

embodied high symbolic meanings in the Palestinian folklore (Cana'an, 1932: 70). It was (and still is) believed that the threshold was the favourite abode of the djinn, hence the fallah would put a silver coin under it so as to passify the evil spirits (silver is a good omen denoting light). The bride should step over the threshold on her wedding night so as not to become barren (Granqvist, 1931). That was also the reason for making an offering on the threshold. The keystone was believed to protect the house from the evil spirit. The name of Allah, Quranic inscriptions and geometric designs were mostly found on keystones. The house was characterized by the grouping of all living and working functions under one roof and into one space, without any divisions (Fig. 4.21). This reflected and also allowed for very close contacts between the house attendants. Behind the door was a small transitional area called qa' ed-dar. This was used as service space for depositing shoes. Another threshold separated this area from the rest of the house. In front of the entrance door was the service area which is functionally an extension of the outer working space. Here women kept most of their kitchen utensils for cooking and serving food. They also stored other working tools. Unlike most of the fallaheen houses, the Barghouthi's did not have any difference in elevations between the service area (qa' ed-dar), and the living and sleeping area (el-mastabeh). The mastabeh which occupied the rest of the house was considered as a clean area for living, sleeping and eating. During the summer season the dar functioned mostly as a sleeping area since most domestic work and socialisation took place in the open air. On the same wall of the entrance door, was the fire-place (mawqed or udjaq). In winter this was the centre of women's activities. It was used for heating and for cooking during rainy days. The beit had very little furnishings. At night mattresses are rolled out for sleeping on. During the day mattresses are rolled up and stored in a niche in the wall called (kaos) (Fig. 4.21). Along the thick stone walls (80-120 cm) were a number of storage niches used to store water jars (zeer or jarrah), clothes, and few other belongings. Food was normally stored in special bins made out of mud called khawabi (single khahieh). The floor of the room was made out of polished lime mixture (maddeh) made out of shid and nhateh. The house had a cross vaulted ceiling typical of most houses in the village.