

Deir Ghassaneh was defined by the boundaries of these fields. To the great majority of villagers, these boundaries marked their entire universe.

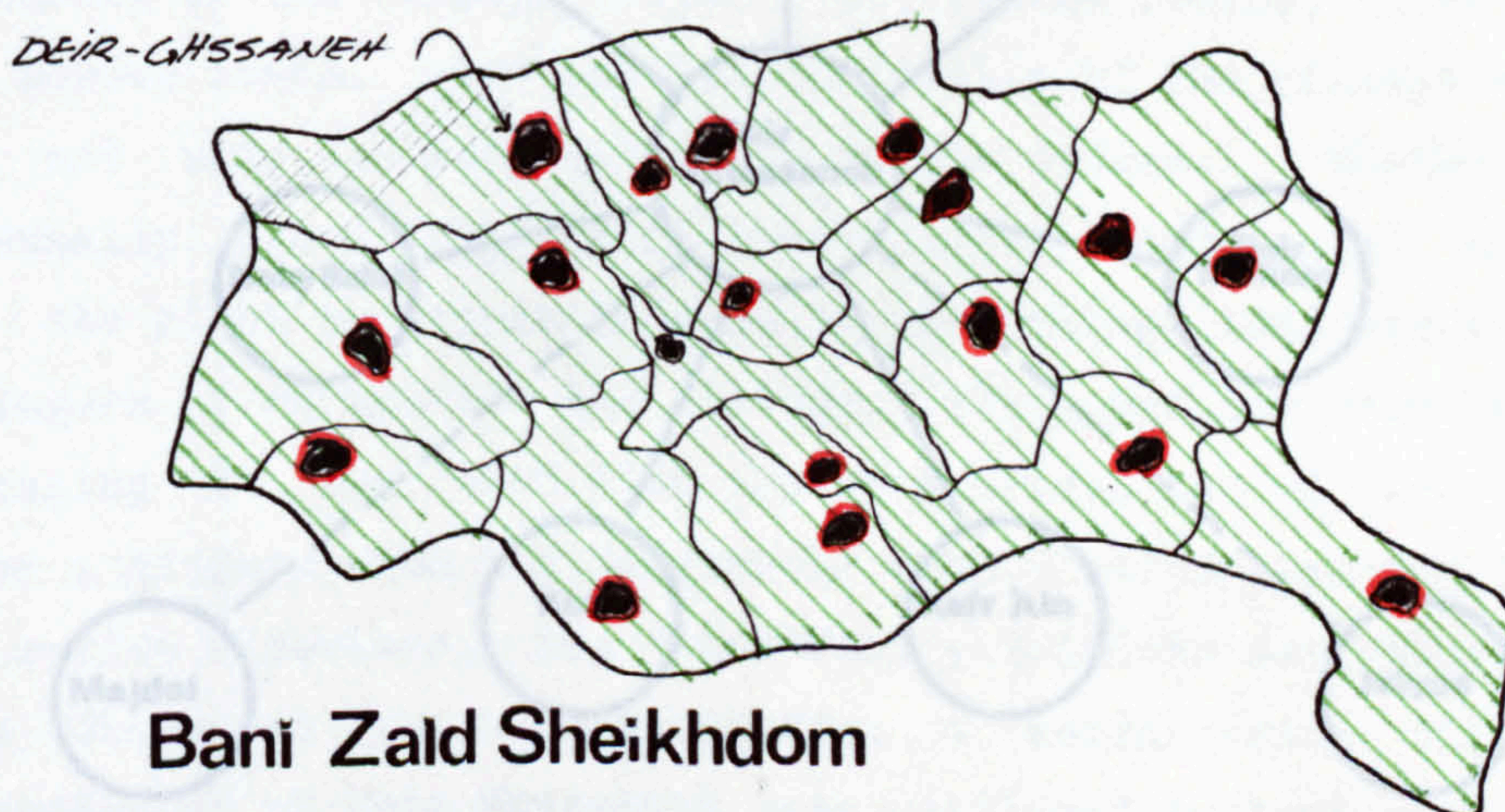


Fig. 3.3: The built-up areas of the different villages separated by
 the villages' fields
 built-up areas
 boundaries of village land
 privately owned gardens (hawakir)

In general, villages were spatial clusterings of communities which consisted of a number of different descent groups. Deir Ghassaneh, was inhabited by seven groups of different descent; the Barghouthis, esh-Shu'aibis, er-Rabis, Nasirs, 'Adi, Misshels and Halabi. These seven clans constituted the village community. Each one of them has its own sub-clans living in neighbouring villages. For example, figure 3.4 illustrates the distribution of the Barghouthi sub-clans in neighbouring villages, both within the Bani Zaid sheikhdom and outside of it. Even though the same clan - in this case the Barghouthi- lived in different villages, their lands were part of the village in which they resided, and were not consolidated as Barghouthi lands (as illustrated in the hypothetical figure 3.5b below). In other words, the village lands belonged to the inhabitants of the different clans in the one village (Fig. 3.5a), rather than to the same sub-clans residing in the different villages.