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*A geographical study of the coastal zone between homs  
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## S E C T I O N   T W O

### Developments in Land Holding and Society in Misuratino in relation to the Forces of Economic Growth

#### Chapter Three - Agrarian Land Holding and Associated Factors in relation to the features of Economic Growth.

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CHAPTER THREE: Agrarian Land Holding and Associated Factors in relation to the Features of Economic Growth.

Consideration of the structure of land tenure in Misuratino is a necessary supplement to the analysis of the physical environment presented in the foregoing chapters. In common with features of climate, topography and geology, the traditional and legal framework prevailing in the oases of Misuratino constitutes a 'quasi-constant' influence bearing upon the social and economic life of the region. Furthermore, examination of land tenure as a reflection of different resource appraisals will serve as a valuable preface to later discussion of the agrarian economy in Misuratino and the steppe environs. In fact, the present discussion will be concerned primely with the littoral oases and the present situation there with respect to land ownership and associated factors, since these small but important areas are the hubs of current economic activity in the region, and contain the centres of the forces which are exerting pressure upon the traditional structure of society, one of the main buttresses of which is the established pattern of land holding.

We may distinguish three major zones of land holding within Misuratino and the adjacent territory; these zones correspond more or less with the three natural regions which we have recognised in the area, that represent gradations of increasing aridity parallel and south of the coast:-

(1) The littoral gardens, which appear in Misuratino as a series of discontinuous oases running close to the coast, where rainfall is greater than 250 mms. per annum, and where water for

domestic and irrigation purposes is available readily from the phreatic water table. In this area, individual private ownership prevails.

(ii) The peripheral steppe zone, which runs roughly between the foot-hills of the interior and the coastal oases, or, in places, to the sea itself. In this region, tribal private ownership is the general rule.

(iii) The inner steppe, or Ghibla region, where common ownership is practised, and where much of the land is under legal ownership of the Government of Libya.

Much of the following discussion refers to the pattern of land holding present in the former two regions.

Land tenure in Libya is characterised by three major formalisms:-

(a) The Arab invasions of the Ninth and Eleventh Centuries obliterated nearly all traces of previous cultural landscapes and associated tenure systems. The Arabs brought with them a simple recognition of different types of land. Consequences of this appreciation in contemporary terms are mirrored in local practice, and in the features of land holding and types of settlement.

(b) Following upon the Ottoman conquest, came a modification of the established practice of the fore-going centuries. The regulation of land use became a matter of Moslem Land Law, which, in application, was a question of administrative convenience and a means for the Ottoman authorities to exact its due from the subject territories.

(c) In the early years of the Twentieth Century, a third element was superimposed upon the framework of legal principle and local Arab precedent in the form of the Italian conquest. The Italians infused a more scientific and commercial attitude to land than had been the case previously. This statement should be modified in the light of the political and economic over-tones, which characterised the Fascist regime in Italy and which influenced colonial administration. (37 & 38)

After the Second World War, the British Military Administration implemented purely ad hoc arrangements in order to retain the benefits of the Italian approach.

The agricultural landscape in Misuratio is a complex, reflecting the influence of different cultural groups and the varying appreciations of the values of land. Tenurial practice, once established, necessarily bears upon methods of agriculture. Equally, patterns of land use are weakened or perpetuated by the direct relationship between environment and farming.

#### (ii) Sources of Material

It must be stated at the outset, that there are very few figures available which indicate accurately the size, distribution or ownership of land. There is no cadastral survey of the oasis area, and census returns rarely include reference to the size and number of holdings belonging to individuals. Hence, in this discussion of land tenure and associated phenomenon, base material will be drawn mainly from the writer's Questionnaire Survey of Misuratio. There are two published works other than the

Questionnaire Survey which deal with the problem of land ownership in Libya. On the one hand, there is an F.A.O. Farm study of indigenous and Italian farm enterprises in the Zavia area, and on the other hand, a report on land rights and taxation in Libya by a U.N. expert. (39) (40) Statistical data in both cases covers a small sample area around Zavia Oasis in the west of Tripolitania.

The Land Registry Offices in Tripoli and their branches in the provinces are ill-equipped with information, and what is available is out-dated and unreliable. Thus, where official figures are not obtainable use is made of data returned by the Questionnaire Survey or alternatively by F.A.O.

(iii) Legal Elements in Islamic Land Holding.

It will be seen from the previous paragraphs, that the land tenure systems that have evolved in Misurata are a mixture of tradition and law. The origin of the various elements has been indicated earlier. It would be of value here to outline the major facets of Islamic Law as operated in Tripolitania.

The original tradition of Islamic Law came from the Selchuk Califs, who used land to pay their soldiers. All army salaries and expenses were met out of land revenues. The Ottomans, who succeeded the Selchuks were also a military dynasty, and, in consequence, military laws and regulations were inter-related closely with land law. This resulted from the inter-dependence of military mobilisation and land holding.

It was customary for the Ottomans to conduct a general survey of the lands of subject territories and assess the revenue which

could be exacted from the indigenous people. In Misuratinu, this proved a difficult task and little was done to attain a complete assessment of the tribal lands and incomes. The Turkish administration was at a loss to control the semi-nomadic tribes, and their sphere of influence was limited to the coastal coasts.

For administrative purposes, the lands were divided into four categories:-

- (a) Khas - reserved by the Sultan, who could grant them to any high ranking officer of State.
- (b) Zamneh - granted to the keeper of the Sultan's purse or to the heads of battalions or commanders of garrisons.
- (c) Timar - granted to soldiers.
- (d) Wakf - dedicated to charitable or educational institutions.

In proportion to the land value, land holders were to put armed men at the disposal of the Sultan in times of war. Upon the death of one of the beneficiaries, his rights and obligations went to his son. In the event of there being no heir, the lands reverted to the State, which chose another holder. In all categories an essential pre-condition of ownership was that the beneficiary should live on and work the land granted to him.

Under various forms, this type of legal ownership pattern persisted until the end of the Nineteenth Century. The Arab inhabitants of Misuratinu were affected only to a minor degree by the operation of these legal and military regulations. The tribes remained on the land taken over after the period of anarchy following the Hilalian invasion. Areas of occupance were defined by traditional practice, and the structure of the tribes dictated

common land ownership. Tithes were paid occasionally to the representatives of the Sultan, but at nominal rather than real valuation.

In 1958, the first Tapu or land registration was introduced into the Ottoman Empire. As will be noted later in this chapter, the immediate impact of this was significant in Misuratio. The amendments and laws promulgated in the mid-nineteenth century were legally applicable to Libya and gained importance there towards the end of the century, hence it will be useful here to examine the definitions which were applied to land tenure by these laws. The Ottoman Land Law divided the lands into five categories:

- (1) MULK - land held in absolute ownership. Within this classification several quite different elements were distinguished.
  - (a) Communal lands:- 25% of land in Misuratio.
  - (b) Private lands belonging to the individual:- 64%.
  - (c) Ushriyyeh:- lands granted to soldiers which were tithable to one tenth of the value of the farm production.
  - (d) Kharadiyyeh:- lands which had been left in the possession of infidel peoples after the conquest of their territory.

Some of the Berber lands in Tripolitania come under this head. Taxes greater than one tenth were levied upon this type of property. Both Ushriyyeh and Kharadiyyeh lands were liable to revert to the State in the absence of an heir to the holder.
- (11) Emiri lands - land belonging to the State:- 8% of lands in Misuratio. Usufruct rights were granted to individuals.
- (111) Wakf lands - lands dedicated to educational or charitable institutions. Varies in Misuratio; in Hama there is no registered Wakf land; in Zliten 5%

and in Misurata 2% of the oasis land is registered as Wakf.

- (iv) Public lands - left for the use of the public. Their title belonged to the State and the heads included in the category were roads, squares, parks and public market places.
- (v) Empty lands - unused lands lying away from any dwelling house. In fact, much of this land was utilised for grazing and foraging. In many cases, a sabile would include it within the communal lands.

Before the Italian occupation of the country, Misuratino fell mainly within the category of mulk. The tendency in land ownership towards the end of the Turkish occupation was for communal mulk to be transferred to private mulk lands. The causative factors and the results of this change will be discussed later in this chapter.

Contractual systems of land holding and short-term tenure are rarely used in the cases of Misuratino. The main reasons for this situation are to be traced to the late evolution of sedentary cultivation in the area, and the significant fact that the oases were always considered to be an integral part of the indigenous pastoral economy. During the period of land transfer-ence from communal to private land holding, the tribes were in possession of the greater part of the littoral, thus each member of a given tribe group received a share of the suani area as a right. The towns people of the coast were essentially concerned with trade and commerce, and their relative power was small in comparison with the military authority commanded by the indigenous groups, hence the villages in Misuratino held only small and

insignificant areas of the oasis land. In these circumstances, there was no demand for a contractual mechanism whereby the pastoralist groups could procure usufruct rights to oasis land in order to facilitate their sedentarisation process or whereby the village peoples could develop tribal land in the oasis. Similarly, State ownership of land through the means which have been described more fully on p.156 was poorly developed in Libya during the Turkish occupation. The Libyan environment was scarcely attractive to the Turkish conquerors as a possible means of investment, and military control of the area was exceedingly marginal in any case.

In Syria, the growth of a fixed population of land holding effendis, and the effective working of the 1858 Land Codes brought about a situation typical of many other areas of the Ottoman Empire, where similar conditions pertained. Enforced sedentarisation of many of the tribal groups of the interior was accomplished through the growth of tenural contracts between the effendi class and the Arabs. Thus the Arabs worked on the large estates in many cases as hired labourers, on a share basis, or undertook to reclaim land belonging to the landlord class on the basis of crop sharing until the peasant finally acquired the land for himself. The exact terms of the contract varied radically from area to area in the Levant depending upon the scarcity of labour and land. Similarly in Tunisia, French colonial control and the acquisition of vast tracts of land by metropolitan colonists working hand in hand with an official

policy of sedentarisation of semi-nomadic peoples, brought to the fore a contractual scheme of land settlement and reclamation.

Systems of land tenancy in Misurata fall under the following heads, although, it should be noted that the operation of these agreements is not widespread, and in large part confined to the foot-hills of Msellata.

(I) Mogharsa.

This system of land tenancy is common to the Maghreb as a whole though more popular in Algeria and Tunisia than Libya. Under it, an aspiring farmer or pastoralist tending towards a sedentary life may enter into a partnership with a person who has land and capital. In Libya the normal working relationship between the two was for the capitalist to provide the farmer with the necessary capital to prepare and plant the land, generally with olives. He would partly maintain the farmer during the early years when there was no production from the immature plantations. The cost of the temporary maintenance was not excessive, and it was expected that the farmer would grow a sufficiency of crops on the land to provide for the limited needs of his family. When the plantations came to maturity and the first crops are garnered, then the property was divided between the farmer and the capitalist, each receiving a half share.

Mogharsa agreements came to prominence after the Italian occupation and operated mostly between Libyan capitalists and poorer Arabs, although there are records of this system being used by Italians in respect to Libyans, as for instance in the

erstwhile Prof Onorata di Tripoli in the region of Gargaresc. (41)

In this latter case, the following system was used with some success. The concession is some 110 hectares in area, situated in the steppe zone and has a gently undulating surface. At ten metres under the level of the ground the water of the phreatic layer was available in good quantities, and at a depth of 44 metres, the second water table could be tapped. The agrarian framework of the concession was woven exclusively around the use of tree crops, mainly olives, almonds and vines. The olive plantations were interplanted with almonds and vines, with the idea that the earlier production which might be expected from these latter two would accelerate the date when the plantations would become a self-supporting economic unit.

In the contract of mogharsa adopted for the development of the farm in question, the capitalist proprietor conceded about 20 hectares of steppe land for ten years to each of the five farmers under contract to him. He granted a farm-house, a stable and a well to each of them so that they could maintain themselves in the years before the trees gave production. The farmers were to plant their total allotment with olives, almonds and other trees in a rational pattern and carry the costs for this work within the first ten years of development. Other cropping was to be allowed only with the permission of the capitalist.

The proprietor provided for the farmer, without cost and for the duration of the ten year development stage:-

- (1) the use of the farm-house, the byres, a well;

- (ii) a grant for the upkeep of himself and his family for the first three years, to a maximum of 500 lire.
- (iii) a grant of 300 lire for the upkeep of the work animals provided by the owner.

Also furnished for the use of the farmer was a State grant for necessary stocks of seed and for payment of planting operations. On completion of the actual planting, the Government allowed a grant to be made to the proprietor and the farmer under the terms of the Colonial Development Acts of 1928 and 1929.

The proprietor's grants made available to the farmer for farming operations which are his responsibility under the moghassa contract are debited to his account by the proprietor. Thus the monies forwarded to the farmer to finance the purchase of olive trees for example, are debited to his account. When the plantation begins to produce after the fourth year, as the first vines come to fruition, the farmer is then liable to begin repayment of the debt he has accumulated during the previous years, although this might be spread over a six year period until the termination of the contract. Bank rate interest as fixed by the Banco d'Italia was charged on the credits allowed to the farmer by the proprietor.

Up to the sixth year of development, farmers kept all the agricultural production from the estate as their own income to help defray the costs of the grants made to them earlier. After the sixth year, however, the production was divided equally between the farmer and the proprietor, until the tenth year, when the estate was divided according to the terms of moghassa. The

farmers took the areas in proximity to the farm-houses, which they were in process of buying from the proprietor, whilst the latter secured a central area away from the farm-houses. Thus of the total 100 hectares of the original estate, 50 hectares were left as an integral block for the use of the proprietor, and the five-ten hectare farms of the mogharsa contractors were distributed around the perimeter.

This is typical of the mogharsa contract in operation whether between European colonists and Libyans or between Libyans themselves. In the former case, the contract was cost-scheduled with cash being the main method of payment from capitalist to farmer and repayment from farmer to capitalist. In the Libyan undertakings, kind tends to replace cash as the medium of exchange, and the terms of development tend to be less defined. For example, the mogharsa farmers on the Gargaresc unit were given explicit instruction of numbers and varieties of trees to plant, hence olive trees were to be planted at the rate of 25 per hectare spaced 20 x 20 metres. On the Libyan farms in the Msellata foothills, the mogharsa farmers are given more latitude in the varieties and the areas they choose to plant.

Mogharsa is a proven and rapid method of development in territories where capital is short among the farming classes and where capitalists are prepared to invest in rural projects. The nature of colonisation in North Africa, particularly in Tunisia and to a lesser extent in Tripolitania, has been particularly favourable to the use of mogharsa.

(II) Enzel.

Another form of contract practised in Libya, and again common to other states of the Maghreb, is the enzel or continuous tenancy. The form of the tenancy is a perpetual lease where the occupant raises sufficient capital to make a small initial retaining payment to the owner of the land, and thereafter pay a small annual rent varying with the size and fertility of the land. The tenancy holds good while the annual payments are regularly met and there are no specified qualifications of development or land use. Land held under this system may be passed on to dependents providing that the rental is paid as formerly.

(III) Annual Lease.

By far the most popular type of tenancy in Misuratio is the temporary lease of land. Small scale farming activity in the area and the self-sufficient character of the rural economy means that the demand for extra land by the farmers is temporary in nature, and is designed merely to take up the slack of a good or bad year. Thus the existence of a large livestock population in the areas hit by several years poor rainfall leads to a demand for grazing land in the steppe which it is impossible for the tribe to provide itself. A cabila in the Sahel might be favoured for several years with an excellent fall of rain within its littoral steppe holding, whilst other areas contiguous might well be suffering from semi-drought. This is a usual feature of Misuratio and by no means confined to very good or very bad

years, hence there is a constant demand for grazing and sowing land from the poorly watered areas to the better watered areas. Except in years of absolute drought, the demand is answered through the operation of short term leases of land in the more flourishing areas of the littoral steppe. This trend is growing as the Arabs become more attached to the littoral areas, (Vide pp. 178-9) and become less mobile in their response to regional variations in the incidence of rainfall.

#### (IV) Italian Tenure Contracts.

Tenurial contracts under the Italian colonial regime were framed under exceptional conditions, and they in no way reflect a purely commercial approach to land values. The demand for development came from the Government not from a land hungry aristocracy in the metropolitan country, and the bias of the contracts immediately suggests this basic factor. During the initial phase of colonising activity which continued at a varying rate between 1924 and 1930, exploitation of the land of Tripolitania was largely in the hands of private capitalists working under agreement with the colonial authorities. Legislation regulating the operation of the capitalist contracts with the Government was passed initially on the 29 of July 1928, and was concerned mainly with financial assistance allotted by the authorities to the concessionaires for reclamation of steppe land. Under their contract, the concessionaires, such as Conti Volpi at Misurata, were allotted land on condition that agricultural development was pressed forward with the utmost speed. The

'development' was undefined in scope, and was largely judged on the area of olive trees planted. On the Volpi Concession the title to the land taken over by the concessionaire was handed over shortly after the land had been reasonably levelled and the olive plantations laid out.

The limitations of the concessionaire contracts were appreciated only after 1929, and thereafter, the administration tried to re-organise the system by periodic legislation. In the years 1929-32 much of official legislation concerning colonisation was intended to cater for the financing of the intensification of the concessions. Thus, in the year 1929 the following items were subsidised by the state for permanent improvements to the properties;

Farmhouses	No.	353
Store-rooms	"	120
Stalls and byres	"	248
Other farm buildings	"	52
Offices	"	10
Manure pits and silos	"	98
Drainage works	Metres	113,875
Communal wells	No.	213
Drilled wells	"	176
Reticulation works	Metres	23,203
Generators	No.	11
Transformers and Transformer stations	"	80
Electric and motor pumps	"	217
Wind pumps	"	52

Data from - Direzione della colonizzazione - Tripoli 1930.

The total funds allotted by the administration in that year amounted to 15,163,925,25 Metropolitan lire. In these early years of colonisation, interpretation of the terms of contract was invariably left in the hands of the individual colonists, and

there are no records of the Government having revoked any concessions of importance. As the trend in colonisation moved more and more to favour the establishment of demographic farming units, the prime position of the concessionaire contract in agricultural life was displaced by newer contracts adapted to the changing conditions in Italian colonial land holding.

In Misuratio, the main colonisation agency was the Ente per la Colonizzazione della Tripolitania (Vide pp. 310 Chapter 4. This organisation operated its own tenancy agreement with its settler farmers in the region. As a foreword to the actual terms of the contract, it will clarify the position somewhat to observe that Ente completed basic reclamation of all its estates in Tripolitania before the arrival of the colonists from Italy, and provided the basic needs of the settlers; farm-houses, byres and all fixed property necessary for the running of the farm. For the settlers, colonisation was merely a physical occupation of the farms; there was no pioneer element involved in demographic farming under the Italian regime.<sup>(35)</sup> Starting from this basis, the contract was organised as follows;<sup>(14)</sup>

- (i) The first year of occupation by the colonists was treated as a period of acclimatisation, when the newly arrived personnel were expected to be under probationary control by Ente. During this period, Ente paid the colonists as labourers and used the combined force available on each estate to complete the final drainage system and setting of the olive and almond plantations.
- (ii) Provided that the settlers showed reasonable adaptation to

the conditions in the area and to the form of the settlements, the relative positions of the farmers and the Ente changed in respect to the tenancy agreement and took on the character of mezzadria contract. In this second phase of contract, which was estimated to last for five years in normal conditions, the families were allowed to draw on Ente for small amounts of capital with which to maintain themselves and their farming operations. Of these monetary advances by the agency, half were held in debit against the farmers, the residue being paid by Ente.

(iii) During the initial period of mezzadria tenancy, the total value of the farm is assessed by Ente and the cost price held as a loan by the agency to the farmer, and thus added to the accumulated debit, if any, arising under heading (ii).

(iv) At various times the Government allotted subsidies to the colonists to facilitate the settlement of farmers without undue economic strain discouraging them in the early stages of development. All monies from the State were given to the colonists through Ente, in most cases directed specifically towards the diminution of the accrued debit of the farmers on the purchase of their farm. Thus on Tummina Estate, the total cost of each farm amounted to the equivalent of £2,000, whilst the Government subsidy of 25% reduced the actual amount payable by each colonist to £1,650. Further subsidies to the colonists

by the Government in the mezzadria phase of tenancy were made to tide them over the years of poor production.

(v) Production from all the farms on the estates during the mezzadria tenancy was collected by Ente and the half share apportioned to the colonist was credited to his account to defray the accrued debit on the farm.

(vi) At the end of the fifth year of occupation, the colonists who had made appreciable strides towards eliminating the debit on their farms were allowed to become full owners on mortgage. Less successful farmers continued under share tenancy until they had paid off at least a third of the total debit accumulated on the farm and the monetary advances provided by Ente. Mortgage arrangements for those farms which passed to the colonists were modest in their demands, and the period of amortisement was adjusted to the productive capacity of the individual farms.

The key to this situation lies in the peculiar economic and political conditions which obtained in the colony during Italian rule. In a later chapter the settlement activities of the Italian administration are discussed in more detail. It is suggested there, that there was no intention that the process of settlement of Italian colonists should be a profitable operation,

rather it was a mechanism towards a political and social end which was heavily supported by Government subsidy by direct and indirect grants. Tenancy contracts on the demographic farms were phrased and intended secure the settlement of Italian peasant proprietors at any cost.

In Misuratio, the demographic estates were constructed in the later years of the 1930's, hence the tenancy arrangements were only in the initial phases when the outbreak of war disrupted the economy of the territory. Under British occupation, the Italians were allowed to stay on their farms regardless of whether they had completed the full terms of the contract or not. A 'Care and Maintenance' policy by the British Military Administration in the first place was not interpreted as allowing the Administration to give confirmation and full title deed to the Italian colonists, who, during and after the war, had paid for their farms and fully developed them according to the original agreements with Ente. Under pressure from the colonists, the Ente organisation in Libya and the Italian Government, the Administration after 1945 granted full title deed to those colonists who could show that they had fulfilled the terms of their contracts. This was resented by the local Libyan populace

in some areas, but the Libyan Government since 1951 has honoured all title deeds granted during the Administration (Italo-Libyan Accord. 1957). The success of the contractual system introduced by the Italians, in spite of the rarified economic conditions which operated in the period 1940-51, has led to a local adaptation emerging from it in the period of independence.

(V) Modern Arab Tenancy.

In the post-independence period, the Libyan Government has been faced with the task of preparing tenancies for both its own pilot demographic estates and for farms which have been vacated by Italian farmers on ex-Ente estates such as Tummina and Kararim. As pointed out above, many of the features of the Italian tenancies were introduced into those adopted by the Libyan Government. In Misuratio, the tenancy adopted on the Wadi Gaam Reclamation and Settlement Project is universally used for new Arab farms on demographic estates.

Having described the evolutionary influences in the tenure and land system, the chapter will go on to discuss the characteristics of agrarian land holding and associated social and economic factors.

(iv) Extent of Small Properties in Misuratio.

A holding in Misuratio may consist of a number of separate plots, which might or might not be contiguous. In the Zavia Report, (39) the minimum farm holding is taken as 3.1 Ha., whereas in Misuratio, a land holding of 2.0 Ha. is not uncommon where irrigation may be applied to the complete farm. The recently established Wadi Caam Settlement is based on a two hectare fully irrigated farm. (35) Holdings which are smaller in area than 2.0 Ha. will be treated as distinct units or as garden culture plots. (3)

The discovery and exploitation of artesian water sources by the Italians in the 1930's opened up a new phase in the spread of sedentary agriculture. Before this resource became available, the only reliable basis for agricultural activity was irrigation from the phreatic water table. Annual precipitation throughout the area is too low and unreliable for sedentary agriculture. In consequence, the extent of the oases is clearly defined by the accessibility of water from the phreatic aquifer. This area of accessibility includes the coastal strip of Misuratio but excludes the extensive areas of marine dune formations and those areas of sebkha soils, which lie within the littoral zone. (Vide Figures 53 & 54).

The total area of the oases in Misuratio has been estimated at 27,678 Ha. (42) In this chapter we shall be concerned mainly with the holdings in this oasis zone. Land holding in the peripheral steppe zone is an important but supplementary element in the indigenous land holding system, and will be considered in subsection (vi) of this chapter.

Italian properties come under a completely different tenurial system from the local Arab farm holdings. The legal aspects to tenurial systems employed by the Italians on the demographic estates will be described later (Chapter 4). Most of the land alienated by the Italian colonisation agencies is on the extreme margin of the oasis zone and in many cases is located within the littoral steppe zone (Vide Figure 24). From this figure, the exact areal extent may be seen in some detail.

(v) The Size of Holdings in Misuratio.

The size of the agrarian holdings in Misuratio varies greatly, but within well defined limits. The dispersion of the holdings amongst the total land hectareage groups is illustrated by the figures in Table 17. From this table, some comparison is possible with the Oasis of Zavia, where a similar survey has been completed under the auspices of the United Nations.

Table 17

Size of Farms by Total Land Hectareage Groups - Sample of 70 Farms in Zavia Oasis - Sample of 20 Farms in Homs and Sahel El-Ahamed.

<u>Total Land Hectareage Groups</u>	<u>Number of Farms</u>		<u>Percentage Farms</u>	
	<u>Homs &amp; Sahel</u>	<u>Zavia Oasis</u>	<u>Homs &amp; Sahel</u>	<u>Zavia</u>
2.1 to 3	7	-	10	-
3.1 to 10	39	5	55	7
10.1 to 220	21	16	30	23
20.1 to 30	3	11	5	16
30.1 to 40		7		10
40.1 to 50		11		16
50.1 to 100		10		14
100.1 to 200		9		13
200.1 to 300		1		1

Data from Theodorou<sup>(39)</sup> and Questionnaire Survey of Misuratio. The number of farms in the table above have been equated to give comparative totals. In Homs and the Sahel El-Ahamed the total farms surveyed was 20; this has been multiplied by 3.5 in each case to allow direct comparison with the 70 farms included in the Zavia Study<sup>(39)</sup>. The % figures are calculated on the original number of farms in the Oasis of Homs and the Sahel recorded by the Questionnaire Survey.

Table 18

Total Farm Land in Hectares per Farm - Sample of 70 Farms in Zavia Oasis - Sample of 20 Farms in Homs and Sahel.

<u>Total Hectares Per Farm</u>	<u>No. of Farms</u>		<u>% of Farms</u>		<u>Group Average Ha.</u>	
	<u>Homs &amp; Sahel</u>	<u>Zavia Oasis</u>	<u>Homs &amp; Sahel</u>	<u>Zavia Oasis</u>	<u>Homs &amp; Sahel</u>	<u>Zavia Oasis</u>
0.1 to 20	67	95	95	30	8.4	12.4
20.1 to 40	3	18	5	26	25.0	28.4
40.1 to 60		13		19		45.3
60.1 to 80		5		7		67.8
80.1 to 100		3		4		90.1
100.1 to 140		5		7		124.2
140.1 to 180		3		4		162.9
180.1 to 220		1		1.5		195.6
220.1 to 260		1		1.5		238.1

Average Ha. for all farms in Homs and Sahel = 5.2  
 " " " " " " Zavia Oasis = 50.0

Data from Theodorou<sup>(39)</sup> and Questionnaire Survey of Misuratio.

Table 19

Selected Land Use Types per Farm by Size Groups of Total Farm - Sample of 70 Farms in Zavia Oasis + Sample of 20 Farms in Homs and Sahel El-Ahamed, in Hectares

<u>Size Group Ha.</u>	<u>Irrigated</u>		<u>Dry-Land</u>		<u>Steppe</u>	
	<u>Land</u>		<u>Homs &amp; Sahel</u>	<u>Zavia Oasis</u>	<u>Homs &amp; Sahel</u>	<u>Zavia Oasis</u>
	<u>Homs &amp; Sahel</u>	<u>Zavia Oasis</u>				
1 - 20	2.6	0.8	1.4	0.4	1.4	2.4
21 - 40	5.0	1.7	3.5	1.1	16.5	4.8
41 - 100		1.6		3.9		14.5
101 - 238		1.3		23.0		16.0

Data from Theodorou<sup>(39)</sup> and Questionnaire Survey of Misuratino.

In Misuratino the farms ranged from 2 hectares to 25 hectares in total, and in Zavia from 4.5 hectares to 225.5 hectares, within the respective study areas. The scope of the survey in both cases is similar, hence the figures presented in Table 17 will allow some specific deductions to be made in respect to the characteristics of land holding in the coastal oases.

The statistics reproduced as Tables 17 and 18 show that 92% of the farms in the Zavia area were within the 10 to 200 hectare range, 46% were less than 30 hectares, and 75% were less than 60 hectares<sup>(39)</sup>. Thus within the cabila there are only moderate variations in the size of holdings. In Misuratino the exceedingly egalitarian land holding system is marked to a more pronounced degree than in Zavia. In the cases of Homs, Zliten and Misurata, 95% of all farms included in the survey were less than 20 hectares in extent. Whilst it must be admitted that the survey was biased somewhat towards the average producer rather than to the larger and smaller units, it is also true that the

effects of these latter groups tend to cancel themselves out.

Furthermore, the largest units registered in the three oases, including the Sahel El-Ahamed, are as follows; Homs 80 hectares; Zliten 70 hectares; Misurata 100 hectares. These figures are extracted from the records of the Land Office at Misurata. Thus the tendency towards large farming units is further developed in Zavia than in Misuratino. This is readily explained by the fact that the process of sedentarisation, dealt with in more detail in Chapter 4, is more advanced in the west, where richer terrain, and a predominately Berber based community have produced more precocious development in land consciousness than in Misuratino.

This narrow range in total land division is further reinforced by the fact that the discrepancies between the greater and smaller farm units lie mainly in the possession of larger or smaller holdings of land in the littoral steppe and Ghibla. Holdings in the oasis tend to remain constant from farm to farm, irrespective of the total farm holding in other areas. Table 19 illustrates this feature. Again the figures in the table allow comparison between the Oases of Misurata and Zavia. The category 'dry-land' refers to those areas on the periphery of the oasis which are close to or contiguous with the irrigated suani, and which are treated as an integral part of the oasis unit, often enclosed by walls in the manner of suani. As such, they are distinct from the land in the littoral steppe of Misuratino, and the undulating Jefara of the Zavia area. A further dividing line between the land of the steppe and the dry-land of the Libyan

farm units is to be seen in the cultivation method; in the dry-land, sedentary peoples utilise the land permanently under a fixed rotation; in the steppe, the occupance is that of shifting cultivation, and the patches of land are sown with cereals when the incidence of rainfall justifies it, not according to a regular pre-meditated plan.

A point worthy of study in this context is the index to the degree of sedentarisation of cabila provided by the amount of dry-land cultivated in any oasis; similarly, the proportion of dry-land cultivation undertaken by an individual farmer indicates the degree to which he is settled in the gardens of the oasis. In simple terms, we may express this relationship as follows; the larger the area of permanently cultivated dry-land, the greater the degree of sedentarisation and agricultural development exhibited either by a cabila unit, or by single family unit. The mechanism behind this index operates in the following way:-

(i) Indigenous farmers have less need to follow the old forces of semi-nomadism proportional to the amount of dry-land grain and pasture they produce in the area contiguous to their oasis suani.

