

security conditions permitted. Sometimes the khirab were inhabited by watchmen or shepherds who brought their families to live with them; this is one way in which some khirab came to be permanent settlements. In other cases, one or two families, or a clan in a mother village, would leave their village to settle permanently in the khirbeh. This split from the mother village could be caused by village disputes. The case of Khirbet Abu Falah in the Ramallah district is an example. A village dispute took place in the mother village (el-Mazra'a esh-Sharkiyeh) and resulted in the abandonment of the village by two clans, Jardat and Shuman. These moved to an existing khirbeh and developed it as a permanent village (mukhtar of Abu Fallah, interview: 1982).

Relations between the satellite villages and the mother village differed. In some cases, the khirbeh remained as a satellite having strong ties to its mother village, though gradually becoming an independent village. In the cases where the creation of the khirbeh was a result of family or clan disputes, the khirbeh tended to break all relations with the mother village. The khirbeh would elect its own headman (mukhtar), and would have its own lands which had to be agreed on with the mother village, either peacefully or through disputes, as occurred in the case of Khirbet Abu Falah.

In general, as security conditions deteriorated, the khirab, especially those located in the peripheral areas, were deserted. Mountain peasants who had their khirab in the plains tended to retreat to their mountain settlements. Also plain peasants took refuge in mountainous areas and kept their contact with their fields in the plains.

#### DECLINING IMPACT OF BEDOUIN

Up to the second half of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Government's authority was hardly felt in most parts of Palestine. The Bedouin, who considered himself the "lord of the land", did not recognise the authority of any government except that of his sheikh.

Bedouin influence on the peasant community varied at different times.