

the madafah (fig.5.3). The eight windows were almost the same size; their rectangular frames hardly project and have a smoother finish than the rest of the building. The original wooden shutters and iron safety bars of these windows have been stolen. These windows had no glazing, since this was not common at the turn of this century.

As with most of the Barghouthi dwellings, and in contrast with those of the fallaheen, the madafah was quite elaborate in its architectural details. This suited its vital social functions and was appropriate as a prestige symbol. The few decorative stones on the facade (fig. 5.7), such as the circular ventilation openings or rosettes, enriched the building with ornamentation. Stones above the windows were also distinguished by their intricate patterns. The proportions of the building and the high quality of workmanship in stone, expressed an intimate knowledge of the material. On top of the building were the projections of a circular dome and an older rectangular dome. The external surface of these white-washed domes were often covered with plants. While the madafah had strong transparency towards the east and west, there were no openings towards the adjacent private Barghouthi dwellings located on its north and south sides.

A rectangular door placed in the middle of the madafah connected it to the saha. This door with its simple lintel contrasted sharply with the elaborated pointed or segmented arches typical of Barghouthi dwellings (Chapter 4). The inner area next to the entrance, which had a high stone threshold ('atabeh), was used for depositing shoes and tools. The remaining clean platform (mastabeh) - raised 20 cm. - was used for seating.

The madafah itself had almost no furnishings. Floors were covered with strawmats (husur). Once a guest arrived, mattresses, cushions and pillows were fetched from the village houses. In the centre, a pit (nuqrah) was dug in the floor. This functioned as a fire-place providing warmth in winter. A big drinking water jar with a dipper (miskah) was placed in the corner. A pottery bowl was also kept for washing. A kerosene lamp was lit at night. Coffee was either made