

## MEGARONS AND ΜΕΓΑΡΑ: HOMER AND ARCHAEOLOGY

THIS paper is primarily an attempt to study the Homeric evidence on houses, particularly on the μέγαρον, in relation to the relevant remains. The reverse procedure, illuminating the archaeological evidence by references to Homer, is a hazardous one, as we shall see. It is often unclear just what is represented by the descriptions in the poems, and what period, if any, the things described belong to. I shall be concerned with these questions here. Are the houses in the poems Mycenaean: genuine traditions from the period in which the stories are set? Or are they Geometric: contemporary? Or a memory of some time in between? Or a mixture? We know so little about the development of the epic tradition that any possible source of information is worth pursuing.<sup>1</sup>

It is quite possible that descriptions in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* may contain purely imaginary elements.<sup>2</sup> One has only to reflect on the beautiful golden palaces inhabited by princesses in European fairy-tales. And if a poet is working in a long tradition, he may pass his fantasies as well as his facts down to the next generation of poets, who will mingle both indiscriminately, treating the fantasies as part of the factual material of the tradition.

What can, however, reasonably be assumed is that someone—poet or audience or both—at any time in the currency of the oral tradition was able to form a mental picture of what was portrayed. Palmer says: ‘Homeric poets and their audience did not tolerate patent impossibilities and absurdities.’<sup>3</sup> This is undoubtedly correct. It is not necessarily to be inferred that one complete and consistent picture of a house (or anything else) will be adhered to all the time. Occasional inconsistencies are, as is well known, inevitable in oral poetry, even between passages where the same house is being spoken of.<sup>4</sup> But at any point in the narrative, the scene must be able to be imagined and understood without obvious and serious discrepancies with what has gone before, especially immediately before.

The first question is, precisely what does Homer mean by a μέγαρον. It is unfortunate that ‘megaron’ has become current for a type of house-plan particularly common on Mycenaean sites (though also found both earlier and

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The following abbreviations have been used:  
Bassett S. E. Bassett, ‘The Palace of Odysseus’, *A.J.A.* xxiii (1919), 288 ff.

GB Heinrich Drerup, *Griechische Baukunst in geometrischer Zeit (Archaeologia Homerica, ii, o [Göttingen, 1969])*.

Gray D. H. F. Gray, ‘Houses in the Odyssey’, *C.Q. n.s.* v (1955), 1 ff.

HM H. L. Lorimer, *Homer and the Monuments* (London, 1950).

MMA G. E. Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age* (Princeton, 1966).

PN C. W. Blegen and M. Rawson, *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia, i* (Princeton, 1966).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. for example Hainsworth, *Homer*, 11–12.

<sup>2</sup> Indeed, in some cases they clearly do, e.g. the *αὐτόματοι* of *Il.* 18. 376.

<sup>3</sup> *Trans. Phil. Soc.* 1948, 92.

<sup>4</sup> See for example Gunn, *A.J.P.* xci (1970), 192 ff., where further bibliography is given.

later), consisting of a main room entered at one end by an ante-room and/or porch. Fig. 1 shows examples of main rooms with porches from the relevant periods. It is debatable whether an apsidal building can be termed a megaron; certainly few archaeologists would apply the term to the suite of the Geometric 'ruler's residence' at Zagora, which appears to be about 8 m. wide but only

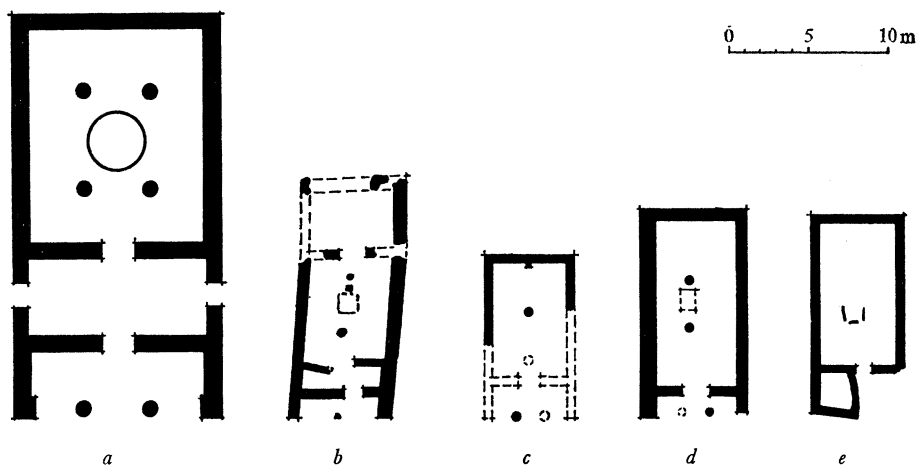


FIG. 1. Megarons of the Mycenaean and Geometric periods

Mycenaean: (a) Pylos, main palace megaron (after *PN*, key plan). (b) Korakou, house L (after Blegen, *Korakou*, fig. 112). (c) Aghios Kosmas, house T (after Mylonas, *Aghios Kosmas*, fig. 15).

Geometric: (d) Emporio, 'Lower Megaron' (after Boardman, *Greek Emporio*, fig. 18). (e) Tsikalario (after Papadopoulou-Zaphiropoulou, *Deltion*, xxi. II/2 [1966], 395 f., fig. 8).

about 7 m. deep.<sup>1</sup> Yet it is highly likely that Homer would have called such a room μέγαρον. What he certainly did not envisage, however, was the double porch of the typical Mycenaean palace megaron.<sup>2</sup>

It will be noticed that the sizes of an average megaron in the Mycenaean and Geometric periods differ little; only the palace megaron is much larger than average.

The relevance of the archaeological phenomenon for Homer is likely to be considerable, as we shall see, but it is not what is meant by the Homeric words μέγαρον and μέγαλα. These words often mean the house as a whole<sup>3</sup> but where they refer to only a part of the house, they mean the main room alone.<sup>4</sup> There are only two examples, in fact the same line repeated, where μέγαρον looks at all as if it represents the suite: *Od.* 4. 625 and 17. 167, where the suitors are playing with the discus on a paved area παρῶθεν Ὀδυσσεύος μεγάρου. This area is usually taken to be the αὐλή in front of the megaron. But, as we shall see,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ergon*, 1967, 76, Room 19 and part of 21.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 8 below.

<sup>3</sup> Knox, *J.H.S.* xc (1970), 117 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Both μέγαρον and μέγαλα can have the

'living-room' meaning, though it is less common in the plural. Henceforth by μέγαρον I shall mean the Homeric word in both singular and plural.

the ἀλλή of Homer is a walled yard in front of the house, rather than the Mycenaean type of central courtyard. So Homer's ἀλλή can quite well be 'in front of the (whole) house'.

