

Fig. 8: Organization of the space in a *katiya* house. Isa Muhammad's home (Fulederu, Asosa wereda).

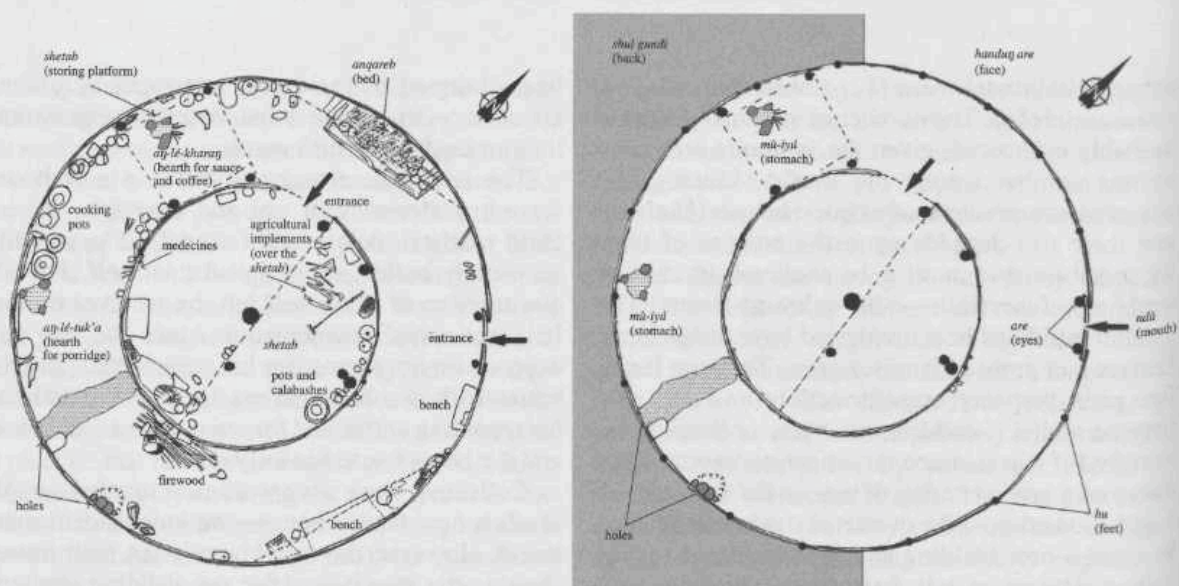


Fig. 9: The organization of the space in a concentric house. Audun Hamis' home (Gundul, Asosa).

### Front and Back – Space and Body

As in most architectural traditions, the Bertha house is a structuring structure (Donley-Reid 1990) and, as it is often the case in vernacular housing, this structuring nature is played out through anthropomorphic metaphors (Preston Blier 1987). Each part of the Bertha house is related to a member of the body: the roof is the head, (*shul*) *alú*. The hearth is the stomach (*mù-iyù* or *shul-iyù*), but we have to bear in mind that for the Bertha the stomach is very similar to the heart and the brain in our own percep-

tion of the body. The door is the mouth, *ndù* (which also means “Bertha language”: Bender 1989: 271). The poles that flank the door are the eyes, (*shul*) *are*, a term which also means “face.” The rest of the poles that support the house are the feet (*shul*) *huu* (or *khu*; Andersen 1995: 50), although the inner poles are called *shiba* (which also means “wings”). Finally, the rear is the back: (*shul*) *gundi*.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, as with the Batammaliba house (Preston

<sup>8</sup> Lists of Bertha vocabulary, containing these words and variants, can be found in Cerulli (1947), Triulzi et al. (1976), and Bender (1989).