II-5: Aspects of nomadism and settlement

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries AD were a period of change in Transjordan. International developments had their impact on a largely rural and pastoral society, changing it completely. In this section these changes and the mechanisms that lie behind them will be examined, with special reference to the Central Jordan Valley. A picture is painted here of a changing society, which may, to a certain extent, reflect changes that took place in the same region in the transitional period between the Late Bronze and the Early Iron Age. The material remains of this period have been described in the preceding chapters: literary sources, archaeological remains and surveys, and the ecological context. Ethnoarchaeology relates human behaviour to these material remains, so that “explanatory hypotheses may be thereby fruitfully constructed as predictions of the past which can be verified (or falsified) by the recovery of new data or better (more inclusive, parsimonious and internally consistent) explanations” (Kamp and Yoffee 1980, 86). The recent history of the Transjordanian Plateau and its interactions with the Jordan Valley can provide some of the explanations for the transition from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age, and although the picture that emerges is far from complete or even coherent, it gives a perspective on the socio-economic backgrounds of society in those periods.

The use of ethnographic analogies in order to reconstruct ancient societies has its dangers. Ancient societies were different in many ways from modern society. Therefore, in order to make a valid comparison that adds to our knowledge of how those societies functioned, it is essential to make a distinction between behaviour that is related to modern society and concepts, and behaviour that is timeless, and based on unchanging, Darwinian (sociobiological) motives. These motives are the production and procurement of food, the protection against enemies and against nature, and the acquiring of status and power (Wilson 1975, 547-76). The economic and social strategies that a tribal society resorts to can vary within a continuum that involves complete settlement at one end, and complete mobility at the other (Salzman 1980). Within those extremes almost any economic activity is possible, whether it be pastoralism, agriculture, robbing and raiding, protection or trade, provided that it is profitable within the specific circumstances that make up the economical or ecological niche of the moment. This conforms to what LaBianca (1990: 13-14) has described as a ‘resilient system’, which functioned within the Hesban region in the Iron Age, as reflected in the archaeological record.

The theory

Until the very recent past nomadism was often seen as part of a cyclic process in which Braudel’s ‘longue durée’ concept played an important role. Periods of dense settlement alternated with periods in which the population returned to a largely nomadic way of life as pastoralists, herding sheep and goats, and forming the ‘pool’ from which the settlers came when resettlement started again. That this, for a number of reasons, is an oversimplification has been made clear by several scholars. The distinction between nomadic, pastoralist groups and settled populations is still taken for granted in many studies about Levantine society, both relatively recent and relatively ancient (e.g. Rowton 1973a, 1973b, 1974, 1976, 1977). Steve Rosen has taken this argument further and states that both groups not only always leave traceable remains, but also that these remains, by their very nature, can be ascribed to one or the other. So if there are no archaeological traces of nomads, there simply were no nomads (Rosen 1988, 1992). He bases this views on Rowton’s model of the dimorphic society, the sedentary versus non-sedentary
population (Rowton 1974, 1976, 1977), each, according to Rosen, with their specific archaeological repertoire. However, as Salzman (1980) and others have shown, the concept of a dimorphic society can be replaced by a more convincing one, that of a continuum between two extremes, and groups of people moving constantly within this continuum. They adapt themselves time and again to the prevailing circumstances, and move from one economic activity to another, if that proves profitable. Their niches are not fixed in any way, economically, ecologically or geographically.

Even in periods of dense settlement, towns and cities with stratified societies, nomadic pastoralists played a role, if only as providers of meat, dairy products, wool and leather (Finkelstein 1995, 26; Rowton 1974). Their social and economic importance can be determined by the presence of ample remains of sheep/goat in towns and cities, which must have been provided by a nomadic or transhumant population, due to the nature of the animals. Their role in the trade and economy must have been considerable, and their territorial needs and claims are bound to have influenced the settlement pattern.

That means that it is not as easy as Rosen suggests, to ascribe material remains to either a sedentary or a non-sedentary population. We can, at the very best, only pinpoint remains to a specific activity, at a specific time. The group that left them, may have been involved in other activities as well, at the same time, or a few days later, activities that leave different traces, or perhaps no traces at all (cf. Finkelstein 1995, 37).

In the past a number of possible explanations have been analysed by several scholars and presented as models to explain the fluctuations between ‘the desert and the sown’, between the settled and non-settled components of society over time. Factors like climate, disease, population pressure, economic decline or its opposite, economic revival, international politics, have all been used as possible explanations, but not one of them can claim to provide the final answer. Which of these, or which combination of them, is valid may differ with every event.

Humans, like every living being, are primarily driven by the need to procreate, to pass on their own genetic material (Wilson 1975, 547-76). In practice this means:
- Procurement of food that contains all the basic nutrients to feed oneself and one’s offspring.
- Protection against nature and against human enemies. This can be provided by the building of fortifications or by making alliances. Alliances can be made with possible protectors or confederates, or with possible attackers, in order to disarm them.
- Status and power provide better chances for oneself and one’s offspring to procure food and protection, and also put one higher in the mating hierarchy.
- Mating strategies are designed for men to produce a maximum offspring, for women to provide the best chances of survival and procreation for her offspring. In practice this usually means polygyny for men, and for women a high-status marital attachment. These can be seen as basic human motives, irrespective of time, place or circumstances. They leave few tangible traces in the archaeological record; nevertheless they must have influenced this record considerably, as they determine interhuman relations as well as man’s relation with nature. They can however be translated into conditions for human behaviour that do leave traces, like settlement patterns, town planning and strategies for procuring and storing food. How basic motives like the quest for food, or the need for status and power can influence settlement patterns, modes of life, and social relations, for example, is outlined below.
The most significant aspect of Bedouin society in the past two centuries was its flexibility. Abujaber et al. (1987, 41) have described the Bedouin as exploring a multitude of resources. Sheep and goats, but camels especially, gave prestige. The Bedouins’ income originally came from camel-trade, robbing and raiding, caravan-escort etc. When these resources dried up with the coming of the modern state, they became smugglers, cultivators of their land, or they found employment with oil companies or in the army of one of the new states.

Lancaster has described the same process for the Rwala Bedouin (Lancaster 1981, 97 ff). The process started in the second half of the nineteenth century, and is, in fact, still continuing (Lancaster 1981, 139 ff). There are several reasons for the shift in economic pursuits. First the Bedouin lost some important sources of income due to the introduction of the railway, and later that of the automobile, which gradually replaced the camel (a main source of income for large groups of Bedouin) as the main form of transport (Hourani 1991, 293, 334; Abujaber et al. 1987, 41). Secondly, in 1858 the Ottoman authorities, in an effort to develop agriculture, introduced the Land Laws (Hourani 1991, 287). These laws made the Bedouin tribes de facto owners of their territory, with the obligation to pay taxes. As the sheikhs of the tribes were made responsible for the collection of the taxes, they gradually entered into formal relations with the state. At the same time the authorities began to take action against raiding and robbing practices, which eventually had its effects. Robbing and raiding had been a substantial source of income for the Bedouin, either directly, or indirectly, by providing ‘protection’ for villages and travellers.

