

Territories (5).

Production on Amiri land was organized around the village or the Hamula. The Hamula is defined by Asad as a group of families "whose heads were linked to one another by agnatic ties". (Asad,1976:3) Until the early 20th century, Palestine had about 800 villages. "Typically" it is maintained, "the Hamula and the village would be co-extensive, although some villages consisted of a number of small, distinct nuclear families" (Abdo-Zubi, 1987:6). In some cases a big Hamula occupied more than one village.(6) Within the Hamula, each individual family was assigned a piece of land which it cultivated and over which it assumed full responsibility. At the end of the production process, land dues, usually a tithe, or 1/10 of the gross annual product, were paid to the Head of the Hamula. The Head of the Hamula, customarily the oldest man in the village, was chosen by the villagers. Every family within the village knew the boundaries of its land. Except for the periodical redistribution of land, done at intervals of 3-5 years to take into account demographic changes within each family (i.e. births or deaths), individual families kept the same land for many years (Warriner, 1948).

Production relations under the Amiri form of land tenure must not be confused with the communal or Musha'a system. Many authors, in confusing these two forms, have presented the Hamula as an egalitarian, undifferentiated unit of production and consumption (Ohana,1981; Firestone, 1975; Baer,1966; Flapan,1979). In this literature all Hamula members were seen as equal participants in the production and distribution process. Yet an examination of the structure of the Hamula reveals that neither it nor the Palestinian village in general was ever a self-sufficient unit. The Hamula