

sources the unquestionably correct Arabic spelling for all kinds of topographic features and for historical sites, ancient and modern. This is of course a difficult and complicated procedure. In addition to searching among written sources, there is constant checking and re-checking with people who know the places or areas concerned. And there must be constant reference to Arabic linguistic forms of the names, as well as to their probable meanings. Especially for place names on which we have no authoritative written source either in the Classical Literature or in modern publications, the only dependable sources are the people of the country themselves. These living sources include both the common folk and learned men.

Skill in phonetics on the part of the recorder, although useful, is not enough. And very few Western writers on Arabia are both trained in phonetics and disciplined in the formology of Arabic grammar. Therefore, most of the Western maps, either as separate documents or as accompaniments to books, are at least in details unsatisfactory. So often, travellers and explorers have written down either the local, popular pronunciation of the name—or what they mistakenly *thought* they heard the sound of the name to be—without sufficient inquiry or without reference to linguistic form.

The common people often depart from the exact classical form, especially in affixing or inserting an additional vowel, and sometimes by shifting the pronunciation *to* the inserted vowel. Familiar examples of such in geographical names are: *Abqaiq* for *Buqaiq*, *Ansab* for *Niṣāb*, *al-Dahána* for *al-Dahnā*, *Wadī Sahába* (or even *Ishába*) for

*Wādī Saḥbā*, *Dharúma* or *Dharáma* for *Dharmā*.\* [ \* ذَرْمَا ] An interesting example of a personal name is the element *Raḥmah*, which, when used as the name of a created being is pronounced by the people as *Raḥámah*.

Because not every traveller or explorer can have by him a learned Arabian, many have been misled by such a simple deviation from the norm as the use of a *fatḥah* instead of a clear *dhammah* in the first syllable of the diminutive. This is true especially of names the first consonant of which is of a nature to influence the quality of the vowel. Another difficulty, for Westerners, with the often-used diminutive form is that the people make the sound of the first vowel so “diminutive” itself that it is doubtful. Hence the appearance on Western maps of such names as *Anaizah* instead of *Unaizah*, and *al-Biraimi* or *al-Baraimi* instead of *al-Buraimi*.

Of course, Westerners often shake their heads over the complexities of Arabic. They do so when they are told that the name of the town is *Unaizah*, the name of the mountain is *Jabal Anāzah*, and the name of the tribe is *Anazah*—each one of them to be pronounced with a strong, clear *ain* which is a most difficult sound for non-Arabs to achieve—and each one of them to be spelled in English with a final

*h*— which, however, as a terminal linguistic device in Arabic, is in pause practically silent, and which, yet again, if in liaison with a following sound is to be pronounced not as *h* but as *t*!

One must of course choose whether he will represent in his transliteration the Classical or literary form of a name, or the popular pronunciation. We, being lovers of Arabic, prefer the former, and we consider it to be correct. This does not mean, however, that one should be pedantic and try to speak always in Classical Arabic, even if he could. But for the recording of information to be used by others it is certainly best to employ the standard form of the language.

There are a few simple procedures which will help to clear up the difficulty of a place name. One may inquire of his source of information: What is the dual form?: What is the plural form? (Or, if the name occurs in the dual or in the plural, what is the singular form?): What is the meaning of the name and the occasion or reason (which the people often know) for the name?: What would a man from the place be called?: Is the name or its meaning mentioned or referred to in any proverb or verse of poetry?:

Take the case of two similar names: 1) that of the escarpment just east of the Dahnā and 2) that of a wādi in the Yemen in the district of Jabal Ṣabir. Some of the people might pronounce them nearly alike, so that between popular pronunciation and variations in the names on maps the recorder might be confused. But the informant would probably pronounce the dual of the first as <sup>°</sup>*Aramatain* and the dual of the second as <sup>°</sup>*Armatain* (both in popular form). Therefore, despite variations in the pronunciation of the singular, one would perceive that the first name as *al-°Aramah*, and the second *al-°Armah*. If there should still be doubt—although there would hardly be in this case—the informant would probably say that a man associated with the first place could be called an <sup>°</sup>*Aramī*, and one associated with the second an <sup>°</sup>*Armī*. Further inquiry would not be needed, after the test of the dual form in each case, for clarification of the ending of the names. But that the ending was *tā marbūṭah* could be proved by having the informant pronounce the names in a construct relationship, thus: Mecca lies in *al-Ḥijāz*; therefore you may say, *Makkatu-l-Ḥijāz*. So, what do you say of *al-°Aramah* of Najd and *al-°Armah* of al-Yemen? The answer (although the informant might fall back into popular variations of the singular form) would be something like: <sup>°</sup>*Aramat Najd*, and <sup>°</sup>*Armatu-l-Yaman*.