The human factors involved in the change may be subdivided into 1) the quest for food; 2) local and international political factors; 3) population pressure. The different aspects of these factors, and their impact on the society of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are worth looking at more closely.

The quest for food

In societies where the availability of food is the key factor for survival the quest for food is often the primary motive for human action (LaBianca 1990). There are different ways of looking at this quest for food. We can look at the actual strategies used to obtain food, like hunting, gathering, pastoralism, or different forms of agriculture. In Near Eastern society, at least since the domestication of plants and animals, all these strategies have, to a certain extent, always existed side by side.

Another way to look at the quest for food, is from the point of view of social relations. Here two different strategies can be discerned: 1) direct production, and 2) obtaining food from the direct producers. While direct production is only concerned with the primary necessities of life, the second strategy also determines the relations of power in a region, as will be made clear in the next section.

In the Jordan Valley food production in the second millennium BC (as well as in the second millennium AD) was mainly by farming and pastoralism, although hunting and gathering never completely stopped (van der Kooij and Ibrahim 1989, 41). Most of the mammals formerly living in the Jordan Valley are now extinct, mainly as a result of hunting.
Bedouin and pastoralists
In the early nineteenth century AD the southern Levant, although officially part of the Ottoman empire, was in practice ruled by a number of Bedouin tribes: the Beni Sakhr in northern Transjordan, the Uhedat in the Negev and Sinai, and the Howeitat in southern Transjordan were the largest and most powerful of them. The Beni Sakhr had conquered the territory of the Transjordanian highlands and the Jordan valley on the Adwan. The continuing territorial struggles between the Adwan, the Abbad and the Beni Sakhr, as well as the tyranny of the Beni Sakhr themselves, left the region rather desolate. There was no settled occupation in the Jordan Valley. In the Belqa Salt was the only inhabited town (Burckhardt 1822, 167). “People of local Arab tribes camped at some of the ancient sites, made use of old buildings as store houses and sowed a little wheat or barley round about, but the only extensive area of regular cultivation was around Salt.” (Lewis 1987, 23). The town was controlled by several tribes, and paid protection to the Beni Sakhr. Other villages and towns were deserted, left in ruins, after their inhabitants had fled. And as long as the Beni Sakhr ruled the area, this situation remained unaltered. Efforts at farming were frustrated by nomadic raids, travellers had to pay khawa (protection money) and even the Hajj was not safe, in spite of the large sums that were paid to the Bedouin in order to ‘protect’ (i.e. ‘not to rob’) the pilgrims (Doughty 1908, 1-3; Oppenheim 1943, 233). The Ottoman government undertook several efforts to regain control over the region. In 1810 the Ottoman army confronted the Beni Sakhr, and lost. It was not until halfway through the nineteenth century that the government managed, by various measures, to finally break the power of the Beni Sakhr. This resulted in a break-up of the tribe, some families of which moved to the west of the Jordan and put up their tents around Beth Shean.

With the power of the Beni Sakhr broken, the area became quickly settled. Villages sprang up through the highlands and in the Jordan valley. The inhabitants came partly from some smaller tribes, that had been controlled by the Beni Sakhr, and partly they came from elsewhere. The government settled Circassians in the region (as part of the strategy to keep the tribes under control), and farmers came from the west side of the Jordan, fleeing political unrest (Oppenheim 1943, 180). The Land Laws of 1858 had given ownership of the land to the Bedouin, with the obligation to pay taxes. The sheikhs of the Beni Sakhr now hired Palestinian fellaheen, and forced some of the smaller tribes to work the land, and so contributed to the settlement of the region (Oppenheim 1943, 235; Tarawneh 1989, 30).

Kerak, a town further south, had for a long time been in the power of the Beni Amr tribe who extorted so much from the town that it was reduced to beggary. But around 1750 AD the sheikh of the town allied himself with the Howeitat tribe and together they defeated the Beni Amr, who then retreated to the Belqa where they joined the Adwan. But they were driven out from there as well, and then moved to Jerusalem. Later they returned to Kerak and threw themselves upon the mercy of the sheikh of Kerak, who turned them into an advanced guard for the town. That way Kerak gained complete mastery over the region and considerable influence in the affairs of the Belqa. The inhabitants of Kerak were of varied origin, some originating from the Jebal, others with roots in the north. There were traders from Nablus and Hebron, and a group of descendants of the Turkish Janissars. The townspeople intermarried with some of the Bedouin tribes, like the Anazeh. The sheikh of Kerak had influence as well as the right of judgment in the whole district down to the Wadi Hasa, and received tribute from some of the smaller tribes. On the other hand, Kerak paid tribute to the Howeitat and the Beni Sakhr.
Officially Kerak belonged to the Pashalik Damascus, but efforts from the government to control Kerak were never successful. Only Ibrahim Pasha held the place for a while, but after he was defeated, the town remained in tribal hands until 1896. The fields around Kerak were worked by townspeople and members of some of the allied tribes. The main commodity was corn, which was traded with the wandering tribes and transported to Jerusalem, but there were gardens and orchards as well.

The River Jordan was not depleted and running low because of extensive irrigation, as it is now. Especially in the winter and spring crossing the river was a dangerous undertaking. Several travellers (Seetzen 1854-59, 301, 320, 374, Porter 1891, 104) have described the difficulties people encountered when they tried to cross. That was in the days before there were bridges in the south, when only the tribes of the Jordan Valley were able to cross the river and maintain the trade with the west (Boggis 1939, 29; Burckhardt 1822, 345). Certainly in the first half of the nineteenth century in the eyes of western travellers the Jordan was a border between relatively ‘civilised’ Palestine and ‘wild’ and dangerous Transjordan (Kinglake 1879, 154;157; Rogers 1862, 177).

