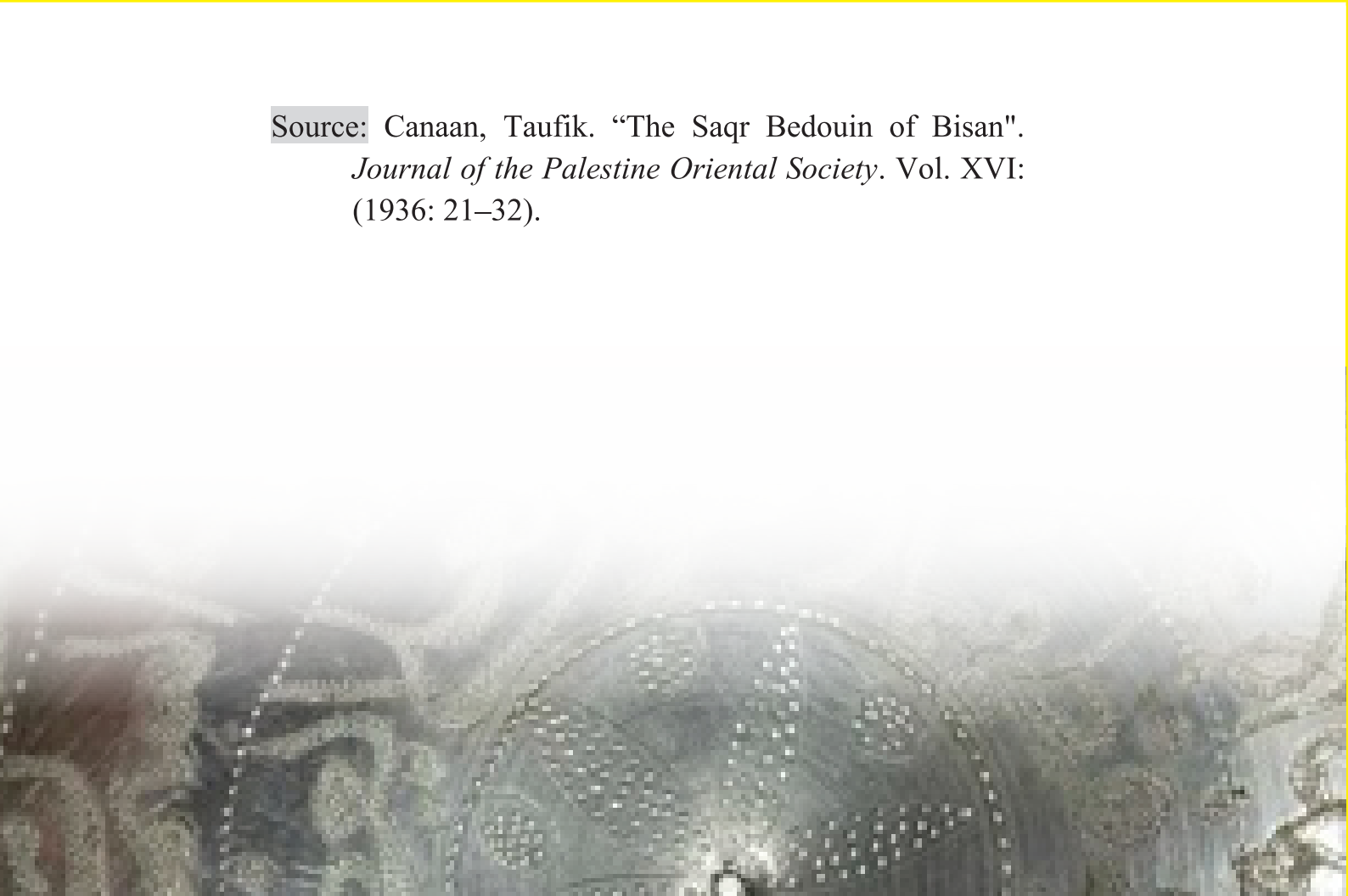


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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page
ALBRIGHT, W. F.	Zabul Yam and Thapit Nahar 17
ASHBEL, D.	On the Importance of Dew in Palestine 316
BERGMAN, A.	The Israelite Tribe of Half-Manassch 224
CANAAN, T.	The Şaqr Beduin of Bisān 21
—	Arabic Magic Bowls 79
EISSFELDT	Hesekiel Kap. 16 als Geschichtsquelle 286
GINSBERG, H.	Ba'lu and his Brethren 138
GLUECK, N.	Christian Kilwa 9
KIRK, C. E.	Excavations at 'Auja Hafir: The Greek Inscriptions . . 279
KÖPPEL, R.	Prähistorische Klimafragen um Ghassül 269
MCCOWN, C. C.	New Historical Items from Jerash Inscriptions 69
MAISLER, B.	A Genealogical List from Ras Shamra 150
MAYER, L. A. & REIFENBERG, A.	A Samaritan Lamp 44
NASRALLAH, R.P.J.	Le Gisement Ghassoulien de Tell eş-Şōma ^c 293
PICARD, L. & SOLOMONICA, P.	On the Geology of the Gaza-Beersheba District 180
REIFENBERG, A.	Ein neues hebräisches Gewicht 39
—	Jüdische Lampen 166
ROSENAU, H.	A Note on Synagogue Orientation 33
SCHWABE, M.	Ein griechisches Grabepigramm aus Tiberias 158
TAYLOR, W. R.	A second Forgery of the Balustrade Inscription 37
—	Samaritan Inscription from Gaza 131
de VAUX, R. P., R.	Deux Fragments de Khorsabad 128
—————	
Book Reviews	46, 255, 322

Treasurer's Reports, Lists of Members and similar announcements are omitted in this reprint edition.

THE ŞAQR BEDOUIN OF BÎSÂN

T. CANAAN

(JERUSALEM)

In the east and south-east of the village of Bîsân live the Şaqr Bedouin. Their territory extends to Tûbās in the south, but in the winter months they move even as far as el-‘Ōdja (north of Jericho). In the summer months they may settle in certain parts of the districts of Nazareth, Djenîn, or even in that of Ḥaifa. To the north of their territory lives the tribe