

III. Changes in the Occupational Structure

The 1920s marked the beginnings of change in the occupational structure of the village community. Land, which was up until then the only source of livelihood for the community, was being slowly replaced by other sources of income and status. Job opportunities inside and outside the village were slowly increasing. By the mid thirties, twenty-four of the villagers had become government official employees, either as school teachers or policemen. Around the same period, some 20-30 villagers became wage labourers in a new lime factory owned by a European settler in the coastal village of Magdal Sadik. By the nineteen fourties, the number of employees (teachers, policemen and wage labourers) was over a hundred (Abu Hani and Abu Adnan; Interviews: 1986). The 1950s marked the beginings of villagers' emigration to Saudi Arabia to work with the Arab-American Oil Company (ARAMCO). In addition to access to cash resources, being an employee, particularly a school teacher, was more prestigious than remaining a peasant. Status was attached to education and wage employment. Through these new wage earners and emigrants, the community was brought into contact with the world around it.

CRITICAL CHANGES IN THE VILLAGE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Since the beginning of the British Mandate in 1918, the built environment in Deir Ghassaneh, as in other villages, was drastically transformed. There have been two phases of construction, the first occurred between the 1920s and the mid-fifties. New buildings constructed in this period bore a great resemblance to traditional building patterns and were in general accomodated within the old structure (Fig.II.1). In the second period, after 1955, the new structures (Fig. II.2) brought with them the embryonic formation of a new spatial organisation which reflected the re-organisation of the community on new basis.

Below I examine some aspects of the new patterns of spatial relations and organisation: