

village spring.

VILLAGE CLANS

Kinship was, and to some extent still is, the determining principle of social organisation and of the organisation of agrarian production. The main divide was between the dominant Barghouthi clan and the subordinate "fallaheen" (non-Barghouthi) clans. The Barghouthis, who were big landlords, cultivated their lands with the help of the fallaheen who owned very little and worked to a great extent as share-croppers. Since land ownership was the basis for economic prosperity, the Barghouthi land-owning families, (particularly the Saleh family who was at the top of the social hierarchy) enjoyed a great deal of power, prestige, and respect over the fallaheen. The social and political relations between the two was characterised by the dominance of the Barghouthis and the complete subordination of the fallaheen (see social stratification chapter 4). The Barghouthi clans included six lineages; Daher, Cana'an, Abu Khattab, 'Ashweh, Daood, and Husein. The fallaheen included six different clans; esh-Shu'abi, er-Rabi, Nasir, Mishel, Halabieh, and el-'Adi. The fallaheen also encompassed two single families that took refuge in the village such as the family of el-Muhtadi (the "enlightened") originally a Christian family from 'Abud that converted to Islam, and found refuge in Deir Ghassaneh in 1890. The other single family is the 'Abweini. As the name indicates it came from the village of 'Abwein.

Until 1919 Deir Ghassaneh was headed by a sheikh - always drawn from the Barghouthi Daher lineage- who was the political leader of Deir Ghassaneh and the Bani Zaid region. The sheikh, together with the council of elders representing the other clans, both Barghouthis and fallaheen, managed the internal and external affairs of the village. The 'Alem (learned man), from the Halabieh clan, was the supreme religious authority who administrated religious rituals but lacked political power.

The Barghoutis represented by their sheikh, had strong commercial