All the examples of μέγαρον which could refer to the suite of rooms make better sense when taken as the living-room only, and many can only be taken this way.<sup>1</sup> μέγαρον then does not mean the same as 'megaron', and the two words must be carefully distinguished.

All indoors domestic life which involves hospitality or which is shared in by guests takes place in the μέγαρον. Primarily, this means eating and drinking, from the simple meal (e.g. *Od.* 17. 94 ff.) to the large-scale banquet (e.g. *Od.* 4. 3 ff.). Where bread and the like is cooked there is no telling: a woman-servant can produce food (cold, presumably) at a few minutes' notice if people arrive unexpectedly (*Od.* 17. 94 ff.). There must be somewhere where this food is cooked and stored, but it is never mentioned.

The roasting of meat, however, is apparently a suitable occupation for noblemen, and is not glossed over like this. Not only in the camp at Troy is it normal for well-born young men to cut up and cook the meat. Achilles, for example, had women at his beck and call but himself, with his warrior companions, killed and roasted the animals (*Il.* 9. 206 ff., 24. 621 ff.). It is also normal in Odysseus' palace, where the suitors always deal with the meat (e.g. *Od.* 20. 250 ff.); it is perhaps part of their ὕβρις that they take the organization of the meal on themselves, but in our society they would surely have ordered the servants to prepare the meat. In Nestor's palace too, his sons cook the meat (*Od.* 3. 404-73). This latter passage is an interesting description of a feast under normal, peacetime conditions, and also shows the reason for the allotment of the task to men. The pouring of wine and the killing and roasting of animals are done as much for religious purposes as to satisfy thirst and hunger, and ritual is closely bound up with eating and drinking. This type of ritual falls within men's sphere of activity, not women's.

It is difficult to localize exactly the business of killing/sacrificing and roasting animals. One gets a general impression that where the emphasis is on the ritual nature of the action it tends to take place out of doors (cf. *Od.* 20. 276 ff.). The same is true of the pouring of libations.<sup>2</sup>

Nestor's feast may be an out-of-doors sacrifice, held in daylight<sup>3</sup> as opposed to dinners in the μέγαρον, which go on far into the night. On the other hand, Aiolus' house is said to be full of the smell of sacrifices (*Od.* 10. 10). Aiolus, however, is no ordinary mortal.

In Mycenaean palaces, it has generally been thought unlikely that the great hearth of the megaron was used for cooking (e.g. *HM* 429). Signs of burning were found on the hearths at Mycenae and Pylos<sup>4</sup> but they were such as can be accounted for by a relatively small fire for heat and light. No traces of animal remains are mentioned by the excavators. Roasting large quantities of meat on an open hearth would be quite a messy business, and one would perhaps expect

<sup>1</sup> e.g. most of the examples in the suitor-slaying, in *Od.* 22.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. Priam's libation to Zeus σὺν μέσῳ ἔρκει (*Il.* 24. 306) and the altar in Odysseus' courtyard.

<sup>3</sup> First thing in the morning Nestor went outside and sat προπάροιθε θυρῶν ὑψηλῶν (*Od.* 3. 407); θύραι can mean either the

doors of a μέγαρον or other room (e.g. *Od.* 22. 76) or the gates of an ἀλλή (e.g. *Od.* 7. 112). There is no mention of going indoors at any stage, and nowhere in the whole passage do such phrases as ἐνὶ μεγάροις or ἐνὶ οἴκῳ, so common in this type of scene, occur.

<sup>4</sup> Wace, *Mycenae*, 77; *PN* 85.

traces of an installation for spits (cf. *Od.* 3. 459 ff.) and/or stands for cooking vessels. No such things have been found.

So it is highly probable that cooking for a Mycenaean royal household was done elsewhere, perhaps in a room designed for the purpose. It is odd that no such room has yet come to light: the use of the room with the fireplace in the 'West House' at Mycenae as a kitchen is by no means certain.<sup>1</sup>

In lesser houses of the Mycenaean period, and probably also in the smaller houses which were built between the end of that period and Homer's time,<sup>2</sup> cooking, at least in winter, must have been done on the main (and usually only) hearth. Beside one hearth at Korakou was a flat stone 'perhaps used to support cooking vessels taken from the fire'.<sup>3</sup> This hearth was in a back room, which also contained a saddle-quern and quite a lot of pottery, so the room may well have been a kitchen as Blegen suggests, with the hearths in two of the other rooms of the house used for heat and light and/or ritual purposes. But in two other houses, there was only one hearth, and that in house M had a presumed pot-stand beside it.<sup>4</sup>

In Geometric buildings, hearths are often recorded,<sup>5</sup> but there is no positive indication where cooking was done. In one-roomed houses, like those at Smyrna, it must obviously have been done in the main room, so probably on the main hearth. But in more complex houses there may have been separate kitchens.

It is not possible to be certain whether the hearth of a Homeric *μέγαρον* was used for cooking, but several passages convey the distinct impression that it was. In smaller buildings Homer seems to imply that cooking was done on the main hearth.<sup>6</sup> Kitchens are never mentioned in the poems (presumably they are not heroic enough). The suitors in the *Odyssey* mention a pudding cooking on the hearth (*Od.* 18. 44). This may well be the main *μέγαρον* hearth, as it is the only hearth we ever hear about in a Homeric palace. The suitors are never mentioned as being in any part of the house other than the *μέγαρον* and the court, and in this particular passage they are in the *μέγαρον*. So how would they know about a pudding cooking anywhere else?

Where, then, was the food for the suitors' feasts cooked? Many writers have assumed that in Homer the cooking of meat normally took place on the *ἐσχάρη* of the *μέγαρον*.<sup>7</sup> This is nowhere explicitly confirmed. *Od.* 20. 248–80 describes how the suitors go into the house, set out chairs, kill and cook animals, and mix wine. Then they all drink; Telemachus places Odysseus on a stool *ἐντὸς εὐσταθέος μεγάρον*. When they have cooked and drawn off the meat, they all feast. There is no mention of moving in and out of the house, or from one room to another; one gets the impression that the whole proceeding takes place in the *μέγαρον*. Later a fire is kindled *ἐνὶ μεγάροισι* to melt fat to grease the bow, and this clearly goes on, like the rest of the bow-contest, in the *μέγαρον*. Perhaps the fire that cooked the meat is re-kindled. This fire could be on either the main hearth or a portable brazier, but since a considerable amount of meat

<sup>1</sup> Πρακτικά xxxiii (1958), 161 ff., and cf. *MMA* 81 f.

<sup>2</sup> Which I take to be the eighth century B.C.: for a useful catalogue of the architectural remains of the Early Iron Age, see *GB* 5 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Blegen, *Korakou*, 88.

<sup>4</sup> Blegen, *op. cit.*, 83 and 90.

<sup>5</sup> At Zagora, for example: *A.J.A.* lxxiv (1970), 282 and pl. 72, fig. 40.

