

HUTS AND FARM BUILDINGS IN HOMER

THESE seem to be regarded as quite a different type of building from houses. The terminology used of them is to a large extent distinct. The only case of extensive overlapping has probably a special stylistic reason.

The main words involved are *κλισίη* (soldiers' hut or herdsman's cottage), *αὐλή* (yard or farmyard), *μέσσανλος* (animal enclosure), and *σταθμός/-οί* (the whole complex of farm buildings). The evidence is scanty: in the *Iliad* there are a number of passages relating to soldiers' huts, and a few mentions of farms in similes and in the Shield section. In the *Odyssey* there is Eumaeus' farm. This is virtually all. There is also, inevitably, a dearth of archaeological evidence for country buildings, since the remains of these are apt to be less noticeable, and often less durable, than those of large settlements.

It is agreed that *κλισίη* is a derivative of the same root as *κλίνω*. Most authorities have interpreted it as 'a place to lie down'.¹ More recently, however, Buti has made the attractive suggestion that it is the beams of the roof that lean, as in 'lean-to'.² Perhaps originally a *κλισίη* was made by just leaning two rows of timbers together and fixing the roofing material to them.³

In later times the word developed a variety of meanings, ranging from wine-shop to chapel. But the only real extension, in Homer, of the basic meaning is in the descriptions of the chieftains' huts at Troy. These would be likely to provide a little more luxury than a mere roof over one's head, especially after several generations of poetic imagination have been at work on them. There is no evidence that *κλισίη* is ever a tent (rendering so beloved of some translators).⁴ The 'tent' idea for Homer is quite disproved by the description of the building of Achilles' *κλισίη* (*Il.* 24. 448 ff.), in which the two actions mentioned are hewing pine-wood and roofing the *κλισίη* with rushes (i.e. thatch).

A thatched roof must be steeply pitched, and this tallies with Buti's interpretation of *κλισίη*. We may compare *H. Ven.* 173, where a *κλισίη* (the farm type) is said to have a *μέλαθρον* (probably 'ridge-pole'). As possible archaeological parallels, the Argive Heraeum, Perachora, and pitch-roofed Samos models come to mind, and also the Protogeometric oval building and the eighth-century apsidal buildings at Smyrna.⁵ But the latter, at least (and probably the models too), cannot be regarded as farm-houses, of which there are no examples at all from the relevant periods.

Heinrich Drerup states 'Die "Klisie" des Eumaios und Achilles müssen Ovalbauten gewesen sein',⁶ on, apparently, the sole ground that an oval house is of much lower social standing than a rectangular one, but there is no evidence whatever to support this. It is much more likely that a feature of the *κλισίη* was a

¹ e.g. Frisk, *Eranos* xli (1943), 63.

² *La Casa degli Indeupei*, 98.

³ As in early English cruck buildings, cf. J. Walton, *Antiquity* xxii (1948), 179 ff.

⁴ e.g. Chapman. The use of *σκηναί* for the Homeric encampment is at least as old as Pausanias (10. 25. 3), who does seem to mean tents of some sort, though it is possible that the *σκηναί* of, for instance, Xen. *An.* 3. 5. 7 are some solidier type of building.

⁵ The Argive Heraeum model: *AE*, 1931,

1 ff., and cf. Markman, *Studies Presented to D. M. Robinson*, i. 259 ff.

The Perachora models: Payne, *Perachora*, 34 ff.

The Samos models: (a) apsidal, *AM* lxxiv (1959), 18; (b) oval, *AM* lv (1930), 16 ff.

The Smyrna houses: *JHS* lxxii (1952), 104; *BSA* liii (1958-9), 10 ff. and pl. 74; Akurgal, *Die Kunst Anatoliens*, 9 and 12 f.

⁶ *AA* lxxix (1964), 2, p. 184.

pitched, thatched roof, as opposed to the flat roof of a more complex large house such as a Mycenaean palace.¹ An oval or apsidal plan is particularly suitable for a thatched roof, but there is no reason to assume that all κλισίαι were oval.

The hypothesis that a pitched roof is of the essence of a κλισίη tallies well with a likely interpretation of κλίσιον. This word occurs only once in Homer, in the passage describing Laertes' house: *περὶ δὲ κλίσιον θέε πάντη* (*Od.* 24. 208). LSJ define it as 'outbuildings around a κλισίη', but this is incorrect in that Laertes' house is nowhere called a κλισίη; it is an οἶκος. Nor is the meaning 'outbuildings' very likely, since κλίσιον is singular and runs πάντη around the house. The whole problem has been thoroughly discussed by Frisk.² There is a confusion, at least as old as Hesychius, with κλίσιον (or κλεισίον), a lock-up, which can refer to outbuildings. It is (barely) conceivable that Homer could have intended this word.³ Or, possibly, κλίσιον could mean a bench, thus being parallel to the 'couch' meaning of κλισίη. Lines 209–10 would then mean 'on which the bondsmen ate and sat and rested . . .' and ἐν δέ in line 211 would either refer back to οἶκος or, more likely, mean 'among them'. There are plenty of examples of benches along the walls of rooms from Mycenaean to Geometric periods.⁴ Frisk interprets κλίσιον as a derivative of *κλίη (also the origin of κλισίη), as αὔλιον is of αὐλή.⁵ κλίσιον means, he says, a construction running around the house, probably a veranda open to the outdoors, with columns like a stoa (cf. Hesychius' gloss, *προστάς, προστώον*). The latter detail, however, seems rather unlikely, as an open veranda would surely be called an αἶθουσα.

