

to the village spring and undertook specific agricultural tasks.

However the hierarchy of the system should not be overdrawn. This was neither a feudal system (in the European sense), nor a caste-system (in the Indian sense). Patronage at best defined the relations between Barghouthis and fallaheen heads of clans, the ultimate dominance of men over ~~women~~ and the centrality (but not the omnipotence) of the Barghouthis.

The same holds true of kinship separation. The separation between clan quarters was not hermetical and was often "violated" by the social interactions and the egalitarian bonds of village solidarity creating pressure towards ideological homogeneity.

As noted earlier, a network of village inter-kin solidarity was reinforced through a shared culture and religious heritage, through the collective imposition of tax burdens, and through the communal coordination dictated by patterns of land ownership and cropping arrangements.

Spatially, the peasants of Deir Ghassaneh expressed their unity by creating centres of activities that cut partially or totally across kinship lines. As we have seen earlier, the village plaza, guest-house, mosque and village fields brought together men of the different clans on a daily basis. The village spring brought together most of the village women. Shared inter-kin utilities such as olive presses, threshing floors, local shops, and cemeteries brought together neighbouring kin groups. The sacred environment of the village acted as an egalitarian force, most immediately for the unity of the village muslim community, and ultimately for the integration of the village into a larger world, that of the community of the faithful (umat al-muslimeen).

However when the autarkic nature of the village spatial organisation began to lose its isolation as a result of the influence of market forces, state intervention, and migration-- the internal forces of the village hierarchy and the close correspondence between social structures and spatial formations were ready to disintegrate.