

If Haddad's description is accurate, then what we obtain here, except for the big cities, is a pattern of fictive alignments on a regional basis, or at least one in which inter-regional or inter-village conflicts would not disrupt the internal solidarity of the village. But we should not overlook the fact that many towns and villages did include a minority clan which occasionally would act as a potential disruptor of village solidarity. In my own town of Ramallah, for example, all the indigenous clans were Qaisi with the exception of one, al-Shaqara, who were Yemenis. Whenever a dispute arose with the neighbouring village of Bitunia--which is both Yemeni and muslim--this one Yemeni clan--which, like the rest of the indigenous Ramallah clans, is Christian--would ally itself with the Bitunians against the other Ramallah (Qaisi) clans. On the other hand we have instances of regional conflicts which involved exclusively Yemeni clans, e.g. Lahham of Bethlehem and Abu Ghosh clans, near Jerusalem, (Lesch, 1977:278).

Fictive affiliations, however, do not seem to have taken the same form throughout Palestine. In a comprehensive study of Qaisi-Yemeni divisions in nineteenth century Palestine Miriam Hoexter distinguishes two main regional patterns of clan alliances; those prevailing in the Nablus mountains and in the Judean hills (Hoexter, 1973). In Nablus indigenous notables and landlords ruled the countryside, while in Jerusalem the local majlis was governed by an Ottoman Pasha. Hoexter convincingly argues that while the terms 'Qais' and 'Yemen' were used more frequently in identifying the contending factions in the Judean hills, the participation of town landlords (in Jerusalem) in their struggles was marginal and secondary. In Nablus, by contrast, town notables were the actual leaders of factional disputes (Hoexter, 1973:300-303, 310-311). The reasons for this lie in the different character of Nablus and Jerusalem as regional centres; the former was a "ruralized city", the abode of successive waves of wealthy landlords (Jarrar, Abdulhadi, Nimer) who moved through-