It is more probable that the κλίσιον was an enclosed shelter, a 'lean-to' (Stanford's translation *ad loc.*), so called because it leans against the house. κλίσιον would then be related to κλίνω in the same way that Buti believes κλισίη is related. A possible parallel would be the long narrow rooms added on around a big main room at Karphi (though these are not actually lean-tos);⁶ or, better, the little 'pantry' beside an apsidal Late Geometric house at Smyrna.⁷ Although this is not big enough to sleep several servants, and does not run all around the house, it could easily have been enlarged to do so.

κλισίη is the only word for a dwelling that does not overlap to any extent with the others. And the elaborate details and imposing formulas typical of house-passages simply do not occur when a κλισίη is mentioned.⁸ In an army camp everyone lives in κλισίαι, not οἶκοι or δόμοι or anything else. In peacetime, at home, pastoral workers live in them.⁹ No κλισίαι are mentioned in towns, though as town houses other than palaces are rarely mentioned one cannot be dogmatic on this point.

¹ On Mycenaean palace roofs, cf. Blegen. *AJA* xlix (1945), 35 ff. where other references are given. I hope to discuss this vexed question elsewhere.

² *Eranos*, xli (1943), 59 ff.

³ Scanned κλίσιον or κλίσϊον (cf. *Αἰγυπτίους*, *Od.* 4. 83). This scansion is, however, only remotely possible.

⁴ e.g. at Mycenae (Wace, *Mycenae*, 79) and particularly often at Geometric sites, e.g. Emporio (Boardman, *Chios: Greek Emporio*, 37, where other examples are cited).

⁵ *Loc. cit.* 63.

⁶ Rooms 8–9–11–14, Pendlebury, *BSA*

xxxviii (1937–8), 77 f.

⁷ Akurgal, *Die Kunst Anatoliens*, 13.

⁸ κλισίη does have a few formulaic epithets: *εὐτυκτος* (three times *Il.*, once *Od.*), *εὐπηκτος* (twice *Il.*), and *κατηρεφής* (once *Il.*), but these are scarce and relatively simple. Details of its decoration and furnishing are never given, as they are for example of Alcinous' and Odysseus' houses, nor are parts like storerooms and stairs ever mentioned (always excepting the passage in *Il.* 24 which will be discussed below).

⁹ For the very few exceptions to these remarks, see below.

A κλισίη has an αὐλή, an unroofed yard in front of or around the κλισίη,¹ in which animals may be kept.² μέσσαυλος occurs five times only, always in a farm context.³ It seems to be a synonym for αὐλή in the farmyard sense. There is no evidence that it is a separate enclosure or pen; in *Od.* 10. 435 it is a general word for farm or 'steading'. The usual general word for a farm, however, is σταθμός.⁴

Eumaeus' κλισίη was apparently sited with a view to suitability for pigs.⁵ There is no indication that it had more than one main room, but this must have been fairly large, since Eumaeus and his four companions normally sleep in it. It had a πρόδομος,⁶ in which Eumaeus sits mending his shoes.⁷

The building of its αὐλή is described in *Od.* 14. 8 ff.:

δείμαθ' . . .
 ῥντοῖσιν λάεσσι καὶ ἐθρίγκωσεν ἀχέρδω

i.e. it was a stone wall with superstructure or coping of wood, or perhaps a barrier of thorns on top of the wall.⁸ The poet continues:

σταυροὺς δ' ἐκτὸς ἔλασσε διαμπερές ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα,
 πυκνοὺς καὶ θαμέας, τὸ μέλαν δρυνὸς ἀμφικεάσσας.

