CHAPTER NINE

STORAGE SPACE, STABLES AND SHELTERS FOR LIVESTOCK

A: Storage Space

All domestic buildings contained storage space, which could vary considerably in size according to the particular needs and the number of occupants. Huge vaulted spaces were available on the ground-floor level of several buildings in the Military Order compounds at Jerusalem and Acre; notable are the ground-floor halls of the palace and the so-called “knight’s halls”.\(^1\) Monastic cloistral compounds generally had a storage wing or cellar. In the monastery at Bethany, in a hall located on the southern side of the courtyard between the east and west churches and adjacent to the kitchens, was a storeroom possibly used for storing wooden barrels of wine, as is indicated by stone benches set on the floor with concave depressions cut in their upper surfaces.\(^2\) In the Italian merchant communes of Acre and Tyre storage rooms occupied the entire ground floor of the palacia. Here the merchants stored the goods brought by them from the West until they were sold or shifted on and also the goods they purchased in the East prior to transporting them back to Europe. Surviving examples of these storage halls vary in size from 138 to 382.5 square m. (Figure 56). They are high, averaging about 6 or 7 m., and are roofed with groin vaulting supported on massive stone piers. The use of groin vaults rather than barrel vaults allowed for several broad arched doors to be opened in the side walls through which merchandise could be brought in and subsequently sold onto the street. An example of such a hall is house 1:5 in the Genoese quarter of Acre which had large openings onto the adjoining covered street. The presence of three broad adjacent doorways supports their identification as shop openings as a single doorway would otherwise have sufficed. The side of the hall (west) adjacent to the street would have served for the sale of goods, the remainder of the hall for

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\(^1\) For a photograph of the former see Stern, 2000 (Hebrew), p. 11.
\(^2\) Saller, 1957, p. 104, Plate 46.
storage. Both the Venetian and Genoese property lists refer to such arrangements. For example, the Venetian palace of the bailli had six large shops on its ground floor, and the Great Palace of the Fondaco had as many as 16! The number of free-standing piers and bays in these storerooms varies from a single central pier supporting four bays as in house 1:10 in the Pisan quarter to six piers and 12 bays in house 1:5 in the Genoese quarter.

Storage on a smaller scale can be seen in house 3:2 in Caesarea, which had what may have been a sirdāb, that is, a partially underground room used for storing items away from the heat. This may have been a feature left over from the Fatimid period in a house that the Franks occupied in the twelfth century and partly rebuilt and expanded in the thirteenth century. Large stone-lined silos located in the floors of houses in Caesarea also originated in the Fatimid period and were used by the Franks, who may also have built such installations themselves. In village houses such as those in al-Kurum there were occasionally undercrofts cut or partly cut into the bedrock. Storage in rural

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