Of course these two names are attested in literature. The first is given by both Yāqūt and al-Ḥamdānī, and the second is given by al-Ḥamdānī alone. Further, Yāqūt quotes about *al-°Aramah* a verse from al-A<sup>°</sup>shā, one of the greatest poets of historic al-Yamāmah.

In case of a name for which there is no literary source, and for which the ending sound “a” might represent *tā marbūṭah*, or *alif maqṣūrah*, or *alif*, or *alif hamzah*, the solution is more difficult. How-

ever, the tests suggested will usually, with patience, bring reasonable assurance of success. An initial difficulty, at times, is to persuade a new informant to concede that theoretically there could be two places or topographical features having a name, when he well knows there is only one! And hence that a dual form of the name is reasonable.

Inquiring thus, and then checking with other individuals who know the name concerned—and then rechecking after a lapse of time, with the original source of information—and meanwhile relating the difficult name to grammatical forms and dictionary or popular meanings—one gradually adds new names in written Arabic to the rich resources to be found in the geographical and general literature of Arabic.

Of course, there will always remain some uncertainties. We have found no assurance, for example, regarding the name of the desert trail leading southeastward from al-Hufhūf (or Hufhūf, or al-Hufūf, or Hufūf, or al-Aḥsāʾ, or al-Ḥasāʾ!) toward al-Kharj, and parallel with Darb Mazālij. The name is pronounced somewhat like: *Darb Huwwijān*, or *Ḥawwijān*, or *Huwwijān*. And it is explained by some as having connection with the idea of "being needy," *iḥtāja*, *yaḥtāju*. But we are still seeking a clear and convincing solution.

We should like to know, also, the origin of the name *al-Baḥrain*. As all know, this was in earlier times the designation of the large eastern area of Arabia, but has now for some centuries been restricted in application to the well-known islands lying between Rās Tanūrah and Qaṭar in the Persian Gulf. The original form of the nominative must have been, of course, *al-Baḥrāni*. But the oblique form of popular usage for the nominative may be found in works of the golden age, such as those by al-Ḥamdānī.

The authors upon whom Wüstenfeld depended for his interesting but not wholly satisfying study<sup>2</sup> appear to have given him one sufficiently logical idea beyond which he did not go. This was that the name came from popular association of the small inland lake, *Buḥairat Hajar*, with the larger *bahr* which was the Persian Gulf.

However, al-Ḥamdānī (Müller, p. 183) says that the designation came from the two *rivers* (or irrigation canals or other kind of water channels), namely: *Nahr al-Muḥallim* and the *nahr* of *ʿAin al-Juraib*. This explanation omits any reference to the Persian Gulf.

There is an intriguing and brief allusion to another theory in the famous *Mirāt al-Mamālik* by the Ottoman Turkish admiral Sidī ʿAlī Raʾīs (Kātib Rūmī), who was in the region about the middle of the 16th century. The admiral tells how he drank some of the sweet water drawn up from the submerged springs under the salt waters of the Gulf. And he makes connection between this long-known phenomenon

<sup>2</sup> Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, "Baḥrein und Jemâma nach Arabischen Geographen beschrieben," *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, Neunzehnter Band, Jahre 1874, pp. 173-222 (map, facing p. 264).

and both the origin of the geographical name and the Quranic verse:

“He hath let loose the two seas which meet each other,” مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ  
يَلْتَقِيَانِ (Qurʾān 55.19; cf. 25.55.)