διαμπερές may mean 'right round' or just 'continuous'. Chamoux has well discussed the sort of arrangement this implies.⁹ There are three elements, he says, in the establishment: the αὐλή, the wooden fence outside it, and the hut within it. The αὐλή is a stone enceinte, in which there are large pigsties.¹⁰ ῥντοῖσιν probably means the stones were unworked, not dragged as some have thought. Around this is the wooden fence, and the hogs sleep outside the αὐλή in this enclosure. It must be quite a large, rough pasture to include an overhanging rock big enough to shelter the hogs (and Eumaeus).¹¹

It is not clear whether πρόθυρον/-a means the outside gate of the αὐλή¹² or the entrance to the πρόδομος. Perhaps the ἀντίθυρον, where Athena stands (and the dogs flee yelping ἐτέρωσε διὰ σταθμοῖο),¹³ is a stronger candidate for the former meaning. ἐτέρωσε either means just 'out of Athena's way' or implies that they slunk along under the walls, as dogs do when frightened.

The stone threshold of the κλισίη is not at all an incongruity:¹⁴ quite small houses of all periods had them, especially in areas where wood was scarce.¹⁵

Few other words are used of the κλισίη. More than a thousand lines of the

¹ e.g. *Il.* 24. 452, *Od.* 14. 5 f. As I hope to show elsewhere, the αὐλή of the Homeric palace was of this type too, and quite different from the internal court of Mycenaean palaces.

² e.g. *Il.* 4. 433 (sheep), *Od.* 15. 556 (pigs). Oddly enough, cattle are never mentioned in an αὐλή, but this may be just coincidence.

³ Thus Palmer's statement, that it was a 'secondary enclosure . . . in the centre of the (palace) αὐλή', is quite erroneous (*Trans. Phil. Soc.*, 1948, 96).

⁴ σταθμός in this sense appears to be found on the Mycenaean tablets, where ta-to-mo occurs twice, in a heading, with lists of sheep. Chadwick argues strongly for its

identification with σταθμός (*JHS* lxxxv (1965), 189), though Palmer doubts it (*Gnomon*, xxix (1957), 569).

⁵ *Od.* 13. 407 ff.

⁶ *Od.* 14. 5. There is no reason, *contra* Stanford *ad loc.*, why this should not mean a porch or vestibule as usual.

⁷ Cf. the seat in front of a Geometric house at Zagora (*ADelt.*, 1960, 248 f.).

⁸ Chamoux, *REG* lxxv (1952), 282 f.

⁹ *Loc. cit.* 281 ff.

¹⁰ *Od.* 14. 13 f.

¹¹ *Od.* 14. 16 and 532 f.

¹² Stanford, note on *Od.* 14. 34.

¹³ *Od.* 16. 155 ff.

¹⁴ *Od.* 16. 41.

¹⁵ e.g. at Karphi, *BSA* xxxviii (1937-8), 67; at Emporio, Boardman, *Chios: Greek Emporio*, 37.

poem deal with events in or about it; in all this, δῶμα is used twice of it,¹ δώματα probably once,² though this could conceivably refer to some other house that Eumaeus had lived in. οἶκος and related words are not found at all. μέγαρον is used twice.³ If any of these words were normal usage for all or part of a κλισίη they would surely occur more often. All the occurrences noted above are formulaic, and it is most likely that the poet has just used a slightly inappropriate formula.

A pastoral establishment, then, consists of a κλισίη (or sometimes, perhaps, several κλισίαι, as in *H. Ven.* 75), a yard or ἀλή adjoining it in which animals are kept loose or in pens, and (at least sometimes) a fenced pasture too. The whole grouping is referred to as σταθμός/-οί.

It is tempting to cite parallels such as the little Geometric houses at Smyrna and Zagora, with their adjoining yards.⁴ But these are town buildings of a fairly permanent character, whereas κλισίαι are all more or less impermanent,⁵ and in comparatively unpopulous country. Perhaps Homeric σταθμοί should be visualized rather as little shelters in various places, between which the herds-men would migrate according to the season and the state of the pasturage.

It must be stressed that all the Homeric references so far mentioned are to buildings of pastoral character. It cannot be assumed that agricultural workers lived in them too; in fact there is every indication that they did not. On the Shield of Achilles, Hephaestus depicts σταθμούς τε κλισίας τε κατηρεφέας ἰδὲ σηκοὺς (*Il.* 18. 589), but these are in the section on pastoral activities, which is quite separate from the previous sections about the cultivation of the land. In the *Works and Days*, κλισίη never occurs; Hesiod's hypothetical farm is an agricultural one. The only animals on it are for work: dogs, mules, and oxen.⁶ As far as one can tell, the slaves and bondsmen live in the farmhouse with their master. This farmhouse is always οἶκος. The same is true of the estate to which Laertes has retired in the *Odyssey*. Some writers have referred to him as living in a 'hut', but κλισίη is never used of his house. It is an οἶκος, which will be the same sort of house as Hesiod's prosperous farmer occupies. Perhaps the element of impermanence in a κλισίη has something to do with this: a herdsman's job can be migratory but an agricultural worker is tied to his land and needs a permanent dwelling.

