

## PART II

### TRADITION AND CHANGE The Case of The Built-Environment

#### INTRODUCTION

The visitor to Deir Ghassaneh today will see a very different picture from that described in part I. In the following, I look at the new face of the village in an attempt to examine the nature of the changes that took place in the village way of life and in its built environment during the past seventy years (1916-1986).

The turn of this century brought about radical transformations in the socio-economic conditions as well as the cultural values of the community of Deir Ghassaneh. Here I will view the changes in the traditional built form as part of the change in several other traditional patterns: kinship relations, power relations, work processes, and behavioural patterns. Because of the complexity in the process of change, a one-to-one correspondence between the change in the built environment and that of other spheres will be avoided. The consequential or causal relation between change in the built environment and changes in aspects of daily life in the village were in most cases neither easily noticeable, nor always directly connected. For example, new patterns of housing dispersion and critical changes in the existing patterns of spatial relations are seen here as having been brought about by a chain of interdependent structural transformations involving privatisation of land tenure relations, changes in the organisation of the agricultural labour process, marginalisation of agricultural activities, emigration of male family members and nucleisation of the extended family.

#### Natural versus disruptive change

The relative social stability characterizing the village of Deir Ghassaneh during the second half of the nineteenth century is not meant to suggest here that the village was free from internal or