It is interesting to note that Vambéry in two editions of this work<sup>3</sup> has left the misprint of *al-Bahreia* for *al-Baḥrein* or *al-Bahrain* (which may go back to an error in the original Turkish). And he also takes what is really a verse of the Qurʾān for a “proverb”! It is even more interesting to know that before water wells were drilled around Dhahrān our Company obtained its water supply from the same submarine springs.

I have thought that the name *al-Bahrain* came from the general aspect of the Persian Gulf. For its waters are divided into “Two Seas” by the sub-peninsula of Qatar and the islands both west and east thereof. This theory may be supported, as Lyall thinks, by a verse of the famous poem by al-Akhnas b. Shihāb of Taghlib. The poem, which praises several tribes and describes in general terms their *dīrahs*, is preserved in both *The Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* and *The Ḥamāsah* (of Abū Tammām). Of Lukaiz, a division of ʿAbd al-Qais in al-Bahrain, al-Akhnas says:

And to Lukaiz belong the Two Seas and all the

coast (or the Sif), وَكَيْزٌ لَهَا الْبَحْرَانِ وَالسِّيفُ كُلُّهَا

In his translation of *The Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, Lyall unauthorizably renders *al-Bahrāni* as “the Twin-Sea Cape,” and says in a note: “This name is probably to be understood of the waters washing both sides of the jutting promontory of Qatar...”

However, other sources (even one included in Lyall’s edited work; see p. 104) picture Lukaiz as dwelling south of Qatar, with its *dīrah* extending as far as Oman. And other divisions of ʿAbd al-Qais are described as dwelling “in the peninsula of Qatar and the coasts of al-Bahrain.” Therefore, the poet may have here another meaning. He may be fancifully portraying Lukaiz as controlling the “two seas” formed by the promontory of Oman—just as in glorifying terms he speaks of Bakr as controlling all or most of Iraq.

I still incline to the view that *al-Bahrain* originally meant the two portions of the Persian Gulf as formed by Qatar and the isles, before the designation was applied to the coasts and hinterland of Arabia adjacent to those two portions. But I shall keep an open mind, and

<sup>3</sup> Arminius Vambéry, *The Travels and Adventures of the Turkish Admiral...* London, Luzac, 1899; and “The Travels of Sidi Ali Reis” (section title: “The Mirror of Countries, or the Adventures of Sidi Ali Reis”), in *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East*, Vol. VI: *Medieval Arabic, Moorish, and Turkish*, New York and London, 1917.

continue to look for references. In research, one does not try to prove his points, but rather to point his proofs.

Another famous geographical term in Arabia we should like explained. It is the so-called "Empty Quarter." In the first place, is the form *rab*<sup>c</sup> or *rub*<sup>c</sup>? It is quite possible that we do not yet know enough about the name, and the occasion for it, to say which is better. The term is strangely absent from earlier written Arabic sources. Although we ourselves have had neither time nor materials to trace the discussions by various authorities and theorizers, or even to locate its first occurrences in Arabic, I have a suspicion which I will ventilate as only a modest and hesitant suggestion. It is that the name may have come from the misunderstanding by a Western traveller of the real meaning of a phrase often used by the more southerly peoples of Arabia.

If you were in one of the oasis pockets of al-Jiwā<sup>3</sup>, you would roughly on the 54th parallel of longitude and north of the northern portion of "the Empty Quarter." Yet, if you asked someone in what direction Qaṭar lay from your position, he would be likely to reply "In the Empty Quarter." By this he would mean, of course, northwest. And if after some time you inquired of the same person in what direction lay Oman (for in continuing inquiry the individual might vary his figures of speech), it is quite possible that he would reply, "In the Empty Quarter." And on both occasions he would be indicating directions *away from* the region to which Westerners apply the phrase as a name.

Now, unfortunately, I have never been among the palms of al-Jiwā<sup>3</sup>, between the sands of al-Ḥumrah, al-Kidan, and al-Qafā, and the brackish waterholes of al-Miḥradh. But, on maps, I have travelled with tribesmen in imagination around much of the so-called "Empty Quarter." And most of the times that I have inquired about directions from given places to other places which happened to lie between the cardinal points therefrom, the answer has been, "In the Empty Quarter." Neither did the direction matter, whether between north and east, or between east and south, or between south and west, or between west and north. Nor did it matter whether the resulting indication led toward the great deserts or away from them.

