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RITUALS OF ROYALTY AND THE ELABORATION
OF CEREMONY IN OMAN: VIEW FROM
THE EDGE

This article explores the creation and elaboration of certain ceremonials and court rituals in the Sultanate of Oman after the accession of Sultan Qaboos in 1970. It investigates the relationship between the development of these ceremonials and the perception of leadership and authority in the person of the sultan, as well as the development of a sentiment of common nationality. Its ethnographic underpinning is the most remote and marginal of Oman's people, the nomadic pastoral Harasiis tribe of central Oman. Whereas the creation of royal rituals was important for building a sense of national belonging even among this most cut off and distant of communities, these same ceremonies and created traditions developed lives of their own. Over time these rituals ossified sultanic courtly behavior, contributing little to the organic sense of Omani citizenship and eventually disillusioning some marginal groups.