

(c) "just distribution" ('adalat al-tawzi'). The latter is a process which prevailed in Ottoman Palestine under the Musha' system, by which each cultivator received his allotted property (usually redistributed periodically every few years) in several parcels reflecting the uneven fertility of village land. In Zbeidat this unevenness takes into account the following factors: (1) distance from the main road and the village centre; (2) distance from the pool and motor, hence the time it took water to treckle down the furrows; and (3) presence or absence of patches of accumulated salinity. Map 11:5 shows the pattern of parcel fragmentation resulting from this system for 3 average farmers. The implications of this fragmentation for the inefficient utilization of limited land is and has been discussed at length elsewhere (see, for example, Grannot, 1951). A similar notion of "justice in distribution" took place in Marj Na'je in 1955 (see Map 11:2). Plots Nos. 1-31 in the lower section of the cadastral map represent fragments that are adjacent to the Zor (river basin) which, although richer in soil composition, were subject to occasional flooding during the winter torrents. Each farming household in Marj Na'je, therefore, received a major parcel and a minor one -- by the Zor. Since virtually all of these minor parcels were fenced off in 1967, their owners lost total access to them.

But owner-cultivation constitute only one dimension of the land tenure system in Zbeidat. To understand the actual structure of agrarian relations in the village, we will now examine the condition of tenancy, relations with landlords, commission agents, and water rights, as the other major components of land tenure.

Share-cropping and Cash Rentals

The prevalent system of cultivation in Zbeidat is the shared tillage of land by all members of the extended family under the control and guidance