

Bedouin raids. Sedentary settlements in these areas were characterised by:

- Oscillation of the borders of the settled areas
- A high percentage of abandoned sites and villages (khirab)
- A large number of temporary or secondary settlements
- Villages bordering the peripheral zones were usually larger both in their population, and in the area of their lands.

Both the western slopes of the Hebron mountains and the Hula Valley are good illustrations of the oscillation of the borders peripheral zones.

In the case of the western slopes of the Hebron mountains one could perhaps argue that the provision of security, (i.e., the curbing of Bedouin raids) seemed to be the only major factor which limited the southern and western expansion of sedentary settlements; no other factor is evident. Figure 1.9 shows how the majority of new settlements in the Hebron mountains occurred in the western and southern slopes.

The Hula Valley is another example where there was oscillation of the borders of settled areas. In this case it is not clear whether it was the threat of Bedouin raids or the presence of malarial swamps that prevented the establishment of primary sedentary settlements in the valley. In 1806, Seetzen described the Hula Valley as a Bedouin domain of the Bani Fadel and Nu'aim tribes (Karmon, 1953: 7). The Bedouin occupied the Hula Valley during the winter planted corn and raised and grazed their herds. In summer they would move to the Golan Heights. This made it possible for the peasants to come down from the hills to grow their summer crops. Often the fallah built small hamlets or temporary settlements which they deserted once the Bedouin returned:

"The wave of nomadic life is constantly lapping against the mountains of the Fallaheen. This wave has its ebbs and flows which even in the last five years has been very marked"
(Conder, 1878: 271).