el-Ghazzāwīyeh, with whom the Şaqr are in continuous feud. The grand *şēḥ* of the Şaqr assured me that his tribe emigrated from the Arabian Peninsula, probably from Nedjd. Their ancestor is said to have had two sons, Mallāk and Fawwāz. The brothers quarrelled and decided to separate. Fawwāz went northward and settled ultimately in the southern part of Syria. His descendants are at present known as ‘Arab es-Sirdīyeh. A sub-tribe of the Sirdīyeh settled in Başret eš-Şām and became *fellāḥin*. The descendants of Mallāk moved slowly to the north. A part of them settled in the district of es-Salt and are at present known as ‘Arab el-‘Abbād; while the remainder ultimately reached Palestine and occupied the *ghōr* of Bîsân. The grand *şēḥ* of the Bîsân Bedouin assured me that his tribe reached Palestine about 50 to 75 years before the era of Aḥmad Pāšā edj-Djazzār, i.e. 200—250 years ago.

Enquiry made in Transjordan¹ verified the statements of *şēḥ* Faḍl about the Bedouin of ‘Abbād. This tribe is divided into two important sub-tribes. In the following an account of these sub-tribes with their *aşāyir* and leaders is given:

I. The sub-tribe ‘Abbād el-‘Arḍah, known also as ‘Arab

¹ I have to thank Dr. T. Qa‘wār for his great help, and Mr. ‘Āyd el-Karādī for his valuable information. Most of the notes sent to me by Dr. Qa‘wār originate from the eighty-year old *şēḥ* Muḥammed eš-Şamlūl.

edj-Djrumīyeh. The last expression is derived from the name of their ancestor Djurm, who was the founder of this sub-tribe. They live in the upper part of Ghōr Abū ʿBēdeh and in Ghōr el-Mašālḥah. This sub-tribe is made up of the following *ʿasāyir*.

1. Manāšīr el-ʿAsālmeh. Their grandfather and founder was Dīb el-Kanānī who came from the Banī Kanāneh about 400 years ago. Their present leader is *ṣēḥ* Saʿd el-Ḥalaf.