(ii) Thus, the more time and effort expended in the environs of the oasis, the less time spent in periodic movement for sowing and grazing in the steppe lands of the south.

(iii) The more a farmer is dependent upon a limited holding in the oasis area, the more capital and labour he is prepared to invest in it, since his capital resources are less rigidly bound up in a large flock of sheep and goats, which require annual

movement.

(iv) The mechanism of economic growth, of which the process outlined above is only a part, is discussed in greater detail in the following Section Three of the thesis in further consideration of economic trends prevailing in the agrarian economy. In the present context, the important factor is that there is a tendency during economic growth for dry-land adjacent to the oases to replace steppe lands of the Ghible for the production of dry-land grains and the grazing of flocks.

(v) Increasing intensity of development activity in the regions of the peripheral steppe brings about a corresponding increase in the pressure upon land. Obviously, as the demand for land in and around the oasis periphery grows, so the price of land reflects the changing economic and social appreciation of land values, until the stage is reached where it becomes profitable to reclaim dry-land into suani rather than compete for purchase of existing irrigated land.

We may suggest that a three-phase mechanism may be discerned in the climate of economic growth affecting the oases of Misuratio, and all are reflected in the intensity of utilisation of the peripheral steppe.

- (a) Firstly, an accelerating rate of sedentarisation in the oases.
- (b) Secondly, an increase in the extent of dry-land cultivation in the vicinity of the suani, corresponding to the decline of cultivation and grazing activity in the Ghible.
- (c) Thirdly, with increasing concentration of population in the oasis regions and greater dependence there upon irrigated land, there tends to be an increase in

pressure upon suan areas leading to a rise in land values. This in turn makes it profitable to reclaim dry-land into the irrigated sector.

These phases coincide closely with the change from pastoral to sedentary occupation in Misuratio.

Table 20 - Selected Land Use Types per Fara - Oasis Land only  
Sample of 10 Farms Homs, Zliten and Misurata 1953

<u>Average Size of Holding</u>	<u>Irrigated &amp; Dry-land</u>	<u>Pasture</u>
4.6 Ha.	3.9 Ha.	0.7 Ha.

Data from L.A.T.A.S. Survey 1953 (49).

Table 21 - Percentages of Number of Holdings and of their Areas  
Five Villages in the Districts of Ramle and Lydda -  
Palestine.

<u>Class of Holding</u>	<u>% of Number</u>	<u>% of Area</u>
0 - 20 dunams	49.1	11.0
20 - 50 "	27.7	22.8
50 - 100 "	15.6	26.3
100 and above "	7.6	39.9

Data from Granott (64)

Table 22 - Land Distribution in Upper and Lower Egypt 1948.

<u>Size Groups in Feddans</u>	<u>No. of Holdings</u>	<u>Area of Holdings</u>
0 - 5	2565	2056
5 - 40	144	1754
Over 40	12	2128

1 Feddan equivalent to 0.42 Ha.

Data from Egypt at Mid-Century, An Economic Survey, Iassawi, G., R.I.I.A., 1954.

Figures returned by the L.A.T.A.S. Report on Land Use by Sample Area confirm that there is only a restricted range in respect to the amounts of land held by individual owners in the oasis area. This report has limitations, since for the

entire area of Misuratio, only ten samples were recorded as a basis for calculation (49). Used as a supplement to further figures included in Table 20, it has value, since it is the sole alternative work on farm size to the Questionnaire Survey carried out by the writer in Misuratio.

In terms of the size of holdings, we shall be dealing with a large number of rather small to medium units. Minute fragments of land do exist in the oasis area, but are not a significant feature in the economy of Misuratio. Large land holdings are almost totally absent from the area. In this respect, Libya is atypical of the Middle East and the Maghreb. Consideration of the statistics illustrated in Tables 21 and 22 will indicate that variations in the size of holdings is more manifest in the Levant than in Libya.

In Egypt, the distribution of property amongst the rural classes exhibits greater variation than in Mandate Palestine, in spite of the land reforms which characterised the post-revolutionary era. Libya in no way reflects this tendency in the Middle East for the rise of a large landed class. There are several important factors which bring about the prevailing egalitarian framework of land holding in Misuratio:-

- (i) The basic poverty of Misuratio tends to discourage investment in real estate.
- (ii) This same poverty renders it difficult for any individual to accumulate large masses of fluid capital.
- (iii) Misuratio has only recently emerged from traditional

economic and social life, hence there has been no real opportunity for the development of a powerful landed interest especially in view of the fact that traditional values of personal status are more important to the rural peoples than ownership of material possessions. This tendency is reinforced by the fact that division of the original tribal common lands into parcels of private property has been carried out recently.

Although Misuratio does not display typical features of the Islamic land-lord system, other characteristics common throughout the Middle East are well developed. During the period of peace, which has prevailed more or less since the closing years of the Nineteenth Century, the processes of parcellement and morcellement have been operating in the area of the oases. Thus, farm size, which has been mentioned previously, was evaluated in terms of ownership alone, since the quality of ownership is the sole factor giving unity to the concept of farm size. In fact, an indigenous farm may comprise any number of separate or adjoining plots belonging to the same owner or group of co-owners. This does not apply to Italian owned farms, which are generally held as single blocks of land.

Most Arab farm units are characterised by a number of parcels of land, each on a different type of land use area. Thus each farmer will endeavour to include within his farm area a series of parcels of land, suani, scrub grazing etc; it is often the case that plots acquired with the aim of diversification are not adjacent to one another. Fragmentation of these

parcels of land proceeds as the normal application of Moslem Land Law works through the passing generations. The over-all field pattern in the oasis areas of Misuratio has taken on a distinctive character through the operation of morcellement and parcellement as may be seen from the out-line of field boundaries in the Sahel El-Ahamed illustrated in Figure 38.

(iv) In summary, we may note that the singular historical evolution of the area, particularly in relation to the intermittent nature of Turkish dominion over Libya, has meant that tax farming and its associated features of rural indebtedness and land mortgage never operated fully in Misuratio as they did in other areas of the Middle East, where the Ottomans displayed more interest.

Three natural areas have been recognised in Misuratio:-

- (i) The littoral zone
- (ii) The peripheral steppe
- (iii) The Inner steppe of the Ghibla

and, as intimated in earlier paragraphs of this examination of the size of holdings, most land owners will hold land in each of the three areas. The availability of land in the oasis garden area has tended to remain constant until recent years, since the littoral was essentially a part of the zone of pastoral occupation, an adjunct to the steppe economy, hence its value was appraised in terms of grazing and gathering potential rather than in terms of intensive utilisation. Irrigation development, an imperative pre-condition to suani

culture, was limited to a small number of communal well systems during the period of semi-nomadic occupation of the area. The figures included in Table 23 indicate the rough proportion of oasis land available per head of population in the oasis zone. Unfortunately, the figures of population recorded during the 1954 Census of Libya do not break down into occupational groups, hence the records included in Table 23 show total population in the oasis in 1954 inclusive of village dwellers. The greater part of the population of Misurata is gainfully employed on agriculture and associated pursuits, hence a number of valid conclusions may be drawn from the figures presented in Table 23. The reported surface area of the constituent oases of Misurata upon which calculation of the land-man relationship is based upon the findings of an Italian survey carried out shortly before the Second World War and extracted from the archives of the Agricultural Department at Sidi Masri, near Tripoli. The statistics were published in the Commercial Bulletin, Nazara of Economics and Finance in 1952.

Table 23 - Oasis Land Availability per Person - Homs  
Zliten and Misurata 1954

<u>Oasis</u>	<u>Males only Total Population</u>	<u>Total Area Ha.</u>
Homs and Sahel	11,360	4,000
Zliten Oasis	21,054	10,634
Misurata Oasis	23,251	13,044

Data from Census of Libya 1958 and (42).

**Table 24 - Land per Farm in the Oases of Zavia and Misuratio - Sample of 70 Farms Zavia Oasis - Sample of 40 Farms in Misuratio**

Size Groups In Ha.	% of Farms		Total Land Ha.	
	Misuratio	Zavia	Misuratio	Zavia
1 - 20	90	30.0	28.5	25.2
21 - 40	10	25.7	5.0	50.4
41 - 100		30.0		105.5
101 - 238		14.3		243.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>33.5</b>	<b>424.7</b>

Data from Theodorou (39) and Questionnaire Survey.

**Table 25 - Man-Land Ratio in the Oases of Homs, Zliten, Misurata and Zavia, 1954.**

Homs and Sahel	0.35 Ha. per each male
Zliten Oasis	0.47 Ha. per each male
Misurata Oasis	0.55 Ha. per each male
Zavia Oasis	0.15 Ha. per each male

Data from Census of Libya 1958 and (42).

The land-man ratio in Misuratio varies from oasis to oasis as illustrated in Table 25. A significant factor emerging from these figures is that the proportion of land available to each farmer in the oases, declines as the process of economic growth gets under-way. Thus, in the poor garden areas of Misurata, the land man ratio is some 0.55 hectares available per male member of the population, whereas, in the more fertile, and more economically advanced suani of the Sahel El-Ahamed and Homs Oasis the ratio drops to 0.35 hectares per male inhabitant. This trend towards small oasis holdings is illustrated again in respect to Zavia Oasis in the Jefara area, where the land-man ratio recorded by Theodorou<sup>(39)</sup> was 0.15 hectares in 1952.

In the Zavia area, the average area of oasis land owned by a sample of 70 Libyan farmers included in the survey of 1952-53 was 6.00 hectares for all size groups (Vide Table 24). Some 25.2 hectares were shared between 21 farmers who owned farms of one to twenty hectares in total area including land in the littoral and inner steppe. At the other end of the scale, ten farmers shared 243 hectares in the oasis zone and the oasis periphery. In Misuratio, the average amount of irrigated oasis land recorded for the farms included in the Questionnaire Survey of 1959-60 was 3.2 hectares; in Zavia Oasis, the corresponding figure was 1.3 in 1952-53. This variation between the holdings in the two areas is to be accounted to the differences in evolution commented upon earlier in this present discussion. (Vide also Balugma(43)). The pressure on land in the Zavia area has led to sub-division of property within the steppe zone, and a later move to reclamation in the oasis periphery. In Misuratio, particularly in the backward localities of Misurata and Zliten Oases, this tendency is not yet apparent. The figures contained in Table 19 indicate a greater proportion of utilised steppe land in Misuratio compared with Zavia, a factor which illustrates well the fact that most areas of Misuratio are in the second phase of growth according to the index proposed on page 178 of this discussion.

In both Misuratio and Zavia areas, the oasis lands account for only a small percentage of the total land holding of each farmer, and the practice of farmers at the present day is to supplement oasis production with dry-land cultivation in the

steppe. There is a greater degree of variation in the dry-land holdings than in the oasis holdings (Vide Table 19). Thus the average holding in the steppe is 1.3 and 2.6 hectares for Zavia and Misuratino, and the average size of holdings in the steppe is 8.59 and 2.81 hectares respectively. It would be incomplete if we closed this survey without reference to the lands of the tribal groups which are at the disposal of the members of each cabila. In Zavia, the average areas used each year by farms included in the sample study<sup>(39)</sup> was more than 40 hectares for each farm. There are no official returns available to show the amount of land utilised each year by the members of the cabila of Misuratino, who have rights to lands in the Ghibla. In fact, this question is of declining importance, since grazing lands are no longer of prime importance to the tribes of the coast lands; nevertheless, it is worthy of note that the vast, arid desert areas of the south are to a greater or lesser extent integrated into the farming economy of the coast; in the later phases of evolution from traditional to transitional economic life, the grazing areas of the Ghibla lose importance in absolute terms, whereas their decline in the initial period of economic growth is entirely relative to the developing pace of economic inter-action of communities in the littoral oases.

Further consideration of farm size in Misuratino is given in Chapter 5, pp. 429-32.

Small holdings of land near to the village exhibit special

characteristics. All the villages of Misuratio are small in size and limited in function; in most cases they represent local centres of administration, exchange and craft manufacture. Hence there are no concentrations of population in the area, and in consequence there has been no pressure upon areas in the vicinity of the villages to specialise in market garden production such as occurs in Tagiura and Sidi Mesri districts around Tripoli City. This situation is reflected in the features of land utilisation and ownership in the suani lying close to the villages. Many enclosed gardens have fallen into disuse, a phenomenon which may be ascribed to several economic and political factors arising from the lack of urban pressure.

- (i) Many of the villagers are both tradesmen and farmers. In fact, many of the local shop-keepers in the suk would describe themselves as farmers rather than merchants. Other villagers retain their lands in the oasis as they represent a second occupation should their businesses fail.
- (ii) A deeper motive is also apparent; land ownership in many cases has been traditional in the family from time out of mind. As in most tradition-based rural communities, tenacity to land handed down from father to son becomes a matter of pride and symbol of status. These features are reproduced in many other areas of the Mediterranean World such as Cospicua (Malta), Galicia (Spain) and in Southern Italy.

Occasionally, when the local economy is distorted by outside influence, village land may become the object of speculation. Recent building of petrol stores and stations caused some speculation in land within the villages. At present this speculative aspect to land ownership in the village is the exception rather than the rule.

Land ownership throughout Misuratinno tends to shew a general homogeneity. Underlying this superficial picture is a tendency for declining availability of irrigation water and a diminishing fertility of soils from west to east. As we have noted previously, this is reflected in the land-man ratio (Vide Table 25). Vertical homogeneity of land holding exhibits similar features to the horizontal pattern, although evidence collected from the Land Registry at Misurata suggests that there is a slight pre-dominance of larger land owners in Misurata Oasis, where the Shaikhs have retained more land and authority than in other regions. The large landed families of Misurata are few in number and they represent an anomaly in the agricultural scene of Misuratinno.

(vi) Dispersion of Landed Property in Misuratinno

The Arab conquerors of the Ninth and Eleventh Centuries introduced a multiple system of land use. This arose from climatic limitations upon agricultural activities and cultural appraisal of the landscape. Ownership of land in the peripheral steppe was essential for the Arab cabila, since pastoral occupance demanded a strong bias towards pastoralism. In fact, the oasis belt was merely a perennial sowing area subsidiary to the tribal pasture zone of the peripheral steppe and Ghible, until the Second Turkish Administration took over in Libya. The Hilalian land use zones are faithfully reproduced in the present day pattern of land ownership. Figure 4 shows that the littoral steppe and oasis zones are contiguous.

Nevertheless, ownership of land in both of these areas by one farmer entailed considerable problems of logistics. It was quite possible for a cabila member under communal mulk tenure to have use of land in the extreme south of the peripheral steppe and also on the coastal fringe of the oases. In some cases a cabila had rights to graze land within the boundaries of the territory of a quite separate cabila.

Geographical dispersion of landed property is a feature common to the oasis lands as well as to the larger divisions of peripheral and inner steppe zones, which we have outlined previously. The suani of the oases are divided into individual gardens, which represent portions of tribal land allotted to each member of a cabila. It is usual for these separate parcels to be situated at some distance from each other, a characteristic of rural land holding that is a legacy from the period of communal mulk ownership.

During the era from the Hilalian conquests to the close of Turkish rule in Libya, common ownership of land necessitated an annual division of tribal territories amongst the members of the cabila. Each member was allotted a number of parcels of land, each on one of the different types of land within the traditional cabila boundaries. Each parcel was intended to be a share of the differing qualities of land, e.g. grazing land, arable land and palmery. It was hoped to secure an equitable division of land by this means. Grazing rights to land in the Ghible extended to all members of the tribe. Practice appears to have varied from one cabila to another, but the tendency was

for larger families to have a correspondingly greater portion of the land in each land use area. Annual distribution was usually undertaken by the Shaikh with the help of his chosen advisors.

This system was breaking down towards the end of the Turkish occupation, especially in respect to land within the oases. Peace and order during the Turkish administration had encouraged the construction of permanent fixtures within the oasis gardens, and the owners had no desire to leave works that entailed labour and capital cost. All-in-all, the balance of the local agricultural economy was changing from predominantly pastoral to predominantly arable farming.

The trend was augmented by the actions of the Turkish administration in Istanbul. There had been official discouragement of communal land holding from the early years of the Sixteenth Century, when the Turks invaded Libya. It has been pointed out previously, that this official attitude stemmed largely from an attempt to rationalise government of the subject territories of the Perte. Taxation was scheduled on the basis of the individual rather than the tribe as a whole, in spite of the economic disposition towards communal life in Libya. The implementation of administrative regulations by the local officials in Libya was reinforced by legislation from the Ottoman capital. Early in the Eighteenth Century, it was enacted that there was no legal necessity for a man forcibly to remain in a system of joint ownership. The local effects of

the law were insignificant in Libya, but the scene was set for later changes. In 1858, the formulation of the Land Code explicitly forbade joint ownership by tribes or similar groups. Libya was on the margins of Turkish influence and these laws had no immediate impact. It is noticeable that the accumulated force of this legislation and the actions of the local Turkish officials began to break down gradually the strictly communal land system towards the end of the Nineteenth Century. In most areas of the Ottoman Empire, this process had moved to completion a century before it had begun in Libya.

Division of property amongst the members of the tribes in Misuratio took place in the years 1911-14, although this was limited principally to the coastal lands. The transfer from common mulk to private mulk ownership was accomplished by traditional methods of dividing the land by its land use quality and distributing a parcel of each type of land to every family. Thus, a farm holding may be dispersed over a wide area within the tribal lands and include a high proportion of non-contiguous fragments. In Zavia Oasis, for example, one farmer held seventeen parcels of land. The extent of fragmentation and associated phenomena in Misuratio will be discussed later in this chapter (vii). In Libya, fragmentation of landed property was an initial state of existence for the farms in the area, resulting from the division of land during the evolution of private property from the communal ownership pattern.

A major effect of the late transition from communal to

individual ownership is that land distribution retains an egalitarian aspect even today. There has been no time or opportunity for the rise of a strong land-lord class. The contents of Tables 21 and 22 indicate the results in other countries of the sequel to land division amongst tribal members. Libya is atypical in relation to the distribution of landed property in comparison to most other states in the Maghreb and the Middle East. The results of the late division of land to the individuals are of outstanding importance, even though they are of a negative quality.

A feature of Arab peasant farming in the Middle East after promulgation of the Edicts of 1858 was the increasing importance of private property which was registered officially, or which was converted from common to private mark ownership. The operations of the money-lenders and the presence of an influential landed class in these territories resulted in the movement of land from many small farmers into the hands of a few large land owners. In a short space of time, the ownership pattern had changed from a communal basis, through an intermediary stage of egalitarian distribution of private ownership, to a system dominated on the top by a few effendi and supported from below by a mass of landless labourers. This pattern holds true for much of Iran, Egypt, the Levant and some areas of the Maghreb. On the other hand, Libya shows only minor incipient elements associated with this process.

(viii) Fragmentation of Landed Property in Misuratio

Iqbal Qureshi, in his 'Interim Report on Land Rights and

Taxation<sup>7</sup>, points out that Tripolitania is relatively free from a class of large land owners, but that the area suffers immensely from excessive sub-division and fragmentation of holdings<sup>(40)</sup>. This characteristic varies from place to place in the oasis lands of Tripolitania. Before considering the regional variations and the nature of fragmentation, some explanation of terminology is necessary. The following major points arise with respect to fragmentation in Misuratinos:-

- (A) (i) The descriptive term fragmentation is used without any generic connotation.
- (ii) The process of morcellement will be regarded as the division of holdings into smaller holdings.
- (iii) The process of parcellement is the sub-division of holdings accompanying or not accompanying the process of morcellement.

An example to illustrate the difference between the terms should finally clarify the position. If a farmer had six plots of land making up his agricultural holding, which he intended to leave to his six sons, he would be faced with two alternative. Either he would give each of his sons one plot of land - which would be parcellement - or, as an alternative, he would divide up each of his six plots into six sections and give each son one section of each of the original plots - this latter case would be morcellement.

- (B) Fragmentation is a world-wide phenomenon and there are many forms involved depending upon the cultural and environmental factors operating in each case, (3) and (44).
- (C) Legal factors are not the only influences which lead to and encourage fragmentation. The processes of morcellement and parcellement may be observed in areas of the world which are subject to radically different legal formalisms. Pierre George pointed out that fragmentation of properties in southern France continued in spite of the effects of the Code Napoleon (45); Moreland, commenting upon the pre-War Muslim Code in India, observed the same trend towards fragmentation of land holding (46). Both writers are adamant in adopting the view that legalist elements were either the result of underlying cultural forces and environmental pressure, or were disregarded where they applied against the underlying forces. In Libya, the a priori legal authority for the parcellement process is also a direct response to the environmental and socio-economic forces at work in the area.
- (D) The operation of Moslem Land Law is the pattern of parcellement in Misuratio, even though it is not the causative factor behind it. It is not intended to enter upon a complete examination of the Code of Moslem Law and its evolution. For further reference on this theme, reference is invited to Gureshi (40). It is relevant to discuss those elements in Moslem Law which pertain to Misuratio and the formal pattern of inheritance of landed

property.

It is usual in Libya that the death of a land owner is followed by the break-up of his estates. In Moslem Law as operated in Libya, a personal estate, however small, may be left to any number of people. Generally the widow has first claim upon 25% of the total estate, whilst the residue is divided in the ratio of two to one between sons and daughters. In the case of a land owner having no family, then his property is divided amongst all relatives having claim upon it. It would be exceptional in Misuratio for there to be one beneficiary of an estate, since primogeniture is recognised neither by Moslem Law nor by local custom. Families are large, on average four to six per family, hence it is unlikely that one child would inherit the whole of a father's property by virtue of being an only son.

A further projection of the pattern emerges since the division of land amongst heirs represents only half the problem of diminishing farm size. At the division of property after the death of a land owner, all claimants upon the estate demand that they receive a share of the different plots of land belonging to the original owner. Hence, if the farmer had an average family of two sons and four daughters, each of his plots of land would be fragmented into two equal parts. One half would be shared between the two sons, whilst the other half would be fragmented into four separate units for the daughters. Division of ownership does not necessarily imply a division of land as a farming entity, but it is more common for operations

to be carried on separately rather than as a joint enterprise, and for physical division of the land to take place.

The causative factors behind the legal pattern which has been outlined in the preceding paragraphs are complex in the sense that many of them take their derivation from a non-Libyan environment. In Chapter 4 following, evidence is suggested which gives support to the assertion that nomadism is an alien social and economic institution in respect to Misuratine. This applies equally to the forces apparent in creating fragmentation in the area, and especially to the interaction of tribal mores and Islamic egalitarianism, which constitutes a major influence in this respect.

As illustrated earlier in examination of communal land practice, the response of the nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes to the radically varying types of land in Misuratine, was to divide each land use area equally amongst member families. The reaction to the use of land was dictated in many ways by the egalitarian system of the invading Arab groups at the time of the Hilalian conquests. In Libya, environmental conditions reinforced this reaction in major and minor ways. The geographical lebensraum encouraged nomadism or at least produced no pressure to drive the tribes to take up sedentary agriculture in the oases. In terms of the individual farmer and his survival, ownership of separate parcels of land was an insurance that poor rainfall would not affect all his crops. The nature of rainfall in Misuratine is such that it might well

fall in one small area, leaving the general spread of land untouched. Hence, at least one of a widely dispersed series of plots of barley could be expected to yield a crop which would maintain the family until the next harvest. Thus, nomadism precluded irrigated, sedentary cropping; this left parcellement as one of the few answers which could be offered to the problem of erratic rainfall, by a society which was lacking in capital and which was basically reliant upon subsistence agriculture. For success, the system was dependent upon communal land owning. When common milk ownership was changed to private milk ownership, the system of parcellement was crystallised.

Furthermore, it may be seen that the traditional forces creating parcellement existed before the legal pattern was superimposed. Under the long period of pastoral occupance, lasting until the end of the Turkish era, official legality did not exist for the interior tribes of the steppe since the Turks and the Karamanlis, who preceded them, had no effective means to control them. In other territories of the Ottoman Empire, the rule of the Porte was more decisive in implementing the laws of 1858, and the egalitarian aspect of Arab life lost influence at a much earlier date.

The dispersion of settlement in Misuratio has been mentioned earlier. This in itself tends to encourage the desire for each man to have his own haush situated separately from the original family settlement. The figures in Table 26

illustrate the varying nature of the number of family groups within one household, but show the tendency for the majority of people to live with a small number of family units in one household. In these circumstances, it will be appreciated readily that joint farming operations are not favoured by the Arab cultivators.

Table 26 - Number of Family Units in Libyan Households in Misuratio 1959-60 - Sample of 20 Farms Home & Sahel

<u>Family units in the Household</u>	<u>No. of Cases</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1	6	30
2	8	40
3	2	10
4 or more	4	20

Data from Questionnaire Survey of Misuratio

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Land left to the daughters of a deceased land owner is actually farmed as an integral part of the family estate until she is married and bears a son. After the birth of a son, the land becomes his property. Thus, if a daughter marries outside the cahila, the land will then constitute a parcel belonging to a man whose main lands lie in a different area, perhaps miles away. This is a small but significant contribution to the greater dispersion of parcels and greater sub-division.

It was suggested earlier in the chapter that the fragmentation of plots was the result of the desire for complete equality. Social practice is very strong, therefore it is only occasionally that the custom of morcellement is deferred in favour of single block shares of land. Many of the farmers

admit readily that it would be easier to work one compact piece of land, but few of them would admit that they would be financially better off under a block system rather than traditional fragmentation. This traditional prejudice arises from the fact that there is strong differentiation of land values as a result of a certain degree of land hunger which is tending to exaggerate real differences in land. The real differences are appreciable over short distances, even within the oasis area where sharp transition from sandy loam to loamy sand brings about a declining fertility. In larger terms, the land use variations between the oasis, the peripheral steppe and the Ghibla all support a highly developed sense of discrimination in land values. The situation of wells, the incidence of palms the tracks of the wadis all help to accentuate the distinction.

Pressure upon land resources is a new phenomenon in Misuratine. It was demonstrated earlier, that the area was moving through the second phase in the mechanism of growth (p. 179), where land in the littoral steppe on the periphery of the oasis was being taken into cultivation for dry-land crops. During this phase, the pressure on land is slowly rising, and the price of land and the number of recorded land transactions are beginning to take on importance to the indigenous farmers. In these circumstances the process of fragmentation becomes closely related to differentiation in land values, and may be expected to become so to a greater degree as the population pressure increases and the interest in sedentary farming

intensifies. Eventually, Misuratio may exhibit the feature, already developed in Zavia Oasis, where pressure on irrigated land inflates prices beyond real value and leads to the enclosure of more dry-land and the construction of other farm over-heads. Further examination of the trends and counter-trends is offered in Section Three of this thesis.

The tenacity of the farmers to their egalitarian system of land distribution and the growing economic pressure upon resources in the oases is not the whole problem associated with fragmentation of agricultural holdings. There is also a lack of initiative and appreciation of the correct approach to the question from the administration. This phenomenon is not confined to Libya by any means, but remains a persistent dilemma in most countries of the Middle East and Mediterranean. In Libya, distribution of the common lands held by the tribes in mulk ownership has been carried through only in recent years, and fragmentation has not yet reached the proportions which have become common in other areas (Vide Tables 21 and 22). Nevertheless, it is conceivable that a considerable deterioration in present conditions may be expected unless there is an introduction of legislation to modify the effects of excessive fragmentation.

Experience on the Wadi Caam Settlement has shown that it is far from easy to introduce a system of land tenure which varies basically from traditional practice. The Arab fella has a great attachment to land, and this is manifest through ownership of farm lands. Tenancy of State or private lands is less

acceptable to the farmer, if not completely obnoxious, than ownership of his own lands. Basically, the farmer would prefer the burden of cultivating a mass of dismembered fragments of land rather than the dishonour of farming a compact area which was not his property.

Attitudes similar to these are not new in social and agricultural history. Deep-rooted suspicion of change was characteristic of many rural peasant communities in Western Europe during the 'assarting' and enclosure movements of modern times. (Cf. France, U.K., Eastern Europe). In this thesis, more and more mention will be made of the increasing interaction of communities in Libya and the increasing commercial and social contact with areas outside Libya. Alongside and closely geared to the rate and force of this impact of new ideas, agricultural life has shown great changes in the last half century. With this change, many traditional customs have lost significance. Ownership of land might well cease to have the present over-inflated value in either the economic or social sense when economic opportunities open up in the towns. When this stage is reached in the development of economic growth, reform will be less formidable in its implications. Loss of rural population to the towns has been proceeding since 1951 and since 1955 this rate of urbanisation has accelerated proportionally to the growth of employment opportunities in the larger towns of Tripoli and Benghazi. As the trend develops in the next decade it is reasonable to expect a corresponding

decrease in pressure upon land as has been observed in Malta (3 & 47). Again, using evidence from other areas of the Mediterranean countries and the Maghreb, it is likely that a secondary process of land consolidation will continue alongside the decline of rural population. The two processes are complementary. This second change will be experienced in the nature of farming activity under pressure of economic growth and will represent the swing of the pendulum begun with the trend to sedentarisation in the early years of the century. For the past half century minifundia farming in the Mediterranean environment, of which the coastal oases of Misuratio represent a part, has been a self-sufficient response by the farming community to the possibilities opened by the mesothermal climatic conditions. A small plot of land, under irrigation, could be made to produce a large variety of crops and fruits which although small in quantity were sufficient to allow subsistence at a reasonable level. Here once more, the question of fragmentation enters directly into the argument, since morcellement allows the division of different land types so that the broadly-based activity of the minifundia may profit from each land use area; grazing land for meat and milk production, dry-land steppe for cereals, oasis land for vegetables, dunose fringe lands for house buildings, palms and rough grazing for domestic animals. Minifundia farming, therefore, created pressure upon the land resources in a unique way; a way which is parochial and even more localised in its operation; demand and supply rarely went beyond this limited

unit.

What happens when population moves from the rural areas to the urban agglomerations? The release of pressure upon the land in terms of persons per square mile does not in itself necessarily imply a lessening in the strength of minifundia organisation. The major force becomes increasingly dictated by the urban demand for agricultural products from the countryside, which exerts a stress upon the minifundia economy. A rural semi-peasant community is not adjusted to appreciation of the scope and variety of demand from the towns, but the urban merchants are in a position to do so, and many of them are sufficiently acquainted with the country areas to attempt to influence production from the peasants. The commercial production undertaken by the peasants removes the economic *raison d'être* for minifundia organisation and allows, in the first place the more money-minded and intelligent, and, later, the mass of farmers to consolidate and expand their holdings in the vacuum left by the release of pressure upon land occasioned by the drift of peoples to the towns. Under these conditions which are already discernable in Misuratio, land 'reform' will come through the actions of peasants and the parcellement of agricultural holdings will become less oppressive. Legal action at this stage will be simply a matter of form. It merits attention here to point out that the degree of success won by the forces exerted by the urban market through the merchants and their local agents upon the agrarian economy, in many ways determines the rate of economic growth in the country

as a whole (Vide Chapter 6, p.534).