<sup>6</sup> e.g. in Eumaeus' *κλισίῃ* (*Od.* 14. 420 ff.), though a *κλισίῃ* is a very different thing from a *μέγαρον*.

<sup>7</sup> For example Rider, *The Greek House*, 170.

is involved (*Od.* 20. 250 f.), if portable braziers were used there must have been a whole set of them, the provision of which would surely be mentioned among the preparations. So it seems that Homer did indeed imagine cooking on a heroic scale being done on the μέγαρον hearth, as everyday cooking must have been done on central hearths in his own time, and in the smaller Mycenaean houses; not, however, in the Mycenaean palaces.

There is no evidence about the nature of Homer's hearth, whether for example it was round or rectangular, centrally placed or not, whether it was raised like the Mycenaean palace hearths: except just possibly *Od.* 7. 153 f. It could be that when Odysseus sits ἐπ' ἐσχάρῃ ἐν κονίῃσι, πὰρ πυρί he sits *on* (the edge of) the hearth. This is the only hearth passage in which this could apply; Arete, for example, is certainly not sitting on the hearth in *Od.* 6. 305 ff. But Odysseus is specifically said to be 'in the ashes, beside the fire', which may put him actually on the hearth, as opposed to Arete who is near it.

Homer's μέγαρον contains κίονες; these are also found in θάλαμοι (*Od.* 22. 176, 193) and in the αὐλή (*Od.* 22. 466). Of the six passages referring to a κίων in the μέγαρον, four speak of someone sitting leaning against it, always someone important or in the limelight: Demodocus (*Od.* 8. 66, 473), Odysseus talking to Penelope (*Od.* 23. 90), and Arete (*Od.* 6. 307). In the latter passage, the hearth and fire are also mentioned. This may be of little significance, however, as Penelope in the second passage is not only ἐν πυρὸς αὐγῇ but also τοίχῳ τοῦ ἐτέρου. One might surmise that the room was small enough for someone sitting by one of the side walls to be clearly visible by the firelight, unless in the shadow of a column.

We can fairly conclude, with Bassett (p. 299), Drerup,<sup>1</sup> and others that κίονες are the round columns common in Mycenaean and later Greek architecture. Many writers, impressed by the round Mycenaean palace hearth flanked by its four columns, have represented the Homeric hearth thus.<sup>2</sup> More recently, Heinrich Drerup has swung the pendulum the other way, and in his latest study of Geometric architecture he states unequivocally: 'An Stelle des von der Homerarchäologie einstimmig angenommenen mykenischen Rundherdes mit vier flankierenden Säulen beschreibt Homer ein fensterloses Firsthaus . . . dessen Herdstelle nur zwischen zweien der hintereinander angeordneten Säulen gelegen haben kann' (*GB* 129). There is no evidence whatsoever in the poems for (or against) such an arrangement, any more than there is for the Mycenaean palace arrangement. Here as elsewhere in his monograph, Drerup affords an excellent example of a scholar led by a primarily archaeological viewpoint to read more into the text of the poems than is warranted.

There are also occurrences of σταθμός in a μέγαρον context. Bassett pointed out that σταθμός and κίων are not the same, and the words are never used interchangeably.<sup>3</sup> σταθμός used of a feature of houses (it can also mean a farmyard) normally means a door-jamb (e.g. *Od.* 21. 45); it probably has this meaning in *Od.* 17. 96 f., where Penelope sits opposite Telemachus and his friend while they eat, παρὰ σταθμόν μεγάρου, κλισμῷ κεκλιμένη. If Penelope is sitting near the door, then we have a picture of Telemachus and Theoclymenos perhaps near the middle of the μέγαρον just on the far side of the hearth—it does not matter so long as they are facing the door—and Penelope a little apart from them, feeling lonely and left out, deliberately isolating herself by the

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Anz.* lxxix (1964), 206.

<sup>3</sup> Bassett, 299, n. 2. See also *GB* 114.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. Bassett, 309; Gray, plan p. 12.

door (a suitable place from which to make her plaintive little speech [101 ff.]).

The 'door-jamb' meaning, however, is difficult in the five times recurring formula *παρὰ σταθμὸν τέγους πύκα ποιητοῖο*. This is where Penelope (and once Nausicaa) stands when she comes to the *μέγαρον* to talk to the people there. By the door would indeed be the obvious place for Penelope, who never associates with the suitors any more than she can help. Why then *τέγους*? There are no examples earlier than Pindar of *τέγους* being extended to mean a room or building as a whole, though this would be the simplest explanation. ('By the door-jamb of the well-built room' would be a perfectly natural thing for Homer to say.) Metrical exigency has probably played some part; none of the other suitable words (e.g. *δόμον*, *δώματος*) would scan, except *μεγάρου*, which is always rare, and possibly did not exist when the formula was first coined. The frequency of *παρὰ σταθμὸν τέγους πύκα ποιητοῖο* shows that it is not an *ad hoc* improvisation by a poet caught out once by a tricky metrical situation, but a well-established formula. Must we then imagine that the door-jamb in some way also served directly to support the roof? This is in fact possible, though not very likely.<sup>1</sup> Or that some other, squared-off<sup>2</sup> pillar is meant, perhaps a timber support built into the wall?<sup>3</sup> Or that for once a *σταθμός* is the same as a *κίων*? In either of the latter cases the appealing picture of Penelope staying as near the door as possible is lost.

The seating of the family has already been mentioned. It is usually thought that the head of the house and his immediate family sit beside the hearth, presumably near the centre of the room.<sup>4</sup> This view is based on *Od.* 6. 305, where Arete sits 'by the hearth, in the fire-light'. However, the hearth of Homer's *μέγαρον* is not necessarily central;<sup>5</sup> more important, in *Od.* 23. 89 f., as we have already seen, Penelope sits 'opposite Odysseus, in the fire-light, *against the other wall*'. So it is quite likely that the king and queen were seated near the walls, as certainly were their guests (*Od.* 7. 95, 17. 447). The precise arrangement of the guests is disputed<sup>6</sup> but unimportant; they were in a single or double row along the side walls and perhaps also along the back wall. There may well be, as Mylonas suggests, evidence for similar seating in Mycenaean palaces (*MMA* 63). However, the same arrangement is found in the Geometric period,<sup>7</sup> so no conclusions can be drawn.

I am assuming, with most authorities, that the Homeric *μέγαρον* corresponds to the main room of the archaeological megaron, and in particular that it normally had only one door.<sup>8</sup> (This assumption is based entirely on the suitor-slaying in *Od.* 22. Without the evidence of this scene, the analogy falls to the

<sup>1</sup> If one imagines for example that the lintel-beam restored by Nicholls in the PG house at Smyrna, which carried the prop supporting the ridge-pole, were built into the end wall and also served as the lintel of the door. For Nicholls's reconstructions, see Akurgal, *Kunst Anatoliens*, 301, figs. 1 and 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Od.* 17. 340 f., and cf. Bassett, 299, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> As common in Mycenaean building, cf. below, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> e.g. Bassett, 298 f.: 'Near the hearth the family gathers.'

