

In front of the makam there is a natural stone platform which functioned as its extension. This platform is partially surrounded by low rubble-stone walls which give a sense of seclusion. The area surrounding the makam (which belongs to the religious endowment (waqf)), was also considered sacred as were all the nearby olive trees. The branches and olives produced by these trees were considered sacred and were not to be picked up by anyone except the makam guardian:

"The Mohammedans consider it unlawful to use the branches of these trees for fuel, believing that were they to do so the curse of the saint would rest upon them" (Wilson, 1905: 28).

The same held true for all agricultural produce planted on the land around the makam. In fact the villagers told a story about a man who picked up some broad beans planted by the guardian. As the man ate them, he immediately fell sick and the shapes of broad beans marked his body.

There was a belief widely held amongst the villagers that one of the two domes of the makam (the western dome) was completed overnight by angels (malaikah). The evidence for such a superhuman act was seen in the missing protruding keystone of this particular dome. The eastern dome of the makam was built by the villagers of Deir Ghassaneh themselves. The domes of al-Khwwas were typical of all makamat, as opposed to the cross-vault used to roof the majority of structures in Deir Ghassaneh. In this regard Ardalan and Bakhtiar note that the dome:

"Is not just a way to cover the walls. It is the image of the vault of heaven and beyond it of the infinite and illimitable World of Spirits of which the sphere or circle is the most direct geometric symbol" (Ardalan and Bakhtiar, 1973: XIII).

Around the Khawwas, the villagers would leave all kinds of objects and belongings under the saint's protection: sacks of wheat, grain, brushwood, ploughs and other agricultural implements could be found, and no one would dare to steal anything put under the protection of the saint (weli).