2. Manāšīr el-ʿŌneh. The founder of this subtribe was ʿŌn ibn Aḥmad. He came about 400 years ago from Ḥidjāz. Their present *ṣēḥ* is Karīm Pāšā en-Nahār. This *ʿasīreh* lives in Wādī es-Sīr.

3. el-Ḥ(a)ṭālīn. A member of this *ʿasīreh* is called ibn Ḥitlān. Their grandfather, who emigrated about 450 years ago from Nedjd, was Dghēm of the er-Rašīd family. Their present *ṣēḥ* is Aḥmed el-ʿAbd ibn Ḥitlān.

4. en-Nʿemāt came about 200 years ago from Djolān. Their leader is Mūsā ʿAbd er-Raḥmān el-Yaʿqūbī.

5. el-Yāzdīyīn (pronounced by some also el-Yazqīyīn) call themselves Qaršīyeh as they pretend to have come from Quraiš¹. Their present *ṣēḥ* is Šhāb el-Ḥamad.

6. el-Mʿādāt (pronounced also el-Maʿdāt). Their grandfather Milḥim el-Mʿādāt came 300 years ago from Ḥidjāz. The present leader is Mūsā el-Miḥdjin.

7. el-Ghanānīm emigrated about 250—300 years ago from the district of Aleppo. They are related to the Nʿemāt Bedouin of Aleppo. Their founder was Ghannām and the present *ṣēḥ* is Raḍwān Abū Ḥrēs.

8. er-Ramāḍneh family is made up of two parts. a) The Dawāhīk, related to the Ḥwētāt of Transjordan. The leading *ṣēḥ* is Ḥamrān. b) A second part, who came from Ḥidjāz.

9. el-Ḥadjaḥdjuh are related to el-Fuqarā. Their ancestor was Muḥammad el-Faqīr. They live in Šihān (ʿArḍet el-ʿAbbād).

10. eš-Šanābreh's ancestor was Mišleḥ Abū Šnōbar who came about 250 years ago from Nedjd. A member of this family is known as Abū Šnōbar.

11. edj-Djabbūrīn or ʿAbbād ʿĪrā and Yarqā. They are made up of the following families:

¹ According to Dr. T. Qaʿwār.

a. el-Bqūr are the oldest family of the whole 'Abbād tribe. Their ancestor Ibēd el-'Adri' emigrated from Egypt. He settled first at Tell Šhāb in Ḥaurān. Later the tribe moved to Transjordan (Ḥirbet Kafr Hūd). Their present leader is Muḥammad Pāša Kāyid Abū Baqr. The name *Bqūr* is derived from their occupation of raising cows (*baqarah*, pl. *baqar*).

b. er-Raḥāmneh emigrated about 300 years ago from Tripoli in Africa. They constitute a part of the tribe with their own ancestral name. Their ancestor 'Alī settled first in Ḥirbet Kafr Hūd. Later on the tribe moved to Ghōr ez-Zarqā. The present *ṣēḥ* is 'Abd er-Raḥmān er-Raḥāmneh.

c. ez-Ziādāt's ancestor, 'Ilwān, came about 250 years ago from Karak. He belonged to the Bedouin of el-'Amr. The members of this 'aṣīreh are renowned for their valour; their *ṣēḥ* is Nimr el-I'rēdj.

d. edj-Djabrā. Their ancestor, Ḥamdān, emigrated about 300 years ago from Egypt. The present *ṣēḥ* is Ḥusēn el-Fāris.

e. el-Mhērāt are *fuqahā*.

The grand *ṣēḥ* of all the 'Abbād tribe is Aḥmad el-'Abd ibn Ḥitlān and their *kafīl* is Muḥammad Pāša el-Baqr. The first named *ṣēḥ*, i.e. the grand *ṣēḥ*, who is also called 'ilm 'Abbād, is at the same time the chief and highest judge of the whole tribe and the last instance in political affairs. The *kafīl* is the person who has the power and duty to execute all the orders of the grand *ṣēḥ*.

I have been told that there are no foreigners in the 'Abbād tribe. This list shows clearly that the different 'aṣāyir came from different countries. Although most of them emigrated from the Arabian Peninsula, there are some who came from Egypt and others from Tripoli in Africa.