<sup>5</sup> Cf. above (p. 5).

<sup>6</sup> Bassett, 297, Bérard, *R.E.G.* lxvii (1954), 14 ff.

<sup>7</sup> e.g. at Zagora (especially room 19) (*Ergon*, 1967, 75 ff. and fig. 77), cf. *GB* 125.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. for example Gray, 10. The *δροσθήρη* was probably something unusual, as it is so carefully described (*Od.* 22. 126 ff.). There is no firm archaeological example of a side door in a megaron: it is now clear that Wace's reconstruction of the 'House of Columns' at Mycenae with such a layout was unwarranted (Wace, *J.H.S.* lxxi [1951], 210; cf. Mylonas, *Mycenae's Last Century of Greatness*, 14, n. 12, and *Hesp.* xxxv [1966], 419 ff.). It is very doubtful whether the main room of the 'House of Columns' should be called a megaron at all.

ground.) The old view that *μυχός* is a bedchamber behind the *μέγαρον* and opening off it, though consistent with a few of the archaeological examples,<sup>1</sup> is out of the question for Homer, as Bérard amongst others amply demonstrated.<sup>2</sup> And as Miss Gray pointed out (p. 1), Palmer's revival of it<sup>3</sup> was based on parallels remote in time and place from either Homer or his subject-matter. Miss Gray (p. 10) has shown, too, that the *μεγάροιο θύρας πυκνῶς ἀραρυίας* that Eumaeus asks Eurycleia to close in *Od.* 21. 380 ff., before the slaughter, cannot be at the back of the *μέγαρον* as the two are standing somewhere near Odysseus at the front of the *μέγαρον*, and Eurycleia certainly did not make her way either through the suitors or round the back of the *μέγαρον* to carry out the order.

What door, then, did Eurycleia close? Not the main front door of the *μέγαρον*, as in the very next lines Philoitios goes and shuts the outer gate of the *αὐλή*, necessarily passing through this door. Homer would surely not have perpetrated such a glaring inconsistency. Miss Gray believes that Eurycleia shuts a side door in the porch, leading to the women's quarters. One might have expected that this door would be more specifically described, and distinguished from the main door of the *μέγαρον*. Another objection is that by far the most likely explanation of 22. 162 ff., namely that it is by glancing through the side door of the porch that Eumaeus spots Melanthius sneaking round to the storeroom for arms, requires this door open during the slaughter (Bassett, 308). Perhaps Eumaeus and Philoitios went through this door, in 22. 179, to catch Melanthius; they certainly did not go through the *ὀρσοθύρη*, which as Bassett (pp. 303 f.) has shown must have been near the back of the *μέγαρον* amongst the suitors. It is unlikely that the porch had two side doors, one to the women's quarters and one to the storerooms. Surely, if so, the poet would have made it clear? It is not at all a natural way to take the passage.

Nor can we simply assume that Homer has nodded, shutting a door and then continuing as though it were open. He clearly has it in mind throughout the scene that Eurycleia has shut a door between the women-servants and what is going on in the *μέγαρον*. When the slaughter is completed, Telemachus knocks on the door (unspecified) and calls to Eurycleia to come, which she does, *ᾧῖεν δὲ θύρας μεγάρων εὖ ναιετάοντων* (*Od.* 22. 399)—again, this sounds like an important door in a *μέγαρον*, not a side door in a porch. Yet it is not a door leading directly into the main *μέγαρον*, since Telemachus leads the way, and *then* Eurycleia finds Odysseus among the slain suitors.

It is most probable that it was the door of some other *μέγαρον* that Eurycleia closed. We know from a few other passages<sup>4</sup> that there is another room somewhere in the house which is also called *μέγαρον*, a room in which the women-servants are often to be found at their work. This *μέγαρον* will be discussed in more detail later. Its door would be an obvious one for Eurycleia to close in order to shut the women away from what is going on.

The only objection is that this interpretation makes it necessary to reject Miss Gray's view (p. 10) that 'the natural interpretation [of 21. 386–7 in which Eurycleia obeys the instructions to shut the door] is that she was standing by the door, which she immediately made fast'. In *Od.* 22. 433 ff., Eurycleia

<sup>1</sup> e.g. House L at Korakou (Blegen, *Korakou*, 81), and later, 'Megaron B' at Thermum (*Αρχ. Έφ.* 1900, 161 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> *R.E.G.* lxxvii (1954), 4 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Trans. Phil. Soc.* 1948, 108 ff.

<sup>4</sup> e.g. *Od.* 18. 316, and cf. Wace, *J.H.S.* lxxi (1951), 209.

leaves the main μέγαρον and goes διὰ δώματα to call the maids. They come ἐκ μεγάρου. And in 23. 41 ff., Eurycleia describes how she and the other maids sat μυχῷ θαλάμων listening to the slaughter. So it does not seem as though the second μέγαρον was right beside the main one; it was reached only by passing through part of the house.

It is likely, then, that the basic plan of Homer's μέγαρον is similar to the main room of the normal Mycenaean megaron (with the reservations that there is no information on the number or position of Homer's columns, or on the position of his hearth; and that we cannot be sure that the room was longer than it was wide, or even that it was not apsidal, though as it was part of a larger building the latter seems unlikely). The megaron type of plan was, however, common both before and after the Mycenaean period. (Provided always that the term 'megaron' is not restricted to the Mycenaean 'palace' type.) However, even in the Bronze Age there are plenty of variations, such as single porches or ante-rooms,<sup>1</sup> and the use of two columns only.<sup>2</sup>

The porch of Odysseus' μέγαρον has already been mentioned. It is a single porch only,<sup>3</sup> probably of the open, colonnaded variety, if the column against which Telemachus leans his spear in *Od.* 17. 29 is in the porch; this is the most natural way to take it, though a colonnade in the αὐλή could also be meant. On the other hand, Melanthius in *Od.* 22. 136 f. when asked to sneak out of the palace by a back corridor and give the alarm refuses,

ἄγχι γὰρ αἰνῶς  
αὐλῆς καλὰ θύρετρα καὶ ἀργαλέον στόμα λαύρης

—the lovely doors of the αὐλή and the narrow opening of the passage are terribly near. This is not likely to mean, as many (e.g. *HM* 423) have taken it, 'the doors from the αὐλή (to the μέγαρον) (i.e. where Odysseus is) and the opening of the passage are near to each other': an idiom unparalleled in Homer. Two interpretations remain: (a) the doors from the αὐλή (to the porch), or (b) the doors from the αὐλή (to the outside) and the opening of the passage are near to *Odysseus*. (a) fits the context well but makes Odysseus' porch into a closed anteroom. (b) is, however, perfectly possible (*contra HM* *ibid.*) if Melanthius knows or assumes that the outer doors are closed and it will take him a little time to open them. He will be within range of Odysseus' bow. This is the best way to take αὐλῆς θύρετρα.

