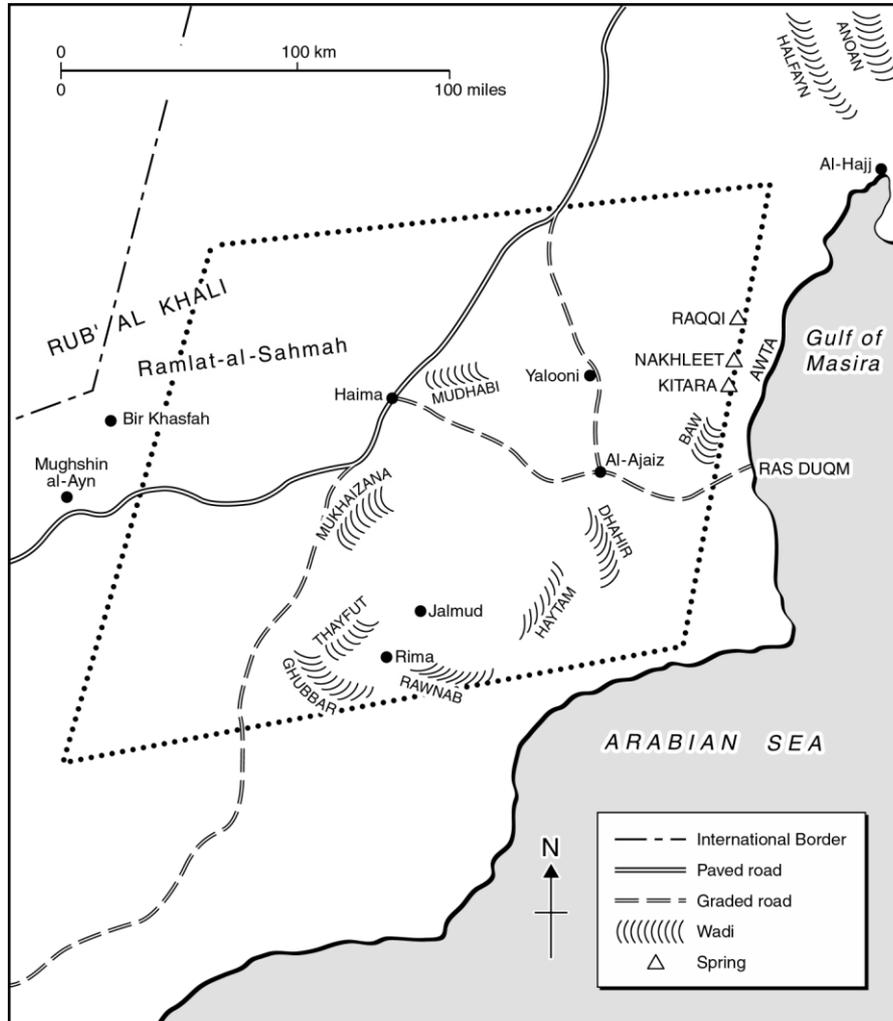
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# The Jiddat il Harasiis and its People

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- South Arabian speaking nomadic pastoral people of about 5,-7,000 people
- Refuge tribe – oral history places them in the Jiddat from mid-1800s
- Raise herds of camels and goats over the 40,000 sq kilometres of waterless gravel plain
- First water wells in the Jiddat dug in 1950s by oil company

# Oman Jiddat il Harasiis



Jiddat-il-Harasiis

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# Jiddat il Harasiis

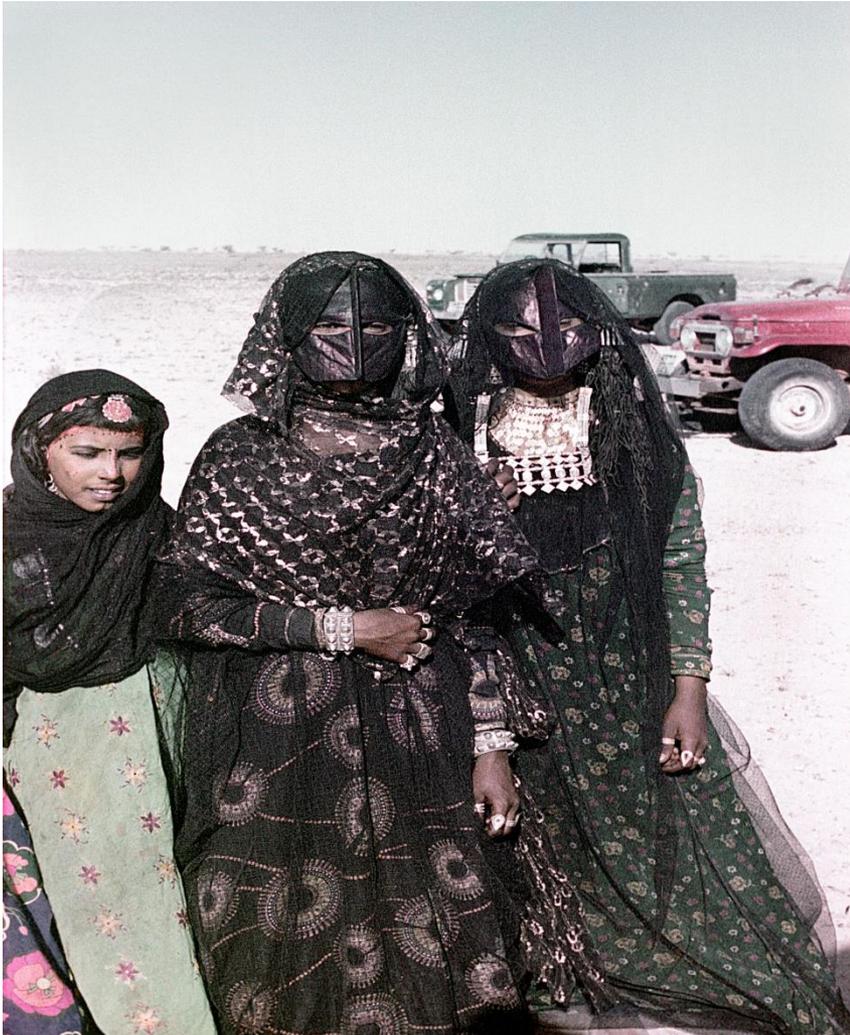
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# Jiddat il Harasiis 1970s