The Şaqr tribe of Bisān is made up of several 'aṣāyir. Each 'aṣīreh is composed of several *ḥamāyil* (pl. of *ḥamūleh*). Some of these families are of true Bedouin descent, while others are 'abīd (pl. of 'abd = negro) and *ghawārneh* (pl. of *ghōrānī*, from *ghōr*,¹ lowland). The origin of the 'abīd is from negroes who were bought by the ancestors of this tribe as slaves. With time they became numerous, were released from slavery, and formed distinct families. The *ṣēḥ* Faḍl el-'Irsān el-Mallāk could not give me any information about

¹ *Ghōr* is the name given to the Jordan depression.

the origin of the *ghāwārneh*. Probably they are the descendants of the original inhabitants of the *ghōr* who were defeated by the invading *Ṣaqr* tribe and were slowly amalgamated with them. The word *ghōrānī*, pl. *ghawārneh*, is a correct derivative of *ghōr* and means "an inhabitant of the Jordan valley."

The true Bedouin of this tribe are again divided into three groups: the *ʾUmarā* (the princes), the *Ṣyūḥ* and the *Fuqarā*. The latter are *darāwīš* and *ʾaṣḥāb ʾarīqah* (followers of a special order). The different *Fuqarā* sub-tribes trace their origin back to the *Nʿemāt* tribe. They are renowned in the *Ghōr* as possessing special knowledge and ability in curing hydrophobia and treating dislocations, especially those of the upper jaw. The *Fuqarā* are followers of *ʿIzz ed-Dīn Abū Ḥamrā*, a *welī* whose shrine lies near Aleppo.

The leader of the whole tribe of the *Ṣaqr*, *Ṣēḥ Faḍl el-ʿIrsān el-Mallāk*, is at the same time the direct *Ṣēḥ* of the sub-tribes of the *ʾUmarā* and *Ṣyūḥ*. The following list gives the names of the different *ʾaṣāyir* with their respective leaders:

The *ʾUmarā ʾaṣāyir* are:

el-Hawābī: Ḥasan el-ʿBedī. el-Mahādwi: Fāris. Bani-ʾr-Rbāyʾah: Fādil er-Rbēʾah.

The *ʾaṣāyir* of the *Ṣyūḥ* are:

ez-Zāmil: ʿĀrif. el-Wādī: Ḥusēn ʿAlī Djabr. eṣ-Ṣlēbī: Muḥammed. er-Rabāḥ: Sālīm el-Iʿqāb. el-Mifliḥ: ʿAbdallah ʿIrsān.

The *ʾaṣāyir* of the common Bedouin:

el-Mrūdij: ʿĀrif. el-Mrēḥ: Ḥasan Abu Ṣūḥah. el-Ḥawālid: Ṭrēḥim el-Ḥdjēri. el-Badāndīyeh: Ḥasan el-Ḥamad. Zbeyed: ʿAlī el-Fāris. el-Maʿādīn: Sālīm el-ʿAbdallah. el-Ḥmūd: Ḥusēn. Qarrūt: Qāsim el-Blād.¹ el-Luēmeh: ʿĀyd. el-Ghniyeh: Ṣāmiḥ. el-Mawālī: ʿAbdallah. el-Bašātšmeh:² Ḥasan es-Salāmeḥ. et-Taʿālbeh: Ḥasan el-Falāḥ. Iʿbēd edj-Djanāḥ: Qāsim.³ es-Sabārdjeh: ʿAlī ʿAuwād. el-Qazāzmeh: Fāriʿ el-Qazzām. eš-Šōbakeh: Saʿd eš-Šōbakeh. el-Harrān: Bḥēt. el-ʿArdjāt: Lāfi. ed-Dʿūm: ʿAlī. el-Bšēri: ʿAbdallah el-Bšēri. el-ʿAlyāt: Lāfi. er-Rbēʿīyeh: Mnēzil el-Mizān. el-Blādīyeh: ʿAlī Muḥammad Ḥsēn. el-Ghazālīn: Ḥsēn Ghazālī el-Hawāwrī: Salmān.