Nomadism is often associated with pastoralism, although the two are far from identical (Cribb 1991:17). Farmers had and still own livestock: sheep, goats, chickens and cows. In the Valley these were kept for private consumption, with eggs, dairy products and one or two lambs for ritual and festive occasions (Layne 1994, 45). They therefore continued to play an important social, and perhaps also symbolic role in the daily life of the Valley farmers1. However, if sheep and goats (or camels) were a main source of income, they were moved from pasture to pasture, on a nomadic, semi-nomadic or transhumance base (see also Cribb 1991, table 3.1a and b), spending only the winter in the Valley. Until the seventeenth century the Jordan Valley had been a flourishing agricultural region, but from the seventeenth century onward pastoralists increasingly dominated the area (Layne 1994, 38). In the nineteenth century AD the Valley was the exclusive territory of pastoral - camel - Bedouin. Lynch (1849, 199) describes the lower Ghor as “a perfect desert, traversed by warlike tribes”. According to Tristram (1866, 572) the Ghor north of Pella was uninhabited, and in the power of the Beni Sakhr (whom he calls the ‘S’hoor’ i.e. Sukhur). Merrill, in March 1876, noticed many Bedouin tents between Wadi Yabis and Pella “scattered at different points”. By the Zerqa he saw “multitudes of black tents, and the fields covered with camels”. These were the Beni Sakhr, who had come down to pasture their flocks. “The Jordan Valley, from the sea of Galilee as far south as the Zerqa we have found to be full of Arabs: flocks, herds and tents. They came from the Moab plains and the Hauran....They will soon, however, begin to move up into the mountains, ascending a short distance at a time, until they reach the plains again in early summer” (Merrill 1881, 194). According to Steuernagel, in 1901 the Ghor was ‘Bedouin territory’.

Until very recently tribes came to the Valley to graze their flocks every winter. In bad times they even came from as far away as Saudi Arabia (Hazleton 1978, 29). Farmers in the Valley used to buy all their manure from Bedouin (Maandag and Macksoud 1969, ch.4). The Abbadi tribes used the Valley in spring to sow their crops, and profit from the

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1. The high prices for all kinds of meat in Jordan at the end of 1993 immediately resulted in an increase of privately kept animals of all kinds: chickens, geese, goats, rabbits etc., in the village of Deir ’Alla.
early spring pasturage for their flocks. In summer they moved up to the hills east and west of the Valley. They sold or traded wool and dairy products in Jerusalem, Nablus and Salt in exchange for coffee, tea, sugar and other supplies. According to Oppenheim (1943, 227) the Abbadi flocks, in the first half of the twentieth century amounted to about 20,000 sheep.

Dry farming and irrigation farming

The need for cereals as a basic nutrient has been a major factor in the sedentarisation - nomadisation processes in the area in every period. Bell described how even the most 'excluded' or the poorest Bedouin had bread or rice (although there are instances where Bedouin lived solely on camel milk for months on end). If it was not possible to buy or rob grain, they would have to grow it themselves (Bell 1907, 16, 119). The Jordan Valley is well suited for farming. Between 200 and 300 mm rainfall (Hirzalla 1973, 26: average rainfall in Deir 'Alla between 1950-1970 was 267 mm) permit dry farming, but with high risks involved. When cultivation was on a rain-fed basis the amount of land under cultivation varied yearly depending on the amount of rainfall; the risk of crop failure was high. Among the crops grown in rainfed areas wheat was the most important. In drier areas barley was grown rather than wheat. There was a maximum of one crop per year. Sometimes crop rotation was practised with wheat and lentils, but a wheat-fallow crop rotation was more common (Aydin 1985, 13).

Most farming in the Valley, however, has always been irrigated farming. It is often taken for granted that irrigation farming requires a complex society, with a highly developed hierarchical structure. Examples are usually taken from Mesopotamia. In the Valley, thanks to the physical landscape, there seem to have been no such restrictions. The physical features of the Valley are such that small-scale irrigation does not necessarily involve a complicated hierarchical structure. In fact, the Jordan Valley is ideal for irrigated farming on a small scale: it slopes down on both sides to the river Jordan. Perennial streams, or what used to be perennial streams, come down from the slopes of the mountains and the foothills, and can easily be diverted into small irrigation canals that also follow the slope down into the Jordan.

Lynch (1849, 203) noticed cultivated patches of wheat and barley in the Galilee Zor, almost ripe, although the only occupants of the region he could see were a number of Bedouin tents scattered over the Zor. Tristram (1866, 527) found small-scale irrigation farming in Kufrein, in the southern part of the Central Jordan Valley: “...cultivation in irregular patches and a small party of semi-nomad dependents of the ‘Adwan had erected their huts and were reaping and threshing their barley”. Merrill, in 1876, saw wadis between the Yabis and Menadirah diverted into irrigation canals. The different users had arranged a division in which each user had one day on which he irrigated his land. He also noticed large fields of grain, between the tents of the Beni Sakhr north of the Zerqa (Merrill 1881, 191). The Bedouin in the Central Jordan Valley organised their own irrigation agriculture. “Through cooperation of members of a tribe, irrigation works were brought back into operation on all the main side wadis. A type of agriculture appeared which, though still heavily dependent on grazing, included the growing of irrigated crops”. Where water rights were not clear they were claimed by force (Watson 1961, 135). A dam in the Zerqa, constructed in earlier centuries, was repaired when agriculture restarted in the Deir 'Alla area in the nineteenth century, and three main canals, that also functioned as territorial boundaries branched off from it. Minor canals in their turn branched off from these. Clan leaders gathered daily, to distribute the water, and organise repairs if necessary (Tarawneh 1989, 46).
Subsistence-based farming versus market-based farming
Schumacher (1886, 1888) has described a number of small villages in the Hauran and the Jaulan. Most of these hamlets and villages were subsistence-based. They were usually small, about 150 inhabitants on average. Most of them had vegetable gardens, beside a spring or stream, sometimes communal, sometimes private. Powell’s study comparing a subsistence-based with a market-based farmers’ village shows that in the subsistence-based village all but six of the families had a *haqura*, a small private vegetable garden (½ - 2 dunums in size) near their home. The market-based village had six *haqura’s* altogether (Powell 1987). Mundy and Smith have studied a village in Beni Hassan territory (Mundy and Smith 1990). In the first half of the twentieth century the people here lived from agro-pastoral production, on a subsistence base. After the first rains the land was sown. Until the harvest people lived in caves, and the animals grazed on communal land. After the harvest, which was stored in the caves, the animals grazed on the harvested land, fertilizing it.

In the 1930s sheikhs in the Deir 'Alla region occasionally tried to introduce market-oriented agriculture, sometimes with disastrous results. The production of surpluses resulted in the destruction of large parts of the harvest, because there was not enough manpower to harvest all before the rains started. The sheikhs tried to trade the surplus on the market in Nablus, but since the Zor woodlands were full of outlaws, only well-armed expeditions had a chance of passing to the west. A large part of the surplus was also spent on banquets and guest meals, in order to establish and maintain the social relations on which the sheikh’s status depended (Tarawneh 1989, Ch 3; Lancaster 1981, 140). In the end outside influences brought about the change from this subsistence-based economy to a real market economy. These external forces were the Palestinian influx, international capital and the introduction of merchant capital.

