

(the two southern vaults took the form of something between a cross vault and a barred vault). An exposed stair-case located on the northern elevation led to the roof, which had neither the minaret nor the dome typical of most urban mosques. This remarkable incongruity in the scale, the decoration and the methods of building between the mosque and the surrounding buildings (Fig. 6.4) is striking and requires investigation.

By reviewing the 372 central highland villages mentioned in The Survey of Western Palestine Memoirs (Conder and Kitchener, 1881), I found that only 14 villages were noted as having a "little mosque". Eight out of 16 Christian villages were noted as having a chapel, a church or convent. The rest were not noted as having a mosque or church (see appendices II and III).

In Tent Work in Palestine (vol. II), Conder makes the following remark:

"You may live for months in the out-of-the way parts of Palestine without seeing a mosque or hearing the call of the Muedhen to prayer" (Conder, 1878: 218).

In a similar vein C.T. Wilson wrote:

"The village mosques are for the most part miserable buildings, dark and dirty, with nothing whatever in their outward appearance to show that they are sacred edifices... Occasionally in the larger villages a more pretentious building may be seen, and one kept in better order, with now and then a medaneh" (Wilson, 1906: 21).

Though one could argue that "miserable", "dark" and "dirty" are emotive terms and may have been used from an ethnocentric point of view, it remains evident that most village mosques were just small rooms designated for prayers. Wilson noted for example that mosques were places which often functioned both as a guest-house and prayer areas (ibid.).

The absence of an elaborate mosque can be explained by the following:

1. The nature of the God/man relationship and the prayer rituals,