The Melanthius passage shows quite conclusively that the porch, whether open or closed, did have a side door,<sup>4</sup>—a feature unusual after the Mycenaean period but apparently found at Zagora in the Geometric.<sup>5</sup> The corridor to which this door leads is common on Mycenaean sites but not found later.<sup>6</sup>

As has already been mentioned, Odysseus' porch was single; Lorimer showed this quite clearly.<sup>7</sup> This in spite of the two different words for the porch,

<sup>1</sup> The 'Little Megaron' at Tiryns has a porch, the 'Mycenaean' megaron at Gournia (House H) an enclosed anteroom (Hawes, *Gournia*, 23 and plan).

<sup>2</sup> House T at Aghios Kosmas (FIG. 1 (c) and Mylonas, *Aghios Kosmas*, fig. 15).

For summaries of the history of the megaron, see Boardman, *Emporio*, 36, and Shear, *A Land called Crete*, 58 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Bassett, 295 f., *HM* 415 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. above, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Ergon*, 1967, fig. 77; if indeed, as seems likely, area 21 was partly roofed to form a porch.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. p. 15 below on the Mycenaean corridor. Drerup cites a corridor in eighth-century Gordion (*GB* 130) but there are still none from Greek sites of the period.

<sup>7</sup> *HM* 415 ff.



*αἶθουσα* and *πρόδομος* (the former is also used of any colonnade). Archaeologists use these two convenient terms for the portico and vestibule respectively of the Mycenaean palace megaron, but Homer uses them quite interchangeably.<sup>1</sup> Lorimer concludes that *πρόδομος* is a wide term which can include the *αἶθουσα* (*HM* 416) but it is just as likely that if there ever had been a real difference between the words, when used of the porches of a megaron (and there is no proof of this), it was hopelessly blurred by Homer's time, because the double vestibule-and-porch plan was no longer used and so there was no occasion to distinguish different rooms. Formulae for putting guests to bed in the *πρόδομος* and in the *αἶθουσα* survived.

Mylonas believes the Mycenaean palaces had 'guest apartments' immediately off the main court (*MMA* 65) and that in *Od.* 3, Telemachus spent the night in the 'guest room' at Pylos (*MMA* 58). The former theory may be correct but the latter certainly is not. If Homer intended such an apartment he would have mentioned it. Guests are always said to be accommodated simply in the *πρόδομος* or the *αἶθουσα*.

*αὐλή*, too, has been applied by archaeologists to Mycenaean buildings, being used of the central courts of the palaces. A very real difference between the Mycenaean and the Homeric phenomena is thereby obscured.

In one passage in Homer, *αὐλή* seems to be extended to mean the whole house.<sup>2</sup> In all the other examples, it is a place regarded as 'outside the house'.<sup>3</sup> It is an outer courtyard, entered directly by a gate from outside (*Od.* 7. 112). It is surrounded by a wall;<sup>4</sup> usually this wall is called *ἔρκος* (e.g. *Od.* 22. 442). The wall can be leapt over (*Il.* 9. 476), or at any rate climbed, if Phoinix is exaggerating in his old age.<sup>5</sup> This would be impossible at, say, Pylos, where the court is completely enclosed by roofed buildings. Yet there is a colonnade at the outer gate of Odysseus' courtyard (*Od.* 18. 102); it need not have extended the whole length of the wall. Such outer colonnades are so far exclusively Mycenaean, in the periods with which we are concerned.

In this yard animals brought to the house for killing were left until required.<sup>6</sup> This practice is quite sufficient explanation of the dung in Priam's *αὐλή* (*Il.* 24. 163 ff.), and also of the dung-heap on which Argus lies.<sup>7</sup> Miss Gray is probably right that there is no separate enclosure in the *αὐλή* for animals. *αὐλῆς ἐν χόρτῳ/-οῖσι* just means 'within the enclosure (consisting) of the *αὐλή*'.<sup>8</sup> If there had been a special pen, Melanthius would not have needed to tether his goats (*Od.* 20. 176).

<sup>1</sup> e.g. *Od.* 4. 297, 4. 302, and 15. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Od.* 4. 74. *αὐλιον*, not found in Homer, must mean a building in *αὐλιον ὑψιμέλαθρον* (*H. Merc.* 103, 134, 399).

<sup>3</sup> e.g. *Od.* 22. 375-6, *θύραζε . . . εἰς αὐλήν*.

<sup>4</sup> *Od.* 17. 266 f., and cf. Bérard, *R.E.G.* lxxvii (1954), 32: Odysseus' *αὐλή* is adorned *τοιίχῳ καὶ θρυγκοῖσι*.

<sup>5</sup> Contrary to this interpretation is the belief of Deroy (*Ét. class.* xvi (1948), 345 f.) that *αὐλή* is in origin the collective of *αὐλός*, a reed, and so basically means the palisade itself rather than the area surrounded by it. But *αὐλός* does not seem to be used of a reed, only of anything hollow, including a reed pipe. Anyway, his claim that in Homer *αὐλή*

largely retains its 'palisade' meaning cannot be substantiated from the text. There are a few passages where this meaning looks plausible, e.g. *Il.* 24. 452 f., *Od.* 9. 184 ff. But in *Od.* 16. 165 and 343 we have *μέγα τεῖχίον αὐλῆς*, and the formula *εὐερκέος αὐλῆς* occurs twice.

<sup>6</sup> e.g. *Od.* 20. 176, where the *αἶθουσα* mentioned will be the one near the outer gate, as in *Od.* 18. 102.

<sup>7</sup> *Od.* 17. 297, if indeed this is within the *αὐλή*. I am unable to discern that 'the order in ρ 260 f. is quite unambiguous' on this point (Gray, 8).

<sup>8</sup> *Il.* 11. 774 and 24. 640.

The *αὐλή* does, however, contain certain structures. Extra bedrooms built for the children of the owner are discussed below. In Odysseus' courtyard there was also an altar to Zeus (*Od.* 22. 334). This altar was perhaps a regular feature, since the usual place to pour libations was *στὰς μέσῳ ἔρκει*.<sup>1</sup> Possibly such altars could be regarded as a Mycenaean feature; they have not so far been found in any of the little house-yards at such Geometric sites as Zagora and Smyrna. However, courtyard altars are so common in classical sites that continuity may yet be shown.