At the present time, the impact of new ideas and methods has only just begun to spread generally in rural Libya. As it is difficult to persuade the farmer to accept single block holdings whilst the minifundia economy continues, so it is difficult to introduce the practice of cash exchange for inheritance rights. It is unusual for heirs to accept cash payments from their brother or brothers for their share of land. This springs from reasons which have been discussed before with respect to ownership and tenancy.

Conditions are as much traditional as transitional in present-day Libya. In these circumstances it is imperative to bear in mind that opportunities outside agricultural employment are limited, although this is rapidly changing. The fact of restricted amounts of fertile farming land and its causes have been reviewed earlier in the two contexts of climate and water resources. The farmer understandably held to his lands since he was faced with the difficulty of acquiring better lands than he had by purchase, and had little inducement to gain employment outside the cabila. Whilst the farmer had no scope for betterment outside the tribal society, and whilst he was contented with traditional life, knowing nothing to compare it with, hard work and uneconomic returns from his fragmented farm were of no consequence. Several of the farmers interviewed in 1959-60 were adamant in asserting that they preferred to be poor and remain within the orbit of the cabila and its traditional

welfare system rather than move to the towns where they could expect nothing but unrelieved poverty. It was noticeable, that this reply from the older men and the poorer men who represent the conservative rearguard of traditional society and economic thought.

Table 27 - Number of Parcels in the Oasis Gardens - Sample of 70 Farms in Zavia Oasis - Sample of 20 Farms in Homs and the Sahel El-Ahamed.

<u>No. of Parcels</u>	<u>% of Farms</u>		<u>Average Size/Parcels</u>	
	<u>Homs &amp; Sahel</u>	<u>Zavia Oasis</u>	<u>Homs &amp; Sahel</u>	<u>Zavia Oasis</u>
1	20	6	2.00	2.19
2	10	21	2.80	0.66
3	30	20	2.23	0.24
4	20	19	2.21	0.22
5	10	13	1.00	0.18
6 or more	10	21	0.33	0.24

Data from Theodorou<sup>(39)</sup> and Questionnaire Survey.

The rural economy of Misuratino is far from being static in nature. Whilst society is characterised by many elements which are basically traditional, as indicated in the previous paragraph there are also elements which may be interpreted clearly as transitional. Hence the farmers reported above are typical of a large portion of the rural community, but, since 1951 of a declining portion of it. Education and increasing contact with the urban areas are forcing changes in mental appreciation of land which may be expected to reflect themselves in patterns of land ownership in the near future.

Here it will be of value to summarise the major effects derived from the practice of fragmentation of agricultural

holdings. Fragmentation of holdings into a number of non-contiguous plots, in terms of physical effort means that every farm operation is multiplied by the number of plots held by the farmer. From the figures in Table 27, it is clear that duplication is the minimum division which is enjoyed by most farmers. Only 20% of the farmers in Misuratino and 5% of the farmers interviewed at Zavia worked only one parcel. The figures included in Table 27 hide the fact that in Misuratino the number of parcels ranged from one to eight, and in Zavia from one to thirteen. The task of moving labour, implements and draught animals from plot to plot is formidable, especially in view of the fact that most farming operations must be carried within a short space of time. During the former rains, planting of cereals and other crops must be accomplished rapidly, and at these times, the number of plots and the distance between them is of prime importance.

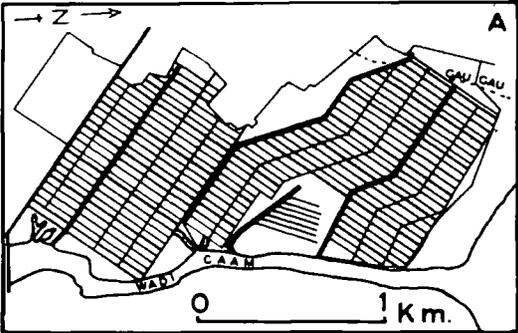
In the oasis gardens, the distance between plots of lands owned by one particular farmer may not be great, as for example in the Oasis of Zavia, where the distance between plots ranged from contiguity, or a matter of a few metres, up to half a kilometre. Experience in Misuratino would lead to slightly different conclusions. Dispersion of plots tends to be greater here, one farmer in Mudiriyat of Homs also owned land in the Sahel El-Ahamed and a distance of almost five kilometres separated the two. This discrepancy may be accounted to the fact that the survey at Zavia did not take into consideration

plots owned through the wife of the farmer for the sons of the family. In general, plots inherited in this way are responsible for the greater areal dispersion of parcels. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the disadvantages of parcellement are evident whether the plots are a greater or lesser distance from each other.

Adjacent parcels of land are farmed as separate units as a general rule. Each garden is divided from the next by an earthen wall making operations such as ploughing an individual day's work for each garden. Irrigation is made expensive and wasteful, since the well owned by a farmer need not necessarily be central to his parcels of land in the vicinity. Evaporation and seepage therefore tend to be increased by the passage of the water over roughly constructed channels across the land. These are but the basic evils associated with fragmentation.

All-in-all, the operation of parcellement and morcellement has made farming in Misuratio extremely unprofitable for the small farmers and contributes to the depressed living standards in rural areas. Since 1951, knowledge of scientific agricultural methods has become more wide-spread. Field extension work by Government and international organisations is gradually augmenting the impact of urban commercial pressure upon rural areas. As previously pointed out, these modern methods have only recently had an appreciable impact upon the indigenous Arab farmers. Nevertheless, it is possible to see that the

**GROUND PLAN  
A-WADI CAAM PROJECT  
B-OASIS GARDENS**



- Waste land
- = Wadi
- Field boundary
- Road
- Irrigation canal

Figure 38

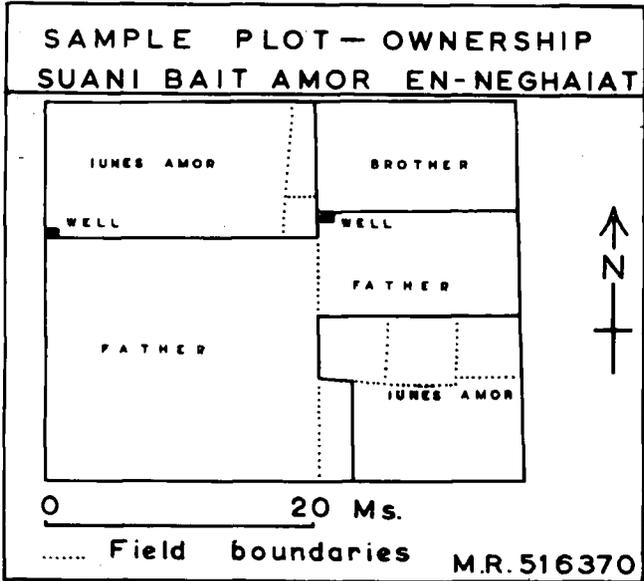


Figure 39

evolution of the agricultural landscape in terms of field size and dispersion represents an impasse against which the introduction of scientific techniques will have to bear heavily.

(viii) Shape of Parcels of Land in Misuratio.

A distinct field pattern has evolved in association with parcellement and morcellement in Misuratio. The attempt to distribute parcels of land which were absolutely equal in size and quality had led to a haphazard field shape. Figure 38B showing the field boundaries in the Sahel El-Ahamed illustrates the range of shapes which have emerged from the process of morcellement. The original parcels have been divided amongst the heirs of several generations of the farmers who have owned the parcels since the change from common to private mulk ownership. A secondary strip pattern has been superimposed upon the irregular parcels by the action of morcellement.

The result of the pattern of field boundaries is that access is often difficult, since the farmer finds entry to his strips across another farmer's land. Irrigation is yet another problem, since water has to be channelled along the whole length of the individual strip, a process which involves considerable wastage.

Narrow and irregular strips of land imply a maintenance of old techniques, since new approaches generally mean mechanisation to a greater degree. A scientific pattern of tillage is difficult in the framework of the present field shapes. For example, contour ploughing as advocated by the experts of the agricultural departments of the Tripoli agencies such as F.A.O.

and the Nazara of Agriculture is uneconomical for many of the strips of land owned by the indigenous Arab farmers.

Thus, the conclusions which were offered in the last paragraph of sub-section (v) would also hold for this aspect of land holding in Misuratino.

(ix) Changes in the Distribution of Landed Properties in Misuratino.

It has been suggested earlier, that social and agricultural life in Misuratino was in a state of unstable equilibrium during the last century. The oases and the steppe represent an integral economic and cultural unit under semi-nomadism. Misuratino was relatively isolated from the Jefara by the Msellata Ridge and was isolated from Tripoli by distance. Before the introduction of mechanised transport, Homs was three days and Misurata five days camel ride from Tripoli. Hence, Misuratino was, in many ways, a remote and backward area where primitive communal land holding was universal.

A prolonged period of peace under the Turkish administration gave time for the change in economic approach and mental attitude which led to the ending of common mulk tenure in the suan of the oases. As yet, Libya is atypical of most comparable areas in the Arab World, since the evolutionary stages through which land tenure systems have passed elsewhere are not reproduced in Libya. Here, there has been a direct transition from the primitive tenure system to the private system. The Maghreb and the Middle East as a whole illustrates a pattern of more complexity. In these areas, the classical evolution has tended

to follow a pattern developing from the primitive to the feudal with only a minor and transitory phase of private small properties. Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Palestine were shown earlier to have large farms under the control of a few land owners, employing the peasants, who, in general, were landless. The agrarian economy in Libya is based upon small peasant proprietors. This pattern, which has been indicated several times in this chapter is of key importance in distinguishing the rural economy and society of Misuratinne from the lands around. Changes in the distribution of landed property had taken place slowly until 1955. This arose mainly from the inherent conservatism of the small peasant farmers, and the deep attachment to land developed for non-commercial reasons.

Properties were constantly changing hands. These changes were limited strictly in scope to the action of parcellement and morcellement. Occasionally, other factors did intervene to introduce some lateral movement in property exchange. The most important of these external factors was the influence of prolonged drought. It has been indicated previously that the indigenous Arab economy is highly resilient in the face of climatic adversity. This is true to a large extent. The changes in the social structure of the tribes, and the economic changes discussed already have made the Arabs more vulnerable to fluctuations in rainfall especially during phase (c) of the mechanism laid out on p. 179. In placing one foot firmly in the sedentary zone of the oases, the Arabs correspondingly forfeited some of

the flexibility of approach to the hazards of the environment. The tribes of Cyrenaica are able to use great mobility in avoiding the worst elements of drought conditions (vide<sup>(53)</sup>). Their flocks can be transported rapidly from desiccated areas to areas which have been more favoured by rainfall. In extreme conditions the bedawin are able to live from their livestock capital.

Growing preoccupation with agriculture, in the cases up to the mid-1950's reduced mobility in the Misuratino area of Tripolitania. The accumulated effect of several years of poor rainfall had an appreciable impact upon agricultural production. The sedentary cultivators were liable to ruin as they lacked mobility and large livestock capital during the preliminary phases of growth. The poorer were compelled to sell out their property to retrieve their position.

Of particular interest in this respect was the period of drought in the years 1948-49. All of Misuratino was not stricken in this period. Rather effects were confined to the area around Suk El-Khemis in the Sahel El-Ahamed. To compensate for the complete loss of crops in the steppe, and the exceedingly reduced production in the oasis area, several farmers were compelled to sell their livestock. With the continuance of the drought into the next year, the farmers had then to resort to the sale of trees. Eventually, pressure from the money lenders, and the farmers' own disinclination to persist against difficulties, led to the mass sale of land. The Ben Nur branch of the

Ulad Bu Rgheba sold out all their estates and moved to Cyrenaica. Most of the land was sold to members of the same cabila, though an unknown element went to merchants in Homs and Zliten who had no affiliation with the cabila. The land went to rich men with farms of their own, whether they were notables of the cabila or not. Consolidation in a physical sense was achieved in a small area of the oasis. The farms which were acquired in the drought years were integrated into other larger economic units in very few cases. Many of the farms were run either by a small independent farmer or were rented by a landless labourer. In a few cases, the properties were being bought on mortgage by enterprising farmers who were prepared to build up a new farm rather than wait for the death of their own father and a share in the family estate.

A significant factor which emerges from this summary of the effects of drought conditions upon the pattern of land ownership in the years before 1955, was that Libya again exhibited atypical characteristics for an Arab country. The drought led to the sale of land by the smaller peasant proprietors of the Sahel El-Ahamed. The victims of the drought were more prepared to give up their lands than mortgage their estates. They were even more unwilling to become labourers on the lands of their fathers. In fact, the fraction of the tribe gave up the land totally, and reverted back to the more primitive conditions from which it had so recently emerged.

The peculiar factors of geography, and the still resilient

tribal society produced a reaction to adversity which gave a striking illustration of the balance of economic development at that time in Libya. In a society which could be described as 'transitional', it could reasonably be expected that dispossessed members of the tribe would turn to the towns or alternatively stay in their home area to become a class of labourers. Neither of these trends were apparent. In Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, the classical reaction to this same situation was for the appearance of a landless peasantry. In the areas of the Maghreb in more recent times, the reaction in social and economic terms has been for a de-tribalised proletariat to gather in the towns.

The unique position of Libya on the scale of social and economic development at this time resulted in the unorthodox response of the Bu Rgheba.

Since 1955 there has been a shift in economic emphasis which has made the previously-quoted human group response to the environment, instanced in Misurata by the Bu Rgheba, of historical rather than present day interest. Whereas the wide-spread poverty of the urban areas in 1947-48 tended to create centrifugal forces away from these centres, <sup>in</sup> the past few years the corresponding force has been centripetal towards expanding and increasingly prosperous urban communities. In 1945, the British Military Administration reported 'There is now considerable unemployment throughout the territory and particularly in Tripoli City. Whereas accurate figures on the unemployment situation are not available, as the majority of the labourer class fails to register with the

Labour Office, there are at present approximately 4,000 registered unemployed in Tripoli town.<sup>(48)</sup> Thus, the unemployment position in the years following the cessation of war in North Africa was sufficient to cut back the rate of population drift to the towns.

In 1951, the urban economic scene had changed only in detail, there were very few occupations open to Libyans outside agriculture and the public administration. Since this time, there have been basic changes in the structure of wages affecting large numbers of Libyans. The operations of the oil companies have expanded many-fold and there has been considerable employment of local labour at most levels of company organisation throughout Libya. The traditional picture of the Arab fellaḥ, as we shall show later, has changed irrevocably since 1951: the present day Arab is increasingly an industrial worker in Tripolitania as a whole, and in Misurata more than in most of the southern area of Tripolitania. The Libyanisation of the public administration after 1951, which allowed, in fact, more openings for Arabs in white-collar occupations than there were applicants to fill the posts was a major contributory factor in the process. The discovery of oil and the prospect of early exploitation of the Libyan oil reserves have accelerated this tendency to urban prosperity in the last two years and have correspondingly intensified the attraction of the urban areas to the rural peoples, whose wages have responded only slowly to the stimulus from the expanding urban economy.

The impact of these changes must not be over-exaggerated at this stage: they are economically critical in marking the changes in economic growth, but they are not spectacular as yet. Nevertheless, the increasing affluence of the towns is impinging upon the rural economy so that the pastoralist is finding it to his profit to be resident in the oases rather than in the Ghila. In the oases, he may benefit from the increase in the prices in agricultural products, and also be available for part-time work with the military, oil company or civil administrations should the opportunity arise.

The inference to be drawn from this is that since 1947-48 Misuratino has seen the passing of stage (a) of the mechanism of land holding and associated socio-economic factors (p. The spread of cultivation in the oases under a system of sedentary agriculture has had the two-fold effect of reducing the vulnerability of the Arabs to the climatic vicissitudes and of taking them across the water-shed between pastoralism and peasant cultivation. This is directly reflected in land holding with the growth of true minifundia peasant farming in Misuratino. Changes in property ownership have been concerned with meeting the demand for variety of land use areas made necessary under the minifundia system, and this demand itself has led to the accentuation of differences in land and to an increase where land prices in the oases make land on the oasis periphery profitable to reclaim as suni, then stage (c) may be said to be underway (Vide p.179). Growth of urban demand for agricultural products is a necessary

process exerting pressure in the oases, which in turn accelerates enclosure of marginal land and stimulates a commercial revolution in the oases, advanced stage (c) and paves the way for a transitional economy in the area.

Thus, land ownership patterns in Misuratino in the causative and result effects, provide a basic guide to economic change in the region. In the following chapters further elements of economic and social growth will be considered.

S E C T I O N     T W O

Chapter Four - Elements of Social Organisation in Misuratio  
in relation to Economic Growth

- (1) Introduction.
- (2) The Cabila Unit.
- (3) Historical Background.
- (4) Ethnic Groups, Economic and Social Divisions in Misuratio.
- (5) Tribal Settlement and Urban Units in Misuratio.
- (6) Tribal Organisation in Misuratio.
- (7) Internal Forces of Social and Economic Growth and Tribal Disintegration.
- (8) Italian Colonial Policy and Tribal Disintegration.
- (9) Italian Land Acquisition and the Diminution of Tribal lands.
- (10) Summary - Traditional Society.

Chapter Four - Elements of Social Organisation in Misuratio  
in relation to Economic Growth.

(1) Upon the basis of the previous discussion of the physical habitat of Misuratio, we shall enlarge the present study in terms of the role and significance of the cabila in the developing economic pattern of the area. The social structure of the cabila represents the traditional element, and the economics - or more generally, the complex of influences that have stimulated economic growth - represent the dynamic factor in the modern agrarian and urban scene in Misuratio. The inter-action of the two elements will be discussed in the pages that follow. The features of socio-economic change are closely related, all impinging one upon the others to varying degrees during the progressive Phases of growth, thus in examination of social organisation and its economic implications, we shall not attempt to force a strict pattern of development upon indigenous society in Misuratio; one economic or social factor need not affect all the peoples of Misuratio at the same time. It will be shown, that the tendency of the tribes to become sedentary cultivators in the coastal oases was a result of internal economic factors generated within the cabila units, and that the projection of growth following upon sedentarisation gathered upon itself increasing momentum. This momentum was reinforced again by outside forces, notably the effects of Italian colonial policy and the associated agricultural and urban development undertaken by the colonial administration. In the following

paragraphs, we shall analyse the form of the influences stimulating economic and social change in relation to the Phases of growth at which they become operative.

(2) The Cabila Unit

Until recent years, the cabila was the basis of the social order in Misuratio, and even at the present day eight out of every nine of the people of Misuratio reside in the tribal domains. Cabila organisation has persisted in Libya as a whole in spite of successive occupations by outside powers; in the course of three centuries, five political authorities have been in control of the area; the First Turkish Occupation, the Karamanli Dynasty, the Second Turkish Administration, the Italian Colonial Government and the British Military Administration. Throughout these periods of conquest, the economic autonomy of the cabila has helped the survival of the social unit. It will be instructive to examine in more detail the origins and the growth of tribal organisation in Libya, and the results which pertain specifically to Misuratio.

(3) Historical Background -

(a) The Berbers

The Berbers represented the major elements in the population of the area, which is now politically integrated in the nation of Libya, until the arrival of the Arabs in the Seventh Century A.D. The connotation of the term 'Berber' is rather broad. It is certain that the main group in the area of Tripolitania at the time of the Arab invasions was the Libi,

a tribe which is frequently mentioned by the ancient historians of both Greece and Rome. From the writings of the classical historians, it appears likely that the Libi groups occupied the fertile areas of North Africa for a long period before the Arab invasions, and at various times included within their domain those territories reaching from Cyrenaica to the Atlantic coast of the Maghreb.

Most Arab chroniclers divide the Berbers into two groups as follows:-

	<u>BRANES</u>		<u>MAZIH</u>
Azdagia	Masmuda	Aurba	Addasa
Agisa	Ctama	Sanhagia	Nefusa
Auriga	Lemta	Hascura	Darisa
Czula			

Of these various Berber families, those which may be considered truly as indigenous to Libya are the Iusta, the Nefusa and the Adassa. The Haura, so-called, probably originated in western Tunisia or Algeria and in spite of local traditions to the contrary did not affect Tripolitania at this time but only moved into the area at the close of the Seventh Century.

Segments of the Ctama and the Imaia did not move into Tripolitania until later in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries.

At the present day, the greater part of the inhabitants of the coastal towns of Tripolitania, including Homs, Misurata and the Msellata villages are descended from the Haura, who at various times came under Arab control and who eventually submitted to total assimilation. The Ctama tribe was centred

mainly in Algeria, and only a small family fraction was established in Tripolitania in the region around Homs. Cabila Sillin remained in the area of Homs Oasis, but all other vestiges of the group have long since vanished. The Zuaga was a small and sparsely distributed tribe associated with the Maghdes group of Berbers. Apart from residual fragments of the tribe at Zuara, where elements of the Berber culture still survive, the only other area of concentration is at Zliten. Here, the Zuaga fraction Beni Mager have been completely Arabised and have no distinct identity in a strongly Arab area.

In summary it may be said that the original Berber inhabitants of Misuratino - the Hauara, Ctama and the Zuaga - have been absorbed into Arab society, leaving only trace elements in the hybrid. The Arabs destroyed the agricultural framework upon which the Berbers had built their civilisation during and after the Roman period. This process must be regarded as gradual; sedentary agriculture did survive into Arab times, and the entire agrarian pattern of the coastal oases was not totally destroyed. The Berbers, both as free men, and later as fiefs of the Arabs, continued to work the oasis lands as sedentary cultivators. At times this hold upon the littoral areas was most tenuous, not so much through the impact of conquering armies, but rather through the extended operation of culture contact. As the Berbers were assimilated to the Arab way of life, the mental attitude of pride in land holding and technical skill in cultivation became weakened, and

standards dropped considerably. Nomadic pastoralism largely superseded sedentary cultivation in Misuratio as the major economic pursuit.

(b) The Arabs

The first influence of the Arabs was felt in Tripolitania during the invasions from the east in the Seventh Century. This initial Arab incursion into Berber lands was essentially military in nature and had little effect upon the composition of population in the area. The Hilalian invasion of 441 H (1049 AD) and the succeeding attacks of the Beni Suleim a few years later were to be paramount factors in determining the character of the population of Tripolitania.

In the year 297 H (910 AD) the Fatimid Caliphate Sciiti were in command of the greater part of North Africa, which they had subjugated with the help of the Berber Ctama group in Tunisia. When the Fatimids moved to Egypt in the year 361 H (972 AD), they relinquished control of North Africa to Iusuf Ben Buluechin Ben Ziri, whose family had already proved its ability to lead and rule in the struggles against the Hauara Berbers. Iusuf was himself a Berber of the important Sanhagia family, who, together with the Ctama, had supported the rule of the Fatimids in Libya and the Maghreb. The family Ben Ziri continued to dominate the area and rule in the name of the Fatimids until 437 H (1045 - 1046 AD). After this date, the descendants of Iusuf claimed direct dependence upon the Caliphate of Baghdad. Since this declaration by the Berbers amounted to rebellion against the Fatimids, who were reigning in

Egypt, it was natural that action would be taken by the Arab dynasty. The form of action was to be of great significance in the history of North Africa, since the Fatimid ruler incited the restless nomadic tribes of Egypt to undertake a war of revenge against the Berbers of Libya. The invasion was led by the large and powerful tribe of Beni Hilal, supported by the Riah, the Zogba and the Atbeg. The Hilalian conquest of Libya thus began.

The invading forces arrived in North Africa in 443 H (1051-1052 AD) and after three years continuous fighting against the Berbers, the Arab tribes divided the land between them. The Zogba settled around Tripoli and Gabes, the Riah at Kairouan and Bagia and the Atbeg in the Constantine district of Algeria. The Berbers were thrust to the west to the strongholds of Kabilie, or were taken as fiefs of the conqueror. Agriculture received an almost fatal blow, since the Hilalian peoples were ruthless in destroying all signs of sedentary settlement including farms, villages and plantations. In the steppe and Jebeline lands, destruction of the settlements and agricultural holdings appears to have been complete, to the extent that the pre-conquest economy was never again re-built. Roman dams, water control works, olive presses and olive plantations were subjected to the depredations of the invaders, and what was not destroyed physically was left to fall into disrepair and ultimate ruin. From all the historical evidence which is available, it seems likely that the entire littoral steppe zone of Misuratio, in common with other similar areas

in the Jefara of Tripolitania, was cleared of all agricultural constructions which were never restored by the Berbers once they were subjugated and absorbed into the Arab culture. On the coast, the oases were less easily destroyed, since they were less reliant upon a high degree of technical organisation and were able to survive long periods of neglect. Nevertheless, it is certain from the records left by Ibn Khaldrun that the area of the oases declined considerably<sup>(50)</sup>.

In terms of the agricultural landscape, the effect of the Hilalian invasion was to change a system of quasi-peasant farmers with a high degree of control over the environment, into a system of semi- and complete pastoralists with no particular interest in control of the environment.

The survival of the oases of Misuratio was facilitated to some degree by the fact that there were established gasr (fortified villages) along the coast, in which the Berber remnants were able to take refuge in times of nomadic incursion. Thus, in a few cases, the Berber response in the economic context was to abandon their agricultural interest and to take to more easily defended pursuits such as commerce, which could be carried on in the towns. The Berbers thus became tradesmen and town-dwellers. This separation of function between the Arabs and Berbers diminished with the passage of time as the Berbers became more and more absorbed into the traditional Arab way of life through the necessity of allying with strong Arab tribes to avoid extinction.

Following the arrival of the Beni Hilal and the successes

gained by them, a kindred tribe, the Beni Suleim, were induced to move to join them in North Africa. The Fatimids were less anxious for the Beni Suleim to join their brother tribe in North Africa than they had been in incite the Beni Hilal to invasion some years earlier. The Berber menace in Libya had been eliminated, and the Fatimids were not desirous of a stronger power growing in their place. The Beni Suleim were undeterred by the Caliph and entered the western gateway to Cyrenaica on the same terms offered to the Beni Hilal.

The Beni Suleim were made up of four main groups:-

- (i) Beni Hebib
- (ii) Beni Auf
- (iii) Beni Debbab
- (iv) Beni Zegb

Of these groups, the Hebib settled in Cyrenaica, whilst the other groups went on to join the Beni Hilal in Tripolitania. The Suleim moved into the lands lying between Tripoli and Gabes, but did not affect Misuratio to any great extent. After the establishment of the tribal groups, the area of Libya underwent a period of disorder and tribal feuding, which was augmented occasionally by the incursion of other Arab adventurers from Egypt. Agriculture declined to even lower levels, and the demands of constant warfare, whether inter-necine or against external groups, tended to confirm the Arab and Arabo-Berber tribes in their nomadic economic structure. Towards the close of this period of anarchy, the Debbab group of the Beni Suleim took control of much of the lands of Tripolitania. In Misuratio, the Ulad Salem became the ruling element, also

holding control of the area south of Sirte.

(c) The First Turkish Conquest and the Era of Karamanli Rule.

The arrival of the Turks in North Africa in 1551 AD was essentially military in character. The invasion was undertaken by the Janissaries and affected only the coastal cities, particularly Tripoli. The Turks and the Karamanli Dynasty which emerged from the conquest, were able to hold down limited areas of the littoral, leaving the tribes of the interior to their own devices, provided that the cities were in no way menaced by nomadic activity. Contemporary accounts of the Karamanli organisation in Tripolitania show that the majority of peoples actually paying tribute to the conquerors were the few sedentary Berber or primely Berber groups who were living in or around the coastal oases.<sup>(51)</sup> In Misuratio, the towns of Homs, Zliten and Misurata came under control of the occupying powers, although the territorial extent of these possessions was limited by the ability of troops of the town garrisons to maintain law and order in the face of constant incursions by the Debbab groups. The first Turkish occupation closed in 1835 AD.

(d) The Second Turkish Occupation

The second Turkish Government of Tripolitania, which was a direct result of the Ottoman invasion and reorganisation of the Empire, had the effect in Libya of extending the zone of alien control outside the limits of the coastal oases. At times such control was tenuous, especially during those periods when the administration attempted to re-institute taxation on

the tribes of the interior. The nomadic tribes denied the rights of taxation to the Turks by means of physical withdrawal along the endless lines of communication across the desert, where the Turks were unable to bring their organised fighting power to bear upon them. Repeated attempts by the Turkish administrators to impose taxation on the tribes culminated in 1911 AD, with a massive rising of the tribes against Turkish authority. Simultaneously, the first landings of Italian troops was taking place in Tripoli, and the Turkish administration came to the verge of collapse.

The periods of Turkish and Karamanli rule which lasted until 1912 were characterised by continuous disturbances as is witnessed by the writings of Tully<sup>(51)</sup>. Nonetheless we may regard this era as an improvement upon the centuries of anarchy which had preceded during the Islamic invasion. Most of the inter-tribal struggles had been brought to a conclusion, and apart from petty jostling for land between one tribe and another, the area was comparatively peaceful. The effects of the peace were expressed in economic and social terms by an increase in activity in the coastal oases towards the close of the Nineteenth Century. There is evidence that several of the semi-nomadic cabila were engaged upon construction of fixed agricultural installations such as wells and small olive and date plantations<sup>(51)</sup>. The tendency of the tribes to use the oasis areas as a greater supplement to the nomadic economy was the very factor which motivated the Ottoman administration to stand firm on the tax issue. A result of this Ottoman

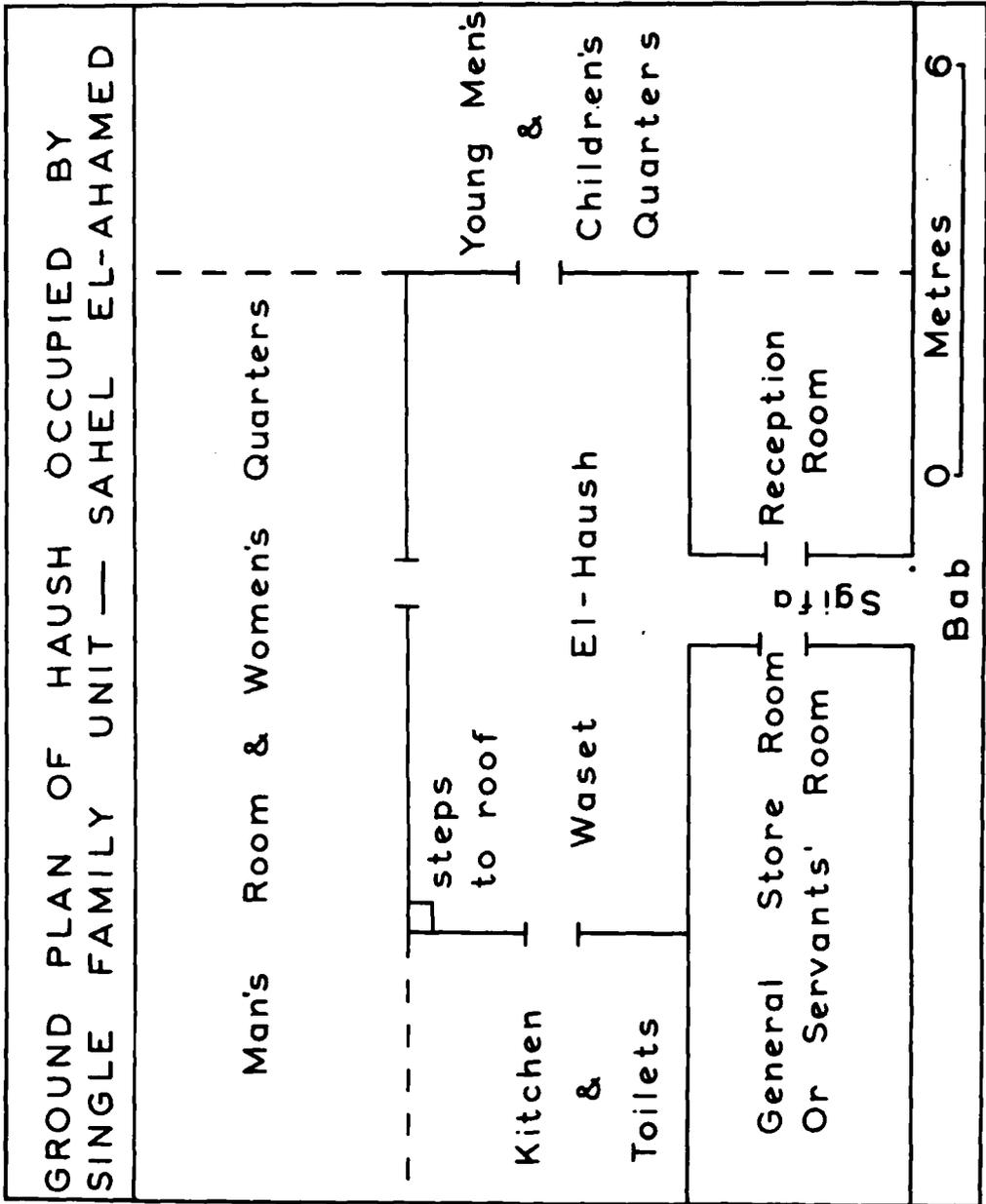


Figure 40

policy was that the tribes remained wary of sedentary life throughout the period of their dominion.

