

spoon of sugar was sometimes added to the water so that the life of the newly-weds would be sweet" she adds. Both the bride and the groom, who carried a long dagger symbolizing his manhood, must step over the threshold so as to avoid any harm of the djinn residing under the threshold. It was, and still is, believed that a newly married couple was like a newly-constructed house, exposed to evil influence (Granquist, 1931: 10).

The fallah's dependency and close interaction with nature, was reflected in the internal organisation of the house. The placement of man, animal, and agricultural produce under one roof with one entrance, and the hierarchical division of the house into corresponding areas at different levels, were by no means accidental, but were symbolic of the various values assigned to the divisions of the house. A wall made up of rubble stone and lattice wood separated the front family space (el mastabeh) from the animal space (qa' el beit) located in the lower back space and from the food storage area (er-rawieh) located in the upper back space (Fig. 4.38E).



Fig. 4.40: Interior of a peasant house

Qa' el-beit which literally means "the bottom part of the house" referred to the entrance area which was used as a service area. A small raised platform with a water jar located on a wall niche above it was used for washing dishes, clothes and bathing. Qa' el-beit also referred to the lower back area (normally a step or two lower from the service area). Animals such as sheep, goats, hens, cows and donkeys were kept here, especially at night. All kinds of tools and implements - firewood, barrels, mud jars, mud bins, and animal manure - were also found in qa' el-beit. For the fallah, the animals were his "valuables" and by keeping them inside with him, he assured their safety and by extension, his own safety. The one entrance and the one roof shared by the two demonstrated a strong unity, or a lack of differentiation, between the fallah and his