Therefore, and hesitantly, until there can be further investigation of the phrase itself, its occurrences, and its possible connection with both scientific and popular concepts of cosmography, I suggest this: Perhaps some Western traveller in Arabia found his informants giving such answers regarding places, which, while lying between two cardinal points from where he happened to be at the time of the inquiry, were also in the direction of some portion of the vast desert area of south-central Arabia. As a matter of fact, the informant would have meant simply that the place in question lay in a direction between the two cardinal points which applied to the case. But the traveller, unsuspecting

—but perhaps aware that there was no general term in Arabic literature applied to the whole vast area—took the directional phrase for an actual geographical designation used by the people.

The temptation to include a few amusing experiences with place-names is one we are not morally bound to resist. Everyone knows, of course, the story of the mapper who seriously recorded *Mount-I-do-not-know*. For that was the answer he got to his inquiry, "What is the name of that mountain?"! I've never actually seen the name on a map; but this is supposed to be a true story! In some other Arab country it was possibly *Jabal Mushārif*, from *Mush* °*Arif*!. In Arabia it would, more likely, be *Jabal Ma-adri*. Professor W. F. Albright of Johns Hopkins University tells of a strange name in the Plain of Sharon. On an exploration trip, he saw an interesting unexcavated mound. When he asked some people in the vicinity the name, the answer was, *Tall Abū-l-Bām*. All ears, then, to learn some interesting name-lore, he was soon disappointed. The name came from the more or less recent purchase of the land on which the mound lay, by a man from Europe bearing the name of Apfelbaum! Adjoining Dhahran, Saudi Arabia has a really wonderful airport. The name of the locality among the folk is wonderful also. It is *al-Uraif*. But here, too, the connected folklore is of no antiquity. The name stems from the fact that during World War II there was at the field for awhile a small contingent of the British *R.A.F.* On the now disused pipeline from Iraq to the Mediterranean, there was a pumping station which was called by the local people *Jifūr*. But the name had nothing to do with *jafara* "to dig." It was simply a popular derivation from the English original "H-4"—*H-4* > *Ay-chī-fūr-Jifūr*!

It appears that when Mr. Philby, whose numerous volumes on Arabia are an endless source of information and pleasure, first visited the famous Wādī al-Dawāsir, he inquired of his companions and of the local people the name of one of the towns there. When the answer came, "*Al-l-Dām*," apparently the noted explorer and scholar cast the article aside and unthinkingly wrote down the supposed remainder, *Dām*. And this, with no diacritical marks in translation, became *Dām*, or "blood." Of course, if he had thought a moment he would have realized that with the article the name which he thus wrote down would have been pronounced in Arabic to him as *ad-Dām*, with no "l" sound at all. Therefore, the presence of the "l" sound was an indication that even without the article the name had to be more than the one syllable *dām*. However, it came about, the luckless name went thus on his maps—and his maps have gone far and wide. Thereafter, someone who was busily preparing maps in Arabic for our Company's annual report to the Saudi Arabian Government was quite understandably caught by the name. Apparently, he reasoned that there was no such placename in Arabic as *Dam* or *Dām*, and that therefore the indication on the map meant that the explorer had found at the location an

arrangement for impounding the waters of the *sail*. So he quickly translated the name of the place to *Sadd*! Fortunately, there was time for the name to be checked in the document, so that it was restored to the proper Arabic original, *al-Lidām*. Actually, the same name is applied to a mountain in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, not far north of Dhahrān. Actually also, there is a name *Dām* or *Dam* among the placenames of earlier Eastern Arabia.