In the cases of the littoral, where the Turks were able to repulse nomadic incursions, sedentary agriculture was increasing in scope towards the end of the Nineteenth Century. The trans-Saharan trade which had revived during the period of peace, came to an end in the closing years of the Nineteenth Century and those coastal settlements in Misuratino, such as Misurata and Homs, which had relied for existence upon commerce were compelled to turn to an alternative resource - agriculture. The nomadic groups of the peripheral steppe took part in this extension of agriculture in the oases, and although the rate of sedentarisation was tempered by fear of Ottoman taxes, many of the semi-nomadic tribes had developed sufficient interest in agriculture to be proceeding with division of communal lands into private holdings.

At the time of the Italian conquest, the social structure of the indigenous tribes of Misuratino remained almost unchanged from the date of the first Turkish conquest. Various amalgamations between different groups of peoples in the area had taken place, but the structure of the cabila was an unchanging quantity.

In the fore-going pages we have followed the military history of the area through the post-Roman era; it will be instructive to assess the results of these compound influences in terms of areal concentrations of human groups and the social structures which prevail amongst them.

TABLE 28

CONSTITUENT FRAGMENTS OF THE BENI HILAL

(1) <u>ATBEG</u>	(ii) <u>RIAH</u>	(iii) <u>BENI ZOGBA</u>	(iv) <u>EL-MAACHIL</u>
Beni Dured	Beni Omar	Beni Iazid	Beni Sahir
Beni Cherfa	Beni Mirdas	Beni Husen	Beni Mohammed
Beni Aiad	Beni Ali	Beni Malech	
Ed-Dahach	Beni Said	Beni Amer	
Beni Latif	Beni Chader	Beni Arua	
El-Aasen			
Beni-Mcaddem			
El-Amur			
Beni Giuscem			

CONSTITUENT FRAGMENTS OF THE BENI SULEIM

(1) <u>BENI AUF</u>	(ii) <u>DEBBAB</u>
Beni Mirdas	Ulad Ahamed
Beni Allagh	Beni Giaber
	Ulad Slemen
	Ulad Salem
(iii) <u>BENI ZEGB</u>	(iv) <u>BENI HEBIB</u>
El-Magarha	Scemmach
El-Hotman	El-Azza
El-Hsauna	
Ez-Zuaid	
El-Guaida	
Es-Sahca	
(v) <u>LUEBED BEN AAMER</u>	
Ulad Salam	
Ulad Mocaddem	



(4) Ethnic Groups, Economic and Social Divisions in Misuratingo

The various classes into which the people of Libya are classified for purposes of census and sociological study are cabila, and lahma. Neither of these terms represents a water-tight unit, but they are well adapted to Arab society in Libya. The aggregate tribe which is the largest classification of society in Libya in an extremely loose term, which is scarcely used except in respect to historical lineage. Family roots are felt to be a matter of family pride, but the organisation which once surrounded the major tribal groups during the early years of the Hilalian and subsequent invasions disintegrated rapidly in the face of geographical decentralisation which accompanied the occupation of new territories. Long before the Turkish conquest, the Arabs had ceased to speak of themselves as of the Beni Hilal or the Beni Suleim, and had returned to more parochial terms of political and social organisation.

The tribal returns recorded in the census undertaken by Agostini reveal a heterogeneous character to the cabila of Tripolitania<sup>(52)</sup>. Throughout the area, there has been considerable inter-mixture of the Arab and Berber elements in the population, which have blurred the origins of the two distinct ethnic groups. The Berber strain comes from the original inhabitants of the country who have been described previously in this chapter. Arab roots are to be found mainly in the two tribal agglomerations of the Beni Hilal and the Beni Suleim who are thought to have their origins in the Nadj (Vide

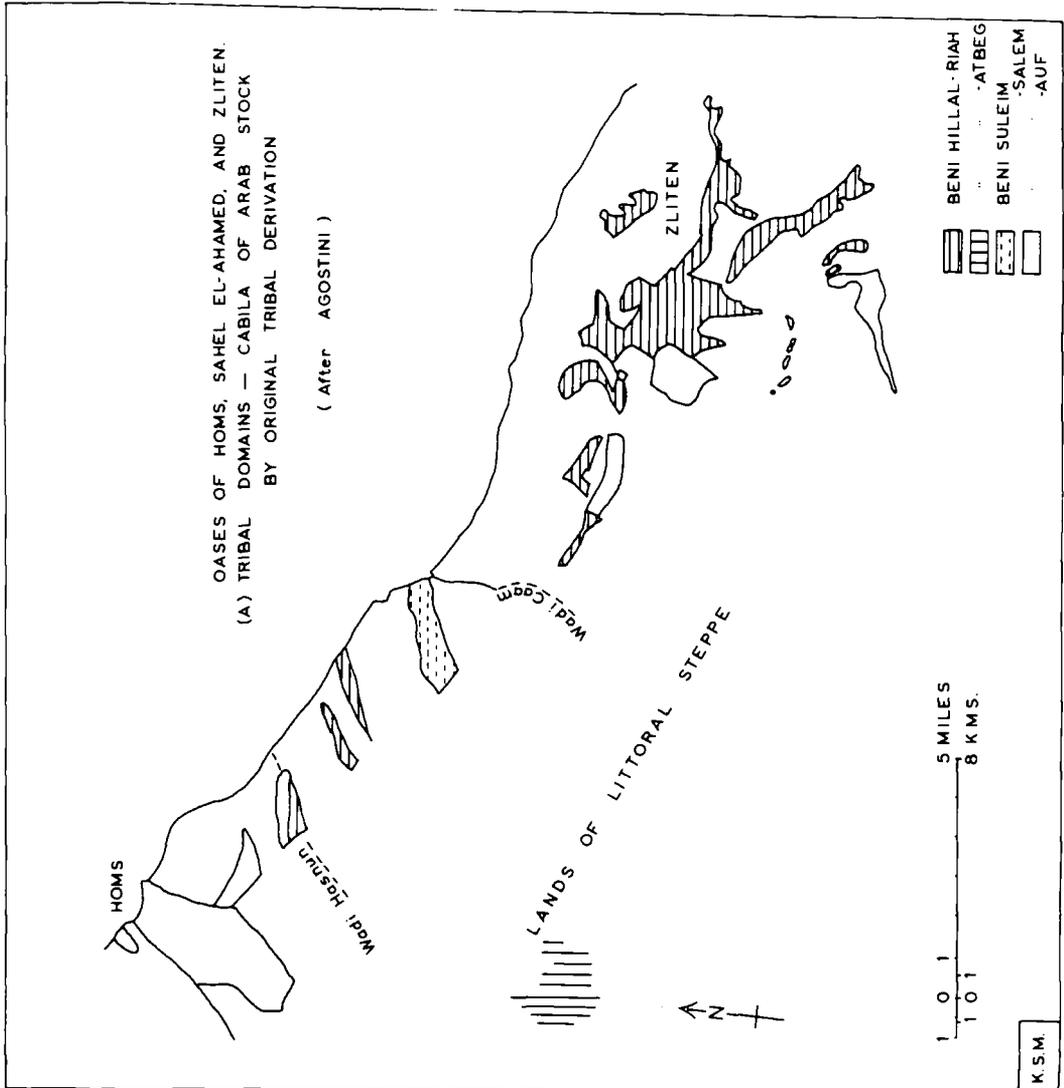


Figure 41

Evans-Pritchard<sup>(53)</sup>). Both these major tribes were of Mudarid stock, of which the Beni Suleim is the senior branch. The figures contained in Table 28 illustrate the constituent fragments of the Beni Hilal and Beni Suleim as they were recorded by the Arab geographer Ibn Khaldun<sup>(50)</sup>. Misuratio was influenced mainly by the Debbab tribe of the Beni Suleim, the genealogical table of which is shown in Table 29. Of the Debbab grouping, the Ulad Salem constitute the major element in the present day Arab population of the area as illustrated in Figure 41 of tribal areas. The Beni Auf are a secondary group represented in Misuratio by a small group of sedentary cultivators in the eastern reaches of the Sahel El-Ahamed. The Beni Hilal agglomeration is represented more in Misuratio than in any other area of Tripolitania; through the Riah branch of the Hilal, they occupy the greater part of Zliten Oasis, and have kinship fragments settled amongst other cabila in both Misurata and Homs Oases. The Atbeg line of the Suleim is found in the Sahel El-Ahamed district, where a semi-nomadic group, the Sciucr, claim ownership to a large area of the littoral steppe.

Areas of Arab occupation illustrated in Figure 41 are purely arbitrary, since the cabila of the coast lands have considerable Berber blood in their veins in spite of the fact that this is ignored by the indigenous peoples, who count this as a mere additive to their basically Arab origins. It is unlikely that there are any pure Arab cabila existing as

an integral unit as there are in Cyrenaica, where the unmixed strain is unrivalled in much of the Middle East<sup>(53)</sup>. Those tribes of Misuratino exhibiting least hybrid in racial origins are these semi-nomadic cabila of the interior steppe, where endogamy has prevailed until recent times. The Sciucr of the Sahel El-Ahamed is the only important cabila which retains purity of strain in Misuratino.

The trans-Saharan trade in slaves, which continued during Turkish times has left a pronounced Negroid element in many of the tribes of Misuratino, especially in the urban and sedentary areas of the littoral. Misurata exhibits a large proportion of Negroid types, whilst, inland at Taerga, the central nucleus of population is constituted by Sudanese Negroes.

The majority of cabila of Misuratino are a mixture of the Berber Hamitic and the Arab Semitic. The Berber legacy may be seen only as a basic racial sub-stratum, since the language and the customs associated with the culture have been obliterated during the centuries of Arab domination and assimilation. The features of the population having a high degree of Berber blood are a light skin, dochiocephalic head shape and tall stature, traits which may be seen in the el-Choms of Homs, El-Gabalia of the Sahel El-Ahamed and the El-Brahma of Zliten Oasis. The tribes of predominantly Arab origin have darker skins, longer and more narrow faces, finer lips, straight prominent noses and are more characteristically dolicocephalic than the Berber peoples. Negroid features

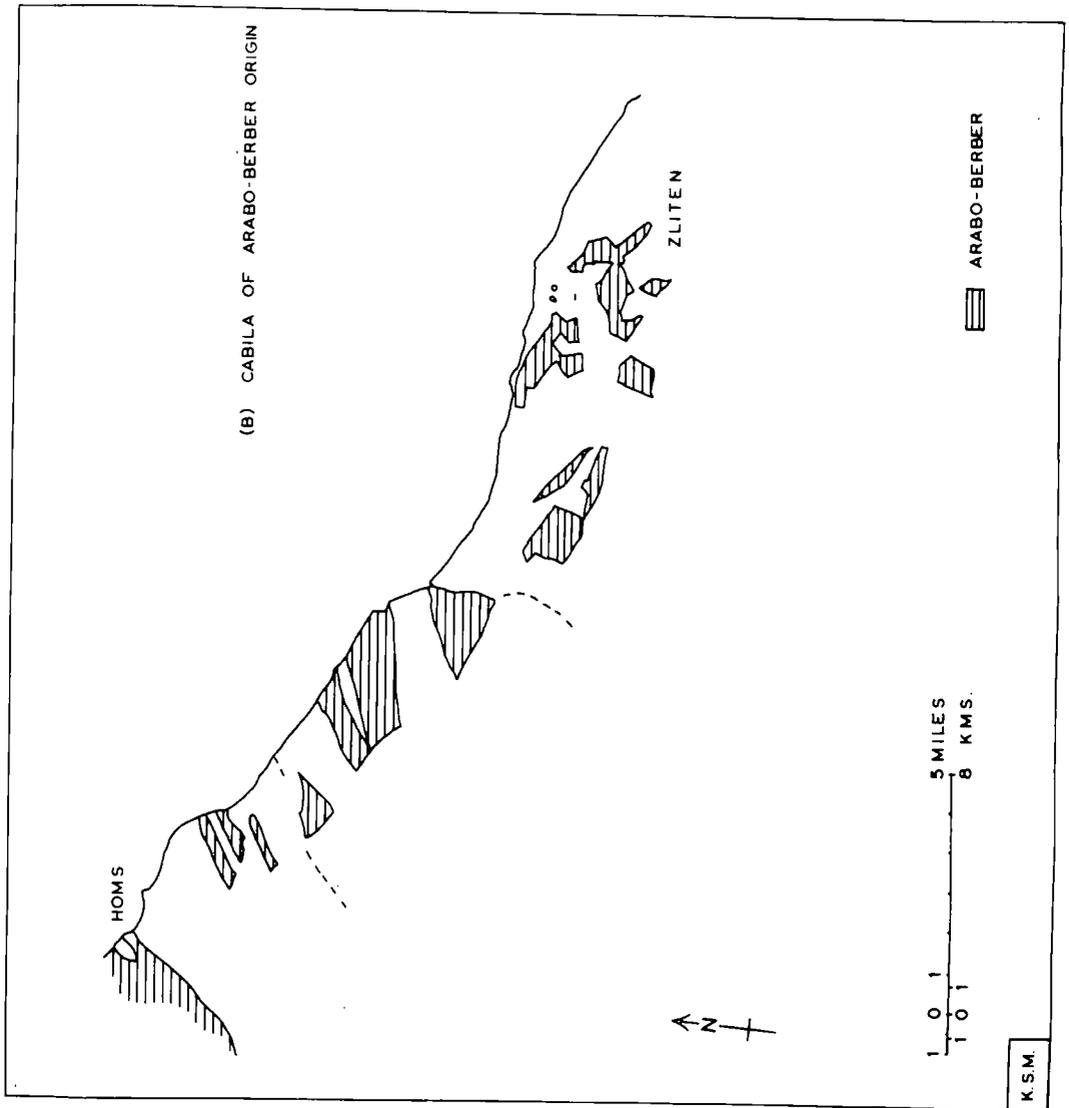


Figure 42

may be traced through the obvious signs of evert lips, wooly hair, platyrrhine nose and mesocephalic head shape.

This account of race origins, and, on a local scale tribal origins, indicates the extent of fission and fusion of races in Misuratio. To some extent, Figures 41 and 42 have sought to illustrate the zonal distribution of specific cultures and ethnic groups, but it should be remembered that racial inter-mixture and Arab cultural dominance have superimposed their own pattern on the area.

In Tripolitania, several other social groups exist alongside the orthodox cabila unit. They are made up of Sceriff, who came originally from Fez, marabouts, who infiltrated from Sakiel El-Hamra in Morocco, and Coleghli, who are descended from the Janissaries who entered with the Turks in 1551 AD.

The Sceriff or Scierfa constitute a religious hierarchy of the Islamic religion, claiming direct descent from the Prophet Mohammed. Their blood relationship with the prophet gives them a powerful standing in Moslem society, where they are looked upon as holy men with divine powers of fore-sight, whose duty it is to cleanse society of its ills. The head of the Sceriff is able to trace his ancestry to Fatma Ez-Zahra, the son of the prophet. The Ez-Zahra family fled to Morocco from Medina after persecution of the group by the Caliphate of Baghdad. The indigenous tribes of the Ulili area cared for the refugees; inter-marriage between the Ez-Zahra and the Aurba Berbers took place and the Sceriff group emerged from the

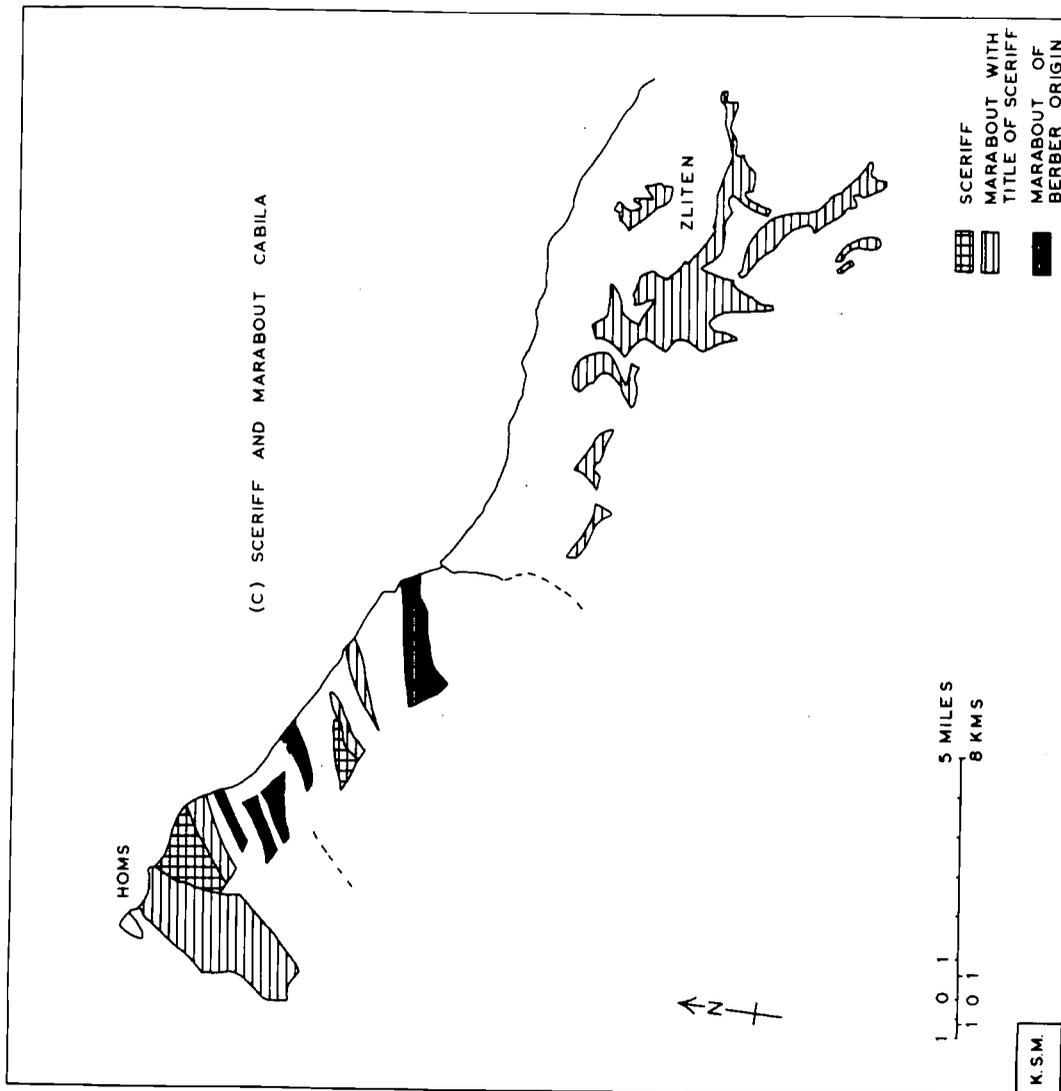


Figure 43

line. During the rule of the son of Fatma Ez-Zahra the centre of the sect moved to Fez and thereafter the descendants of Ez-Zahra spread throughout North Africa. Extensive tracts of land are found under their control in all the oases of Misuratio (Vide Figure 43).

The maraboutic tribes of Misuratio are direct or allegedly direct descendants of the subsidiary Ez-Zahra line. In some cases, the holy men who founded the marabout tribes originated from the Arab university of Cordoba, but, invariably, claim is made to succession from Ez-Zahra. Infiltration of marabout holy men into Misuratio began in the Fourteenth Century and continued intermittently for several centuries. This eastward movement from Algeria, Spain and Tunisia represents the normal flow of holy men towards Mecca, the latest one of which was the pilgrimage of the Sayyid Muhammad Bin Al-Sanusi Al-Hassani, the Great Sanusi. The true marabouts founded their religious devotions upon an ascetic life manifest through existence as hermits. In areas where their teachings and way of life made them acceptable to the local inhabitants, they settled and founded maraboutic dynasties pledged to the continuance and spread of the pure way of life.

Following in the wake of five centuries of unrest and invasion, the influence of the Marabout and Sceriff leaders was to be of great significance. Their work did much to lift the Berber peoples to a level of equality with the Arab conquerors, and thus accelerate the process of assimilation of Berber cultures into the Islamic tradition. Amongst the

Arab tribes the effects of the teachings of the holy men and their followers were to be seen in a tendency to sedentarisation exhibited by many semi-nomadic groups. This is especially applicable to the Zliten area, where the majority of the cabila were subjected to Sceriff and maraboutic infiltration, and where religious tradition became a strong force in tribal political and social life.

The human constituents of the marabout tribes is a complex and highly variable matter. At best they may be described in group form as a social agglomeration. Depont and Coppolani offer an interesting summary upon the make-up of the marabout cabila: - 'Dans les endroits déserts ou des marabouts conduit par le destin, avaient cessé de vivre et ou reposaient leur dépouilles mortelles, se réunissaient des tronçons épars de tribus, des fractions disloquées par les événements, la aussi se refugiaient les simples, les désertes, les fervents, les étrangers, les pauvres diables; et, avec le temps, de ces éléments si divers, naquirent des véritables agglomérations unies par les liens religieux, des tribus ennoblies par le souffle divin quise dégageait du tombeau de leur Saint vénéré, dont chacun prétendait descendre, et dont le nom se transmettait à tous de génération'. (54)

There is a distinction to be drawn between those holy tribes which are descended directly from a Sceriff lineage, and those which have no Sceriff affiliations. Of the former group, the Fuatir of Zliten are the largest element in Misuratino. The Marabouts having no Sceriff lineage are

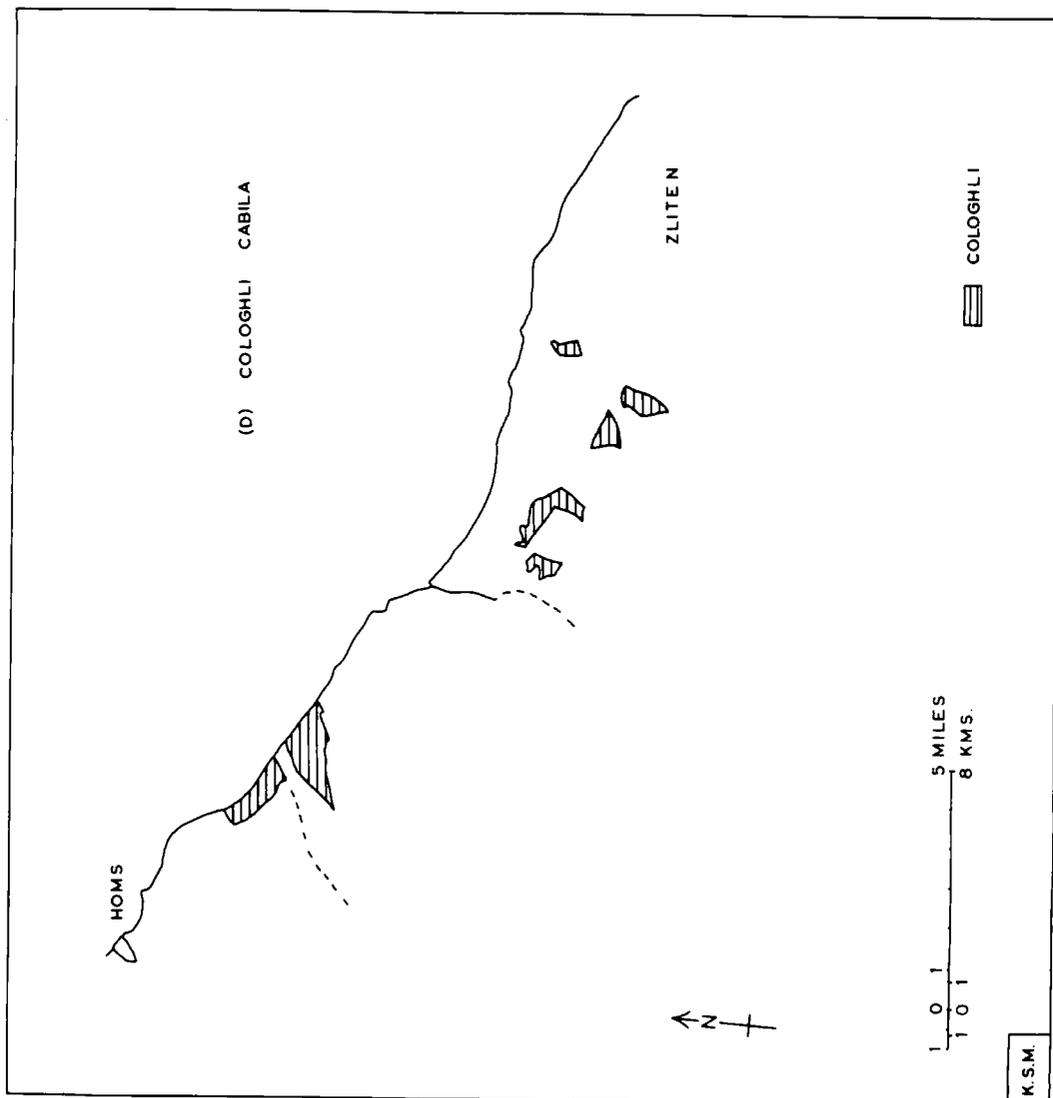


Figure 44

represented in Misuratio primarily by the El-Gehawat of Homs Oasis. Further maraboutic ramifications in terms of social groupings within the area are the tribes which are descended from the slaves of the marabouts, of which the Khoddam esc-Scech of Zliten Oasis, a tributary tribe of the Ulad esc-Scech, are an example in point. During Turkish times, the marabout and Sceriff groups were exempt from taxation and treated with great respect by the administration. This factor again accounts for the fact that tribes with holy attributes were amongst the more sedentary elements in the indigencus population at the time of the Italian conquest.

Many of the Janissary groups who settled in Tripolitania took the name of marabout and dropped their traditional name Iuldasc, which was retained by most other Janissaries in other parts of the Maghreb.

Of final consideration in this review of racial and social groups in Misuratio are the Cologhli (cul-oghli (Turkish)). These groups are descendants of a three way mixture of blood; Janissary, Berber and Christian slave. This latter element entered through the activities of the pirate bands of Tripoli, who took considerable numbers of female captives during their raids on ports and shipping in the Mediterranean. There are strong concentrations of Cologhli in the Sahel El-Ahamed, Zliten and particularly in Misurata Oases (Vide Figure 44). Agostini recorded the following numbers of Cologhli in the oases of Misuratio in 1917:-

<u>AREA</u>	<u>TOTAL POPULATION</u>	<u>COLOGHLI</u>
Homs Oasis	8,700	100
Sahel El-Ahamed	15,345	1,488
Zliten Oasis	33,000	2,700
Misurata Oasis	34,200	16,710

Data: Agostini, Popolazione della Tripolitania, 1917. (52)

The Cologhli are accepted as more or less equal members of society in Misuratino. They also constitute the major element in the population which is particularly amenable to the duties of administration, and, since Turkish times, they have formed the secretarial class in most areas. In keeping with this function, the Cologhli are often concentrated in and around the villages and towns.

There are strong Jewish groups located throughout Misuratino. It has been suggested that the Jewish peoples found in Tripolitania are residual sections of colonies which existed before the Hilalian invasion (55). Whatever their origin, they display characteristics closely akin to the Arabised Berbers, with distinctively pale skin pigmentation. In economic terms, they tend to be concerned with commerce and money-lending; following from this, they exhibit well defined concentration in the towns. Urban life has always been of a limited nature in Misuratino, and in consequence, there has been no separation of Jews into a hara quarter as there has been in the more developed urban units of the Maghreb. In the major villages of Homs, Zliten and Misurata, there tends to be a marked division between the Moslem and Jewish areas of settlement, but this has not been marked by any physical

barrier. In Homs, for example, the Jews tended to congregate along the road from the market to the harbour in the houses that are now occupied by the Post Office and local administration offices (Vide Figure 46).

In the Italian census conducted by Agostini in 1914, the following numbers of Jews were recorded:-

<u>AREA</u>	<u>1914</u>	<u>1946</u>
Homs	420	882 (Total District)
Sahel El-Ahamed	-	-
Zliten	750	781
Misurata	970	1,158

Date: (i) Agostini, Popolazione della Tripolitania, 1917. (52)

(ii) Sanderson, Italian Rule in Tripolitania, 1947.(56)

In the years up to 1946, the Jewish communities in Tripolitania were comparatively large, especially since they tended to be in concentrated groups. In 1947-48 the numbers of Jews in Misuratio declined rapidly. In the first instance this was a result of ill-feeling produced by a local conflict between Jew and non-Jew following the murder of an Arab by a member of the Jewish community. Resentment against the Jews was fanned by the growing troubles in Mandate Palestine. During and after the Palestine war of 1948, the antagonism against the Jews came to a head in a series of riots, and many Jews left Libya for Israel. The Jewish population of the area was generally poor, since their lands were limited in extent and commerce was of a parochial nature. It is note-worthy that all the poorer elements left for Israel, where they could fare no worse than they had done in Tripolitania. At present there

are no official statistics available to indicate the exact numbers of Jews remaining in the oases of Misuratio. A scale of decline may be taken from the following figures, extracted from various sources, which illustrate the rate of the Jewish exodus from Tripolitania as a whole:-

JEWISH POPULATION IN TRIPOLITANIA

1914	16,000	(Agostini, 1917)	(52)
1946	28,000	(B.M.A., 1947)	(24)
1950	13,000	(U.N., 1951)	(57)
1954	4,449	(Census of Libya, 1958)	

The 4,449 Jews reported in Tripolitania in 1954 have been reduced since the Census by migration to Israel, and the present day figures would be more accurately stated in the region of 4,000. In Misuratio there are only an insignificant number of Jews left, and of these, the majority are to be found in Homs and Misurata, where they have been able to retain their financial interest in industry. In total, they cannot number more than 30-40 persons, and this is suggested as a generous estimate by the provincial authorities.

