

and event. What is of concern to us in these legendary historic tales is their social functions. They are also an important indication of the nature of relations between the different clan groups. It is important to observe the discrepancies in how the same group was seen by members of the clan and by members of other clans. The stories describing the Barghouthis and the means by which they took possession of most of the village lands is a good example to illustrate this point.

As far as the Barghouthis were concerned, they believed themselves to be of noble descent. They claimed direct descent from the second Khaliphate of Omar. They came to Jerusalem with the famed muslim leader, Salah ed Din el-Ayoubi, and settled in the holy city of Jerusalem until they were appointed as rulers of the Bani Zaid region by the Zahir Babers in the sixteenth century (Wilson, 1906: 78, Macalister, 1923; 355, and Barghouthi, manuscript: n.d.). There was very little doubt in the Barghouthis' minds that their economic monopolies and social privileges were the result of noble origins. They saw themselves as the true muslim Arab knights, as opposed to the fallaheen who lacked honourable and noble origins.

However the fallaheen on their part, held the Barghouthi stories of their clan's origins in suspicion and had their own beliefs about the history of the Barghouthis. "The Barghouthis", narrated one of the fallaheens in an interview with the author, "are of Bedouin origins". They came to Deir Ghassaneh much later than the fallaheen, erected their tents nearby and as time passed by they befriended the Tamimis, the most influential and powerful clan in Deir Ghassaneh then. Barghouth, their acclaimed ancestor, married the daughter of the Tamimi's sheikh. As time passed, Barghouth gained power and later on he betrayed his in-laws, took over all their properties, and threw them out of Deir Ghassaneh to the neighbouring village of en-Nabi Saleh. Ever since then, Barghouthis have been involved in continuous struggles for power with the different clans in the village. It was not their "noble" origins that gave them the power but their betrayal of their own people" (anonymous, interview; 1986).

Notice that the fallaheen thought of the Barghouthis as Bedouins and