The influx of Palestinians led to an increasing need for agricultural products. New terrains and techniques were exploited, which needed capital. On the one hand this came from foreign aid, and on the other hand from merchants and moneylenders, who thus acquired large plots of land. The capitalist market economy proved a vicious circle: the farmer became dependent on the market as well as on the people who provided him with capital, and fell deeper and deeper into debt. “Until the mid-1960s usury in the Jordan Valley worked as a mechanism for land transfer from *fellaheen* and their traditional leaders to the merchants” (Tarawneh 1989, 75).

Schumacher (1886, 22, 87-89, 91) demonstrates that already in the nineteenth century some of the larger villages were dependent on moneylenders from Damascus, which suggests they had been experimenting with market-farming. The same development has been described by Kippenberg (1978) for the Judean hill country in the Persian and Seleucid periods (Kippenberg 1978, 42-106). The Persian system of taxing forced the farmers to produce a surplus, and so created an underclass, dependent on foreign merchants. Nehemiah’s reforms changed this situation, but the continuing tax demands now led to a division within the community: an upper class, and those dependent on them. The Seleucid tax system, based on crop sharing, increased the social differences.

Obtaining food from the direct producers
Market-based farming, and therefore trade, was one way in which food was transferred from the producer to the consumer. The Bedouin had regular trade-relations with the sedentary population, as can be seen in the cases of Salt and Dera’a. Around 1800 Salt was a regional market town. Bedouin pastoralists, from the Beni Sakhr and the Belqa tribes came to the Salt market to exchange their pastoral products for grain and other things. Bell’s description of the selling of corn to the Sherarat by Namrud, a trader from
Tneib, is a beautiful example of this trade (Bell 1907, 40-41). The Bedouin also functioned as middlemen for markets in the Nablus and Jerusalem districts, as well as for the eastern tribes (Abujaber 1989, Ch 4). Likewise Dera’a, a village of 4000-5000 inhabitants, described by Schumacher (1886) as the capital of the region, functioned as a regional market; it was surrounded by the tents of Damascene merchants. So there existed a network of markets covering the region, maintained by Bedouin merchants.

Raiding and protection as economic pursuits

The world of the Bedouin in the nineteenth century was based on the principle of survival of the fittest. It consisted of the tribe, and those bonded or allied to them. Everybody else was considered an enemy. Raiding and robbing one's enemies was perfectly legal, as a display of strength, as well as a source of income. Therefore ghazus (raids) were regularly undertaken on other tribes, with the sole purpose of robbing each other's sheep, goats and camels (Bell 1907, 65). The inhabitants of Dana and Buseirah in Edom regularly stole each other's cattle (Burckhardt 1822, 410). In 1811, in a famous ghazu, the Beni Sakhr robbed the Howeitat of 1200 camels (Burckhardt 1822). Raiding villages, trade caravans and travellers therefore was also justified, especially as this took place in what the tribe considered its territory. It could be bought off by paying khawa. Khawa literally means ‘brotherhood’, and payment of it provided protection by creating a temporary ‘kinship relation’ with the tribe. Lancaster describes khawa as a mutual agreement between the Bedouin and the villages, “the necessary regulatory mechanism for symbiosis in a system where coercion is not possible” (Lancaster 1981:123). If the khawa was not paid, the Bedouin effectively stripped the village or trade caravan of everything worth taking. Especially in the early nineteenth century, when the government was powerless to protect them, life was difficult for the settled population, as well as for traders and travellers. In 1802, when the Egyptian government refused to pay the Howeitat for their job as carriers for the Hajj, they replied by robbing an Egyptian trade caravan of several thousand camel loads of coffee. Following this raid, coffee became so cheap among the Bedouin that it was traded for wheat on a one to one basis (Burckhardt 1822, 413). Even the Hajj itself was not safe: although the government paid the Bedouin tribes along the route a generous khawa, they still would occasionally attack stragglers (Palmer 1871, 429; Schumacher 1886, 110). Numerous nineteenth century travellers in the Valley have described this practice and the effect it had on the population. Lynch (1849, 182) describes the ruins of the villages of Delhemiyyeh and Buk'ah on either side of the river. Here the Bedouin robbed the fellaheen of their harvest, forcing them to leave their villages, or live off whatever they could find, until the next “harvest and the robber”. Tristram described the village of Dibbun: “once a Christian village, now a desolate heap of mouldering walls....and so the Bedouin are laying waste village after village”(Tristram 1866, 546). Even some of the villages belonging to the Beni Sakhr in the Southern Ghor were robbed occasionally. Sedentary population in the Valley had virtually disappeared before 1850, chased away by the Bedouin’s continuous raiding and robbing. Lewis (1987, Ch 1) has described the same process for Syria and North Jordan.

The villages and hamlets in the mountains were better protected against robbing than those in the valley, as can be seen by Schumacher’s description of the Hauran and Jaulan (1886), because the terrain was difficult for the horse-mounted Bedouin (Abujaber 1989, 30). Still they always feared attacks, and for that reason the villages were built on hilltops. People also tended to cluster in larger villages for safety, deserting the small ones. Esh-Shajarah in the Jaulan consisted largely of immigrants: fellaheen from other villages who sought protection against raiding practices, and Bedouin “who make their
first essays in town life” (Schumacher 1886, 86). Tristram (1866, 572) described the region north-east of Pella as a region “studded with villages, containing from 500-1000 inhabitants each, few of which are marked in the maps, and which are utterly unknown beyond their own neighbourhood”, concentrated around the village of Tibneh. The inhabitants were not Bedouin, and all the villages were situated on hilltops, for safety. The presence of a sheikh from an important tribal family provided some protection against raiding (Schumacher 1886). Abu Obeidah in the central Valley seems to have had reasonably effective protection from its weli (a Muslim saint, whose grave had protective power). The same has been noticed by Merrill, for a hamlet a mile south of Wadi Yabis in the Valley, around the grave of a Muslim saint. It was not permanently inhabited, but served as a storage-place for grain, and according to the people it was not robbed, on account of the protection of the saint that was buried here. (More examples of the protective power of welis can be found in Sonnen 1952:102 ff).

An important extra source of income came from the khawa which villages paid to the Bedouin, to prevent them from raiding. Schumacher describes how the ’Anazeh had absolute power in the Hauran until about 1850, where they either ‘protected’ or raided villages (Schumacher 1886). The farming clans in Deir ’Alla in the nineteenth century paid khawa to the ’Ajlun clans (Tarawneh 1989:53).