Another structure in Odysseus' *αὐλή* is the *θόλος* which features in the hanging of the unfaithful maids (*Od.* 22. 442 etc.). The most convincing parallel that has been suggested is the little round, partly underground structures at Smyrna; some of them were actually found within the yard-walls of the houses.<sup>2</sup> These are identified with the numerous clay 'granary' models, of rounded conical shape, all from Attica and all found in graves, in so far as their provenience is known. The most recent and spectacular examples are those from a mid-ninth-century woman's grave in Athens, one of which consists of a row of five granaries on the lid of a pyxis.<sup>3</sup> This model, with its double ventilation(?) -channels below each granary, obviously may shed light on the mysterious 'theta structures' at Lefkandi.<sup>4</sup> There may be a local variation between Ionia and the mainland, in that the agora model and the 'theta structures' were above-ground buildings (as were at least some of the other models)<sup>5</sup> whereas the Smyrna granaries were sunken.<sup>6</sup> There is no evidence to show which type Homer had in mind. Some of the models show a pronounced projection at the topmost point<sup>7</sup> highly suitable for fastening a rope, and there can be little doubt that the *θόλος* is correctly identified with these granaries. They seem to be confined to the Geometric period, though one of the models has been called sub-Mycenaean.<sup>8</sup> Professor Vermeule thinks the round structure at the back of the palace at Pylos is a Homeric *θόλος*,<sup>9</sup> but it is unlikely that its thin wall could have supported even a light roof and it is probably to be regarded rather as an unroofed enclosure (*PN* 293).

Palmer's assumption that the smithy mentioned in *Od.* 18. 328 was within the *αὐλή* is quite unnecessary,<sup>10</sup> but there is some justification for Miss Gray's location of a spring inside Odysseus' courtyard.<sup>11</sup> Water was piped to Alcinous' *αὐλή* (*Od.* 7. 129 ff.), as it was to the palace at Pylos, though not to the central

<sup>1</sup> Achilles, *Il.* 16. 231; Priam, *Il.* 24. 306.

It could be that *ἔρκος* was originally distinguished from *αὐλή* as the dignified ceremonial court from the farmyard (cf. *Zeὺς Ἐρκείος*; at any rate *ἔρκος* never has the 'farmyard' meaning which *αὐλή* often has) and that the two functions were before Homer's time combined in one enclosure. This would have to have happened soon enough for the formulae in which both words are used together to become established.

<sup>2</sup> Akurgal, *Kunst Anatoliens*, 13; cf. J. M. Cook, *The Greeks in the East*, 32 and fig. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Hesp.* xxxvii (1968), 92 ff., where references to other examples are also given.

<sup>4</sup> Popham and Sackett, *Excavations at Lefkandi, Euboea, 1964-6*, 30 and figs. 68-70. One of the structures appears to be within

a house-yard, as at Smyrna.

<sup>5</sup> Two have ladders painted up the side, in both cases starting at the very bottom (*CVA Schloss Fasanerie 2, Deutschland 16*, pl. 56.10; *Hesp. Supp.* ii. 186-6).

<sup>6</sup> See Nicholls's reconstruction, Akurgal, *Kunst Anatoliens*, 301. Graham objected to their identification as granaries, saying that 'other people have preferred (granaries) raised' (*J.H.S.* lxxxv [1965], 219) but about the same time at Tarsus—not so very far away—underground granaries were in use (Goldman, *Tarsus iii*, 6).

<sup>7</sup> e.g. Brann, *Agora viii*, 72 and pl. 21.

<sup>8</sup> *Hesp.* xxxvii (1968), 92, n. 41.

<sup>9</sup> *Greece in the Bronze Age*, 166.

<sup>10</sup> *Trans. Phil. Soc.* 1948, 97.

<sup>11</sup> Gray, plan p. 12.

court (*PN* 332–6). At Phylakopi there was a well in the courtyard in front of the palace: this courtyard has the appearance more of a public square than of the usual Mycenaean internal court.<sup>1</sup> Once the courtyard is placed, as the Homeric one was, in front of or around the house rather than surrounded by it, it is quite reasonable and not without archaeological parallel to put a public source of water in it. There are no examples (so far) of water being piped to anywhere in the Geometric period.

The picture we have of a Homeric courtyard, then, is of an open courtyard in front of the main part of the house (or even right round the house in the case of Achilles' κλισίη (*Il.* 24. 452), surrounded by a wall and providing probably the only entrance to the house. It might be encroached on by the building of extra rooms, and was used for religious purposes and as a temporary pen for animals. It contained a 'beehive granary'.

This has almost nothing in common with the Mycenaean palace courtyard, which is completely surrounded by the building and an integral part of it. A Mycenaean courtyard does not have extra rooms built into it, nor contain any buildings. Nor would it be suitable for keeping pigs and goats, however temporarily (the animals would in most cases have to be brought through a fairly elegant part of the house to reach it). The difference is clearly shown if we compare the plan of, say, Pylos with the reconstructions of the Homeric house suggested by various authors.<sup>2</sup> The Homeric αὐλή has far more in common with the little yards around some of the Geometric houses at Smyrna, and what appears to be a yard-wall at Lefkandi.<sup>3</sup>

Homer seems to consider it normal for extra bedrooms (θάλαμοι) to be built in the αὐλή for the owner's children. Priam's household is the extreme example of this.<sup>4</sup> Telemachus also had a θάλαμος built for him in the αὐλή (*Od.* 1. 425 f.). There is no evidence for Miss Gray's view that such bedrooms were free-standing;<sup>5</sup> this is an unnecessarily expensive form of construction, and one not at all proved by περίσκεπτος, by which Homer is far more likely to mean 'conspicuous' than 'with a wide view'. The fact that Telemachus is lighted to his bedroom (*Od.* 1. 428) is no evidence on the point: a corridor can be just as dark as a courtyard. Nor is there any proof of Wace's contention that the bedroom was 'apparently above the court'.<sup>6</sup> There is no suggestion in the text that it was upstairs; the usual architectural meaning of ὑψηλός is 'tall', not 'in a high place'.

Whether the θάλαμος of Odysseus and Penelope should be regarded as the main bedroom or a junior one is doubtful; probably the latter, since it was built while Laertes and Anticleia still ruled in the palace (*Od.* 23. 192 ff.). There is no

<sup>1</sup> Atkinson, *J.H.S.* supp. iv (1902), pl. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Particularly Miss Gray's plan (p. 12), in spite of her comment that there are now Mycenaean parallels for everything in the Homeric house. In a more recent article, Tamm also fails to appreciate this difference. She makes, however, a fairly sharp distinction between the αὐλή of a Homeric palace and that of a Homeric κλισίη, whereas this difference was, I believe, one rather of degree (i.e. size or elaboration or decoration) than of type. (B. Tamm, *Stockholm Studies in Classical Archaeology* v [1968], 141–3).