Work on placenames, of course, is intimately connected with that on maps. It is hoped that out of both there will ultimately come a gazetteer, in the form of a book, accompanied by maps and covering the Saudi Kingdom, the Arabian Peninsula, and immediately adjacent territory. In such endeavors we are greatly aided by the learned officials of the Government. And we hope for opportunity to benefit more from the counsel of individual Arabian scholars who know the literary sources as we could never hope to know them. We have derived much benefit from *The Route Book of the Saudi Arabian Kingdom*, prepared by H. E. Rushdi Bey Malhas and already in its fifth printing in the Government Press in Mecca.<sup>4</sup>

3. A HISTORY OF EASTERN ARABIA. Another project, the extent of which we did not at first realize, is a history of Eastern Arabia from early times to the present. Collecting data for this purpose as rapidly as the extent and variety of our program allowed, we have found so much material that the task of gathering, assimilating, evaluating, and arranging will require considerable time. There is abundant documentation, first of all, in Arabic sources themselves. Many of the great geographers and historians have written about the area. Indeed many of the renowned Arabic poets were from, or had connections with, the historic regions of al-Yamāmah and al-Baḥrain. And their references and allusions to persons, places, events, and conditions of life have been the subject of indispensable comment and explanation by the editors of their verses. Also, material must be drawn from original sources or important secondary sources in half a dozen other languages besides Arabic.

Reasons for the importance of such an undertaking are obvious. Eastern Arabia is the primary scene of the modern industrial and economic development of the Saudi Kingdom and of the Arabian Peninsula. The newly independent status of large and populous nations on the wide-extending shores of the Indian Ocean, with which Saudi Arabia is connected by sea, gives the possibility for Eastern Arabia, with its vast resources, to become an open door for increasing trade with the East. The history of Eastern Arabia, despite the fact that it has never been written down in organized fashion, is important in it-

<sup>4</sup> In this connection, it was interesting and encouraging to hear recently from Dr. Nabih A. Faris, of the American University of Beirut, that he and a group of associated scholars were to prepare a gazetteer of Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan.

self. And clarification of the long history of the region will aid in our understanding of the present elements of race, religion, tradition, custom, and thought which survive in the midst of busy industrial development.

4. COUNSEL TO DEPARTMENTS AND GROUPS OF THE COMPANY engaged upon specific activities. An example is that referred to above, in our work with the Exploration Department on placenames for new maps. Another is the giving of advice to the film group—which is associated with the Company contractually—on history, customs, language, etc., in connection with educational and historical films.

It is natural that Aramco and associated companies should have recorded in living picturization for history important phases of Arabian industrial development. This they have done or are doing in the area covered by the concession granted by the Saudi Arabian Government, and in regions connected with significant subsidiary developments by agreement with other governments, such as the famous pipelines from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea. In addition, the Company uses technical films as part of modern visual aids in the industrial training of its employees. When people see and hear at the same time, they learn all the faster to improve their efficiency.

As one of the numerous ways of cooperating with the Government, the Company has also undertaken the production of a number of educational films not confined in their scope to use in connection with industry. So far, such films have dealt with water conservation and health. Others are to treat of subjects of similar importance for the welfare of the people of the country, in which the Government is genuinely concerned. Members of the Royal Family, officials of the Government, and the people themselves have always given their full cooperation to such constructive endeavors. Those charged with production of the films are Mr. Ray Graham and Mr. Richard Lyford and their associates in New York, Washington, and Arabia. All who have seen the two films, "Waters of the Desert" and "The Fly" will testify to their technical skill and artistic success.

The most ambitious project yet attempted, however, is the production of a motion picture on the history of the Arabian Peninsula, of Arab civilization, and of the Saudi Kingdom. The film will portray adequately and impressively the long history of the Arabs. But the climax will be the story of the career of H.M. ʿAbdul-ʿAzīz ibn ʿAbdul-Raḥmān Āl Faiṣal Āl Saʿūd the maker of modern Arabia, and the contemporary industrial developments which have begun to realize His Majesty's hopes and prayers for his country and his people. However, material progress so far will be pictured not as full attainment, but rather as a challenge for the future. Preparation of the film, after considerable time in planning, has involved over five months of work in historical, urban, industrial, agricultural, desert, and marine scenes of Saudi Arabia. It has involved filming also in Ḥaḍramaut,

Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt, as well as in museums and libraries of the Near East, Europe, and the United States.

The production of a film to be shown in slightly less than an hour and a half will take over a year's time. In covering so long a history in so short a viewing time, much will have to be omitted. Also, mistakes in details will be unavoidable. However, it is hoped that the result will be a true and comprehensive picture of Arabia and the Arabs—their history, their brilliant civilization, and their modern renaissance.