The protection money that nineteenth century travellers and caravans paid for the right to travel though the territory of the different tribes, was also called khawa. Upon payment they were provided with a rafiq, a guide whose presence guaranteed their safety with the tribe and all allied tribes in the territory. Stories about these guides can be found in every nineteenth century travel account. Boggis (1939:29) tells the story of Th.H. Molyneux in 1847, who was travelling with a boat down the Jordan river. From Beth Shean to Abu Obeidah he had a rafiq from the Beni Sakhr, but then he entered the territory of the Beni Amr. Negotiations over the new rafiq did not go very well, and Molyneux went on without a guide - but not very far. The expedition was attacked and robbed of everything they had, and forced to flee back to Tiberias.

Social relations of production

The social relations of production in agriculture are determined by the extent to which different parties have an interest in the produce from a certain plot of land. At the beginning of the nineteenth century some tribal lands were already subdivided between individual households, first on the Plateau, but later also in the Valley, as a result of the beginning of a tendency among Bedouin to start agriculture. This type of division of land is still called tribal division (Abujaber 1989, Ch 4).

In the 1850s the Ottoman government began actively to encourage agriculture in the tribal territories. The people who worked the land of the tribal owners were often farmers from Palestine, but there were also members of the tribe of the tribal owners, or of other, subjected tribes who worked the land. This was already common practice in Edom, for example, where the Howeitat had control over several villages that were inhabited by subjected tribes, who performed agriculture and horticulture for trading purposes (Burckhardt 1822, 403, 407). The Howeitat themselves owned large date plantations in the Aqaba region (Oppenheim 1943, 291).

In the Jordan Valley the ’Adwan also employed slaves (Abujaber 1989, 69 ff). The Ottoman Land Laws of 1858 did not change the existing social relations of production; in the Valley they were more or less a confirmation of the status quo. Their main effect was that they brought the landowners, the Bedouin, into the sphere of influence of the state. Different tribes reacted differently to the need to cultivate the land, but in most cases the tribal owners did not live in the Valley. Sometimes the land was worked by hired
labourers, tenants or sharecroppers. In other cases members of the family worked the land. They came to the Valley in the sowing and harvesting seasons. In some cases this eventually led to permanent settlement in the Valley (Steuernagel 1925, 216). Between the First and Second World Wars farming in the region north of Deir 'Alla was mainly carried out by the owners and their families, with the aid of retainers and employees. Tenant farming was rare (Watson 1961, 137). In the south most of the land was in the hands of relatively few people, mainly tribal families or moneylenders who did not live in the valley. There were few owner-producers.

In 1942 a few people lived in the Valley throughout the year, carrying out small-scale cultivation and irrigating the land in summer. Most of the cultivated land was owned by people in the hills, who came down to cultivate it in spring, and who stayed until the harvest in midsummer (Lumsden and Yofe 1950, 65).

After the first influx of Palestinian refugees in 1948 the government redistributed the land, creating a large number of family farms, each with a minimum size of 30 dunums. However, some of the traditional owners, the tribal families, managed to keep large plots for themselves, using their extended family ties. This land they hired out. A UNRWA study on East and West bank shortly after the land reforms shows that 54% of the farms was owner-occupied, 30% was fully tenanted, 15% was of mixed tenure (Anbar 1984). A study by the Dept. of Statistics in 1961 again shows an increase in sharecroppers, at the cost of owner-occupants and tenants:

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<th>perc.</th>
<th>perc. land</th>
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<tr>
<td>Share croppers:</td>
<td>56 %</td>
<td>39 %</td>
<td>43 dunums</td>
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<tr>
<td>owner-occupied</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>33 %</td>
<td>81 dunums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mixed tenure</td>
<td>13 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was also a small number of cash-renters and rent-free occupants. The small family-farm, either owned or tenanted, was not strong enough for the competitive market-economy that now developed in the Valley. The farmers had to borrow money, either from professional moneylenders or from their landlords, who thereby strengthened their hold on the land and its produce. After the construction of the East Ghor canal 60% of the cultivated land and holdings in the East Jordan Valley was sharecropped.

With the influx of Palestinian refugees came the need for more land. New lands were cleared of brushwood. In the Zor and along the banks of the Jordan tens of thousands of dunums were opened up. Between 1953 and 1965 the area used for farming increased from 280,000 dunums to 380,000 dunums, mainly at the cost of grazing land, and therefore of sheep and goats.

In the case of owner producers, only one interested party holds the means of production, and is therefore entitled to the entire produce. At the other end of the scale is the slave who works someone else’s land. The landowner owns everything, including the slave’s labour, and is therefore entitled to the whole produce, from which he only has to give the slave enough to keep him fit to work. Between these extremes there is a continuum, and the existing agricultural social relations of production are found somewhere within this continuum.

The means of production are: land, water, mechanical equipment, seeds, fertilizers, insecticides, irrigation modes and labour (Pollock 1983, 15). Except in the case of the owner-producer, the landlord owns the land, while ownership of the other items varies. According to Pollock the division of the produce was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tenant</th>
<th>landlord</th>
<th>shared</th>
<th>division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>labour</td>
<td>land, water</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>50% - 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labour</td>
<td>other</td>
<td></td>
<td>33% - 67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>land</td>
<td></td>
<td>85% - 15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The last case comes close to cash-tenancy.

**Social relations of production in the Deir 'Alla region**

The Ottoman Land laws divided the land into a number of categories. The most important in the Deir 'Alla region was *miri* land, which was owned by the state, and leased for a restricted period. By custom it could pass from father to son, but there was no legal right of inheritance. In the Deir 'Alla region settlements were raided regularly by the 'Adwan until the 1920s. Some of the cultivators therefore returned their *miri* land to the government in exchange for protection. This transaction turned them from owner-producers into state-sharecroppers (Tarawneh 1989, Ch 2).

For the tribal lands the sheikhs, the heads of the tribal families, were given official right of appropriation and expropriation in the service of the state. They distributed the land among the producers according to certain rules and appropriated the surplus. The land was redistributed every two years, and divided among the married males, the size of each plot being determined by the distance to water. The sheikhs were also appointed *multazim*, state tax collectors for their territory. Eventually this resulted in the ‘*kharrath*-economy’, a society in which someone’s status depended on clan membership. There was a basic division into three levels (Tarawneh 1989, Ch 3). The *khurr* clans formed the traditional Bedouin clan structure. These clans had relatively few members but held most of the land. The *ghawarnah* clans had many members, but relatively little land. The *beed* families were descendants of the slaves that had been brought into the Valley from the Sudan in the preceding centuries to work in the sugar industry. They had no clan structure and no land and were either servants or *kharratheen* (ploughmen). Only the *khurr* had political influence.