The exodus of Jews from the area was the last of the great migrations of population from Misuratio. In its proper context, the movement may be considered as completely in keeping with the historical pattern which has been traced in earlier parts of this chapter. It is true that the mass migration of Jews took place recently after several centuries apparent peace and order in the territory; and it is again true that the movement involved modern means of transport. But, in many ways, it must be accepted as yet another reaction to the push and pull

mechanism which has operated in the region since historical times. It also serves the purpose of demonstrating that the political, social and religious framework of the area is still in a state of flux beyond purely parochial terms. Further movements of this nature must not be excluded from the realms of possibility; this discussion of racial, cultural and religious affiliations is in no way a final summary upon the inter-action of the communities of Misuratio. Libya as a whole, and Misuratio as a part of the political system, is essentially kaleidoscopic in character, and a dis-arrangement of one or more of the groups in the pattern may well change the quasi-static form of society. The juxtaposition of an urban and sedentary Tripolitania and a pastoral and nomadic Cyrenaica: of a cosmopolitan and politically conscious class and a powerful and puritanical zavia: of a Pan-Arab nationalist movement, and a traditionally independent tribal organisation, gives little ground for accepting the status quo as the final character of Libya.

(5) Tribal Settlement and Urban Units in Misuratio.

(a) Types of Dwellings in Misuratio

Housing types in Misuratio exhibit great variety; they vary both horizontally from village to tent, and vertically from landless labourer to trader and administrator. This vertical cleavage is reinforced further by the presence of many quite distinct racial groups within the area; this is reflected in the existence of Turkish houses, Italian farmhouses, modern European villas, all of which are super-imposed upon the Arab

pattern of settlement.

The census authorities in Libya recognise the following dwelling house types; villas and apartments; haush; bedawin tents; shanties; caves and sundry other units of collective occupation. This official classification, whilst basically sound in its application to Misuratio, tends to blurr the underlying differences in dwelling types which have been mentioned in the fore-going paragraph, and does not satisfactorily delimit the bounds of sedentary and pastoral occupation. Thus, there is no indication in the census report to show whether shanties are very poor representations of haush, or, alternatively, summer residences of the semi-nomads. With these factors in mind, an analysis of dwelling types and their relation to economic and social circumstances obtaining in the area will be undertaken.

The bedawin tent stands at one end of the scale of horizontal differentiation between economic groups in Misuratio. In terms of economic occupation, the 'bedawin' reference in this context pertains to the style of tent and does not imply usage in the true bedawin pattern such as one finds in Cyrenaica. It may be seen from the figures illustrated in the table following, that tent dwellings account for significant portions of indigenous accommodation in all the administrative districts, with particularly high returns for Homs District.

BEDAWIN TENTS - NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES IN MISURATINO

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Homs	3424	22.0%
Zliten	958	9.5%
Misurata	1244	10.3%

Date: Census of Libya 1958.

Most of the tents of the semi-nomads are of simple design, consisting of a single stretch of felt composition, which is spread over a number of wooden props. The tents of the Sciucr of the Sahel El-Ahamed are small in comparison with the larger traditional tents of the Cyrenaican tribes. The radii of the tents found in Homs District rarely exceed four or five feet. The tents assume an ultimate rectangular pattern when they are pitched and pinned down with limestone boulders. Where scrub is available, it is normal for rough, thorny branches to be scattered about the tent walls to protect the tent cloth from animals. The tent may not represent a complete dwelling unit, since the semi-nomadic tribes are not constantly on the move, and are able, therefore, to afford the luxury of more dead weight than the true nomadic tribes. One result of this may be seen in the form of lean-to annexes of straw, esparto or wood built against the sides of the tents. These annexes assume greater dimensions with longer sojourns in one location; the more frequent the necessity for movement, the less inclination to construct additional living space. Many of the tribes of Misuratino, excluding nomadic groups such as the Maadan of Misurata, tend to develop the lattice-work appendages of the tents into permanent constructions.

Eventually, one or more families of a semi-nomadic cabila tends to acquire a permanent interest in the oases and thus relinquishes its economic and material need for tentage. In many cases, tentage persists after the economic need for it has gone. This is a result partly of high prices for haush, and partly a result of the fact that the decision to stabilise the dwelling place is not a conscious move. To illustrate this latter factor, we may quote the case of the Bait Amor of the En-Negiahat of Homs. During interview, the Shaikh was adamant in asserting that he was not a farmer but a keeper of herds and a man of the desert. His sons were actively working the suani of the oasis in the region of Leptis, and when the Shaikh was asked about this activity, his replies made it clear that he regarded cultivation as a temporary occupation for his family. He wanted to return to the Ghibla pastures after he had had time to re-build his stock holding. On the other hand, his sons, who were farming the land, took the view that they would not leave the oasis again unless compelled to do so by economic difficulties with cultivation. The significant break is quite forcefully illustrated by the fact that the Shaikh of the bait still lived in his tents surrounded by a large accumulation of lattice annexes, whilst his sons had built permanent haush on their land. The sons were convinced that their father would not take to the semi-nomadic life again. Economic circumstances had forced him to become more or less sedentary; nonetheless, in the Shaikh's mind there remained a degree of resistance to the change. In



ABOVE Permanent shanty dwelling - Sahel El-Ahamed

BELOW Single room haush with annex - Homs Oasis.



many ways he typifies the transition stage in the move from the tents to the tent-shanty.

The haush is the main unit of agrarian settlement in Misuratio:-

HAUSH - NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES IN MISURATIO

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Homs	7863	51.5%
Zliten	7784	78.0%
Misurata	10212	85.0%

Data: Census of Libya, 1958.

In form it is a square building, comprising an outer section of rooms, which enclose a small central courtyard (waset el-haush). On some of the older buildings, the outer wall is castellated as a means of defence, and is invariably of double walling. In the larger haush, the entry to the waset el-haush is made through the bab (gateway), but in most of the buildings the normal Arabic phrase sgifa (corridor) is more applicable. Most haush break down into four large rooms (dar) (Vide Figure 40). The use of rooms is more or less fixed by custom but varies with the number of family groups who are resident in it. A wealthy man who owns a complete haush divides the rooms according to a fixed pattern. In Misuratio this division is as follows: one room for each wife; one room for reception of guests; one room for the children; if there is any space left, a further room will be used for a resident worker or domestic servant.

Owners of haush who are not affluent are likely to divide



ABOVE Shanty dwellings - Homs Oasis.

BELOW Cave dwelling - Homs Oasis.



off the rooms so that each major room accommodates one family. There are cases where this division is carried further, but this is a diminishing rather than increasing state of affairs. Pressure upon rural housing has decreased in Misuratio corresponding to the drift of peoples to the large towns since 1955. In the larger cities, outside Misuratio, overcrowding of haush has become a disturbing social and sanitary problem, but this need not concern us here.

Shanty dwellings have become an important feature of the settlement pattern in Tripolitania. In many ways, they cannot be considered as a completely modern phenomenon. In earlier paragraphs of this discussion, it was shown how the emergence of a sedentary class from the ranks of the semi-nomads was achieved in part by the use of tentage in the cases although the original purpose of this specialised construction had gone. It was also shown that the tentage gradually acquired additions to floor space by the use of small annexes made of light material, which could be woven readily into a lattice-work wall or roof. The cycle of development arises when the tent wears out and is not replaced and the now sedentary farmer has no alternative accommodation. The normal effect of this situation is for the production of a shanty house of lattice-work supported by wooden poles augmented by mud walls or pillars. This process of sedentarisation has been in operation for almost a century, and with it, the constant presence of the shanty - the compromise product between the era of pastoralism and the beginnings of sedentary agriculture.

In some of the semi-nomadic cabila of the area, and one may refer here to the Mharaghna of the Sahel El-Ahamed, annual movement between the oasis and the steppe invokes a response of two different house types. In the summer, the Mharaghna return to their shanties which have been left since the previous year, or, alternatively, build new shanties for their residence in the oases. During the period when most of the tribe is located in the steppe pastures, tents are used as the standard dwelling units. This also gives support to the suggestion that the shanty is not an innovation to oasis life. The significant features emerging from the use of the shanty are the rate at which it has spread as a dwelling unit, and the change in the materials that make up the flimsy construction.

In Misuratio the term shanty is applied to rural dwellings sited on agricultural land, providing shelter for local cabila or their smaller fractions, who are stationed there either temporarily, semi-permanently or permanently. The villages of Misuratio do not exhibit shanty development on the bidanville pattern, which has become so established a part of the North African scene. In Tripolitania as a whole, the only bidanville development is in the city of Tripoli itself, where the collection of an incipient proletariat with no tribal roots has been associated with the growth of the city since Italian times. In the villages of the oases, there are poor areas, but in all cases the dwellings in these quarters are poor haush, not shanties.

Shanties which are occupied on a semi-permanent or

permanent basis have taken on new character through a change in the materials used in their construction. In place of the laboriously woven lattice-work sheets, that were used extensively for walling and roofing, flattened petrol tins and packing cases are now in general use. These constructions are less picturesque than their predecessors, but, from the practical point of view, they provide more protection against rain and sand storms.

The numbers of shanties recorded in the oases of Misuratio and their percentage importance as a dwelling unit are illustrated by the following figures:-

SHANTIES - NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES IN MISURATIO

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Homs	189	1.2%
Zliten	1149	11.5%
Misurata	477	3.9%

Data: Census of Libya, 1958.

Other classified dwellings which are mainly rural in distribution are caves, and 'unimproved dwellings' of the census classification. The importance of these dwellings in the component oases of Misuratio is illustrated by the following statistics:-

CAVES AND IMPROVED PREMISES - NUMBERS IN MISURATIO

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>NUMBER OF CAVES</u>	<u>NUMBER OF IMPROVED PREMISES</u>
Homs	75	15
Zliten	6	5
Misurata	6	5

Data: Census of Libya, 1958.

Cave dwellings may be considered as yet another extension of the shanty in both economic and social spheres. They represent a transitional stage in the change from pastoral to sedentary occupation. Amongst the Sciucr cabila of the Sahel and Zliten, cave dwellings in use are not permanently occupied by the same family or group of families. They are utilised, in fact, as permanent stations for that segment of the cabila, that is left to attend to cropping in the oases whilst the group as a whole is engaged in working the semi-desert land for shifting cultivation and pasture. The individual families in the cabila have no interest in maintaining a haush, since the bait responsible for oasis cultivation changes each year; nonetheless, it is useful for the cabila to keep a cheap and simple habitation available in the vicinity of their oasis possessions. The large number of cave dwellings reported by the census in Homs District arises from the fact that the District of Homs, opposed to the Oasis of Homs, includes large areas of the Msellatan zone within its boundaries (Vide Figure 50). In the Msellatan area, the availability of caves which may be adapted for human occupation is so great that there is no incentive for the peoples of the zone to set up either haush or shanties unless they are resident in the villages of the Kussabat Plain<sup>(20)</sup>. The only cave dwelling in Homs Oasis is located in the Wadi Zennad (Vide Figure 76).

'Improved premises' included in the census are those ente case colonice that have been restored to the Libyan



ABOVE Este farmhouse - Dafnia.

BELOW Nahima Estate.



Government under the terms of the Italo-Libyan Accords, and that have been granted to Arab lessees. The use of ex-Italian property by Arabs has been confined mainly to the semi-nomads, since the distribution of the majority of case colonice in Misurata is limited to the peripheral steppe, which falls in large measure under the domain of the semi-nomadic cabila. The Maadan Cabila of Misurata, for example, occupy several of the disused case colonice at Kararin. The semi-nomads occupy these houses entirely in their own tradition. Thus, the main body of the farmhouse is used as a stable for livestock, whilst the Arab and his family take up residence in their tent or shanty outside the farmhouse itself. The number of this type of dwelling is likely to increase in the near future as the effects of the Italo-Libyan Treaty become more apparent. Further examination of this subject may be found later in the thesis (Vide Chapter 6, pp.668).

The location of the Italian private concessions and demographic estates may be seen in Figure 24. Also shown on this Figure is the Arab estate at Wadi Caam. Both the Italian and Arab agricultural development schemes utilised a geometric ground-plan, whereby the landscape was divided into a multitude of farm plots of equal area. The siting of farmhouses was dictated entirely by the geometric plan of the estates, each farm plot carrying a farmhouse. The Ente case colonica was built to a standard pattern of three rooms, two of which were bedrooms and one a living room-cum-kitchen. Italian farmhouses are constructed of rough stone and finished with a

plaster covering. The roofs are flat so that they may be used for water catchment, storage and ripening levels for the agricultural produce of the farm.

Shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, the Italian administration began construction of a large demographic estate at Nahima, that was intended for the settlement of Arab soldiers who had served with the Italian Forces. Ma'mara on the Jefara Plain is an example of a similar scheme. With the outbreak of war, the scheme was discontinued and little was added to the skeleton of the estate. Of recent months (Spring 1960), the Libyan Government has begun a project to resuscitate the fabric, and there is some hope that the farms will be occupied within the next year. Yet a further example of the settlement house is to be found in use on the Wadi Gaam Settlement. The new Arab farmhouses represent a compromise between European ideas and traditional Arab elements. The haush form is discarded on Wadi Gaam Settlement in favour of a compact lay-out on the style of the casa colonica of the Italian estates. The interior is Arab in conception, with the traditional features of the haush incorporated within the apparently Europeanised exterior. Thus entry is gained through the sgifa, and the dar are quite separate from each other. Mention has been made already of the Maadan semi-nomads in relation to the casa colonice at Kararim estate. The settlement units used at Wadi Gaam Settlement exhibit the same lack of adaptation to the Arab cultural pattern, since they lack a waset el-haush. The Arab owners have compensated for the want of a

waset el-haush by providing shanty annexes to the farm houses so that their women folk may move about the haush without necessity for the veil. It may be expected that the saving in ground space effected by the adoption of European style will be recognised as illusory, and that there will be a future reversion to the haush form with the integral waset el-haush.

(b) The Village

The place of the village in rural society is governed by the fact that it is an alien institution in respect to tribal organisation. In the first place, the towns and villages of Misuratio were developed as military posts, or, more often, as centres for administration by occupying powers. A brief recapitulation of the distribution of the artisans and their ethnic origins will serve to show the extent to which alien elements predominate in village life. In all the villages of Misuratio large Cologhli settlements are to be found, usually associated with administrative employment. In the pre-1948 situation, Jews were widely distributed through the villages of the area. Their interest in esparto grass exportation from Homs was one of the major factors behind the development of the village. At Misurata, the growth of the carpet manufacturing industry resulted from the twin influences of the Turkish occupation and the capital resources of the resident Jews. Greek traders and fishermen are semi-permanent features of the three larger villages - Homs, Zliten and Misurata. Thus

village organisation is in essence of foreign imposition upon the area, and a development independent of the tribal structure of indigenous society.

It is likely that the sites of the present villages have been occupied for several centuries in various forms. Local tradition has it that Homs, Misurata, and, later, Zliten were local collecting centres for the semi-nomadic tribes during their summer residence in the oases. The Arbi cultivators might have provided a permanent base of population for these settlement sites. It is certain that the tribal segments whose origins were mainly Berber - the Sillin of Homs for example, confined their habitat to the littoral steppe and were never out of contact with the oases for long periods. In these circumstances, it is possible that some modest form of village life existed in desultory form towards the end of the period of Hilalian unrest.

The coming of the Turks brought relative security to the towns in which they set up their regional head-quarters. Homs, Zliten and Misurata had importance as centres of Turkish administration. The presence of the garrison permitted the unhindered growth of market functions within the village boundaries, and annual marketing between the aliens of the villages and the nomadic cabila of the steppe interior took on a more permanent aspect. At the time of the Turkish occupation, the countryside had become less disturbed by inter-tribal warfare and the incursions of the bedawin groups of the Ghibla were less frequent. Greater peace encouraged the growth of

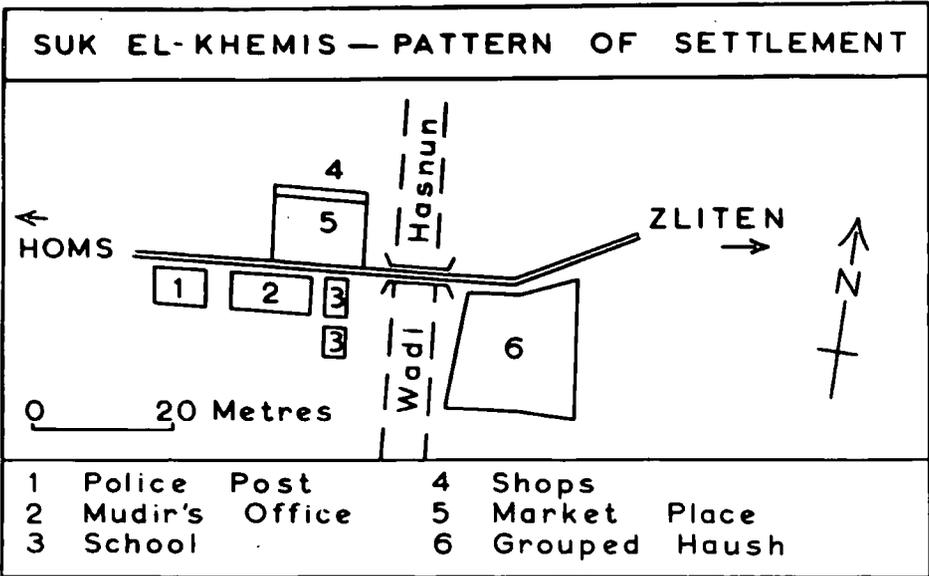


Figure 45

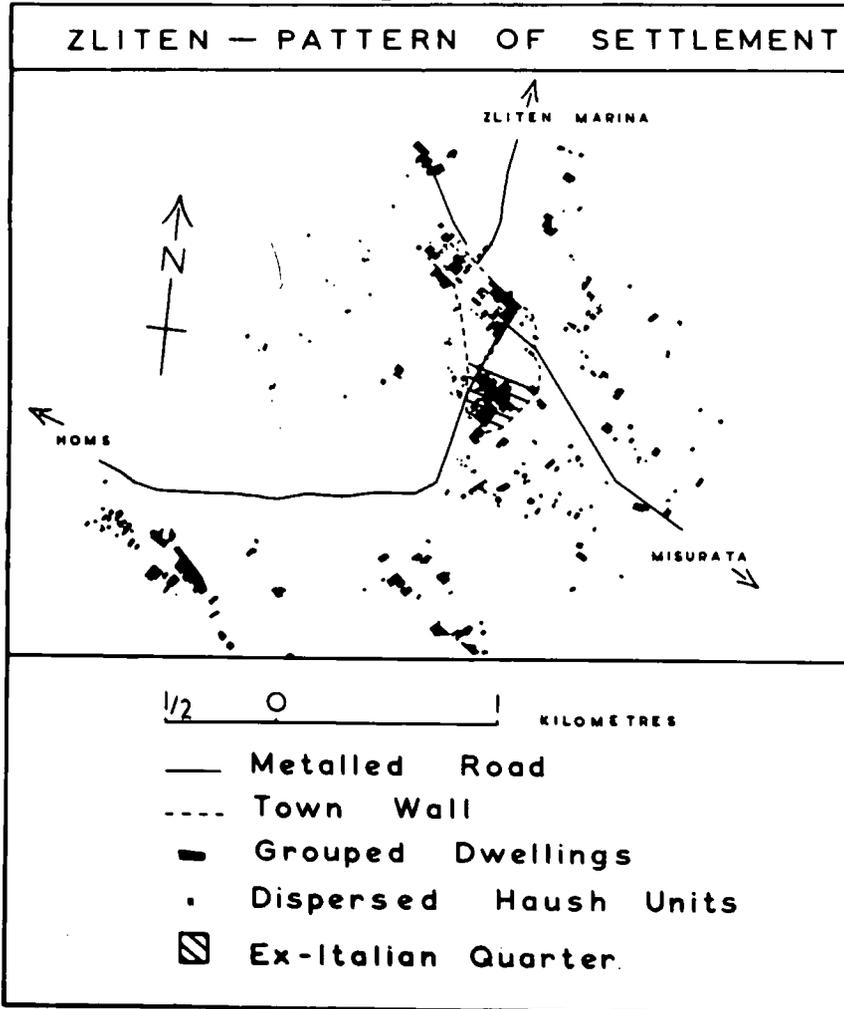


Figure 47

local suk, bir and gasr centres in the oases, and to some small extent in the littoral steppe zone. These subsidiary centres differed from the villages in that they were temporary gathering points for trade, barter or watering of flocks. The villages proper tended to be used by tribes with no common bond, whilst the smaller centres were used as internal meeting points for individual tribes or other unitary groups. The temporary nature of the bir and suk of the Arab economic and social organisation dictated that there was no real community development around the centre. Bir Dufan, for example, still used on occasions by the Orfella and Zliten cabila, has only one haush at the present day, and this of recent origin.

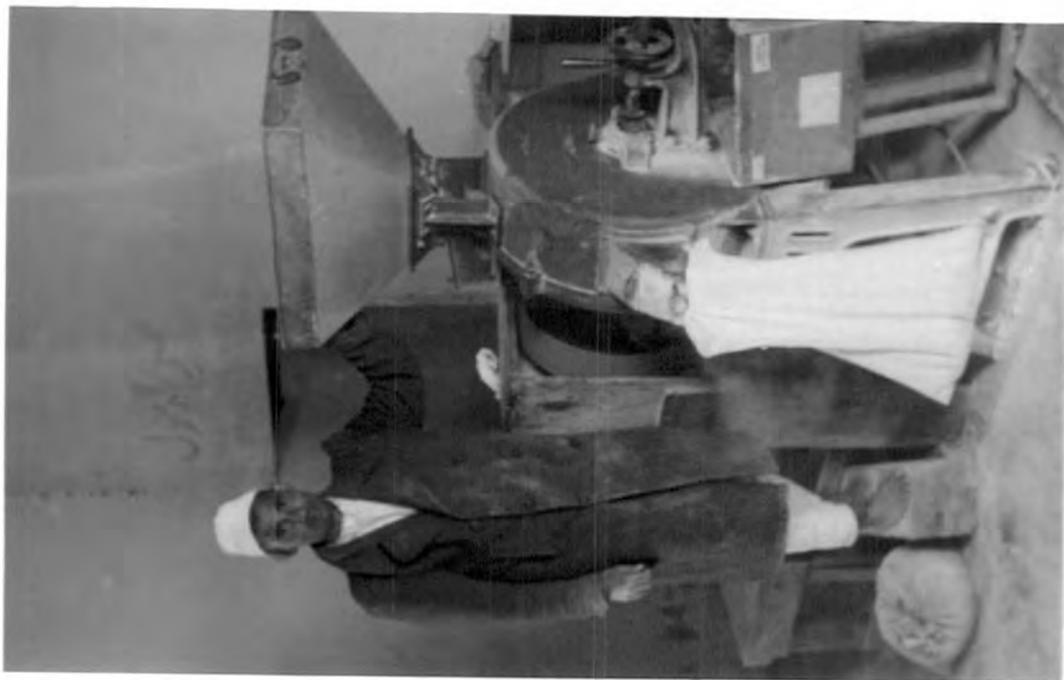
Suk El-Khemis and Suk El-Giuma represent Arab centres which grew beyond the bounds of temporary occupation. Both function as markets without further community development. Exchange without manufacture has meant absolute specialisation of function to the exclusion of further development. The pattern of Suk El-Khemis in the Sahel El-Ahamed may be represented by two lines of shops facing onto the main road. Beyond the shops and the minor official buildings, there is nothing but the patchwork of suan (Vide Figure 45).

The significant features of the urban geography of Homs may be seen illustrated in Figure 46. H.S. Cowper reported in 1897; "Khoms is a tiny resort of modern growth owing its origins and present existence to the esparto trade."<sup>(58)</sup>. This is rather an over-estimate of the influence of the esparto



ABOVE Turkish houses - Homs.

BELOW Modern Arab flour mill - Homs.



trade on the development of Homs, but shows the limited extent of growth in the village before its arrival. In fact, Homs had been used by the Turks as an administrative centre since their occupation of the country, and especially after the fall of the Karamali Dynasty. In many ways, the village functioned about the house of the administrator and the quarters of his troops until the arrival of British interest in the esparto grass reserves of the interior wadi basins. Exploitation of esparto grass imposed a new phase of development upon the administrative and trading functions of the village. The esparto trade began in Homs in 1873, and in the year of Cowper's visit, he describes the changes apparent since that time:-

"Although in the rear (of the village) lie the usual squalid Arab huts, the chief features of the town are one or two wide streets, in which are the residences of the halfa (esparto) industries, the Turkish officials and the telegraph company. The large barracks, the light house and the halfa yards all help to add a feeling of life and industry." Most of these developments referred to by Cowper were located in the street marked from the main through road, running to the harbour, where both Turkish and Jewish communities were settled. Cowper's remarks make it clear that the Arab quarter of the village remained as a separate entity, with the suk and artisan element existing as socially and economically isolated units.

The Italian occupation brought radical changes in the social framework of the village of Homs, and brought in its

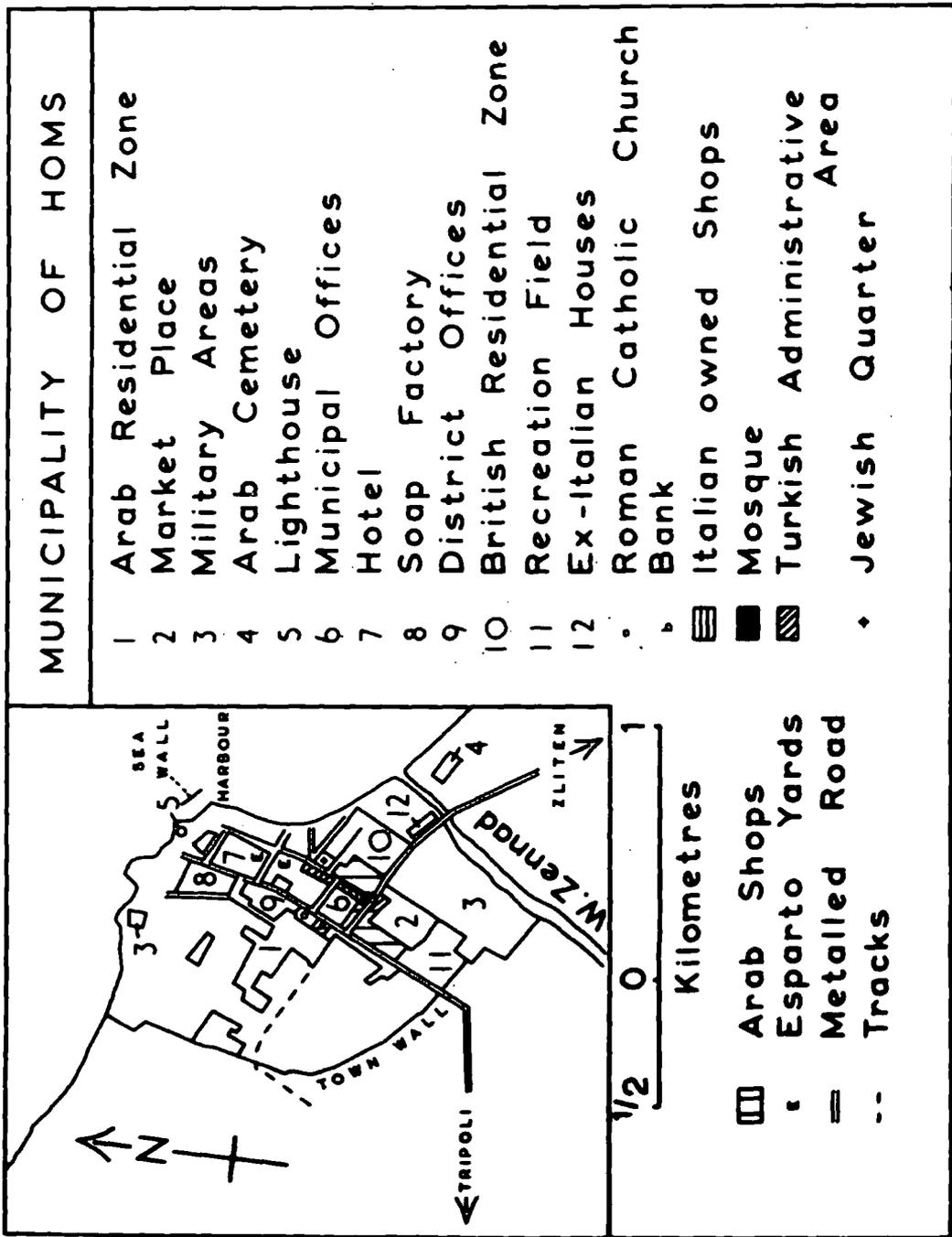


Figure 46

train much constructional development. Most of the buildings appearing in Figure 46 are to be dated to the Italian period. The old Arab quarter was swept away by modern development, and re-housed along the line of the main road. Material change which resulted from the arrival of the Italians became evident particularly after the second Italo-Sanusi War, and reached a peak in the period of intensive colonisation in the late thirties. Correspondingly, social and economic development took place during the same period and at the same rate.

In the following section of this chapter, analysis is made of the Italian influence upon the indigenous social structure. Here, we have mentioned only those influences in the Italian penetration of Arab society, that had their effects in village life in Misuratio.

Zliten emerged as a village unit at much the same time as Homs. Beginning as a convenient meeting place for cabila in the area, it later took on a more permanent form as a trading point. Zliten was not a foreign creation in the style of Homs. The penetration of the oases by the Sceriff and marabout sects led to an earlier amenability to sedentarise around the mosques and the zavia in the village. Administration was carried on from the village during Turkish times, but it was regarded as a subsidiary centre to Homs. There were no Turkish barracks at Zliten, and the development of the village was confined to the construction of houses for Turkish officials and the Telegraph Company. Indigenous activity centred around the religious institutions and the small suk,



ABOVE Panorama of Homs harbour and precincts.