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# Jiddat il Harasiis in the 1980s

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**Social housing**



**Co-ed School**



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# Innovation in Herding Practices

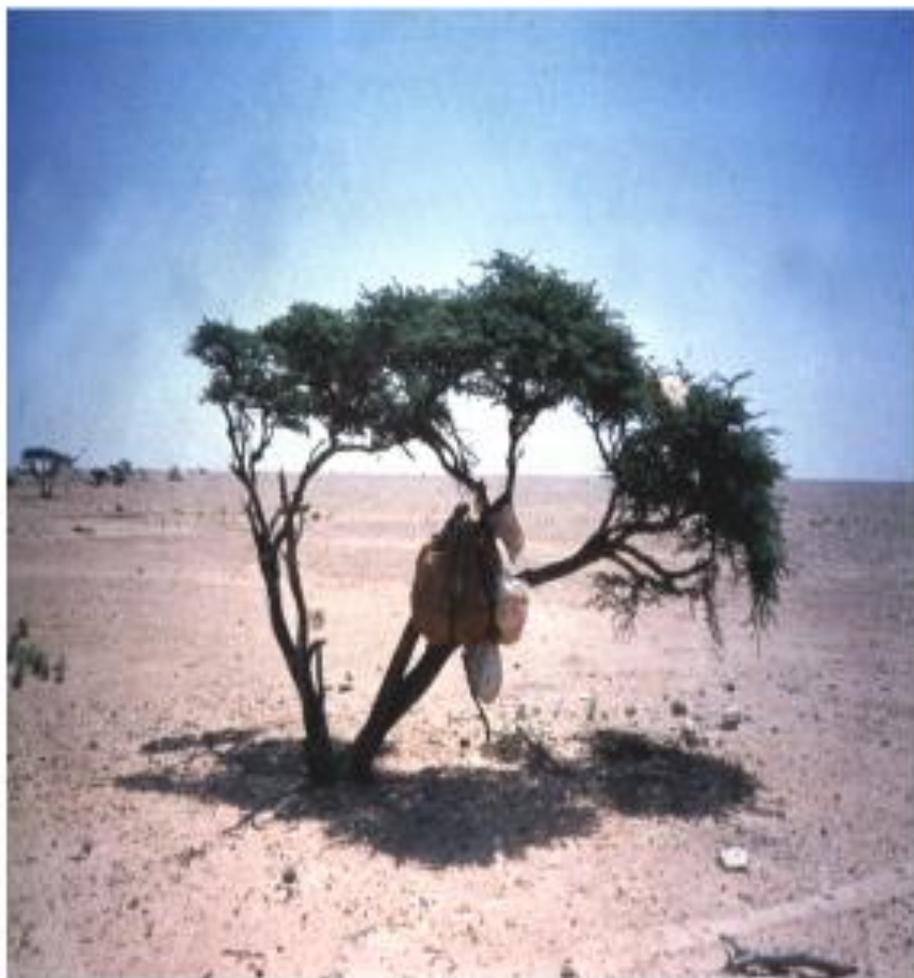
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# Harasiis Herding Household Shelter

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**1970s**



**2000s**



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# The Azabah – mobile camel camp

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# Celebration at Kin Group Azab

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# Changes to Harasiis Tribal Society

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- Increased mobility of individuals
- Decreased household movements
- Increasing use of split households and temporary camps; multi-resource
- Social housing units in Oman and UAE
- Hired herders Baluchistan, Sindh

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# Bedouin Mobility, and Environmental Adaptation

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- Tackling the pejorative attitudes to Bedouin mobility, and settlement
- Fears of loss of language as Arabic becomes hegemonic and **inter-tribal** settlements increase
- Concerned with challenges to their identity and belonging with oil company view of desert as **'terra nullius'**.
- 'Belonging' and culture transfer tied the family Azabah