The usual social relation of production in *khurr* territories was that of landowner-*kharrath*. Officially the *kharrath* was a sharecropper, but since the landowner determined the production, and provided land, water, working animals, and food for the *kharrath* and his family during the production cycle, with three quarters of the produce going to the sheikh, the social relation of production was one of complete one-sided dependency. Expiring contracts were automatically renewed.

Within the *ghawarnah* territories the *kharrath* was found as well as the sharecropper. In this relationship a sharecropper usually had kinship ties with the landowner, since both were members of the same clan. His relationship with the landlord was on a much more equal base than that in *Khurr* territories. The sharecropper kept most of the produce, and decided what he wanted to produce. In the Deir 'Alla region the end of the *kharrath* economy only came with the land reforms of the 1950s.

**National and international political powers**

The Ottoman empire of the nineteenth century stretched from the Euphrates in the East to the Danube in the West, Egypt in the South to Russia in the North. But by the end of the eighteenth century it had seriously weakened. In 1798 Napoleon conquered Egypt. This was the first serious challenge to the empire, and immediately exposed its military and strategic weakness. The Ottoman empire was crumbling through ages of inertia and neglect. The west, on which it had always looked down, was now in power. As so often happens, the attacks from outside awoke a slumbering uneasiness inside. Powers began to stir. The Wahabi, a religious movement from the south, took hold, and in a few years it threatened the empire from inside. It started as a strictly religious movement but soon became a political revolt, aimed against the Ottoman government. Its followers were mainly Bedouin, and its success can partly be explained by the rigid
standards of justice imposed by the Wahabi leaders, and by the peace that reigned in the areas ruled by them, a stark contrast to other parts of the Ottoman empire. The central government was too weak to do anything to stop it. The only chance came from the side of Egypt. In 1815 Mohammed Ali, Pasha of Egypt, undertook the task. Eventually he succeeded and broke the power of the Wahabis. But he did not stop there. He, and later his son Ibrahim, continued north, moved up to Acco and Damascus and Aleppo, and challenged the empire itself. He would have finished the Ottoman empire if foreign forces, England and Russia, had not prevented it and driven him back to Egypt.

It was vital for the leading trading countries of Europe, England, France and Germany to have peace and quiet in the Near East and open and safe trade routes. They pursued these interests not only by interfering with internal troubles like those caused by Mohammed Ali and Ibrahim Pasha, but they had also been establishing trade houses and consulates in the main cities. Now they created and safeguarded ports along the coast and created railways. The first railway was opened in 1856 in Egypt. In 1863 the French created a port in Beirut, and a carriage way from Beirut to Damascus. In 1869 the Suez Canal was opened. The Turkish government, seeing that it could not stop this development, tried to keep up with it, in order to keep control, and started building the Hijaz railway, from Damascus to Medina, and the Baghdad railway, with the financial and technical support of England and Germany.

With the west came new ideas, of nationalism and democracy, which led to internal unrest and the initiation of national movements (Lewis 1995, 307-308; Hitti 1970, 745 ff). At the same time, however, the powers of the west declared the Ottoman Empire bankrupt and a danger to their interests. European conflicts were reflected in the Middle East. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Germany cultivated ever closer ties with the Ottoman empire, to the discomfort of England and France. These two countries started a policy aiming for the overthrow of the Ottoman government. They used Arab nationalism to fight the Turks – and incidentally Germany - organizing an Arab revolt in Hijaz in 1916, where the Bedouin aided the British forces against the Turkish/German forces, in exchange for promises of independence and material aid. The promised independence was deferred, however. This, in its turn, led to a series of nationalist movements involving religious and nationalist feelings. Eventually these led to independence.

After WW I Palestine came under British Mandate. Large scale Jewish immigration in western Palestine, which had begun by the end of the nineteenth century, continued and was encouraged by the British. The growth of national socialism in Germany, with its anti-Semitic policy resulted in an enormous influx of Jews. By the early 1940s Jews owned some 20% of the cultivable land. After the end of WW II a new influx of Jewish survivors of the war ensued. The creation of the State of Israel in 1948 was immediately followed by a war, in which two-thirds of the Arab population of Western Palestine left their homes and became refugees, completely upsetting the balance of the Transjordanian population.

The 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank caused a second influx of Palestinian refugees into Jordan, an acute overpopulation of the region, and a radical change in the division of water sources.

Population pressure

Population pressure can be caused either by an increase in population, through immigration or natural growth, or by a diminution of the available space, for which
climatic changes are often responsible. According to several sources the settled population in the Valley in different years was as follows:

1900: 3580 (Steuernagel 1925, 137)
1940: 8000 (Tarawneh 1989, 19)
1952: 29833 (Watson 1961, 138)
1953: 33767 (Watson 1961, 138)
1967: 97000 (Hazleton 1978, 24)
1973: 64012 (Dept. of Statistics 1973)
1978: 75000 (Sorenson 1978)

Steuernagel counted the number of houses in the Deir 'Alla region around 1900 (Table I).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Permanent</th>
<th>Temporary</th>
<th>Inhabitants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zerqa</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>23 (11A)</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajib</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kufrinjeh</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghor</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| A = settled Arab Bedouin

*Table I. Number of houses and their inhabitants in the Deir 'Alla region according to Steuernagel.*

He stated that there was a general increase in the number of settled houses between 1885 and 1900, although he had no numbers for the Deir 'Alla region. In the Ghor around Deir 'Alla there was no settled population in the 1940s (Tarawneh 1989, 19). The structures that can be seen on aerial photographs from those days, like those in Glueck 1951, were used for storage or temporary shelter (Layne 1994, 40 and note 4). The people lived in goat-hair tents or in caves in the foothills.

There had been some immigration already in the nineteenth century. Tribes came from the east, like the Beni Sakhr (Abujaber 1989, Ch 4), the Bashatwah, the Balawneh, the Ghabbad, and the Dayyat (Watson 1961, 134). From the west came farmers. They often named the new places where they settled after their places of origin. They came from the Nablus region, the Jerusalem region and Ramallah (Abujaber 1989, 96). The two main flows of immigration came after 1948 and after 1967. Until the mid-1960s lack of irrigation water limited the population of the Valley to about 37,000. The construction of the East Ghor Canal, combined with a malaria control program, increased the population to about 90,000, in 53 settlements (Dajani et al. 1980, 20). During the 1971 war most people fled the valley, and the infrastructure disintegrated. However, after the war, thanks to an active settlement policy from the government, settlement increased again, and it has, ever since.