<sup>3</sup> Smyrna: several of the yard-walls can be found on the plan in *B.S.A.* liii (1958–9), and cf. Nicholls's drawing in *Greeks in the East* (J. M. Cook), 32 fig. 5. Lefkandi: Popham and Sackett, *op. cit.*, fig. 68.

<sup>4</sup> *Il.* 6. 243 ff.: such enormous dormitory wings could never have been fitted into the space available on the citadel at Hisarlık, which probably reflects more on poetic method than on the identification of the site with Troy.

<sup>5</sup> Gray, plan p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> *J.H.S.* lxxi (1951), 207.

mention of the room in which the senior couple slept. Odysseus' *θάλαμος* was presumably on the ground floor, because of the tree it incorporated.

The word *θάλαμος* is quite wide in meaning, as Wace pointed out in his excellent discussion.<sup>1</sup> It can mean any sort of storeroom or bedroom, and perhaps the same room may sometimes have served both purposes.<sup>2</sup>

It is not necessary to believe with Wace that *θάλαμον καὶ δῶμα καὶ αὐλήν* (*Il.* 6. 316) 'gives what seems to be the three main divisions of the house' and shows that *θάλαμος* 'can refer to the domestic quarter of the house as a whole'. There is no other passage which supports this view, and against it we must set *μέγαρον καὶ δῶμα καὶ αὐλήν* (*Od.* 22. 494). It is just as likely that the latter passage is the basic formula (the *μέγαρον*, the rest of the house, and the court) and that the substitution of a bedroom as the central part of Paris' house tells us more about Paris than about Homeric houses.<sup>3</sup> Certainly all the action in Paris' house does seem to take place in the bedroom (cf. *Il.* 6. 321 ff.). Noack's contention that the main hall of minor characters can be called either *μέγαρον* or *θάλαμος*<sup>4</sup> is quite unjustified. None of the examples he cites<sup>5</sup> show the same room clearly being designated by both names.

Of storerooms, *θάλαμος* can refer to several kinds, as Wace showed for Odysseus' house.<sup>1</sup> There is the upstairs room where treasures (such as axe-heads) are kept, of which Penelope has the key (*Od.* 21. 42); the *θάλαμος* where arms are kept, which may be upstairs or on the ground floor (*Od.* 22. 109, 140, etc.); and the room in the basement (a suitably cool location) where are kept provisions, as well as unworked metal (*Od.* 2. 337). There were undoubtedly many other storerooms in the house, including one where fine material was kept (*Od.* 19. 256). It seems that a storeroom might be in any part of a house and on any floor. This can be paralleled on Mycenaean sites: basement storerooms were normal.<sup>6</sup> There is a possibility that basements existed in the Middle Geometric period at Smyrna,<sup>7</sup> and other examples may yet be found at such sites as Zagora.<sup>8</sup>

Wace has remarked that 'every kind of room which can be kept closed or private is a *θάλαμος*'.<sup>9</sup> This is borne out by the interesting fact that the doors of a *θάλαμος* appear to be regarded as a particularly important feature. They are mentioned in connection with almost a quarter of the total occurrences of the word *θάλαμος*.<sup>10</sup> In many of these passages they are used as descriptive embroidery rather than part of the action.<sup>11</sup> If a *θάλαμος* was to be described, the

<sup>1</sup> *J.H.S.* lxxi (1951), 207 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Palmer, *Trans. Phil. Soc.* 1948, 114.

<sup>3</sup> This possibility was suggested by Professor Webster (in discussion).

<sup>4</sup> *Homeric Paläste*, 49 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Il.* 3. 125, 142, 6. 377, 22. 440, 460.

<sup>6</sup> e.g. the 'House of Columns' area at Mycenae (*Hesp.* xxxv [1966], 425 and fig. 2).

<sup>7</sup> The remains of charred beams were found across one of these rooms, and were interpreted by Akurgal as supports for a flat roof (*Kunst Anatoliens*, 9 ff.). Until the site is fully published, however, the possibility cannot be ignored that they were the floor joists of an upper storey. The floors of these rectangular rooms were at a lower level than their surroundings. Nicholls describes them

cautiously as 'basement-like houses', and they could in fact have been basements (*B.S.A.* liii-liv [1958-9], 84).

<sup>8</sup> However, it is noteworthy that the practice at Emporio was to level the site to take a one-storey house, or to build a 'split-level' house with a mere step between the two levels, rather than to build part of the house over a basement which could contain storerooms, although the site would seem to have been suitable for this (Boardman, *Emporio*, 40 ff.).

<sup>9</sup> *J.H.S.* lxxi (1951), 209.

<sup>10</sup> Six out of twenty-four in the *Iliad*, nine out of forty-five in the *Odyssey*.

<sup>11</sup> e.g. *Il.* 14. 166 ff., *Od.* 21. 42 ff.

poet automatically thought of doors. Conversely, if doors were mentioned the most impressive example was felt to be, not the doors of some great μέγαρον, but the ὑπορόφοιο θύρη θαλάμοιο of a rich man (*Il.* 24. 317).

While Odysseus was away, Penelope slept and spent most of her waking hours in a part of the house which is variously described as θάλαμος (five times) and ὑπερώϊον/-α (18 times). These two words are not, however, synonymous. When the meaning must be just the one room in which she slept, θάλαμος is used (e.g. *Od.* 4. 718, 802). ὑπερώϊον, as one would expect, seems to be a more general term for all or part of the upper storey. It may be that it means just 'upstairs' in general, including Penelope's bedroom and some storerooms (e.g. *Od.* 21. 42 ff.); on the other hand, in all the occurrences of the word, it is women who are concerned. Penelope attends to domestic work there.<sup>1</sup> No other room than Penelope's is specifically described as ὑπερώϊον.<sup>2</sup> In the *Iliad* too it is only women who ascend to the ὑπερώϊον (though this is hardly conclusive as the word only occurs twice): to give birth (2. 514) or to sleep with a god in secret (16. 184). So perhaps the *Etymologicum Magnum's* interpretation of ὑπερώϊον as 'women's quarters' is right for Homer.

There is as yet no certain evidence for upper storeys between the Mycenaean and early Archaic periods, though there may be a footing for a staircase at Zagora.<sup>3</sup>

Another room which is used by women, and which could be part of the ὑπερώϊον, is given the name μέγαρον. There are a number of passages in which this word must refer to some other room than the main hall; six or seven in the singular and two in the plural. In all these passages the women-servants are involved.<sup>4</sup> There is no clear indication whether this room is upstairs or downstairs. Since, as has been shown already, μέγαρον means basically a large room in which people gather together, and does not include the porch or porches, there is no need to equate this μέγαρον with the 'second megaron' at Tiryns or Pylos. The room which is meant is probably somewhat similar to the classical and later ἱστεών, where the women did their spinning and weaving.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps some of the rooms in the seventh-century houses at Smyrna could have served this purpose.<sup>6</sup> This room may be designated οἶκος (*Od.* 1. 356, 360) or δώματα (*Od.* 18. 314) as well as μέγαρον. And as we have already seen, it looks as though it is in a far corner of the house, beyond a number of θάλαμοι.