BELOW Market day at Homs



where local exchange and barter was conducted. Alien communities in the village accounted for a large proportion of the population; the Jews made up a trading and artisan class in the area north of the village centre; Greek fishermen and other minor traders represented a floating population of varying numbers.

Italian influence had a major effect upon the development of the village, but Zliten was passed over as an administrative centre, since Misurata offered a better geographical position for control over the Orfella districts of the south. It may be seen from Figure 47 that Italian buildings in the village are limited to those needed for local government. The fact that the Italian barracks are situated outside the village tends to minimise the dimensions of the ground plan as against similar diagrammatic representation of Homs and Misurata. Zliten Marina, situated some fivekilometres to the north is entirely an Italian development intended to tap the tunny fish resources of the seaboard. Zliten Marina is still in use, but the spread of buildings reflects rather the military installations than true industrial premises.

At the present day, Zliten is the most Arab of the coastal villages with a greater proportion of indigenous constructions than any of the other settlements. The presence of the mosques, the marabout tombs and the savia have helped to give the village a genuine Arab character. The poverty and the basic under-development of the surrounding oasis tend to retard the growth of Zliten to the extent that it exhibits a static

total of population and a correspondingly high rate of permanent emigration. As a social and economic unit, it represents the past rather than the future.

Misurata has more obscure origins than either of the preceding villages. There are many divergent legends concerning the beginnings of the town on its present site. Two of these deserve some attention. One strong possibility is that during the first Turkish occupation of the country, slave trading across the Saharan routes was a profitable pursuit followed by the traders and the caravaners of the coastal districts. One of the largest terminals for the trans-Saharan trade was Misurata, which was the most accessible port and market for routes via Sebha, Hon and Suk El-Gemal. Misurata enjoyed advantage over Tripoli, since the hold of the Turkish administration in the capital was stronger than in Misurata; taxation in Misurata was therefore less onerous and attractive to foreign traders who bought slaves at the coast. Large numbers of Jews, Maltese, and Derna people gathered in Misurata to supervise the buying and transportation of slaves after their arrival from the Sudan. The presence of aliens with capital for investment stimulated the growth of small but important industries, and especially the growth of carpet making in the village.

A second tradition has it that the Misuratans tended to turn to trading and other activities after their rights to the Sirtican pastures had been successfully challenged by the Orfella and Tarhuna groups. Most of the so-called trading activity was

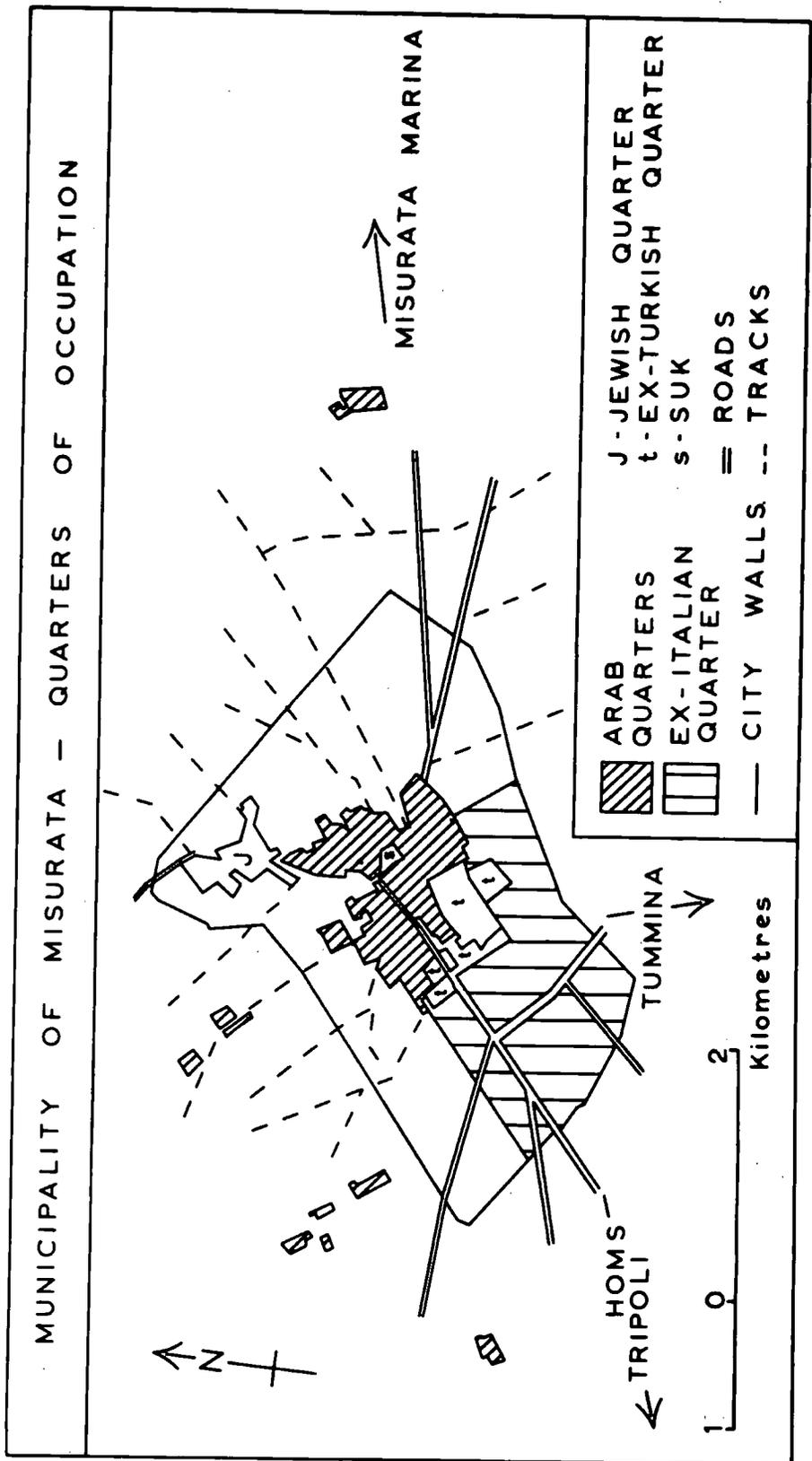


Figure 48

concerned with protection of caravans through their territory. Success in this field eventually led the cabila groups to extend their protection to the coastal settlements. Far from discouraging trade, the protection of caravan routes by the Misuratans stimulated commercial activity in the region. There were only eight large groups in the area extending along the west of the Gulf of Sirte, all working in reasonable harmony, hence it was an easy matter for traders to come to a working arrangement with them. Other routes to the coast shared a common disadvantage; the territory through which they passed was inhabited by a multitude of tribes and tribal fractions of uncertain allegiance, where security of transit could not be assured. In the Misurata region, all caravans arrived at their destinations and the trading posts were safe, since the cabila were as reliant upon trade as the merchants.

We may assume that both legends hold some truth and are not mutually exclusive.

After a long period of decline following upon the cessation of the trans-Saharan slave trade, Misurata expanded during the era of Italian occupation. The town was well situated for the purpose of administering the Eastern province of Tripolitania, which extended south to include large areas of the inner steppe lands (Vide Figure 49). To cater for the needs of the civil and military administration, a new town was built alongside the old village and contiguous with it on the west and south (Vide Figure 48). The new town received fresh impetus after 1937 when the agricultural estates of Crispi (Tummina), Garibaldi

(Dafnia) and Gioda (Kerarim) were developed. Corresponding with the construction of the estates, some small scale industrial establishments were opened in the town to anticipate the production from the land. Civil amenities, including cafes, cinemas and advanced education facilities were also built during this later phase of colonial administration.

Misurata Marina, intended as an out-port for the parent town, was part of the development plan for the area. To some extent, the harbour had military importance. The period of Arab unrest during the First World War indicated that the only real hold of the administration in times of weakness was through the ports. Misurata Marina, in common with other harbour works in Misuratino, was intended as a military staging port as well as an outlet for the interior.

Italian development activity impinged broadly upon Arab economic life, since the labour demand by the administration could not be met from the metropolitan country - and in the first place was not intended to be met from this source. With the growth of public utilities, recruitment of Arabs for the Italian forces, and development of large agricultural estates, the indigenous peoples were increasingly attracted to the urban units as represented in Misuratino. High wages and civil amenities available in the villages converted many Arabs from their traditional dislike of town life. With this critical change in attitude, Arabs became important elements in village life. In the initial stages of transition, participation in village labour and industry was obscured by the fact that most

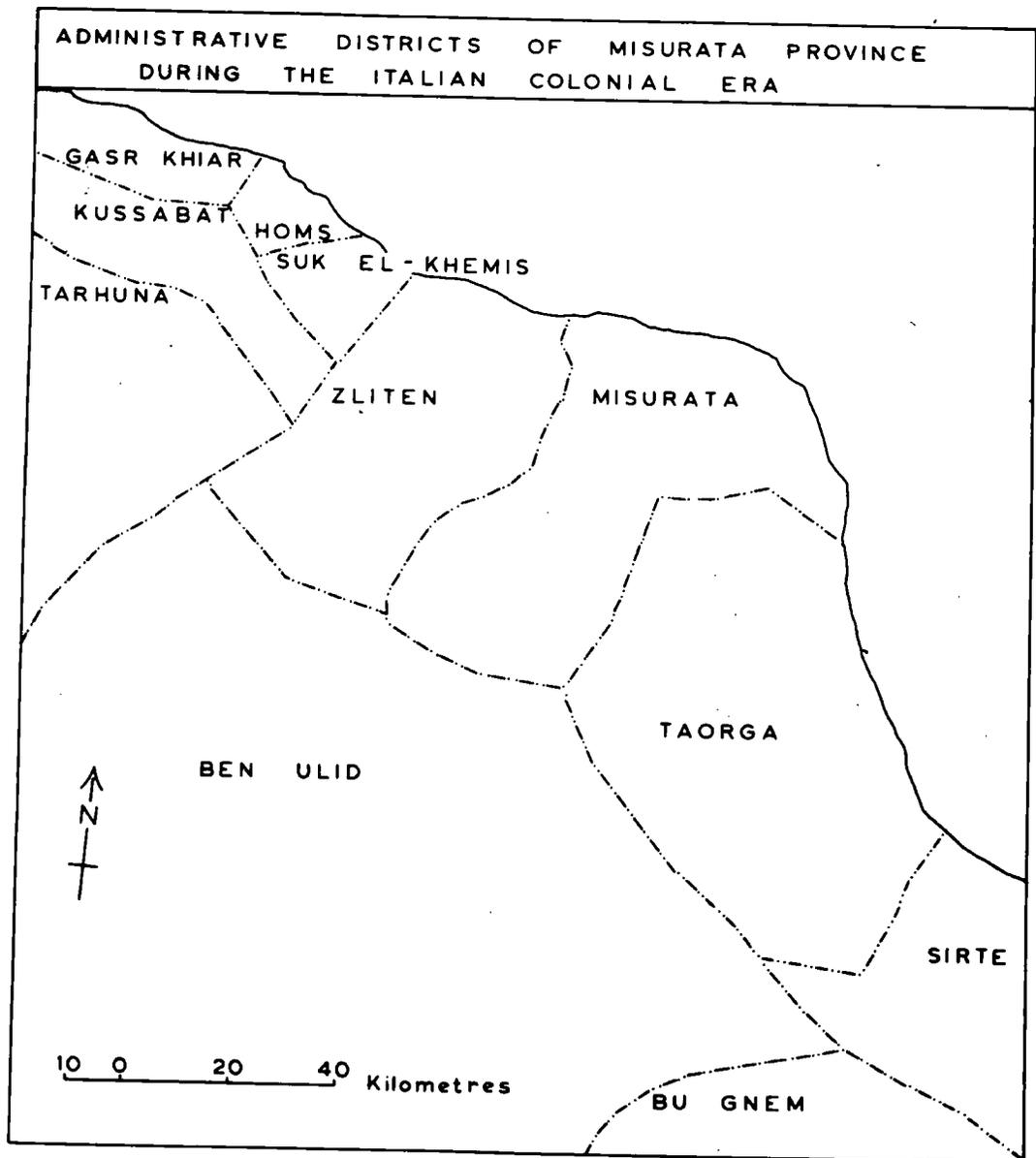


Figure 49

of the Arabs retained their links with the cabila organisation and retained their interests in land. Even people who became traders and administrators tended to keep their agricultural holdings. Furthermore, Italian interest in village life until 1950-55 tended to obscure the relative importance of indigenous peoples in urban units. Recently, the full extent of the trans-migration of Arab social attitude and economic pre-occupation from the farm to the town has been realised in numerical and financial terms. Since 1951, local government by the Arabs, and the decline in the influence of alien communities; Italians 1945 et seq; Jews 1948; British 1951; has brought about the final transformation of the villages into true indigenous units.

(6) Tribal Organisation in Misuratio.

The organisation of the cabila of Misuratio to a large extent is a legacy of the days when all the tribes were nomadic in nature. Basically, the social structure is egalitarian, paternalist and founded upon family affiliation. In local terms, administration is carried out through channels which have existed since the tribes first came to the area. Sedentarisation has meant a change in function for some of the cabila officers, and a broadening of function for others, but very few positions have been removed completely.

The first major division of Misuratio into districts is a relatively new one dating back to the time of the Turkish occupation, when administration was achieved through local area

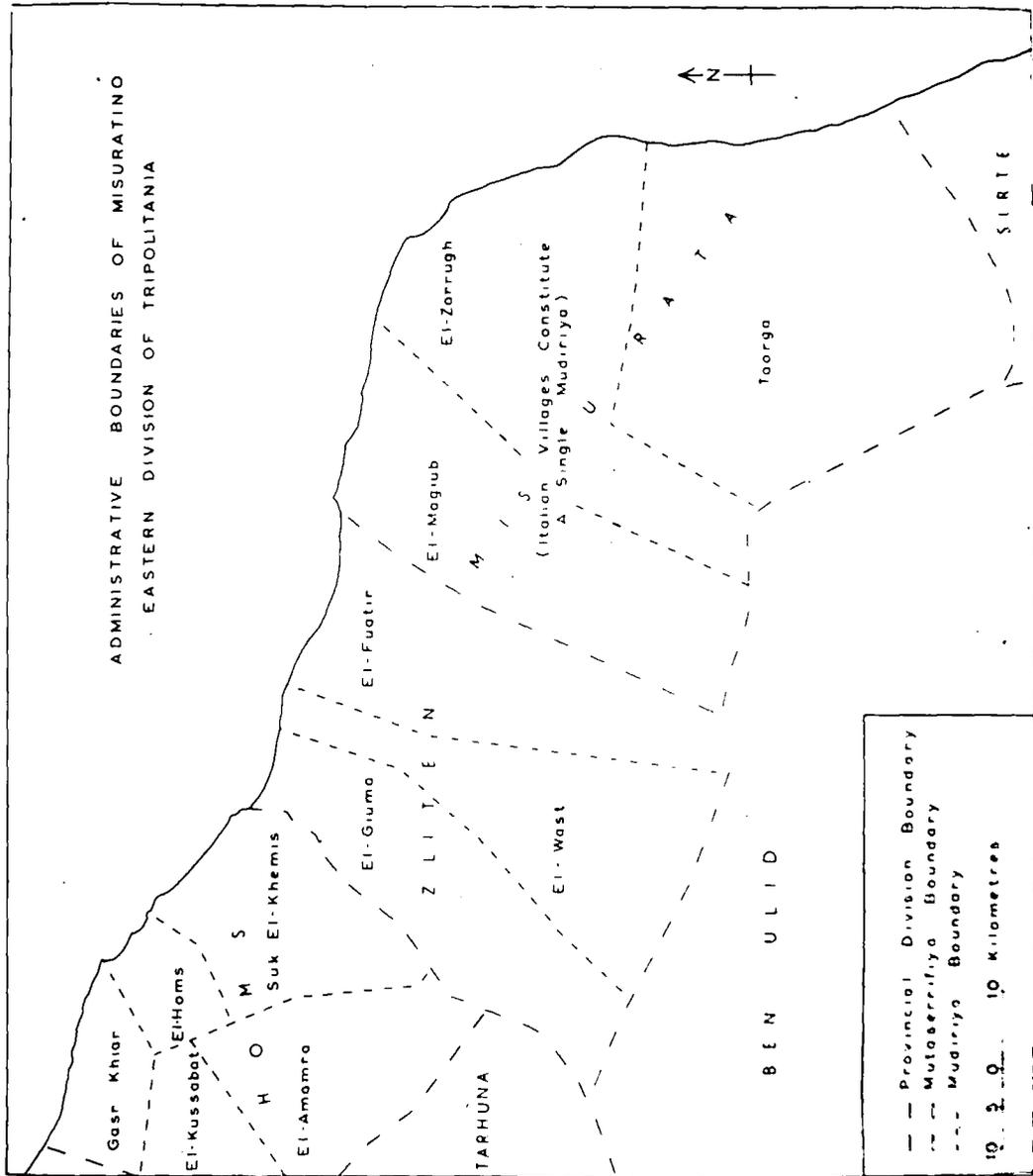


Figure 50

commanders. Under the Italian regime, Tripolitania was divided into two Prefectures based on Tripoli and Misurata, with a sub-division of each Prefecture into Districts. There were 21 Districts maintained during the Italian administration, of which three were in Misuratino: - Homs, Zliten and Misurata. Figure 49 shows the extent of the District areas. Under present conditions, most of the alien staff of the local administration, who were left over from the Italian and British Military Administrations, have been replaced by Libyans. Thus, Libyans are now to be found heading all sections of local government.

The following table shows the organisation of local government at District level and below:-

<u>Unit of Organisation</u>	<u>Official</u>
<u>Mutaserifya</u>	<u>Mutaserif</u>
<u>Mudiriyyat</u>	<u>Mudir</u>
<u>Cabila</u>	Shaikh

Within Misuratino the territorial division of Districts and mudiriyyat is as follows, and as illustrated in Figure 50:-

<u>Homs District</u>		<u>Zliten District</u>		<u>Misurata District</u>	
<u>Mudiriyyat</u>	El-Choms	<u>Mudiriyyat</u>	El-Wast	<u>Mudiriyyat</u>	El-Maguib
"	Suk El-Khemis	"	El-Fuatir	"	El-Zarrugh
"	Gasr Khiar	"	El-Giuma	"	<u>Ente</u>
"	Shegran			"	Taorga
"	El-Kussabat				
"	El-Amamra				

District headquarters are situated in the three respective villages of Homs, Zliten and Misurata, where the Mutaserif is resident. The office of Mutaserif is filled by the Provincial Government without reference to the local area to which he is

appointed. In most cases, the Mutaserif holds final authority over every aspect of administration within his district, although representations on behalf of smaller units below are frequently taken into account. In essence, the appointment of Mutaserif is as much political as administrative since it is general for the nominee to be a close supporter of the present regime.

Following the District unit, the political and official organisation breaks down to a more parochial division - the mudiriyat. The Mudir acts as a local advisor and administrator on behalf of the Mutaserif to whom he is directly responsible. There is some tendency to accept local opinion as a guide to the popularity or social standing of any prospective Mudir, but as with the Mutaserif, the candidate stands as much on his political bias as on his merits as an administrator. Libya is a quasi-democracy headed by a king who is more in the tradition of the old Arab Shaikh than in the European formalism of constitutional monarch. In consequence, administrative posts tend to be filled by people who are to all intents and purposes clients of the monarchy. This conclusion is neither an attempt to criticise nor to condone this state of affairs. It should be pointed out that the system of personal nomination to posts in local government is quite in keeping with Arab tradition and is accepted by most of the peasants as being the correct and normal procedure. Only the younger people, who have been educated outside the confines of the mudiriyat are

critical of the system.

Both the mutaserifya and the mudiriyat are impositions of the Central Government upon the tribal organisation. In many ways, the former are made to fit with the latter. Thus, a mudiriyat consists of a number of integral cabila, and the District pattern takes its delimitation from the same source. The cabila enclosed within the confines of any mudiriyat or mutaserifya do not necessarily have any other unifying bond apart from dependence upon the central office. In many cases, the governmental pattern is taken from the tradition of the Ottoman administrative areas, which itself arose merely through the availability of villages where defence and administration could be centralised safely.

Tribal organisation, as distinct from governmental administration, functions along the broad lines which have been left as a legacy from the era when the tribes were nomadic in character:-

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Officer</u>
<u>Cabila</u>	Shaikh
<u>Fakad</u>	Shaikh
<u>Lahma</u>	Shaikh
<u>Ailet</u>	Senior male member
<u>Bait</u>	Senior male member
<u>Family</u>	Senior male member

The preceding table gives the direct line of group leaders and their respective units of representation. The term Shaikh has been used in the cases of the larger units, whilst senior member has been used to show leadership of the more intimately related family sections. In fact, some cabila use the title

Shaikh for all group leaders, but this is confusing, especially since the break-up of the lower groups is tending to de-value the term on this level. There are bait groups in the Homs area, for example, which have been reduced to a mere shadow of their former strength, and now represent little more than a family group of the lower order on the preceding table. In these circumstances, the 'senior member' gives a better impression of the scale of organisation than the 'Shaikh'.

The universal group in the tribal system is the bait. This consists of an extended family, which may include as many as four or five generations within its organisation. All the families claim direct descent from a single ancestor, who, in turn, was a descendant of the original founder of the tribe. It is a patriarchal organisation, where the eldest or most influential male is invested with supreme authority in conducting all affairs which relate to other bait groups in the cabila. The constituent groups of the bait are completely independent of the senior male member of the bait in all affairs which relate solely to their personal or family organisation. This smaller unit, the joint family, is more characteristic of the semi-nomadic tribes than of the coastal tribes. In the oases, the wealth of the individual and other cultural factors which have been discussed earlier, give greater economic independence to the individual and discourage the family system. In the En-Negiahah of mudiriyat Homs, for example, there are very few household units which comprise more than two families. Amongst the poorest of farmers in the cabila, there are several house-

held groups of three or four families, which represent the joint family system as it has been described previously, but these are limited in number to some sixteen households. In the semi-nomadic cabila, and the cabila containing large elements of semi-nomads, the joint family system is more evident.

As in the bait organisation, the joint family system is a kind of patriarchal structure, where the senior male is paramount in the conduct of family affairs. In some respects, the joint family group differs in essentials from the bait. In the family group, the senior female member, the wife or mother of the male head, has authority in matters of internal household management, and in some of the more sedentary cabila of Berber origin, as for instance in the case of the Sillin of Homs, often has considerable influence in general family matters. The earnings of all members flow into the common pool, on which drafts to meet the needs of all are regulated by the family head; each earns according to his capacity, and receives according to his needs. The joint family system has several advantages; it takes the place of national social insurance and guarantees a living to all its members. At its best it makes possible the most economical use of the family resources and obviates the worst consequences of fragmentation of agricultural holdings. On the other hand, the joint family system tends to discourage individuality and enterprise, especially where it is run in association with minifundia farming organisation. In this context it is worthy of note, that the conservative,

traditional cabila retain the system, whereas units at a more advanced state of economic growth have discarded it.

The joint family groups form part of the larger bait groups, which, in turn, are components of the larger division of tribal organisation. The ailet section of the cabila is the primary division of the lineage from the true common ancestry. Normally this lineage is taken from the first generation of sons of the common ancestor, and the ailet take their names from these sons unless some formal denomination is chosen. Evans-Pritchard suggests that ailet names were frequently the nick-names or the battle names of the sons of the common ancestor (53). The following table indicates the ailet divisions in the Ulad Iahia cabila of Zliten district.

<u>BENI SULEIM</u>					
Ulad Debbab			Beni Auf		
Ulad Beni Ahamed Giaber		Ulad Salem		Ulad Salem	
El-Alauna Merzuch		El-Ahamed		Ulad Sinan Ben Otman	
El-Nasciauna Gedeiat		Ulad Iahia		El-Grenna	
El-Amarat		Ulad El-Asued		Ulad Iahia	
<u>El-Ascebat</u>	<u>El-Ausceria</u>	<u>Ailet Ben Trenchi</u>	<u>Esc-Sciurruf</u>	<u>Ailet Ben Maatamed</u>	<u>El-Hsciadat</u>
<u>Ailet Ben Giaballa</u>			<u>Ailet Ben Isa</u>		

Ailet underlined in type. Data from Agostini (52).

Whereas the ailet branches of the cabila may be regarded as full and true branches of one common seed, the larger lahma and cabila units are less reliably so, usually being made up of

several branches of devious origin. In the oasis areas, there has been a strong tendency towards the grouping of peoples into social aggregates which have assumed the status of cabila or lahma with no apparent reference to pure ancestry. The tendency has been facilitated by the fact that blood relationship may be superseded by spurious affiliation during times of trouble or need, so that a group of indeterminate ancestry may be assimilated into a larger unit and accept the traditions of the stronger group as its own. In the example quoted previously (Ulad Iahia), the tribal units and lahma units show more ethnic homogeneity than the norm for Misuratio as a whole.

More typical of the social aggregates which make up the bulk of the tribes of Misuratio, where there is a distinct break of ancestry between the cabila-lahma and bait groups, is the case of cabila El-Choms:-

<u>Cabila</u>	<u>Primary Lahma</u>	<u>Marabtin Lahma</u>	
El-Choms	El-Gaerat	El-Giabarna	
	Ulad Agial	El-Hebscia	
	Esc-Sceredat	Et-Tura	
	El-Frud	El-Guggim	
	El-Hadadna	Ulad Embarech	
	El-Godga	Et-Tualeb	
	El-Magiarscia		
	Es-Suaber		
	ez-Ziadat		
	Esc-Sciuaigh		
	Al-Asbaa		
	El-Fuadel		
	El-Gfof		
	Es-Suauda		
	Esc-Sciorfa		
	El-Gorba		
	<u>En-Negiahat</u>	<u>Ailet Amor</u>	Family <u>Iunes</u>
	El-Ghenda		
	Mahanna		
	Esc-Scelm		

N.B. - The Marabtin lahma are those which have been absorbed by

the cabila originally as clients and now as equals. The distinction between the primary (Sa'ade) lahma and the tributary (Marabtin) lahma has been blurred in the social structure of the oases. For the full account of the relative positions of the two cabila segments vide (53).

In the cabila El-Choms, the lahma groups shown above have no genuine claim to common ancestry. In the first place, there are six large appendage groups which are sufficiently independent still to be recognised in local attitude as non-cabila in the full sense. Of the other primary lahma, there is little recognition of common ancestry except in the sense that their traditions have a mutual areal base in and around the Homs area. Within the framework of the lahma organisation there are again discernable tendencies for there to be several ailat not claiming complete common ancestry with the rest of the group. Thus, the Aila Amor (indicated in the preceding table as a sub-group of the En-Negiahat) have a division of ancestry between their main lahma the En-Negiahat and their sister aila in the Susa area of Cyrenaica. Naturally, they look more to their aila group as their unit of recognition and greatest affinity rather than to the larger, more amorphous lahma aggregate. As economic units, therefore, tribes such as the El-Choms tend to be exceedingly decentralised, and the true working and economic entity is the aila.

The social position of the Shaikhs has been referred to already, and it will be of value to supplement this survey of tribal organisation by some reference to the Shaikhs. Each

section of the tribe, i.e. cabila, lahma aila and bait, all have Shaikhs at their head. Each Shaikh has the power to conduct the affairs of the section to which he is elected or which he succeeds to, in relation to similar groups. Thus the lahma Shaikh deals solely with affairs relevant to the lahma as it is affected by outside groups - mainly other lahma in the same cabila. As far as internal organisation goes, the Shaikh has exceedingly limited functions. During the period when the tribes were nomadic or semi-nomadic in nature, the Shaikh took responsibility for convening the meetings of elders where decision was made concerning the times and lines of movement of the flocks and the distribution of land. The quintessence of the Shaikhly position was the role of advisor, a 'constitutional' president of position rather than function. His responsibilities were sharply defined by the semi-autonomous powers of the smaller groups below and the larger group above. In times of war or unrest, the Shaikh was appointed military leader, and it was during such times that he assumed greatest influence, although, in theory, as military leader his duties were limited to martial matters and did not extend into the civil field. In fact, many of the strong Shaikhs were able to take advantage of military emergencies to assume greater authority over the tribal groups than their normal position allowed. Examples of the rise of Shaikhs to supreme authority in the Middle East are many in number, the principle ones being - the Khan Dynasty and the Hashemite line. In Misuratio, there have been no cases of the up-rising of a powerful Shaikh to a

pre-eminence throughout the region, although many individual Shaikhs from the Misurata area distinguished themselves during the Italo-Sanusi War (e.g. Ramadan El-Shatawi).

The defined duties of the Shaikhs in terms of their responsibility on behalf of the tribal section are generally - provision of shelter to travellers and the distribution of aid to any of the group members who may be in difficulties. Generally, the Shaikhs were allowed a greater proportion of land than other tribal members to compensate for responsibilities undertaken for the section, but it was still expected that the wealth of the Shaikh would be available to all. During Turkish times, the Shaikhs were held responsible for the collection of taxes and in some cases actually became paid Turkish officials. This practice was more wide-spread amongst the sedentary cabila than the semi-nomadic groups, and was not well received by most members of the tribes. As a technique of local control, the system did not survive for very long.

Later in this chapter, it will be shown how the position of the Shaikhs was de-valued by the Italian administration as a deliberate policy. At the present time, the position of the Shaikhs is most tenuous, since the social structure which gave rise to and supported them has been eroded away gradually in the face of Italian influence and the recent social and economic revolution within the oases.

Of final consideration in this evaluation of tribal organisation, account must be taken of the secondary dignitaries and officials who go to make up the temporal and ecclesiastical

hierarchy. In the bedawin tribes of Cyrenaica, the Shaikhs tended to be invested with both religious and civil authority, especially when the Sanusi Order spread through the province. Islam was more an adjunct of urban Arab life than a part of the tribal structure as such<sup>(53)</sup>. Since most of the tribes of Misuratio are in fact sedentary, some of the religious institutions which one normally associates with village and town life are reproduced in the suk and gasr centres. In each of the oasis villages of Misuratio, including Homs, Zliten, Suk El-Giuna and Misurata there are mosques maintained by Imam, who have considerable authority in all matters relating to the zavia and to other non-temporal affairs.

In the three main oasis villages, where the division of population is assessed on the basis of the urban unit rather than the tribal unit, each quarter appoints a Muchtar El-Mahlb. The function of this unpaid officer is to act as advisor to the people in matters relating to their personal difficulties. The position may not strictly be related to the position of ombudsman, but there is much of this personal aid and advice service rendered by the Muchtar. For example, should one of the members of the quarter be short of food or other basic needs of sustenance, then he appeals to the Muchtar, who in turn advises where the necessary materials may be obtained in his quarter or cabila. Thus he acts as a central focus for the charity and alms giving which is necessary in the urban unit, where the tribal protection and social security do not operate.

