

inner private domain from the outer world.

4. There were relatively few openings to the outside. Ground floor openings (which were rare) were hole-like ventilation openings placed so high up the wall that a passer-by could not see within. Upper floors openings, in richer Barghouthi houses, were screened by lattice wood shutters, so as to allow women to look out while not being visible themselves (Fig. 4.19).
5. Entry gates to the Barghouthi compounds were normally elaborate, signifying important transitional points. In some cases, there were special entry doors for women which were normally located in the back. This was the case in the Saleh, Cana'an and the 'Ashwah compounds (Fig. 4.14). In the majority of the Barghouthi compounds, entry gates opened directly on the courtyard. However in the case of the Saleh and the Abdul Aziz compounds, a bent vestibule or a change in direction of movement prevented any outsiders from gazing into the inner courtyard.
6. From the courtyard, a flight or flights of stairs, led up to the roof (stiehad), which had parapet walls up to two meters high. This prevented any glimpses into neighbouring courtyards and gave privacy. To these walled off roofs opened one or more elevated rooms ('alali). These 'alali served as bed rooms for the master of the family or were in some cases, reserved for male visitors. This is why some elevated rooms had external stair cases which connected them directly to the outside. Most of these elevated rooms were characterized by having very high domed ceilings which were white washed and beautifully decorated. The elevated rooms also had relatively big windows to enjoy the panoramic views of neighbouring villages (Fig. 4.17). These 'alali were seen by the Barghouthis as symbols of power and prestige; hence, some were elevated up to 20 meters (fig. 4.17). These 'alali were also used as towers for defence at times of inter-Barghouthi fights. Stones, or later gun-powder, were thrown or fired from the roofs of these 'alali, which could be reached by internal stair cases built within the walls of the elevated room.