The population of the Jordan Valley can be divided into two different groups (Hazleton 1978, 24):

1. “members of formerly nomadic tribes who gained legal title to the land in the valley during the British Mandate”;
2. “individuals organised along family lines who migrated to the Valley after 1948. The first group consists largely of landowners, the second of farmers (tenants and owner-producers), and commercially active individuals”.
The farmers who came from the west in the nineteenth century settled mainly in the highlands, among the local *fellaheen*, and those former slaves from the Sudan who had settled there. The Valley, as stated above, was Bedouin territory and often confronted the refugees with the same situation from which they had fled. Villages were usually homogeneous, each village consisting of people from one region, and often named after that region.

In 1948 the situation in the Valley was different. It was now cultivated, the acute menace of the Bedouin tribes had abated, and it had a relatively low population. When the first influx of refugees came, eleven refugee camps were built by UNRWA workers, but this was not enough. People began to squat in the Valley. In the early 1960s an agricultural irrigation scheme was planned, in order to settle the refugees. It did however not involve housing schemes. The result was much illegal squatting on private and governmental land. The squatting pattern is revealing. It was clear that the squatters avoided good agricultural land; on the other hand, they wanted to be close to water and roads. This resulted in a linear settlement pattern, which is still characteristic of the Valley housing: people “squatted linearly along the main valley highway and parallel to the canal” (Grava 1985, 1). When the East Ghor Canal was extended to the south so was settlement. Settlement maps (Grava 1985 map 2) also show linear settlement patterns on the badlands between Ghor and Zor, especially in the southern half of the Valley, and along the banks of the Zerqa. In 1967 the next influx of refugees came, and six new refugee camps were built, the largest near Kereimeh (25,000 inhabitants).

After 1967, when the Valley was the scene of frequent fighting, most people fled to the mountains and 60% of the dwellings were destroyed, either by the war itself or by the results of abandonment. Less than 5000 people remained in the Valley. After 1970 most of the people returned (Grava 1985, 1).

Until 1948 settlement was primarily in the north and south of the Valley. Between 1947 and 1951 people settled equally throughout the valley, but after that there was again a tendency to settle in the north and south (Watson 1961, table 45). A survey carried out at the end of the 1950s shows that in the south of the Valley the tendency was to a less ‘settled’ way of living than in the north: few stone or cement houses, more wooden huts, tents and caves (Watson 1961 table 50). Houses of mudbrick or mud and stone were divided more or less equally over the Valley.

In the Deir 'Alla region settlement tended to be dispersed, not concentrated in villages (Watson 1961, 74). One of the problems the Jordanian government had to face when they introduced education programmes was the fact that in the southern valley “...a large proportion of the population is ‘semi-nomadic’ ... moving from permanent houses in villages to temporary shelters on farm lands during the period of planting and harvesting” (Watson 1961, 74). In 1985 89% of the Valley population lived in recognisable settlements. The others lived on farms, scattered over the countryside. A village consisted (and often still consists) of a core of dwellings, surrounded by garden plots for fruit trees and vegetables, around which were the orchards; still further away the cultivated fields and on the periphery the grazing fields. These tendencies can already be seen in Schumacher’s description of the Hauran and the Jaulan in the 1880s (Schumacher 1886;1888).
The link with the past

Because of its climate the Ghor is often considered a marginal area, in relation to the surrounding areas. That means that in times with little agricultural settlement the Ghor will be the last to be permanently settled. Its climate is, however, very suitable for a (semi)-nomadic or transhumant way of living; in winter it is mild, compared to the highlands. Nomadic pastoralists used to visit the Valley in winter, returning to the highlands in spring. Coexistence of farmers and pastoral nomads is rare in the Valley, whereas it is the norm in the highlands (Mundy and Smith 1990, Abujaber (1989, Ch 4). The Plateau, and places like the Baq’ah valley are ideal for agriculture, which means that at most times pastoralists and farmers shared the land and cooperation would be profitable for both groups (Lancaster 1981, 99 ff). Since the Valley is a marginal area, it is only densely settled in periods that see intensive settlement in general. These tend to coincide with a decline of pastoralism, so coexistence of both modes of life would rarely occur in the Valley. Whenever a combination of both economic pursuits was encountered, they proved to be in the control of (although not necessarily practised by) one and the same tribe.

Agriculture and settlement was one of the Bedouin's answers to a changing society. Salzman recognizes this adaptive strategy as “the assertion of societal continuity in changing or new circumstances” (1980, 6), a general mechanism that allows for any strategy, or mode of existence that is the most profitable in specific situations. The circumstances that triggered settlement in the Valley in the nineteenth century were pressure from the government, as well as population pressure in the highlands. Territorial divisions in the Valley, which had been created in the previous period remained intact in this process of settlement.

Although rain-fed farming is possible in the Valley, the risk involved is high. On the other hand, the structure of the Valley is such that small-scale irrigation is easy and can be done without complicated hierarchical structures. Small-scale irrigated farming would result in a linear settlement pattern along the wadis. A more highly organised society would be able to dig and maintain larger irrigation systems, resulting in a more dispersed settlement pattern, but still concentrated on the wadis, as can be seen in the case of Deir 'Alla, where the canals that were reopened were the remnants of an earlier, more organised society. Its maintenance already involved a relatively complicated organisation, which developed consequently.

The Jordan Valley in the Late Bronze - Early Iron Age Transition

Until the building of the Ghor Canal, which made large-scale irrigation in the Valley possible, the ecological context of the region was basically the same as in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. Settlement in the Late Bronze Age in the area of study was high compared to other regions in the same period (Map fig. 11-2; Leonard 1989). The Late Bronze Age settlement pattern in the region of Deir 'Alla and Sa'idiyeh suggests the presence of an organised society and a reasonably strong government that stimulated settlement. Most of the sites were settled towards the end of the Late Bronze Age (Ch. 11). Only a few sites were settled early in the Late Bronze Age, and most of these were deserted towards the end of that period. The significance of this settlement development will be discussed in Ch. 11. The most important aspect of it in the present context is the concentration of Late Bronze Age sites in a period that was notorious for its lack of settled occupation outside the large towns.
Most of the sites that were settled towards the end of the Late Bronze Age are found along the wadis; most of the sites that were deserted towards the end of the period are found on the plain, away from the wadis. This tendency, to settle alongside water is comparable to the situation in the Valley after the construction of the Ghor canal and the influx of large groups of refugees. Most of the sites are found in the Ghor, the area preferred for agriculture.

**Pastoralists and farmers**

The Valley used to be a winter station for pastoralists because of its mild winter climate and fertility. The nineteenth century Bedouin considered their winter pastures in the Valley part of their territory, and this was acknowledged by the Ottoman and British authorities in their land divisions. The Bedouin of the nineteenth century had managed to drive away most of the farmers. The few that were left were regularly robbed, and the Bedouin themselves also practised some agriculture on a small scale. This situation was made possible because government was weak and did not interfere with the affairs of the Bedouin. The same situation may be found in the Late Bronze Age, north and south of the area of study, where (apart from the city state of Pella) virtually no settled occupation was found. Historical arguments for the existence of nomadic robber bands in this region have been touched upon in Chapter 1 and will be discussed in Chapter 14.

