

CHAPTER FOUR

VILLAGE QUARTERS: SOCIAL AND SPATIAL DIMENSIONS



Fig. 4.1: The village of Deir Ghassaneh

Deir Ghassaneh occupies the top of a hill, spreading out on its eastern and western slopes. Seen from a distance, the village appears as a compact unit of white stone. This dense settlement contrasts strongly with the indefinitely extended rocky mountainous landscape around it. The ancient appearance of the village structures, and the neatly organised stone terraces which surround the village give the feeling that the fallah has found an "anchorage" in this site for hundreds of years. The silhouette of the village with its many rounded domes (fig. 4.1) is in sharp contrast with the bright blue skies. On the one hand, the vertical Barghouthi buildings accentuate the vertical direction and give a feeling that the village "rises" up (to use Norberg-Schulz's term) towards the skies. The verticalism finds an echo in the domes of the Barghouthi buildings occupying the top of the hill. On the other hand, the horizontal stone buildings of the fallaheen seem to be an extension of the surrounding landscape. The "hugging of the earth" is emphasized by the heavy and massive stone buildings. The horizontal expansion of the buildings located on slopes, expresses a strong relationship between the natural landscape and man-made environment. The closeness to earth is one striking aspect of the village. The natural landscape penetrates all levels