¹ The *q* (ق) is pronounced by some as *dj* (ج)

² It is written *البشاكه*, the *k* (ك) being pronounced as *ts*.

³ Some pronounce the *q* (ق) like a German *g*.

The *ʿAbid ʿasāyir* are:
 el-Ghrēr: Fḏel. el-Himwēl: ʿUmar. el-Iʿbēd: ʿId. el-Qūṣān:
 ʿAlī. el-Mawālī: Ḥasan Yūsif. el-Murdjān: Ḥsēn. el-ʿĀbed:
 Maḥmūd. eš-Šhūr: ʿAwaḏ el-Muffiḥ. el-Mahdī: Rašid ʿAbd el-
 Mahdī. el-Bayātrah: ʿAbdallah.

The *Ghawārneh ʿasāyir* are:
 el-Māṣālīḥ: Ḥallūt. el-Qahāwšeh: ʿĪd. Djarabint: ʿUqlaḷ-Hādī.

The *Fuqarā* families are:
 el-Iʿwētiyīn: Mḥammad. ez-Zēdān: Rādī.

The five *ʿasāyir* of the *Şyūḥ* belong to the sub-tribe el-Mallāk, which is said to be the direct descendant of the founder of this Bedouin tribe, Mallāk the son of Şaqr. The *şēḥ* of the *Şyūḥ* families is at the same time the grand *şēḥ* of the whole tribe of eš-Şaqr. The *mašāyih* of these five sub-tribes hoist one or more ostrich feathers on their tents. The feather is fastened to the central pole of the tent, which is known in this region as *el-quṭb*. The *şyūḥ* (leaders) of the the other sub-tribes hoist a white flag. The *ʿAbid* and *Ghawārneh şyūḥ* do not enjoy any of these prerogatives.

The Zbeiyed family is the largest *ʿašireh* in the whole tribe. The Bani-ʿr-Rbâyah are proud to be Ḥuseinīyeh, i.e. descendants of Ḥusēn the son of Faṭmeh, the daughter of the Prophet Mohammed. A thorough analysis of all the data given above shows clearly that the Şaqr and the ʿAbbād tribes, which claim to be descendants of one and the same father, came from different regions. Time and political needs amalgamated them.

Most of the Şaqr tribe cultivate grain. The land used to be their own property, but was expropriated by Sulṭān ʿAbduḷ-Ḥamīd. As these Bedouin, like many other owners of tracts of lands, could not pay the official taxes for several years, the Sulṭān paid the accumulated sums to the *ḥazīneh* and took possession of the land. The former owners were allowed to continue the cultivation of the land, paying 20% of the income, 10% being the regular land tax and 10% for the Sulṭān as the rent of the land. The British Government, recognizing the cultivation rights of these Bedouin, kept them in their district. A new regulation makes it possible for every one to take complete possession of his land after paying L. P. 1.500 for every dunum.

The cultivated land lies in the Bisān district, mainly to the east

of the village, in the *ghōr* of Bisān, and in the subdistrict of Blād Hārteh. The Ṣaqr raise also cattle and move with them in different seasons to different places.

The men of one class may take for wives only girls from their own category or from an *ʿasīreh* of a lower class. The *ʾUmarā*, the noblest class, on the other hand, may take their wives from any one of the different classes. The most important qualification in such a case is beauty. The *mahr* of a virgin negress is 45 sheep (*ṣāh*) and L.P. 10; that of a widowed or divorced *ʿabdeh* (negress) is only 30 sheep and L.P. 5. The *mahr* of a daughter of an *ʾAmīr* or *Ṣēh* may be as high as L.P. 250. A bridegroom pays for his cousin only one quarter of the *mahr*, as he has the first right to her.

Circumcision may take place at different ages. It is seldom done before the age of two months, and boys often reach the age of fifteen years before it is performed. The Bedouin prefer to do this act in special "houses" (*byūt* = tents), like those of the *maṣāʾiḥ* of el-Mallāk, the "houses" of Ṣēh Fāriʿ el-Qazzām, Ḥasan Abū Šūḥah, el-Mrēḥī, ed-Dwēš, and Rādī ibn Zēdān.

