

THE BARGHOUTHI DWELLINGS

The one striking feature about the Barghouthi dwellings was their urban-influenced architectural forms. In fact "Barghouthi Architecture", like most throne village architecture, had more in common with urban forms than with what we may term here as the "fallaheen built forms". As explained earlier, the Barghouthis, who were semi-feudalists in a rural setting, had strong ties with urban notables, particularly with those of the town of Nablus. As a result of this, they aspired to lead an urban life style which was reflected in the spatial organisation of their dwellings. The sharp distinction between private and public, which characterized most of the Barghouthi dwellings, was mostly the result of the semi-urban role of their women, a role confining them to the house.

It is believed that most of the Barghouthi buildings were constructed by master-builders who came from Nablus. Hence similarity to urban forms is only to be expected. Master builders usually came with their team and thus transferred the same building techniques and forms that prevailed in the town of Nablus to other locations.

The Barghouthi architecture (and throne village architecture in general), like the social and political role of the Barghouthis, bridged the differences between urban and fallaheen built forms. This is best illustrated in the spectrum of Barghouthi dwellings which lay between the urban looking compounds of the Saleh family, and the peasant forms of some of the Dawood families (Fig. 4.15).

The Barghouthi dwellings, as figure 4.15 illustrates, seem to have had indefinite variety in their architectural forms: size, scale, architectural articulation, treatment of elevations, details of doors and windows etc., all depending on the owner's position in the social hierarchy. Within this seemingly limitless variety, one can delineate invariant features of spatial organisation. For example, the relationship of the single-room houses (dor) to the central courtyard seems to have been an invariant relationship (Fig. 4.16).

Together, uniformity and variety within the Barghouthi dwellings