

The agricultural fields, which were free of man-made structures (except for storage houses (kusur)), the belts of empty lots around the village (hawakir), and the backs of buildings; all created distinct boundaries which separated these villages from one another.

Being the throne village of Bani Zaid sheikhdom, Deir Ghassaneh, was characterized by a distinct system of social stratification. The dominant social and spatial feature was the division between the dominant Barghouthi clans and the subordinate fallaheen (non-Barghouthis by definition).

The political and social dominance of the Barghouthis represented by their sheikh, the semi-feudal potentate of the region, was reflected in the centrality of Deir Ghassaneh in relation to villages around it, in the centrality of the plaza (including the sheikh's dwelling) in relation to the rest of the village, and in the prominence of the Barghouthi quarter in relation to the rest of the fallaheen quarters, as well as in the elaborate semi-urban forms of their architecture in comparison to the simple fallaheen built forms.

The social structure was one in which the basic social units at the village level were clearly defined by the principles of kinship and patronage. Role expectations were embedded in rank status and gender divisions. Those in turn corresponded to specific units of spatial allocations. The allocation of village space was greatly influenced by a hierarchical system of control. Patronage and patriarchy determined the control of wealth by men, and the division of labour along gender lines.

Within each quarter and within each household, patriarchal control of the heads of households over their married sons and their womenfolk and children was replicated in the mode of control exercised by the sheikh over all other clans within a hierarchical system of patronage.

This system of control dictated the most dominant feature of the village built space: a hierarchal spatial order of separation and differentiation based along kinship and gender lines.