In their quarrels the members of the Ṣaqr Bedouin come to one of the following two judges (*qāḍī*, pl. *quḍāt*): Fāriʿ el-Qazzām of the Qazzāmeh sub-tribe and Marʿī l-Ḥasan of the *ʿAbādī*. The first is the more important. Their decision is final. If a party refuses to submit to the judgement, the grand *ṣēh* of the Ṣaqr has to execute the same by force. The position of the judge as well as of the *ṣyūh* of the *ʿasāyir* is hereditary. The son of a *ṣēh* or of a *qāḍī* becomes, after the death of his father, a chief or a judge respectively.

When a Bedouin commits a murder or a rape his life and property are at the mercy of the sub-tribe of the murdered person or raped woman. The only way to protect himself and thus to gain time for settling matters, is to put himself under the protection of an influential *ṣēh* or still better under that of the grand *ṣēh* of the whole tribe. This act is known as *el-widjh*. The rights of such a refugee are strictly respected.

This protection extends generally for four to five months. A person who dares to break the *widjh*, i.e., who does not respect the privileges of the refugee and consequently does not respect

the honour and the position of the *šēh* who is giving the refugee protection, becomes the enemy not only of the *šēh* but of the whole tribe. Only the family of such an "honour-breaker" (*qāṭi' el-widjh*) stands on his side. They have to appease the *šēh* whose *widjh* has been broken for the wrong done by one of their members. The punishment of a *qāṭi' el-widjh* is very severe. He has to place a line of white camels, a line of white silver coins (*medjīdi*) and a line of white garments from the place where he attacked the protected person to the tent of the protecting *šēh*, the *šāhib el-widjh*. As he is, in practice, unable to fulfil these requirements, he must flee to another district and remain there for a period not less than seven years, after which he may return to his *ašīreh*. His people must, however, first have given satisfaction for the wrong he has done (*ṣulḥah*).

A person in financial need is generally helped by the members of his sub-tribe. Such a help is called *el-ma'īneh*. Occasions necessitating such help are marriage, buying a mare, atonement for murder or rape. Sheep, goats, or money are presented. All such gifts are debts which have to be paid back by the person who receives them.

The Şaqr tribe honour several *awliā* (saints). All lie in their own territory or near to it. Oil, candles and a white flag (*rāyeh bēdā*) are vowed to them. White flags are stuck on the grave itself or on the wall surrounding the court (el-Ḥalabī). White flags are met with more often in this district than in central Palestine. At times red and green flags are seen, but the white colour predominates. When a vow is to be fulfilled the relatives of the person offering the vow accompany him to the respective shrine and dance several hours a day for one to seven days around the shrine: They intend to express in this way their gratitude to the *welī*, and to show their joy at being answered. As at other places in Palestine the Bedouin of this district place some of their goods—wheat, barley, field tools, etc.—around the sanctuary, being sure that nobody will dare to touch them, for they are under the protection of the man of God. This custom is slowly dying out. Wheat and barley used to be stored in oval holes excavated in the immediate vicinity of the shrine (Abū Faradj).

The *awliā* of the Şqūr are:

1. Mḥēšiq. His shrine lies in el-ʿArīdah. He is the most important local saint. Mḥēšiq is a very irritable (*niziq*) saint. He punishes every person who uses his name unlawfully, or who irritates him in any other way. The following story is characteristic of a *niziq weli*. A jackal ate an onion from a garden adjacent to the *weli's* shrine. Next day the Bedouin found the animal dead with the undigested onion protruding from its anus.

2. El-Ḥidr (in Bardalah, near Ṭūbās) is a powerful and forbearing saint.

3. Ḥamd el-Fātūr in el-Fātūr (to the south of Zarrāʿah) is an unimportant and not irritable saint.

4. El-Ḥalabī has his shrine in the village of Bisān. The tomb is surrounded by a high wall. He is regarded as the next powerful saint after Mḥēšiq. El-Ḥalabī is forbearing (*tawīl er-rūh*), treating people with patience, even when they offend him.

5. Irḥāb has his sanctuary at el-Ḥamrā, not far from Farwāneh. This and the following saints are not much respected. All are *ṭawīlīm er-rūh*.