The film is planned to be ready for distribution before the end of 1953. There will be both Arabic and English versions. 20 years of successful endeavor have passed since the oil concession was granted and the Company feels that it has both the responsibility and the privilege of portraying to the West what the Arabs have been in history, who they are today, and how important their friendship is to the Western democratic world.

5. LINGUISTIC STUDIES AND RESEARCH LIBRARY. The large task of giving American and other Western employees of the Company a practical introduction to the Arabic language is a part of the work of the Training Division. There was for some time a language training center on Long Island near New York City. Now, however, the language center operates near Beirut, on the outskirts of Sidon. There the trainees see in the stream of oil, flowing from Saudi Arabia through the huge pipeline into tankers and other ships of world trade, the basic reason for their coming to live and work among the Arab peoples. After the brief but intensive introduction to Arabic there, opportunities are provided for continued study and practice in the various places where the employees may work.

Naturally, the aim of the language training is the practical one of communication in Arabic in scenes of work, in shopping in local communities, and in social interchange wherever people meet. Therefore, the kind of language first taught is popular spoken Arabic, related to the forms and phrases commonly used in the principal area of activity in Eastern Arabia. There are plans to provide basic instruction in spoken Arabic to all Westerners in Arabia, even including the families of employees.

At the same time, the Training Division gives for advanced students courses in newspaper Arabic. Thus, a considerable number learn a more literary or standard type of Arabic. The expanding program will ultimately provide for training of selected groups in Classical Arabic as well. Just as English is taught to Arab employees and their children in the Company's Industrial Training Schools, so literary Arabic, with frequent reference to popular spoken forms, is included in the curriculum of the Company's schools for the children of American families.

Members of the Research Division, obviously, deal with all kinds of Arabic, from the purely Classical of written sources to the many dialects and various to be heard in such a "melting pot" as Dhahrān.

They are continually profiting from their associations with desert, town, and sea folk, and with educated individuals, by gaining practices in spoken Arabic. At the same time, they are constantly striving to improve and widen their knowledge of Arabic grammar, history, and literature, and of the Islamic sciences. This they recognize to be the task of a lifetime. Therefore, they take advantage of every vacation period to arrange for some time of concentrated study.

It is a part of their work to advise with members of the Training Division on the program, materials, and problems of instruction in spoken and written Arabic. They also participate in various programs of teaching Arabic for members of the Relations Department and for Company managerial officials. They work with the Translation Division in checking translated documents, and with this division and others in developing Arabic technical terms for Company use.

It is unfortunate that there is not sufficient time for various endeavors of linguistic research which should be carried on. Dhahrān—and likewise Riyādh, Jiddah, and other large centers of population in Arabia—is an open laboratory for the study of various dialects, of their meeting, and of their change and interchange. Indeed, with over 20 nationalities in a district like Dhahrān—most of the different nationals being from various Arab and Islamic countries—language interplay and development offer rich opportunities for observation and writing. English is influencing Arabic and Arabic is affecting English. Arabic dialects and area usages are meeting. In our own offices, we hear newly introduced tribesmen from different parts of Arabia discussing with great interest—and sometimes with friendly argument, and sometimes with mutual amusement—their different Arabic expressions.

At least some observation and recording can be carried on in connection with practical tasks. And it is our intention to employ, soon, various machines for recording and filing linguistic data for future reference. For instance, a tape recording of the various placenames within an area under study will be a most useful addition to written notations in Arabic and in transliteration. After a certain informant is no longer available, his recorded pronunciation and explanation will still be at hand for rechecking. Proverbial sayings, verses of poetry, and accounts of events in tribal or town history—all of which might require too much time for writing down—can be recorded for a day of more leisure. And the clues to local placenames, history, customs, and ideas, as well as to grammatical usages, will not be lost. Such important linguistic activity as the study of Mahrī and other variant branches of Semitic speech can be facilitated by recording spoken material, and then going back over it, with the aid of individuals who know both Arabic and the other Semitic form. Also, recordings of local speech made now will, by comparison after a decade or two, be valuable for the study of linguistic change.

Let us return for a moment to the discussion above regarding the