

Such a system of collective responsibility suggests that the co-ordination and solidarity between the villagers as a whole would be enhanced. Not only did the villagers share the crushing burdens of impositions, but they often shared a collective punishment in case of failure to fulfill the payment of the taxes. Many villages suffered from the state soldiers when they came to harass and plunder villages which failed to pay their share of taxes (Firestone, 1978: 827).

THE VILLAGE FIELD: A DIFFERENTIATED AND STRUCTURED SPACE



Fig.3.7: Village fields

The village of Deir Ghassaneh is surrounded by a continuous series of extending mountainous rocky landscape. Except for the extensive terracing of olive groves, which gives the landscape a containable dimension of human scale, the fields seem, to the eye of the external observer, to be undifferentiated and unstructured; no physical boundaries separate Deir Ghassaneh's agricultural fields from those of neighbouring villages, no physical boundaries separate the village built-up area from its field, no boundaries differentiate the various lineage group's landholdings and no boundaries exist to mark where one fallah's property starts and where it ends.

However, in the fallah's mind, this seemingly amorphous landscape was spatially differentiated and structured. For him, who spent the long hours of his daily work within the boundaries of the village fields, the natural landscape was transformed into a "cultural