6. Sālim el-Wābši, at el-Ḥamrā,

7. Abū Faradj in el-Ḥnēzīr, near ez-Zarrāʿah.

8. eš-Šūbāši, near Ṭūbās.

9. Muḥammad el-Qabū, in eš-Šafā.

10. ʿAnṭar in el-Ḥamrā.

11. eš-Šēḥah Fiḍdah in el-Ḥnēzīr.

12. er-Radghā in er-Radghā near Ṭūbās. The two last are, as their names already denote, female saints.

The cemeteries of this Bedouin tribe are scattered in different places. They generally surround the shrine of a *weli*. The sub-tribes of the ʾUmarā and Šyūḥ have their own cemeteries.

The inhabitants of Palestine were until recently divided politically into two groups, the *Yaman* and the *Qēs*. The Ṣaqr tribe belongs to the *Yaman* party. They are thus naturally allied to all Bedouin tribes and peasants who belong to this political party. If a tribe is attacked by any enemy they ask the help of their allies, whose moral and sacred duty it was, and still is, to come at once for assistance, even if they live far away. This custom is at present more strictly practiced by the Bedouin than by the *fellāḥīm*. Eš-Ṣaqr are thus allied to the following Bedouin tribes:

<i>Tribe</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Name of the šēḥ</i>
Banī Şaqr	Salt district	Mitqāl bin Fāyz
‘Abbād	Balqā	Ibn Ḥatlān
es-Sardiyyeh	Ḥaurān	S‘ūd el-Klēb ibn Fauwāz
Bašātweh	Djizr el-Madjāmi‘	Zāhir el-Mitqāl
edj-Djbārāt	Gaza district	Muḥammad ibn Muşrif
Banī Ḥmēdeh	Kerak	Lāfi bin (i)Brīz
et-Turkmān	Merdj ibn ‘Āmir	Radja. l-Ya‘qūb
el-Balāwnī	‘Adjlūn	Yūsif Abū Znēmeh

The present ties of alliance are not as strong as they used to be in past times. Thus for example the political bonds between eş-Şaqr and Banī Ḥmēdah have been so neglected that they have nearly vanished, although formerly they were very strong. The Şaqr are also allied to some *Yamani* villages. Such villages are usually headed by some influential families. A family belonging to this category is the Dār Djarrār, who live in Sannūr, Djaba‘, and Burqīn. The first village was their capital. Dār Djarrār had many political quarrels with Dār ‘Abd el-Hādī who are *qēṣī*. The Şaqr always came to the succour of their allies.

The natural enemies of the Şaqr Bedouin are those tribes who belong politically to the *qēṣī* faction. The most important Bedouin tribes of this category are:

<i>Tribe</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Name of the šēḥ</i>
el-‘Idwān	Between the Jordan Valley and es-Salt	Sulṭān
Banī Ḥasan	ez-Zarqā	Şhāb ez-Ziyūrī
el-Ghazzāwīyeh	The ghōr north of Bisān	Bşir el Ḥasan
el-Maşālḥah	Abū I‘bēdeh	Muḥammad Sa‘id el-Fā‘ūr.
el-Masā‘id	Wādī el-Fār‘ah	‘Abdallah eḍ-Dāmen
el-Fḥālīyeh	en-Naqrā (Ḥaurān)	‘Abdallah el-Badhān

The following story, which has doubtless some historical background, is given as the cause of the bitter enmity between eş-Şaqr and el-‘Idwān. The latter attacked the tribe of ‘Abbād which is, as we have seen, related to the Şaqr Bedouin, drove it out of its own territory in el-Balqā and occupied the latter. The beaten ‘Abbād took refuge among the Şaqr Bedouin and lived with them for fourteen years. The Şaqr assigned a special part of

their territory to their guests. At the end of these fourteen years the two tribes together attacked the 'Idwān and drove them out of the land of the 'Abbād. In order to protect the 'Abbād against any unforeseen attack by the 'Idwān the Ṣaqr stayed with the 'Abbād Bedouin for seven years.

The cause of the bitter enmity between the Ṣaqr and the Ghazzāwiyeh was the murder of two 'umarā of the latter by members of the former.

