

Power Relations and the Number and Location of the Guest-Houses

In nearly every Palestinian village there was at least one guest-house. The number of guest-houses was influenced by the number of clans in a village, their size and affluence. Whether there was one or more guest-houses was dictated by whether there was one hegemonic clan or several powerful ones. In the case of Deir Ghassaneh until the 1920's, there was only one guest-house, located in the Barghouthi quarter, and in the middle of the Daher compounds. The placing of this single guest-house in relation to its surroundings revealed the hierarchical social order which prevailed in Deir Ghassaneh. The fact that the Daher guest-house was considered the common madafah reflected the power and authority which that family enjoyed over other families. Whereas in some villages the guest-house was a room in the sheikh's house or, as in smaller villages and hamlets, the village mosque was used as a guest-house, in Deir Ghassaneh, the guest-house was a separate building distinguished by its size and scale. Men from all the Barghouthi sub-clans, the Shu'aibi, the 'Alem and the lower quarter, came to the guest-house and considered it their common madafah.



Fig. 5.5: The Shu'aibi and Cana'an private reception rooms ('alali)

The different clans had their own private reception room located in their own quarters. These were referred to as 'alali (elevated rooms), and were used by the clans for their own personal and family guests only (Fig. 5.5). In times of tension and dispute between the