Two further appointments are of interest; i.e., the

Kaimakam, and the Mudir El-Mal. The former official is appointed by the Commissioner General of the Province to act as a second in command to the Mutaserif, to whom he acts as advisor and substitute in the case of his absence. In some of the larger mutaserifiya of Tripolitania the area is divided into segments, each including a small group of mudiriyat. To each of the sub-divisions is given the title kaimakamerya, and the Kaimakam himself administers the area. The Mudir El-Mal, as with the Kaimakam, is a post left from the days of Turkish administration. The post is part-time and operates only in the period of tax assessment before the harvest. In Turkish days, the post was permanent and highly paid, since the coverage of responsibility extended to all fiscal matters affecting the mutaserifiya. The status of the Mudir El-Mal has declined since that time, and the post is regarded as non-official. His main functions are concerned directly with tax gathering in the district of appointment, and especially with the assessment and collection of the agricultural taxes and tythes.

(7) Internal Forces of Social and Economic Growth and Tribal Disintegration.

The first stages of transition which are discernible in Misurafino are those affecting the greater tendency of the tribes to change from pastoral to sedentary occupance. Beginning during the rule of the Karamanlis, and gaining greater hold during the succeeding administration of the Ottomans, general law and order spread to include all of the coastal and littoral steppe areas. The insidious influence of this long period of

peace encouraged the development of the sedentary oases.

The construction of fixed installations in the oasis areas is the index of the changing gravitation towards sedentarisation. In the first phase of activity in the oases, much of the construction was done on communal financing for communal benefit. This merely represents a hang-over effect from the traditional method of semi-nomadic existence. Later, small property investments by individuals began to take on more importance. Turkish attempts to implement their taxation laws upon the inhabitants of the region were a retarding influence in respect to the investment rate by the Arabs in the oasis areas. Turkish interference in the sedentary areas under their control invariably caused a temporary cessation in the development activity. Over long periods, the administrative shortcomings of the Ottoman Government allowed a net gain in the sum of fixed installations in the oases.

Attention turned from preoccupation with stock to cultivation of crops for several reasons. In the previous discussion of the environment of Misuratio and in the descriptions of the cultures which existed before the Hilalian invasion, it was pointed out that the oasis areas and the better watered wadi depressions offered scope for sedentary agriculture. The Berbers had been able to develop the area under a system of sedentary agriculture without the aid of great technical accomplishment. North Africa in its littoral reaches offers an environment which allows cultivation of a great range of crops with the application of simple techniques, and a minimum

of capital. Thus from first principles, the move to agriculture was always within environmental possibility.

During the long drawn out phase of Arab invasions of Libya, Cyrenaica acted as a transit zone, with the displacement of each tribal aggregate which took over the area by the succeeding tribe moving in from the east. Once the Beni Sulcim were established there in strength, and were able to resist the pressure from the east, they were left in sole occupation. As a race and culture they were relatively purely east. The tribal strength of Cyrenaica and the lack of alternative economic attraction has thus maintained the social structure of Cyrenaica in an unchanged form right through to the present day. In Tripolitania, different factors operated which precluded this unimpaired survival of the nomadic social unit.

Tripolitania acted as a residue zone for the tribes which were pushed from Cyrenaica during the phases of conquest and occupation from the east. Furthermore, the area had a resilient indigenous population whose numbers remained substantial in spite of the protracted warfare against the Arabs. The result of this inter-mixture of incoming Arab stocks amongst themselves and with the Berber peoples necessarily implied the evolution of a composite race in Tripolitania. Thus absolute cultural standards of Arab economy and society became modified. The tribes of Cyrenaica transferred their cultural framework from the Nadj to the Western Desert as an intact whole. In essence their movement was a change which involved only geographical

location. The Tripolitanian tribes on the other hand ended their wandering as a modified racial and cultural agglomerate in the framework of which were the seeds of economic change. During the period of unrest before the Turkish occupation, demands of warfare and the constant influx of tribal fragments from the east gave little scope for development outside the confines of semi-nomadism. Later, the delayed move to the oases began slowly.

Along the coast, palm trees and cereals flourished with very little necessity for careful husbandry. Water was accessible in the springs and wells flowing from the phreatic water table. To a primitive society, the oases had a strong attraction for their own economic merits. Thus, the fruitfulness of the oases, and the reliable supplies of food-stuffs for man and beast which were available from them may be counted as a factor of great significance in evaluating the 'pull' of the oases on the tribes of the littoral.

It would be incomplete to end this analysis of conditions in Misuratio which gave rise to the accumulated force behind the move to sedentarisation, without mentioning the 'push' effect from the desert and semi-desert. Times of drought create the greatest population pressure in the desert and peripheral zones. Survival in these times means access to some permanent water source, which in Misuratio is available only in the oasis zone. Depletion of stock during these times of poor rains takes an immense toll of the animals to the extent that regeneration

takes several years. Clarke estimated that the Tunisian nomads take as long as six or more years to rebuild their flocks after severe drought years<sup>(59)</sup>. Once the semi-nomad of Misuratine was settled in the oasis during the period of a drought, it was likely that he would be compelled to remain there for a time dependent upon the rate of growth of his herd. In the case of the Bait Iunes of Leptis quoted in the section (5) it has been shown how temporary sojourn tended to become permanent occupation.

In agricultural terms, increasing sedentarisation entailed more concern with the cultivation of crops which required prolonged attention. Simple cereal husbandry was not dropped altogether, but it was relegated in importance; in terms of area, it was allocated to the littoral steppe zone; economically it was subsidiary to the oasis culture. Cultivation in the oases with a large range of crops demanded that the farmers spent a majority of their time in the littoral zone and were free from the necessity of seasonal movement. Hence as soon as a tribe or group adopted cropping beyond traditional cereal cultivation, economic control came from the oasis not from the steppe.

It was inevitable that some legacies would be carried over from one economic regime to the next. For some while, the annual division of lands applied to the oases just as much as to the steppe. Traditionally, the Shaikhs divided out the lands between the sub-groups of the cabila, granting each a section of the land use types. Ultimately, each farming unit

received a section of each type of land, e.g. a section of land for cereal cultivation, and some waste land for grazing of flocks. This traditional system of land division had several obvious disadvantages, the main one of which was that annual change of ownership of any given piece of land discouraged individual efforts at improvement. Whilst insecurity prevailed in the area, the difficulties associated with communal land holding were not appreciated, since there was no motive to invest time and labour in projects which were subject to destruction and seizure. Communal construction of wells and minor works was less objectionable on this score, since the destruction of these works could be made good by the cabila as a whole.

During the extended period of peace which lasted through the era of Turkish administration, there was some tendency to treat oasis lands as private in the sense that such land was rarely partitioned each year amongst the bait and smaller groups. Each bait tended to gravitate to one area, where the domains were farmed under the joint family system, which we have described earlier. Turkish interference in the agricultural life of the area was limited to periodic attempts to exact taxation from the tribes; bait cultivation of the lands precluded the effective operation of these attempts. Turkish attempts to effect the transfer of lands from common to private mulk had little success in Misuratio, and it was not until the close of the Nineteenth Century that legal registration of property was begun.

The gradual growth of interest in the oases through the centuries of the Turkish administration culminated in the transfer of land from common to private mulk. Correspondingly, the unit of economic enterprise changed from the hail to the single family group. The construction of installations became the responsibility of the individual farmers as claims upon communal facilities out-stripped the capital and organisation of the communal grouping. Civil order removed the risks from private investment in fixed assets, hence the expansion of agricultural improvement in the later years of the last century was accomplished largely by the use of private capital.

The gradual nature of transition from the larger to the smaller units of economic life left the social structure unimpaired. The tribal structure of the oases retained the same institution and mores that had operated in the semi-nomadic, pastoral economy of the interior. Society in the oases was parochial in character and imposed few demands upon the original social organisation, hence the broad structure of the cabila passed from the steppe to the oases. The rate and direction of indigenous economic growth underwent considerable change in the period of Italian colonial rule; in the following section we shall analyse the impact of the Italian occupation of Misuratio in respect to social and economic organisation in the indigenous sector.

#### (8) Italian Colonial Policy and Tribal Disintegration.

The first tangible signs of tribal disintegration may be conveniently dated to the time of the transference of land from

common mulk to private mulk ownership. It has been shown in the preceding section of the chapter that this change in the pattern of land holding was the culmination of the internal forces generated during the Turkish administration. To understand the present position of the tribal structure in its social and economic aspects, it will be necessary to examine the effects of Italian rule in Tripolitania.

The Italian era may be divided satisfactorily into three critical phases, each of which exhibit a different character to the relations between Italian and Libyan. The following table gives the approximate dates of the periods suggested.

(i)	1911-22
(ii)	1923-28
(iii)	1928-39

During the first eleven years of their occupation, the Italian Government in Tripolitania was liberal in attitude. The opposition presented to the Italian forces in Tripolitania was feeble in nature and the struggle in military terms was soon at an end. Thus there was no cause for bitterness on the part of the Italians. The actual course of the war of occupation broke down into several distinct phases. At the time of the Italian landings in Tripoli, the Arabs were in a state of rebellion against the Turkish administration, which ill-advisedly, had persisted in its attempts to enforce rights of taxation upon the tribes. The advent of Italian forces in Tripolitania brought an end to the altercation between the two and stimulated an allied front to the advancing invaders. The

alliance was of a temporary kind, for the Turks were compelled to withdraw following the Treaty of Losanna in October of 1912, which capitulated sovereignty to Italy. The Tripolitarians had little heart for the struggle without the backing of the Turkish troops and resistance in the area became negligible from the military point of view. In Cyrenaica, the Sanusi Bedawins continued the fight against the Italians, but this had no real counterpart in Tripolitania. Some local resistance was encountered by the occupying troops, especially in the environs of Misurata and Tarkhuna, but although sporadic and disorganised outbreaks against Italian authority marked the months following the conquest, Tripolitania was rapidly subjected by the invading forces.

To a great extent, the Italian administration was prepared to accept and help maintain the indigenous society which it had taken over by force of arms. The literature available at the time of the conquest indicates clearly that the Italian attitude to their new colonial possessions was governed largely by the concepts prevailing in the metropolitan country. Benevolent despotism was playing its last lines on the stage of Europe; in Italy the governmental theory revolved largely around the concept of benign aristocratic rule; thus it was to be expected that many of the characteristics of administration should be transferred to the new territories in Libya.

Academic interest in Islam and the geographical study of the coastal areas of Tripolitania had furnished the preliminary evaluation of the significance of the area. Scientific

expeditions in 1911 and the following years were aimed largely at analysis of the indigenous economic and social structure with a view to making it comprehensible to the administration and thereby possible for the administration to accommodate it within the compass of its operations (8), (52) and (60).

The Italian Government in Tripolitania considered that the indigenous Arabs would settle down under colonial rule, and with careful treatment would be pleased to accept the benefits which were to be obtained through the presence of a relatively rich and technically advanced European power. As will be seen later, this proved to be a complete mis-estimation of the situation. In fact, the Arabs were most unwilling to condone permanent occupation of their territory. The native population of Tripolitania, and of Misuratio in particular, had been accustomed to foreign suzerainty over their country for many centuries, although this was of a purely nominal nature. The influence of the Turks had been insignificant in terms of direct control, and local affairs had continued in the traditional manner throughout their occupation. If the Sultan occasionally exacted taxes from the inhabitants of the area, at least he had claim to do so through his position as head of Islam. The newcomers from Italy were ethnically alien to the Arabs and were infidels. Thus they had very little to recommend them in the eyes of the Arabs in spite of the monies they had in quantity, and which they were prepared to distribute for favours and allegiance.

During the period 1911 - 22, the tribal structure survived undisturbed by the Italians. Central authority had passed again from one invader to another, and the under-lying tribal entity had maintained itself intact as the parochial unit of social and, to a lesser extent, economic activity. In the towns, the municipal social groups came more firmly under Italian control than they had been under Turkish administration, since mechanised contact between the towns increased the power of the central authority to enforce its rule from Tripoli.

The latent dissatisfaction of the tribes in Misuratinò broke out in the form of revolt at any time when the Italians were caught at a disadvantage, either through preoccupation with affairs on the mainland of Europe, or with the permanent discord which characterised Italic-Sanusi relations in Cyrenaica. The outbreak of war in Europe and the return of the Turks to Libya as allies of the Central Powers gave occasion for revolt against Italian authority. In the first place, the attack upon the Italian position in Tripolitania was essentially part of the Sanusi campaign against the Italian advances through the Ghible and the Fezzan, where Sanusi centres had been over-run by Italian troops. The Sanusi tribes of Sirtica, Ulad Suliman and Magharba, with the help of some small bands from Tripolitania established military supremacy over the Italians by the defeat of Colonel Miani at Gasr Bu Hadi in April of 1915. At the time of this battle, the Misuratan tribes were allied with the Italians, since Ramadan El-Shatawi, the leading Shaikh of the Misurata area,

saw in the Italian occupation a chance to extend his hegemony over the whole of Misurata and the contiguous stretches of the Ghila. His support of the Italians was relinquished during the course of the battle as he saw the Italians lose ground and eventually retreat. Ramadan immediately joined the Sanusi rebels in their attack upon the Italians and helped to drive Colonel Miani out of the Sirtica region. The Italians withdrew from Misurata after the defeat at Gasr Bu Hadi and ultimately vacated the oases of Misurata and Zliten completely. The only foot-holds remaining in Italian hands were the town of Homs itself and small areas of Homs oasis and the Sahel El-Ahamed which could be effectively controlled from the fortress at Homs.

The break-down of Italian administration in the area permitted the emergence of a local hierarchy headed by the Shaikh Ramadan El-Shatawi, who ruled over the turbulent area from Misurata. Ramadan was anti-Sanusi in policy and was at pains to keep out all Sanusi elements from the Sirte region. In a pitched battle at Beni Wali in 1916, the Sanusi forces were beaten back from the coastlands, and an effective political boundary between the lands of Ramadan and Sanusi established in the vicinity of the Wadi Zemzem. During the period of dominancy, Ramadan entertained various ideas for the extension of his power, but, constantly at loggerheads with the Sanusi, he was not able to expand his possessions. Without the political and military support of the Cyrenaican bedawin, the Misuratans were impotent. Nevertheless, nominal government was founded on Misurata through the Jumhuriya El-Trabulsiya which was an

instrument of Turkish and German interest in the area operating through Ramadan el-Shatawi. The Committee of Reform at Misurata did gain some prestige in the later years of the period of anarchy, and it appeared at one time as if the negotiations of the Committee with the Italians might lead to the establishment of an independent Amirate in Tripolitania. (Provisional Meetings Reform Committee - Italians, Kallet el-Zetuna 1919). Hopes of independence were finally crushed with the advent of Count Volpi. He was appointed Governor of Tripolitania, and with a large Italian army at his disposal prepared to take energetic steps against the Arab insurgents and their Government at Misurata. By the late spring of 1922, the Italians were again in control of the coastal strip from Misurata to Zuara. The revolt of the interior faded to negligible proportions with the fall of the Sanusi leaders in Cyrenaica, and Tripolitania became a wholly Italian province once again.

The protracted nature of the war-fare during the second Italic-Sanusi War and the acrimony which had inevitably worsened the relations between the Arabs and the Italians led to a total change in the attitude of the Italian administration after 1922. Count Volpi was a man of ideals, but one who was capable of immediate and direct action should the occasion demand it. He was a complete change from the preceding Italian military commanders and Civil Governors who had presented so vacillating a front to the Arabs since the out-break of hostilities.

Evaluating the problems besetting the Italian administration in Tripolitania, Volpi saw that the major obstacle to progress was the tribal system, and the power of the Sanusi Lodges. The latter had never been strong in Tripolitania, especially in the coastal areas, and the Order had suffered severe losses in the oases of Misurata at the hands of Ramadan El-Shatawi, hence there was less concern with this aspect to Arab resistance than with the problem of the tribal power. During the struggle with the Italian forces in the course of the wars in Libya, it had been the tribal structure which had made the guerrilla warfare possible in the first place, and which had sustained it in the second place. Volpi faced the task of coming to terms with the system or destroying it. The experience of the early years of the Italian occupation had proved conclusively that the tribes could not be ignored as organisations of no importance.

The war years illustrated time and time again, that the Arab tribes were not to be treated as allies, since they were reliable only in so far as they stood to gain. The classical example of the Battle of Gasr Bu Hadi had been repeated time after time during the wars which had covered the years 1915 to 1922. Despite this experience, attempts were made to come to terms with the Shaikhs in the early years of Volpi's Governorship. The Shaikhs were in no mood to accept the conditions offered by Volpi, which virtually converted them from tribal heads to local Italian administrators. In many cases, the very

fact that the Italians were willing to talk and discuss the situation proved weakness in their ranks in the eyes of the Shaikhs. In exasperation, Volpi decided that he would suspend judgement no longer, and set the die for the years 1922-28 in his summary of Italian attitude to the Shaikhs and the social system which they represented - "We shall govern this country not with the Shaikhs, nor against the Shaikhs, but without the Shaikhs". Strongly centralised authority at every level of administration was made entirely Italian in character, and the tribal representation in the counsel of all but their own internal units was excluded or reduced to the mere formality of rubber stamp duties. Those Shaikhs who accepted the position as quasi-civil servants in the service of the Italians invariably lost face within their tribal group, or if they refused co-operation with the Italians were by-passed in the dealings between officials and public. In either case, the whole position of the Shaikh was devalued as a deliberate policy.

It must be remembered, that the Shaikhs were products of the tribal system and although they fulfilled useful functions, their places were not indispensable to the survival of the tribe. Still the units suffered badly with their loss, the inter-communication between groups broke down, and the larger units, such as the tribe and cabila ceased to have meaning in terms of common and unified organisation. Thus, the second major stage in tribal disintegration took place, this time from a pre-designed policy imposed from above.

Count Volpi continued as Governor of Tripolitania until 1929, when a new regime began in the Province. In 1934, Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were joined together as a single unit, with the capital at Tripoli and the coastal lands divided into four commissariats, with sub-capitals at Tripoli, Misurata, Benghazi and Derna. The Ghible areas and the Fezzan were separated from the coast and ruled as a military district. By this means, central legal and administrative control was extended more thoroughly through the littoral sedentary zone. The pyramid of officials under the commissariats were Italian or subservient Libyans whose duties were confined to menial tasks. At local level, the Shaikhs were recruited as adjuncts to the system of government, but their treatment accorded more to that of a junior clerk than a tribal dignitary. Shaikhs who were not co-operative continued to be removed from their positions, and the Italians were eventually able to nominate their own Shaikhs whose acceptance by the tribe was merely a matter of form. The constant warfare during the period of anarchy following Miani's defeat in 1915 until 1922 had left the wealth of the tribes seriously impaired, and there were few Shaikhs who felt economically strong enough or in a position of sufficient prestige to rebel against the growing Italian control over their original autonomous organisation. Minor rebellions in the Farhuna district often gained the support of the Misuratan tribes, but this token resistance did little to undermine the well established authority of the Italians.

Invariably such action was followed by punitive action by the Italians, who would remove the tribal head or first son of the tribal head as a hostage and frequently put him to death as a public demonstration of the fate of dissident Shaikhs. Under constant pressure, the shaikhly hierarchy was decimated and reduced in power.

In many ways, the techniques utilised by the Balbo administration after 1934 were new, but they sprang from an old policy. Strangely in keeping with Italian incompetence in their colonial affairs in Libya, the greatest blow to the tribal structure in Tripolitania came through more insidious and un-planned actions than the slaughter of petty Shaikhs.

Development activities in Tripolitania gathered immense momentum in the years following 1930 as a result of several inter-related factors. The occasion of Volpi's retirement from the Governorship of Tripolitania was also the occasion for the advent of Fascist influence in the province. Early Fascist intervention in the colony dated from 1922, but the influence of the Count Volpi had been to delay the effective operation of Fascist precepts in Tripolitania, since he was a man whose first concern was for the military administration of the country rather than for political interference. During his administration too, the Fascist Government in Rome had been closely involved with domestic politics, and was not unwilling that the status quo be held by Volpi whilst home commitments were attended to.

Following the turn of the decade in which Volpi had held

sway in the area, the Italians looked to their colonies to provide an outlet for their economy and a justification for their claims to world power status. This was largely achieved through the application of great amounts of capital to the problems of development. Amongst the schemes which were implemented as integral parts of the plan of development, were the reclamation of the steppe for private and demographic settlement by Italian nationals brought in from the metropolitan country, and the provision of the service 'over-head' amenities which were to act as a basis for the expanding reclamation activities. Skilled labour to implement these schemes was brought in from Italy, but the labour requirements demanded by the speed and scope of the development necessarily involved the recruitment of large bodies of indigenous workmen. In the first place, the demand was satisfied from urban sources, but as the operation gathered impetus, there was an increasing tendency to call upon the reserves of labour in the rural areas. High wages and good conditions offered by the public works departments of the administration combined to create a strong centripetal force upon the members of the coastal tribes, who gravitated towards the recruitment centres.

The effectiveness of this recruitment of Arabs for service in the public, and to some extent private development schemes was made most apparent through the fact Homs and Misurata both increased their population by some 300 and 400% respectively during the early years of the development phase. The high

wages were the main attraction to the Arabs to leave their tribal lands, but the factor which was most significant in creating the movement away from agriculture and the tribal domains on a permanent scale was the security of state employment. Seasonal labour was not new to Misuratio and the tribes had made use of it to supplement the funds of its members during the annual sojourn in the oases. The Italian administration extended this traditional seasonal labour into permanent engagement, with the result that many tribal members became alienated from the normal economic and social routine of the tribe. This did not imply that the Arabs who worked for the administration were cut off completely from their tribal roots, but it did imply a further distension of the individual members from the social and economic framework of the tribe. It has been indicated earlier that the loss of the Shaikhs was not a mortal blow to the tribes, since they had been thrown up by the underlying tribal structure and could be dispensed with if necessary. The removal and dethronement of the Shaikhs was an inconvenience to the tribe; the attraction of the tribal members to alternative social and economic organisation was a great step in the negation of the *raison d'être* of the tribal structure as such.

The growth in the scale of development activity and the further inclusion of the indigenous peoples in the life of the Province increased the rate of decline in the tribal structure. Large scale recruitment for the public services was followed by the raising of Libyan troops for Italian regiments in Libya. Thus the process of attraction away from the tribal areas to

to the urban units succeeded in accomplishing what legal and administrative measures had barely affected. The assimilation of Arabs into village and town society was a gradual process which gained momentum with the passage of time. This factor, in common with other less direct influences, resulted in the declaration of Balbo that the problem of major import in the Province was 'fitting the Arab into our social life'. To this end, the administration decreed that Libya was an integral part of the metropolitan country<sup>(61)</sup>. This latter phase of policy towards the Arabs developed from rather mixed motives. In the years from 1934, the Fascist Government had invested large amounts of capital in Libya on the following scale:-

Western Libya - Investment by Italians  
in Colonisation Activity.

1932-33	2.541.200
1933-34	4.093.829
1934-35	4.216.856
1935-36	16.728.004
1936-37 (Till 24.3)	3.489.452

Total West Libya 31.069.341 Lire

Source - Statistiche sulla colon. della Libia - Falloni.

This table illustrates the expenditure on colonisation activities alone, and for a full picture of expenditure by the Italian Administration reference is necessary to Table 30. The Italians had witnessed the increasing rate of tribal disintegration which had appeared as a by-product to the investment, and were willing to capitalise on the process by giving added legal incentive for the Arabs to transfer allegiance to the State. Hence the Royal Decree of 1939 (9th Jan).

TABLE 30

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT FOR PUBLIC  
WORKS AND UTILITIES - TRIPOLITANIA

<u>HEAD OF EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>FINANCIAL YEARS</u>
	1913-36 ( In '000 Lire )
Road Constructions	130,858
Port Constructions	53,000
Agricultural Development and Land Reclamation	53.118
Public buildings and buildings in general inc. equipment of offices and lodgings.	103.785
Construction of tele- graph and telephone lines and Radio Stations.	6.680
Hydraulic works	4.230
Sanitary works	6.200
Railway Construction	52.100
Interest for amortisation of loans, contributions and interest on sums borrowed by other institutes (Ente, <u>INPS</u> )	34.024
<u>Total</u>	<u>444.095</u>

Source - "Memorandum on the Economic and Financial Situation  
of the Italian Territories in Africa", Rome 1946. Tipo  
del Senato. Quoted in "A General Economic  
Appraisal of Libya", Lindberg, U.N. 1951.(79).

Other motives are apparent in the mood of administrative and legal benevolence which characterised the years 1938-39 in Tripolitania. The Duce was convinced at the time that Italy would be drawn into the developing struggle for power in Europe. If this was to be, he knew that he could not afford to have his hands tied in Libya as his predecessors had during the First World War; in any case, the Italians had much more material interest and prestige value vested in Libya in 1939 than in 1915, and were anxious to preserve their status in the area. As a part of this appraisal, the Italian Government was prepared to make some concessions to the indigenous peoples, especially to those whose influence was greatest in the tribal areas, from where trouble could be expected in the event of Italian participation in hostilities on the mainland of Europe. In Tripolitania, the Arabs were induced to join the army and further encouraged to take part in the development activity. Colonisation schemes, hitherto restricted to Italian nationals were extended to include co-operative Arabs who had served the State in the administration or in the army. The projected estate at Nahina was for the express purpose of providing for the Arab colonists in this latter category.

As fate would have it, the integration of Arab society with the larger metropolitan unit was stopped abruptly with the declaration of war in 1940, when the Italians discarded civil administration for the military organisation necessary for the prosecution of the war against British interests in the Mediterranean. Thus, the full effects of total assimilation of the

Arabs were never realised. Nevertheless, the Arab social organisation had undergone radical changes by the close of the Italian colonial period, and in 1940 one was already dealing with the concept of two Arab social structures; one the traditional but waning tribal system; the other an expanding urban non-tribal system.

(9) Italian Land Acquisition and the Diminution of Tribal Lands.

During the period 1911-22, the Italian administration maintained a policy of protection of native lands corresponding closely with the desire to support the indigenous social and economic structure which was discussed in the preceding section of the chapter. Necessity arose for the acquisition of land by the administration and this demand was catered for by the Decree 1099 of September 1913, which enabled the Governor to expropriate land for purposes of government, and by the Governor's Decree of May 1916 which allowed the sequestration of all property which was deemed to belong to tribes in a state of rebellion against the administration. Although the means of land alienation were legally available, there was little done to violate the original promise that the State would respect native lands. Furthermore, the war commitments of the Italians in Europe and the ineffectual actions by the local commanders in Tripolitania left the lands of Misurata in native hands from the time of the battle of Gasr Bu Hadi, until Volpi's campaigns of 1922. At the time of the re-conquest of Tripolitania only 3,600 hectares had been taken over by the administration for the immediate needs of Government in building institutions and military storage areas.

Much of the land expropriated in this phase was in the vicinity of the villages and suks, and was obtained under the terms of the Decree of 1911, which contained safeguards of compensation for the owner of the lands which were taken by the State.

With the end of the war in Europe, the Italians were once more able to concentrate their forces on the re-conquest of their colonial territories in Libya. The task of pacification ended in 1922 in all areas of Tripolitania, with the fall of the Jumhuriya el-Trabulsiya at Misurata. The rebellion of the Arabs, and the large part played in the resistance to Italian penetration by the tribes, made it clear to the Italians that there was nothing to be gained from a policy of appeasement. The protagonists of a pro-Islamic were discredited. The idea of a paternal rule over the territory and a care-taker administration which would function merely to maintain the area as a 'Colonie de position' was not feasible in the conditions which prevailed after the re-conquest.

Partly to stabilise the area militarily, and partly from a desire to make the colony pay its way, the Governor of Tripolitania, Count Volpi, instituted a second phase in Italian policy in Libya. From an initial status of a 'colonie de position', Volpi enlarged the concept to that of a 'colonie d'exploitation'. His thinking was coloured by the success which the French had achieved in Tunisia, where the olive groves of the Sahel had proved immeasurably profitable in an environment similar to that in Tripolitania. Development in the Province was considered to be simply a problem of investment of capital and the application

of technical knowledge.

This policy was implemented in the years 1922-28 with the establishment of the legal mechanism for the acquisition of land from the Arab tribes. The lands were to be granted to corporations or individuals under contract based on the condition that they accomplished a minimum of agricultural development. Various means were used to obtain the lands for distribution to the Italian concessionaires - (i) Nationalisation, (ii) Compulsory purchase, (iii) Expropriation. Of these legal devices, the former (i) was not applied to Misuratio at any time during the Italian administration, although vast areas of the steppe became open to State encroachment under the terms of the Decrees of nationalisation. The relevant decrees were -

- (a) Governor's Decree of 18th July 1922. By this decree, all lands were assumed to belong to the State where private ownership could not be proved by title or registration. In Misuratio, the private mulk lands were still in a position of emergence from the common mulk land holding system and there was very little registration under private title. The process of registration under the Turkish Government was mainly verbal in any case, and this was not accepted as legally binding by the Italian authorities. In fact, the result of the decree in Misuratio was to accelerate the process of registration by the wealthier land lords, whilst the poorer element were unaffected.
- (b) Governor's Decree of 10th February 1923. The passing of this decree was significant in Tripolitania in setting the

pattern of all land seizure, whether by nationalisation, confiscation or compulsory purchase, since it set in principle the concept that legal powers would be taken to promote the seizure of land wherever it was needed for the purposes of colonisation. The pattern of land policy changed from directing colonists to those areas available to colonisation by genuine legal right, to choosing land which was amenable to colonisation and then creating the legal means for pre-empting that land. The whole of the land which was circumscribed by the terms of the decree was in the steppe zone, and was already open to seizure by the provisions of the decree (a) above.

- (c) Royal Decree of 15th November 1923. This decree was used as an explanatory foot-note to the preceding decree (b), and was concerned with the definition of the types of land which were to be nationalised as State property. Under the terms of the decree, all the lands in the steppe zone of Tripolitania which were not actually under tree plantations were liable to nationalisation. Thus the zone of shifting cereal culture, unless utilised for permanent exploitation with fixed well installations and walled suani, was regarded for official purposes as being 'under-cultivated', and thus included in the area which was available for colonisation. In fact, the governmental agency deputed to cope with the selection of colonising areas in the steppe zone, the Ufficio di Colonizzazione, allowed the lands held

under the provisions of the decree to be cultivated by the Arabs under their customary practice until such time as they were allotted out in concessions.

Under the articles contained in the series of decrees mentioned above, the lands of Misuratio were laid open to complete sequestration by the State. There were several factors which led to the exclusion of the littoral steppe of Misuratio from the operation of these laws, which it will be of value to note. In the early phases of Italian occupation it has been shown how the disrupted state of the country precluded active development of the area after the battle of Gasr Bu Hadi. During the second phase of occupation (1922-28) colonising ventures in Tripolitania were confined to individual enterprise based on the Sfaxian model, whereby vast estates were laid out by capitalists whose centre of activity was Tripoli. Depois<sup>(62)</sup> observed somewhat caustically that the Italian cultural tendency led to the growth of an urban minded farmer class:- "Les centres de colonisation ne seront donc jamais que de tres modest satellites autour de la capitale" The capitalist farmers were reluctant to take up concessions which made it imperative to live outside Tripoli. Since mechanised transport was still little more than a precarious means of travel in the undeveloped country, Misuratio continued to be relatively isolated in the eyes of the Italian concessionaires. Thus as long as there were fertile areas available on the Jefara plain which were within easy reach of the capital, Misuratio

offered few attractions to colonists and the steppe was left for the use of the tribes.