Women play an important rôle in some phases of the daily life of the Ṣaqr as is the case with all Bedouin tribes. This is especially the case in *ghazā*. The following story illustrates this fact better than any description. The 'Idwān Bedouin, reinforced by the family 'Abd el-Hādī and their *fellāhīn* followers, attacked the Ṣaqr near the village el-Mirhād, in the Bīsān district. After a hard fight, the less numerous Ṣaqr, who had defended themselves very bravely, had to retreat in disorder as far as the Wādī eš-Šarrār, near Mt. Tabor. In the first line of the retreating and beaten Bedouin were two Ṣaqr Bedouin: a negro, Bḥēt eṭ-Ṭlédjeh, and a true Bedouin, Sa'īd el-Muṭlaq. A girl, named Fhēdeh, was waiting at the outskirts of the camp, with the women of the tribe who were longing impatiently for news of the battle. From the excited state of the two horsemen she at once understood the whole situation, and knew that their men were beaten. She called on the two *haiyāleh* (horsemen) to stop, and forced them by her words to go back and try to save the honour of the tribe and the safety of the women. She shouted at them: *Bḥēt, Bḥēt yā Aḥū Frēdjeh; Sa'īd, Sa'īd yā Aḥū Šarbeh*. The two warriors, preferring death to being despised for not having answered the call of women to save them from falling into the hands of the enemy, turned back and fought heroically in the first lines. They finally succeeded in retrieving the situation and in driving the enemy back. The 'Idwān and their allies were completely beaten. The Ṣaqr boast that Sa'īd el-Muṭlaq killed 72 of the enemy on this occasion.

The *naḥweh* (exhortation) of the women inspires and stimulates the fighting men of every Bedouin tribe. A man is always called "the brother of (the name of his sister)"; for the honour and the protection of his sister, especially if she is not married, is his first and most sacred duty.

The Şaqr tribe possesses several well-bred mares. One of the most important, Kḫêlet 'Adjūz, came from Nedjd. The name 'adjūz (old woman) came from the old woman who raised her up. Imm 'Arqūb received its name from the following story: Two Bedouin who were on bad terms met unexpectedly in a lonely part of the desert. One was riding a well-bred horse called Maşhūr and the other a mare known by the name Kḫêleh. Following the Bedouin rule that if two enemies meet in a deserted place and there is nobody to intervene and to stop their fighting (*ḥadjdjâz*) they have to forget their enmity for the moment, they dismounted, shook hands and partook together of a simple meal. The owner of Kḫêleh asked his opponent if his mare could be fecundated by Maşhūr. This was agreed upon under the condition that they should meet at this same place after the mare gave birth to a filly. The owner of the mare went in fulfilment of his promise a few weeks after his mare had given birth to a filly. His opponent, who intended by this trick to take possession of the filly, was awaiting him. He warned him of his intention. The owner of the mare galloped back, and his opponent was unable to overtake him. The filly forced her mother, by running from time to time in front of her, to lessen her speed. The Bedouin, afraid of being overtaken by his enemy, drew his sword and smote the filly on her 'arqūb (tendon of Achilles). The blow slightly reduced the speed of the animal, but it still kept up with its mother. Having reached the tents of his tribe, the owner of the mare examined the wound and found it superficial. The filly received the name Imm 'Arqūb and proved, as it grew, to be the swiftest mare in the tribe. Other well-bred mares are: Kbēšeh, M'annaqīyeh, Samḥâ, I'baiyeh Imm Djrēš, Ḥiqlāwīyeh, Djidrāmiyeh, Maḥladiyeh, Hadbâ, Djafîâ, Ḥamdāniyeh and Şwēmeh. The last owes her name to a birth-mark (*šāmeh*) on one side of her breast. It is said that all these mares have Nadjd blood.

Although the Şaqr are at present a very poor and unimportant tribe they still remember past times when they played an important rôle in the political affairs of their district. They used to have a cavalry of 1000 *djada'ah* (a two year old mare) beside 1500 other horsemen and more than 2000 footmen. Nowadays they have become so poor that they have been obliged to sell large stretches

of their excellent land. Men and women work here and there to earn a few pennies to cover the expenses necessary for their miserable life.