At the same time a different kind of pastoralism may have existed in the area under study. McGovern (1986, 6) mentions the spring migration that until recently took place between the Jordan Valley and the Baq'ah Valley, through the Wadi Zerqa, and assumes the existence at the end of the Late Bronze Age of a symbiotic relationship in the Baq'ah Valley between the settled population and a semi-nomadic population, which migrated to the Valley in winter.

The settlement pattern that evolved in the Early Iron Age shows some of the same characteristics as that of the period after 1948: close to water (Wadi Zerqa, Wadi Rajib and Wadi Kufrinjah all used to be perennial streams), and close to fertile soil, but not on it. It seems that at the end of the Late Bronze Age the inhabitants of the region moved to sites closer to water, which resulted in the new settlement pattern. The ethnographic material, however, suggests that a group of newcomers from elsewhere were partly responsible for the new settlements. So does the fact that the number of settlements at the end of the Late Bronze Age and in the Early Iron Age is much larger than that in the earlier Late Bronze Age. The settlement pattern indicates that these newcomers practised farming. Most of the new sites were found along the Zerqa. The Zerqa valley is one of the main routes from the Valley into the highlands, and the very fertile Baq'ah valley. Comparison of Deir 'Alla final Late Bronze and Early Iron Age pottery with that of the Baq'ah region shows a similarity in household vessels that strongly suggests a relation between the two regions (van der Steen 1997; Chapter 7).

**Reasons for settlement**

Sedentarisation of (semi)nomads may have different causes. First there is the basic difference between 'falling out of the nomadic cycle' at the top, or at the bottom (Barth 1961, 105 ff; Cribb 1991, Chapter 4). Examples of rich tribe members that fell out 'at the top', because of too much wealth, are given by Abujaber for the process of sedentarisation on the highlands at the end of the eighteenth and in the nineteenth century. They still had considerable influence in the dealings of the tribe. Falling out 'at the bottom', because of lack of resources, also leads to settlement, as shown above, but in the marginal areas and/or in the service of the rich pastoral nomads.
Although used by Bedouin as winter pasture in the nineteenth century, the Valley was only settled by people who had fallen, or rather been driven, out of the nomadic cycle on the highlands, usually in the service of those Bedouin. The scale of these movements was never large; the settled population in the Valley around 1900 was still only about 3600 people. It was population pressure in other areas, the highlands and western Palestine, that led to maximum settlement in the Valley, only limited by the available amount of water, and this not exclusively by settling nomads, but by a mixed population of settling nomads, farmers and artisans. MacDonald (1992) has suggested that population pressure is usually the main reason for settling in a marginal zone. Reasons for the shifts into the Valley of settlers were territorial struggles, in the nineteenth as well as the twentieth century, which were the result of population pressure. The same development is being suggested here for the beginning of the Early Iron Age in the Deir 'Alla region. The reasons for population pressure in the transitional period should most probably be sought in the international developments which also caused the Sea Peoples to move north together with the breakdown of the Egyptian empire. The archaeological record suggests that in the Amman region and the Baq'ah valley in the Late Bronze Age a complex social structure existed, possibly a city state structure (Hübner 1992, 159; McGovern 1986). It has been suggested, on the basis of the archaeological record, that (trade) relations existed between the Amman region and regions in Syria. Among other things, the pottery repertoire strongly points in that direction (Dornemann 1983, 31 ff). The Amman region, as a trade centre, had a complex socio-economic structure and a high population. When international trade was disrupted, the social and economic structure of the region collapsed. According to the mechanisms described in Renfrew's 'Dark Age model', which is used by McGovern to describe and explain the events in the transitional period (see also Chapter 13), the collapse of this structure would lead to: "the establishment of small outlying village communities....a transference of Late Bronze technologies (notably coil building of large vessels and iron industry) to the Early Iron Age frontier villages" (McGovern 1986, 343 ff). As the areas were already in contact, these outlying village communities may well have formed in the Valley, along the lower course of the Zerqa.

Tribalism and territoriality

Tribalism, although well attested in the recent history of the region as well as in contemporary literature of the Bronze and Iron Ages, is hard to detect archaeologically. It has been stated repeatedly that tribes, or, as Kamp and Yoffee prefer to call them, ethnic groups, are not by definition nomads or pastoralists; they can be found in all sociocultural levels in society, and furthermore membership of an ethnic group is on pragmatic grounds, for political or military interests, sometimes around a strong leader. Groups can attach themselves to tribal communities, or detach themselves from them. Kinship relations are then formulated to 'legitimise' membership and strengthen loyalty to the tribal group (Kamp and Yoffee 1980, Cribb 1991, 52 ff, among others). Historical sources stress the importance of this legitimisation: Rowton (1973) has extensively analysed the Mari texts relating to Amorites; Egyptian and other texts concerning Šasu have been analysed by Giveon (1971); numerous passages in the Bible show the importance of ethnicity for Israelite ideology in the Iron II period. Kamp and Yoffee do not want to relate ethnicity to any territorial contiguity; Cribb, however, lays a clear link between territory and tribalism, defining a tribe as an organisation for the control of territory, a territorial system. In times of unrest territorial fights can occur, resulting in shifts in territory which are consolidated in the following period. The history of Jordan in the nineteenth century, as well as the historic sources that concern the Levant, seem to
confirm this link with territory, at least in situations where the tribe has a reasonably strong pastoralist component.

In the case of the Jordan Valley in the transitional period, the archaeological evidence is still very sketchy. Still, some suggestions can be made. It has been proposed above that a group of transhumant pastoralists from the Baq'ah Valley used the region around the Zerqa as winter pasture in the last phase of the Late Bronze Age. With the decline of the social structure in the Baq'ah valley they came down the Zerqa, possibly with other people from the Baq'ah Valley, and settled along the Zerqa, and possibly the Wadi Rajib as well. They may have already considered this region part of their territory. The earliest Iron Age phases at Deir 'Alla have been interpreted as pastoralists in the process of settling (Franken 1969). The settlement pattern (see above) as well as the material culture suggest a mixed society: pastoralists, farmers and artisans (the pottery repertoire has similar traits to that from the Baq'ah Valley, see also Franken 1969, 20; there were metallurgists, as the excavations at Deir 'Alla have shown). If they still formed one group, in order to survive in their new environment, they would form a tribe or ethnic group, according to the definitions given above, and they may actually have seen themselves as one.