Chronologically, expropriation was the first legal mechanism applied to the lands on Misuratino. There were two main enactments which gave legal authorisation to the acts of expropriation:-

- (a) Governor's Decree of 15th May 1915. This decree emerged as an integral part of the conditions laid out in the declaration of a state of war in the Province, and was intended to act as a deterrent to the Arabs from joining the rebellion. After the pacification of the area under Volpi, the decree of 1915 was modified to act as a method of punishment against those Arab individuals and tribes who had participated in the rebellion against Italian authority.
- (b) Governor's Decree of 11th April 1923. Was the official declaration of the previous decree of 1915 together with some enlargement of the provisions contained in it. The exact terms stated that the lands of all cabila, and individuals and all people who had made common cause with them were confiscated by the State. Whereas the 1915 decree had referred to the oasis possessions of rebellious elements, the 1923 decree was specifically designed to cover the steppe lands of the rebels.

The decrees outlined above came into effect in 1922-23 in Misuratino and were applied to all areas of the littoral oases

with the exception of Homs Oasis, where Italian control had been maintained, and where the local inhabitants were less able or inclined to make trouble for the Italian administration. The Sahel el-Ahamed was again within the sphere of influence of the Italian command during the rebellion and only fragments of the area were taken away from the Arabs. The position in the Zliten Oasis showed great contrast to these two former cases, for here, some 1,900 sections of land were confiscated as being the property of rebellious elements. Most of the confiscations were limited to the oasis land itself, and the town area was left untouched. Nevertheless, 156 individuals were affected by the expropriations in the years following Volpi's conquest, and some 180,684 gedula passed to the State (1,780 hectares). In Misurata a similar process was applied in respect to rebel lands, especially to the suani owned by Ramadan el-Shatawi. The exact extent of the confiscations of land by the State is unknown, but the officials of the Land Registry at Misurata estimated that as much as 3,000 or 3,500 hectares were taken over by the State authorities. Most of this land in Misurata was granted to the Casa de Risparmio in the town to be the basis of its security reserves.

The phrasing of the legislation tended to be more severe than the application of it at local level. The suani lands of the oasis are highly parcellated (Vide - Land Tenure) and offer little scope for large scale colonisation projects which were in current favour during the 1920s and early thirties. In Zliten and Misurata, the lands which were expropriated after

the rebellion were left in the hands of the original Arab owners, or transferred to other Arabs who were in the service of the State. Thus the impact of the decrees (a) and (b) above was cushioned slightly in its application to the oasis zone proper.

Whilst the tribal lands in the oasis areas had little appeal to the concessionaires coming in from Italy, the undeveloped margin between the oasis and the littoral steppe offered scope for rapid and profitable reclamation. The first of these areas to be seized for colonisation under the terms of the 'rebellious subjects' decrees outlined above was the zone of Misurata between the scarp at Ras el-Magen and the oasis of Zaviet Maguib. In 1928, 2,109 hectares were allotted to Count Volpi for colonisation, on the grazing lands of the es-Secni and Sidi Ammaar. Volpi chose the Misurata region for the establishment of a major concession to act as an example to other capitalist concessionaires, who were showing reluctance to move beyond the confines of Tripoli. His efforts were unsuccessful, since the tribal lands were left untouched until seven years later, when construction began on Concessione La Valdagne in the vicinity of Homs Oasis. Valdagne lands were seized under the provisions of the 'rebellious subjects' decrees, and again showed a tendency to be peripheral to the Arab gardens of the oasis as had been the case with Concessione Volpi. Some 1,360 hectares were involved in the Valdagne project.

The final results of capitalist colonisation in Misuratio were insignificant in comparison with the large scale developments which had been taking place on the Jefara during the years before 1928-30. The decrees of expropriation had made some 29,281 hectares in Misuratio available for colonisation by 1930. Of this total, only 2,109 hectares had been allotted for purposes of reclamation and colonisation by 1930, and at the close of the Italian occupation this had increased to 3,969 hectares. The results of the sequestration of lands during the early phases of the Italian administration were thus of limited dimensions. The loss of land in the vicinity of the oases was an inconvenience for the Arabs rather than an irreparable decline in their grazing and sowing areas. It should be noted at this stage, that the block seizure of land by the Italians tended to hit a few tribes rather badly. It is well to remember that purely areal statement of land quantity is very misleading in its application to the lands of Misuratio, since the highly differentiated qualitative appraisals of land give vastly differing values to small areas in comparison to the larger areas. Thus, the loss of a strip of good grazing land near the oasis is not to be compensated for the fact that there are unlimited acres belonging to the tribe in less well-watered districts of the interior steppe. It is a singular feature of the Ufficio di Colonizzazione that they failed to take account of differentiated land values in evaluating the economic and material loss of land by cabila in the face of the

demands of more space by the Italian agrarian units. The Italians attempted to give compensation for grave family or individual disruption caused by the sequestration of land in Misuratio, but their attitude was coloured by the apparent availability of land, and in their appraisal, they constantly under-valued land by applying average values to large areas. The slightly higher prices paid for the poor hectares which were in the majority, did not compensate for the under-payment for the fertile hectares which were few in number, and generally irreplaceable. This official blindness to differential land values caused distress in a limited number of cases after the end of the rebellion; later during the final phase in Italian land policy this very fact was to prove a great obstacle in Italic-Libyan relations.

TABLE 51

LAND CONFISCATION AND THE ALLOTMENT OF CONCESSIONS -  
TRIPOLITANIA.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>LAND CONFISCATED</u>		<u>LAND ALLOTTED IN CONCESSION</u>	
	<u>West Libya</u>	<u>East Libya</u>	<u>West Libya</u>	<u>East Libya</u>
<u>Up to</u>	<u>Ha.</u>	<u>Ha.</u>	<u>Ha.</u>	<u>Ha.</u>
1923	9,313	300	3,970	---
1923	26,100	90	3,612	---
1924	27,100	540	9,947	---
1925	4,887	1,442	17,619	---
1926	35,124	5,393	25,596	---
1927	45,264	4,450	27,554	9,553
1928	14,722	29,692	13,465	1,893

In Tripolitania as a whole, capitalist development of concession areas in the steppe zone was proceeding rapidly and with great technical success. The olive was spreading gradually over the land, and the superficial aspect of the Jefara was showing the characteristic geometrical pattern of plantations in place of the poorly developed patches of shifting cultivation. The figures in Table 31 give some indication of the allotment of concession land which had been nationalised and expropriated under the systems discussed above.

Volpi's scheme of development appeared to be casting the die for the future of Tripolitania. In the middle twenties De Cillis, who had a large share in the formulation of official policy towards the colony, was adamant in asserting that 'the introduction of Italian peasants is not contemplated now nor for some time to come'. The pioneer development accomplished by the corporations and the private concessionaires was having a large measure of success, and the administrators in Tripolitania were aware that the potentialities for Italian peasant colonisation were limited by the environment. The only means whereby peasant colonisation appeared to be possible in Tripolitania was by direct substitution of Italians for Libyans in the suani of the oases. This would create more problems for the administration than it would solve.

This appraisal by the colonial administration was not to be of long-standing importance. In the Mother Country social and political factors were working against the concept of Libya

as merely a strategic area. Exploitation by capitalist methods was not proving rapid enough for the Fascist Government in Italy. The discrepancy between the figures contained in Table 31 for land confiscation and allotment was sufficient for grave doubt to be cast upon the efficacy of exploitation by capital and technology alone. Apart from the military and the administration, the numbers of Italians resident in the colony were small. The Fascist regime in Italy was anxious for quick results in the development of its colonial possessions. There is no place here for complete discussion of the political background in Italy following upon the rise of the Fascist party. It should be noted, nevertheless, that the tentative approach to colonial development adopted by the old colonial administration was unattractive to the Government in the metropolitan country.

The political tide turned in 1928. In Libya this was reflected in the retirement of Cenci Volpi in 1928, and the full turn of the wheel was represented by the appointment of Marshall Balbo in 1934. An attitude of self-confidence replaced the former official circumscription in respect to colonisation. The effects of this change have been discussed previously in respect to the de-tribalisation of Tripolitania. According with the attempt to assimilate Libya into the social structure of Italy, a political and economic policy of integration by settlement of Italian peasant farmers was embarked upon.

Marshall Balbo planned to introduce 20,000 Italian peasants each year for a total of 25 years, thereby giving a rural Italian population of 500,000 by the mid 50s. The ratio of indigenous Libyans to Italian colonists would thus be reduced to approximately two to one. The basis for this intensive settlement was to be the demographic estate.

In the metropolitan country, experimental settlement of peasants upon reclaimed lands in the Pontine areas had proved reasonably successful. It was hoped to transfer this same pattern to Libya. In the first phases of colonisation, the administration in Tripolitania attempted to adopt the framework of capitalist estates to the new conception of demographic settlement. In the years following 1928, increasing pressure was exerted upon the concessionaires to take land with a written obligation to take a quota of Italian peasant farmers. For the most part, it was intended that the immigrants should be allowed a mezzadria tenancy of part of the larger concession estate. In essence this system was a direct transfer of the indigenous agrarian organisation of the Italian South, with landless labourers attached to a latifundia estate. In Misuratio, this framework is exemplified in Concessione La Valdagno, where the latifundia exists as a permanent whole, whilst the farms of the mezzadria form small allotted semi-permanent portions peripheral to the central organisation.

La Valdagno Concession was developed in the period 1937-38 by an Italian industrialist who hoped to take advantage of the

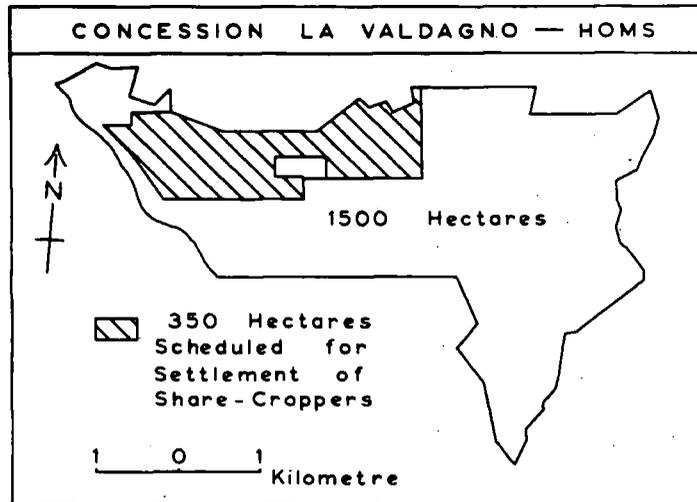


Figure 51

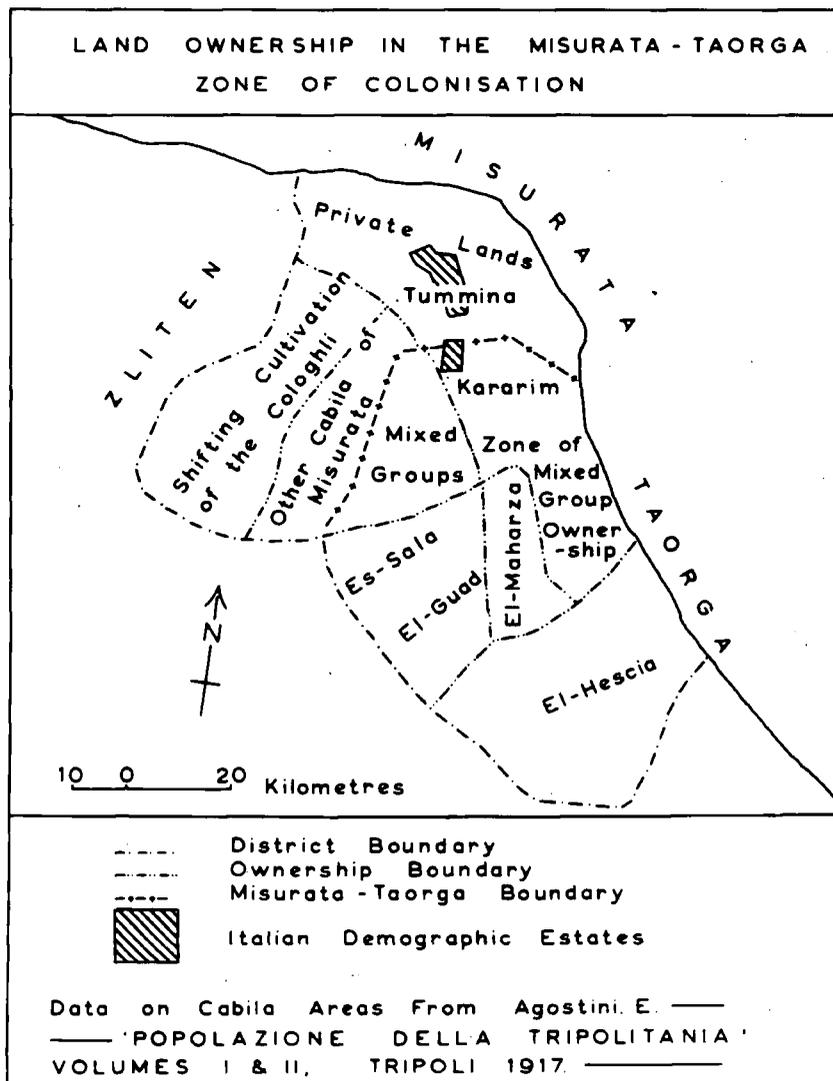


Figure 52

opportunities offered for investment in Libya under the Fascist regime, whereby tax relief at home could be obtained proportional to the colonial investments undertaken. The total area of the estate amounted to some 1,860 hectares, of which 512 hectares were to be allotted to the mezzadria for contract occupation. Figure 51 shows the distribution of these plots in the ground plan of the estate, each podere being 16 hectares in area. The bulk of the estate left after the allotment of podere was worked by direct management under a technical farm manager appointed by the estate owner.

It was found that land purchase and development on the part of individuals was accompanied by many defects in relation to the problem of extension of demographic settlement. The administration had no guarantee that the land under the control of private individuals would remain under Italian control since the owners were at liberty to sell their lands once the terms of the original holding contract had been fulfilled, and the full title of ownership passed from the State. There was always the threat that the colonist having acquired his estate might fall the victim of economic distress or might sell his lands at a profit to a non-Italian and return to the home country. The advent of the new Balbe policy was designed in part to exclude this possibility .

Experience showed that the concessionaires had no economic interest in taking tenant farmers, or scrupulously following the rule of employing Italian labour on the estates. The

planters of olive groves did not engage Italian workers, but preferred to draw on the indigenous labour market. Local labour was at times unreliable, but it was always cheap. During the fifteen years of the maturing period of the plantations, when the farmers could expect no crops from the olives and the almonds, it was in their interests to keep down costs to an absolute minimum. On most concession farms there was nothing which the peasant settlers could usefully do which would be profitable to the farmer during the maturing period. Hence, the response of the concessionaires to the proposal of demographic settlement within the framework of capitalist plantations was not enthusiastic. Thus on La Valdegno, the Italian peasant contribution to the total labour force was 32, whilst the indigenous labour employed was 250 during the year 1939 as a permanent force, and 600 during the harvesting season. This attitude on the part of the concessionaires is reflected further by the slow rate of increase in settlement in the years immediately following 1928.

Since the old system failed to carry through the professed aims of the administration, new machinery was called into being. The advantages of national land ownership and development were well adapted to the problems of mass demographic settlement. From the legal point of view, the danger that land would cease to be Italian was easily safe-guarded by the terms of contract. National, central control would ensure that concentration of land in the hands of a few people did not take place, and that

the peasant farmer character of the estates was ensured. Furthermore, planning was the more easily implemented when the administration was the land holding and developing agency responsible for the integrated schemes throughout Tripolitania. The creation of an Italian farming class, which was the social objective of the administration was thought to be possible only through the direct action of the Government. The particular political conditions pertaining in the metropolitan country and the personal interest of the Duce in the Libyan scheme dictated that the new majority class in the Nuove Italia d'Oltremare should be Fascist in character. This could be achieved most efficaciously under the regime of national rather than private land development.

At the end of 1932, the Italian Government authorised the formation of L'Ente per la Colonizzazione delle Cirenaica (Organisation for the colonisation of Cyrenaica). The terms of reference under which the company operated were strictly defined in scope to ensure settlement of peasant farmers. Two years later, the company had begun to introduce immigrants into Cyrenaica. The plan upon which the company worked became the blue-print for all demographic settlement in Libya. Thus colonisation in Libya had changed from latifundia to minifundia agrarian organisation.

In Misuratio, the re-alignment of policy towards purely demographic colonisation was to have great effects upon the agricultural landscape. Previous discussion has shown that the

concessionaires were reluctant to take over land in Misuratio, since the area was inaccessible from Tripoli at that time. The planners from Ente brought rather different concepts to bear on land development in the region. The main concern of Ente was that there was ample steppe land which could be rapidly reclaimed and converted to agricultural use. Closely related to this factor and coinciding with the changes in colonial policy and the arrival of Ente, a second significant factor emerged from an exploratory survey of Misuratio and the steppe periphery. In 1936, Italian engineers discovered a large water table in the steppe zone in the region of Tummina and Kararin. Estimates for the reserves of the water table gave a basis for the introduction of large estates with a great irrigation potential. This discovery gave appreciable impetus to colonisation in Misuratio.

In earlier sections of this examination of Italian land policy, it was pointed out that the official legislation enacted during the period of occupation was intended to provide a legal mechanism for land acquisition. The operation of the Ufficio di colonizzazione confirmed that land was taken for colonisation projects where it was needed, and not where there was genuine justification for its seizure. Account has to be taken of the amelioration of Italian colonial policy towards the late thirties, a change which has been mentioned previously, since there were corresponding adjustments in land policy to comply with the new outlook. The legislation relevant to nationalisation and expropriation was not repealed in any degree, but

the application of the details of the law was given a shift in emphasis. The compensation clauses, which were applied in the Jefaran areas of Tripolitania on a very modest and nominal plane, were given greater scope and financial backing in Misuratio in the years 1937 to 1939 during the period of estate construction.

In this period, the term 'compulsory purchase' is more just to the process used to acquire the steppe lands for demographic settlement. The lands involved in the transfer from Arab to State ownership were included largely within the terms of both expropriation and nationalisation legislation promulgated by the decrees of 1913, 1922, 1923 and subsequent amendatory decrees relevant to them. Under the normal procedure of the Ufficio di Colonizzazione, the lands scheduled for colonisation could have been seized as State property without compensation being paid to the individuals or cabila concerned. In fact, the areas of land which now make up Centro Crispi and Centro Gioca were bought under compulsory purchase. The compensation paid for the lands suffered from the defects which have been noted earlier in respect to average price levels being applied to large areas in spite of the local practice of differentiating sharply between different land use zones over small distances.

In the period 1937-39, the following steppe areas were taken into the state domain lands for the purposes of colonisation, and conceded to Ente.

<u>Centro</u>		<u>Superficial</u>	<u>Date of</u>
<u>Italian - Arab.</u>		<u>Area</u>	<u>Construction</u>
Crispi	Tummina	9,140	1937
Gioda	Kararim	2,288	1937
Garibaldi	Dafnia	19,869	1938
Nahima	Nahima	500	1939
<u>Total</u>		<u>31,797 Hectares</u>	

The absolute total of land purchased under the terms of the colonisation projects to some extent over-emphasises the amount of land which was alienated from the Arab cabila. The following table shows the amounts of land which have reverted back to Arab ownership since the original purchases were made.

Area and Date of Reversion of Lands to State and Arab Ownership in Misuratio.

<u>Centro</u>		<u>Superficial area involved in transfer</u>
<u>Italian - Arab</u>		<u>Discarded pre-1940.</u>
Crispi	Tummina	1,940
Gioda	Kararim	488
Garibaldi	Dafnia	1,469
Nahima	Nahima	-
<u>Total</u>		<u>3,897 Hectares</u>

Nevertheless, the extent of Italian impact upon the area may be gauged by a comparison of the Italian estates and the total oasis land available to the Arabs along the coast. The area brought into cultivation by the Italians exceeded 27,900 hectares in 1940, and at the same period, the total holdings by the Arabs in the oases of Hems, Zliten and Misurata was estimated at 27,678 hectares<sup>(42)</sup>.

The mass alienation of land from the Arabs had a twofold

necessity for grazing and shifting cultivation lands operated only under the tribal communal system. In fact the operation of the grazing and the shifting cultivation system continues even to the present day in the area. One factor which contributed to the ease with which the tribes were able to adapt themselves to the loss of land, and which was used by the Italians to justify their thesis that the disruption of the cabila was minimal, was that grazing use of the lands was extended to several cabila in the Gieda zone. These cabila had further common lands in the south (Figure 52). This idea is a total negation of the local practice of land-use differentiation which has been investigated in respect to compensation paid to the Arabs for the loss of land. In the Garibaldi (Dafnia) area, the land alienated by the Italians belonged to a single cabila group, the Hauamel who possessed only limited areas in the oasis and the littoral steppe lands covered by the estate. The Hauamel and associated groups were badly affected since they lost lands to Garibaldi estate and also lost small areas to the Nahima estate. In this latter case none of the conditions enumerated in the Italian apologia appertain. The area was communally owned; the loss could not be compensated for by adoption of other contiguous areas; money payment for the loss of land was an ineffectual reparation for the total elimination of agricultural livelihood.

This latter case of tribal displacement was the extreme example of tribal break-up as a result of the Italian land policy, but the effects of displacement occurred in less considerable

forms to all the cabila whose lands were disposed in the colonising zones of Misuratino. The economic balance in the area between the possibility of making a living and failing to exist from the environment was more narrow than the Italians were prepared to admit. The closely defined zones and localised patches of land-use types were amongst the basic causative elements in the evolution of economic life in the area. The exclusion of significant pockets of land from the economic caucus was sufficient to disturb the fine balance of equilibrium upon which the tribal economic structure depended. Thus the Bu Rueia of Misurata, who occupied the lands to the south of Zregh oasis lost both oasis and steppe land to Garibaldi to the extent of about 600 hectares. The cabila had other lands available as the Italians pointed out, but the fact that 600 hectares had passed from their control placed heavier, and in many years, impossible demands upon the residual areas. To cater for the poor years, which fall twice in every five years on an average, the cabila was compelled to buy in grain, and borrow or rent grazing land. This was a new factor in the economic system of the cabila, since they were placed in a position where direct purchase of basic requirements was necessary, where previously trade and economic interaction with outside groups had been limited to barter and exchange for comparative luxuries. In order to pay for the grain and grazing rights made necessary by the loss of lands, the members of the cabila were impelled more and more to seek for employment

outside the cabila. This process, begun to ensure the survival of the tribal sub-groups, proved to be a powerful counter-pull to the units and their economic integrity. In the case of the Rueia, the employment opportunities offered by the farmers of Garibaldi was an easy line of resistance, and the tribal units became dislocated and ineffectual as the trend to accept work outside the cabila grew in strength. With the decline in the economic spheres of activity, social life lost much of its control and the tribal and sub-units correspondingly lost status in the eyes of its members.

This latter process of social disintegration following upon economic decentralisation of tribal activity may be counted as the secondary major result of the mass alienation of lands by the Italians. In many ways, it was a gradual force exerted upon the tribal group, affecting at first only a few individuals. Later, as the scope of the land acquisitions increased in the late 1930s, the number of indigenous Arabs affected was greatly expanded. It must be remembered also that the process was augmented by the economic attraction of the Italian enterprises which grew up on the sequestered lands.

In summary it may be said that Italian land policy and the acquisition of tribal lands has been made to look far worse and criminal than the facts justify. Qureshi falls into the trap of finding the nearest and easiest dog to beat in his Report on Land Right and Agricultural Taxation in Tripolitania<sup>(40)</sup>. Sanderson in the B.M.A. publication 'Italian Rule in Tripolitania'

is even more extremist and academically misleading in his summary of Italian policy<sup>(56)</sup>. Both writers tend to look at the finished results of Italian rule after 1945 and account the total effects of de-tribalisation to the legislation which has been outlined in this section. They point to the great urban growth during the Italian period and Sanderson suggests the aim of Italian land policy as a deliberate instrument used to break the power of the tribes and Shaikhs. There is no doubt that the Italians were at great pains to reduce the power of both the tribes and the Shaikhs who led them. This is amply illustrated by the public statements made by Volpi and Balbo during their terms of office in the Governorship. The part played in the struggle between the administration and the tribal groups by the policy of land acquisition must nevertheless be regarded as accidental, however much it was welcomed by the Italians.

The key to the situation resulting from Italian land policy lies in the relationship which existed between the Arab tribes and the Misuratio environment before the advent of the Italians. It has been mentioned previously in this section in respect to the Bu Ruel<sub>2</sub> of Misurata, that the economic balance in the area stemming from the different land use zones as seen through Arab eyes, and the economic necessity for large areas of land of all kinds to cater for climatic variability both in space and time was exceedingly narrow in respect to the possibility of eking out a living and failing to do so.

Italian land acquisition tipped the scales against the tribal economy and provided concurrently alternative opportunities outside the tribal system for the individual members. The joint effects of the two processes were sufficient to stimulate significant changes in both economic and social life in Misuratine. It was a process which accumulated upon itself. Hence the moral blame for the present state of the tribes may not be laid wholly at the feet of the Italian rulers of Tripolitania. External human pressure permanently achieved what the environment had been forcing upon the indigenous population from time to time.

(10) Summary - Traditional Society.

Long-term economic change arising from internal pressure combined with induced change of the social and economic structure from external influence, thus gave momentum to the disintegration of the tribal units. As a conclusion to this discussion of traditional place of the cabila in the social and economic pattern of the area, it may be pointed out that social build of Misuratine has shown endless change. The apparent static nature of the cabila organisation is illusory.

External and internal trade in the area fluctuated according to the power of the occupying regime to impose peace upon the region and keep open the trans-Saharan trade routes. Urban development in Misuratine was again the product of aliens and was the symbol of alien culture in the Arab semi-nomadic landscape. Craft industries were a part of the urban economic scene rather than the traditional framework of the tribes.

Agricultural productivity began to show improvement with the greater spread of mulk and the investment in fixed installations such as irrigation facilities and ancilliary farm buildings. In spite of the move of the tribal centre of interest from the semi-desert to the coastal oases, and the construction of permanent dwellings, the dichotomous character of the coastal societies continued, with a sharp ethnic and economic division between the rural and indigenous and the urban and alien elements.

The growing sedentarisation of the Arab and Arabo-Berber peoples modified the economic central control of the cabila and smaller family organisations, but left the status of the joint institutions largely unimpaired. Nevertheless the basic task of the social structure was to ensure the provision of the necessities of life, and in most tribal groups, some 90% of the population was engaged in this way. The preoccupation with the demands of food production helped to maintain the authority of the tribe and smooth over the transition from pastoral to sedentary occupation without a major rupture in the social fabric. Society remained egalitarian since there was little scope for vertical movement where all members of the tribe were limited to comparatively poor areas in the oases, and where there was no scope for capital accumulation on a large scale. Income accrued above the needs for bare subsistence were lost in non-productive or low-productive out-lays, such as feasts and ceremonies demanded by custom and the maintenance of social status.

The move from the steppe to the oases was prompted by forces of individual enterprise which in the long run were to prove stronger than the tribe itself. Before the Italian occupation, the working of these forces of disintegration were scarcely discernable since the speed of economic progress in the oases was masked by the parochial nature of the settlement and the power of control which mere vicinity allowed to the larger social units. Whilst the individuals in the tribes remained in the tribal domains, and until the 1920s, there was no alternative to residence there but starvation, the cabila organisation remained paramount. Tribal and close kinship ties were of first importance in this regime. The interaction of the differing sub-groups within the cabila and the relations of these groups with the external world were of primary interest to the peoples of rural Misuratio. Traditional outlooks, legacies of the days of semi- and pure nomadism, lasted on in the oases long after the causative forces behind them had vanished. Mental horizons were exceedingly limited by the demands of the groups loyalties, but, as Evans-Pritchard points out, the concept of Islam and the wider Arab world was also powerful even amongst the smallest fractions of the tribes, 'Brotherhood in Islam spread with the ever-lengthening family or pseudo-family ties' (53).

All this has been changing at an increased rate. With the growth of international commerce and the rise of the internal markets, assisted by the extension of roads, the old

self-sufficiency of the cabila has been progressively worn down; the rigidity of the old cabila division of labour softening; the traditional barriers to economic mobility are slowly yielding and cash increasingly replaces kind and barter in the cabila. At the same time, the expansion of towns and the diversification of employment opportunities, the rise of new trades and the decline of old ones have been breaking the hold of the cabila and the family systems. The spread of education and the general trend of the times has worked in the same direction. The younger people who have been educated since the Italian occupation of the country are particularly aware of the changes in the world around. The Italian and the British Governments in Tripolitania have thrust new ways of living and new concepts onto the traditional economic structure and attitudes of the indigenous Arabs, which has created a ferment of new ideas.

Since 1951, social change has accelerated with the extension of electoral qualification to all areas of the State and the introduction of adult male suffrage in all levels of Government activity. Tribal horizons have been lifted inevitably by these processes, and the position of the tribal organisation has undergone rapid loss of status as the individual members of the tribes have been drawn into the larger non-kinship group. Economically, the process has been more intensive, and in this context the influence of the expansion of employment opportunities outside the tribal organisation cannot be over-stated. Earlier

in the chapter it was shown that the Italians began the process of de-tribalisation in the 1920s after the re-conquest of Tripolitania, and that in the subsequent years development activities by the Italian administration brought about an unscheduled but powerful movement from the tribal areas to the centres of employment. This gravitation of economic interest was essentially in response to a force of attraction presented by the new way of living introduced by the foreigners. By the end of the Italian occupation, traditional society and the traditional economic system had changed irrevocably. Capital investment in over-head and agricultural development schemes for Tripolitania was well above the rate suggested by Rostow (10%) for a society beginning the transitional phase of growth<sup>(63)</sup>. It is true that the capital investment was intended mainly for the European elements in the country, but as a legacy to the State of Libya, they represent the first economic trend towards transition. During and after the war the investment rate dropped catastrophically when the war expenditure and development undertakings collapsed in 1944.

Since independence, the break down of traditional society has gained momentum from the oil-exploration and aid revenues which have again provoked a rapid rise in investment above the 10% level. The economic position at the present day is discussed in a later chapter, for immediate purposes the notable and significant effects achieved since 1951 have been the continued economic attraction away from the tribal lands,

the decline in the hold of the family upon the individual, and the cabila on the family group, and the devaluation of the status of the tribal hierarchy in personal and regional affairs.