

traveller or individual from other tribes was allowed to pass. In contrast to the Bedouin of Naqab, Bedouin tribes in other sub-districts were relatively small groups and had less power (Barron, 1923: 37). By the beginning of the nineteenth century, very few Bedouin in Palestine were purely nomads (Graham-Brown, 1980: 84). They began to cultivate the land and became semi-nomadic. Even though Bedouin life still depended to a degree on pastoral land where he raised his goat and sheep herds, he also cultivated the land by planting mainly barley, wheat and sesame. Agriculture was based on moving from one land parcel to another. Once the parcel was exhausted, the Bedouin moved on and used another; he did not take care of the land by using fertilisers, or crop rotation.

The differences in the way of life, as well as in the fundamental economic and social organisation between Bedouin society and that of the fallah, resulted in the absence of conflict over the same resources such as land and water. In principle the two communities tended to occupy different geographic areas. In Tent Work in Palestine, Conder describes these areas thus:

"the narrow peninsula of cultivated hills in which the settled population lives is surrounded by a broad sea of desert, over which the Arab (i.e. Bedouin) delights to roam" (Conder, 1878: 271).

For the Bedouin leading a semi-nomadic life with relatively great mobility, arid and semi-arid zones provided an environment suited to his way of life. The Naqab desert provided him with a more ideal situation because it was much bigger and drier than an areas which were often swampy and malarial.

The desert for the Bedouin was a symbol of freedom, while the walls of the city or the compact and densely clustered houses in villages were stifling and limiting atmospheres. The Bedouin encampments were usually spread out. Each tent or group of tents were set 200-300 metres apart (Conder, 1878: 275). Unlike the fallah's villages, these encampments were never located on a hill. They were always concealed in the mountain foothills to protect them both from winds and from the raids of other Bedouin tribes. The Bedouin's contempt for the peasant's life meant he was not prepared to forsake the