

Once the mud was dry, it acted as a formwork for the roof. The bulk of the cross vault was made out of light stone, cut in an uneven brick like stones called (hajar nari) (fire stone). This was light in weight and fire-resistant. This stone was mixed with lime water, which acted as a binding material. The vault was left for a few days to settle. Once the m'allem placed the vault keystone (el-ghalak) in position, the festive event started.

The roof was completed by filling in the four corners of the arched walls and the vault with rubble stone and earth, or sometimes with earth only. The roof was then totally sealed by pouring the mortar (made out of lime and earth) all over the roof.

While the work was going on, women were preparing the festive meal in order to celebrate the completion of the vaulting (el-aggdeh). This event was considered one of the happiest moments for the fallah; "there is no joy except the joy of vaulting" (ma farah illa farah el 'aged) say the fallaheen.

On this occasion, another offering, known as the offering of the vault "dabiehet el 'aged", was made. Unlike the foundation offering, which was made for the djin, this was made for the prophet Abraham "dabiehet Ibrahim" (Cana'an, 1933: 64). This offering was either made on the roof itself or in front of the house at its entrance door. The offering was laid with its head towards Mecca. The blood was allowed to run on the door threshold, where the spirits dwelled. This was done as a proof that the offering was made. It was believed that if the inhabitants of the house did not make an offering for the spirits who resided there, the spirits would take their offerings by killing the owner of the house or a member of his family.

When the vaulting was finished, every one who helped, or even passed by, was invited to join the festive meal. The m'allem would usually receive a present, often a cloak ('abaieh), or a robe (qumbaz) for his valuable work. At the turn of this century, the m'allem was paid in cash; four to five majiedieh (one majiedieh was equivalent to one pound sterling) for building the house. Later on, in the 1920s, the