There are, then, two different types of building, corresponding to two completely separate types of farm. Laertes pastures no animals, and Eumaeus has no interest in agriculture.⁷ The agricultural farmer has a house of which some, at least, of the normal house terminology is used. It may be just accident that δόμος and related words are not used in any of the few references to Laertes' house, though the fact that οἶκος is also Hesiod's word for the farmhouse could be significant (he uses δόμος, etc., for other types of house).⁸

¹ *Od.* 14. 395 and 16. 78.

² *Od.* 14. 381.

³ *Od.* 16. 165 and 17. 521.

⁴ Smyrna: Akurgal, *Die Kunst Anatoliens*, 9 ff.; Zagora: *Ergon*, 1967, 75 ff.

⁵ Eumaeus had moved into a new κλισίη while Odysseus was away (*Od.* 14. 7 ff.), and Odysseus expresses no surprise or particular interest on learning this (*Od.* 13. 407 f.).

⁶ *WD* 604 and 607.

⁷ Perhaps Eumaeus would have transferred his attention to agriculture if Odysseus had remained in Ithaca and given him an οἶκος, a κλήρος, and a wife (*Od.* 14. 64). This would have been a change for the better: an οἶκος is a better class of dwelling than a κλισίη, and moreover carries with it connotations of a 'household'.

⁸ Other, clearer signs of a difference between οἶκος and δόμος are discussed elsewhere (*JHS* xc (1970), 117-20).

A great deal of the action of the *Iliad* takes place in and about the *κλισίαι* of the chieftains. Yet we find the *Iliad* even stricter than the *Odyssey* in excluding normal house terminology from referring to a *κλισίη*. Except in part of book 24 (to be discussed below), *δóμος*, *δῶμα*, and *οἶκος* are never used.¹ *θάλαμος* never occurs, nor *μέγαρον*. An *αὐλή* was probably normal, though rarely mentioned,² and so was a *πρόθυρον*.³

There are no indications that there was more than one room in a *κλισίη*, though one cannot be sure that there was not. Certainly Homer must have envisaged a chieftain's *κλισίη* as being reasonably large. Quantities of possessions are produced from them,⁴ and Agamemnon frequently invites the other chieftains to dinner and a conference. In Achilles' *κλισίη* a sheep is killed;⁵ the only other unambiguous example of killing an animal inside a dwelling is in Eumaeus' *κλισίη*.⁶ It must have been a messy procedure. But a *κλισίη* is not a family home, and of course both these instances are in entirely or predominantly masculine households.

A military *κλισίη*, then, is very much like a pastoral one. But book 24, lines 448–691 (Priam at Achilles' *κλισίη*), presents a completely different picture. Here are the unprecedented words used:

471 *οἶκος*512 *δῶματα*572 *οἶκος*644 *αἰθούσα*647 *μέγαρον*673 *πρόδομος δόμου*

Suddenly Achilles' hut has many of the attributes of a palace, though Homer has not forgotten that it is a *κλισίη*.⁷ It is not that more of the story happens in a *κλισίη* here than in any other passage, so that only here is there much occasion to use these words.⁸ Nor is it likely that in an otherwise superb scene the poet is simply nodding over his house-plans, especially since only in 572,

Πηλεΐδης δ' οἴκοιο λέων ὥς ἄλτο θύραζε,

does it look as though a very apt expression would have been hopelessly disrupted by attempting to substitute some other word for that in question. It is much more likely that palace terminology was felt, perhaps subconsciously, to create the appropriate background and atmosphere for this great scene.

To sum up, then, a Homeric *κλισίη* is quite different from an ordinary house. The difference is probably that it is a relatively small one-roomed hut with a thatched roof, intended for impermanent or periodic occupation only. When terms appropriate to a house or palace are used to any appreciable extent of a *κλισίη*, this is done for special effect.⁹

Wellington, New Zealand

MARY O. KNOX

¹ With the possible exception of *οἶκονδε*, *Il.* 23. 856, which might, however, mean 'to his home' here. In any case, this word is very generalized in meaning.

² *Il.* 16. 231.

³ *Il.* 19. 212: front door, either of main room or of porch, as above.

⁴ e.g. *Il.* 19. 243 ff., where from Agamemnon's hut are brought seven tripods, twenty cauldrons, twelve horses, and eight women. We need not take the horses, at least, too literally; they must have been kept in the *αὐλή*.

⁵ *Il.* 24. 125.

⁶ *Od.* 14. 419 ff.

⁷ Line 596.

⁸ For example, most of book 9 (over 600 lines in fact) takes place in Agamemnon's and Achilles' *κλισίαι*.

⁹ This paper is based on parts of a Ph.D. thesis in the University of London, written with the aid of a scholarship from the New Zealand University Grants Committee. I am grateful to my supervisor, Professor T. B. L. Webster, for invaluable advice and encouragement, and also to Professor Agathe Thornton and Professor H. A. Murray for useful suggestions and help.