

the village. A number of 19th and 20th century written sources make only cursory mention of the village of Deir Ghassaneh in different contexts; (Canaan, 1932:185-186 and 1933:53; Conder and Kitchner, 1881, vol.2 :290; and Dabbagh, 1973: 266-270).

The tradition of oral history in the village concentrated mostly on the legendary origins of the village clans coming from Hijaz and Yemen. This division corresponds to the Qais and Yemen: the two peasant factions that divided rural Palestine in the nineteenth century.

Until the turn of this century, Deir Ghassaneh was both the throne village and a centre for the Qais faction. We have very little exact information about the size of its population during this period. Conder, in 1881, described the village as "of moderate size, built of stone and has olive beneath" (1881:290). The first modern census in Palestine, in 1922, enumerated its inhabitants at 625, all Muslims. In 1931, the population increased to 735, occupying 181 households. Since 1960, Deir Ghassaneh has been merged administratively with the neighbouring villlage of Beit Rima, with a combined population of 4467 (1974).

Deir Ghassaneh was, and remains, a predominantly agricultural community whose land encompasses 12802 dunums (3200 acres), mostly located to the west of the village built-up area; the latter occupying 56 dunums. About two-thirds of the village lands (8151 dunums) are rain-fed olive groves. Grapes, figs, vegetables and cereals are also grown. Up until the 1920s, the great majority of the villagers were subsistence farmers, working inside the village. Very few people sought employment outside. Most villagers worked in agriculture and hence they all more or less carried out the same tasks, with differentiations based on sex, age, social status, and special skills. The daily patterns based on cyclical agricultural activities created a sameness in the rhythms of life in the village. The distinctive rhythm for village men was the back and forth movement from the village to the fields. And the distinctive rhythm for most village women was moving about their homes, with seasonal participation in field work and frequent trips to the