One passage that is difficult to interpret is *Od.* 18. 185 f. Penelope has sent for two maids to accompany her among the suitors, and Eurynome goes διέκ μεγάρου to fetch them. There is no reason to suppose that Penelope is not in her θάλαμος as usual, especially as she then proceeds to lie down and go to sleep (an indication that Eurynome had a little way to go, although the sleep is a brief one). The maids come ἐκ μεγάρου fourteen lines later, so it cannot be that for

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* 15. 517, though it is implied that were it not for the unwelcome presence of the suitors, she would do her spinning and weaving downstairs, as other queens do (cf. *Od.* 4. 121 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> The second-floor situation of the treasure-room is inferred from Penelope's mounting the stairs to reach it (*Od.* 21. 5).

<sup>3</sup> *Ergon*, 1967, 78.

<sup>4</sup> e.g. *Od.* 18. 316, 19. 30, 19. 60.

<sup>5</sup> I am grateful to Professor Webster for

suggesting this parallel. For a fifth-century example in Athens, cf. *Hesp.* xx (1951), 206, and for a full discussion of such rooms at Olynthus, Mylonas, *Olynthus xii* (Robinson), 369 ff.

<sup>6</sup> For example the big room beside the megaron-like suite in the house in squares F.XII, G.XII, F.XIII, G.XIII on the plan in *B.S.A.* liii-liv (1958-9), and cf. Kurgal, *Kunst Anatoliens*, 184.

some reason Penelope is in the servants' hall, while the maids are elsewhere. If the maids had been in the main *μέγαρον*, Penelope could simply have gone there with Eurynome: in any case, it is clear that the maids were not in the *μέγαρον* while the suitors feasted. The separation of *ἐκ μεγάροιο* from *διὲκ μεγάροιο* by only thirteen lines is too short for the inevitable occasional inconsistency of the oral poet to be invoked. The only explanation I can see is that *διὲκ μεγάροιο* in line 185 is a slip, the use of an established formula in an inappropriate context.

Attempts have been made to localize Penelope's *θάλαμος* more precisely. The best suggestion is that it is somewhere near the front of the main *μέγαρον*.<sup>1</sup> She is able to hear a good deal of what goes on in the *μέγαρον*.<sup>2</sup> As well, there is the scene in which Odysseus, in the porch, hears Penelope sobbing and thinks of her standing near him (*Od.* 20. 92 ff.). Palmer may well be right that the Greek for the latter part just means 'and in his heart he imagines her as . . . standing beside him',<sup>3</sup> but there is no doubt that he actually does hear her sobs. We may allow for the possibility that the poet was unfamiliar with very large, solidly built houses, and from his own experience of comparatively flimsy dwellings imagined sounds carrying further in big houses than they actually do. In particular, the passage in which Eurycleia tells Penelope that she and the other servants, *μυχῶ θάλαμων*, could hear the groaning of the dying suitors may be an exaggeration, though the slaughter must have been quite noisy (*Od.* 23. 40 ff.). Why then did Penelope, from her hypothetically much nearer position, hear nothing? The immediate reason is that she had been put into a sound sleep by Athena (*Od.* 21. 357 f.), and the ultimate reason is that it is part of the story that the maids should at this stage be frightened by the slaughter and Penelope unaware of it.

It is clear by now that Homer imagines a palace as being of a size and complexity so far unparalleled in the archaeological record of the early Iron Age, and it is likely that this is a genuine tradition from the Bronze Age. Certain features point this way, such as the outer colonnades, the corridor, and the assumption of basements and upper storeys. Nevertheless, the excavations at Zagora create a strong presumption that there were in the Geometric period more elaborate buildings than any yet found.<sup>4</sup> Zagora was only a moderate-sized town in its heyday, and places like Athens and Corinth must have been a good deal bigger and richer, and had much statelier homes. So we cannot make assumptions about palaces in general, but must consider each feature separately.

Some important details of construction remain to be discussed: the most difficult is the shape of the roof of the *μέγαρον*, and its relationship with Mycenaean and later roof shapes. It will be convenient to discuss the archaeological evidence first.

The roofing of Mycenaean palaces in general, and of the megaron in particular, has received a good deal of attention. There is little doubt that the megaron roof was flat, like the roof of the rest of the palace,<sup>5</sup> not because any actual proof has yet been forthcoming, but because the objections to a steeply or a shallowly pitched roof are so many and so strong.

<sup>1</sup> Bassett, 300 f., *HM* 414. Cf. also Myres, *J.H.S.* xx (1900), 134 ff., Palmer, *Trans. Phil. Soc.* 1948, 111.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. Telemachus' sneeze, *Od.* 17. 541 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Trans. Phil. Soc.* 1948, 112.

<sup>4</sup> *Ergon*, 1967, 75 ff.; 1969, 132 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Dörpfeld in *Tiryns* (Schliemann), 218 ff., 248 f., and pl. 3; Müller, *Tiryns* iii, 189 ff. This view is now accepted by most authorities.

A steeply pitched, thatched roof was advocated by Leroux<sup>1</sup> as an inevitable concomitant of the long narrow plan (which of course it is not). He cited in particular the isolation of the megaron from the rest of the palace by a corridor, which was (he said) unroofed and served as a place for rainwater to run off. Even if he is right for the early megarons of Troy II,<sup>2</sup> the corridors in the Mycenaean palaces clearly had no torrents of stormwater pouring into them. The excavators would certainly have noted either good drainage arrangements or signs of the water's ravages. Further, it would have made the storerooms opening off the corridor uncomfortable of access in rainy weather; and it would have precluded the subdivision of the Western corridor at Pylos into rooms which were used as additional storage (*PN* 116, 119, 132). We need not even follow Lorimer (*HM* 422 f.) in seeing in the Mycenaean corridor a survival of the earlier, unroofed 'lane'. There is an excellent reason for the corridor in the palaces, as a glance at the plan of Pylos or Tiryns will show: if there were no corridor round the sides and back of the megaron, servants whose domestic duties took them from one side to the other would (short of going outside or upstairs) have to cross either the porches or the court, perhaps while some royal ceremonial was in progress.<sup>3</sup>

If on the other hand the corridor was roofed (as it surely was) drainage from a pitched roof over the megaron would be a problem; elaborate guttering arrangements would be needed, which must have left some trace.

This objection about runoff applies equally to the shallow-pitch theory,<sup>4</sup> which was moreover refuted by Blegen<sup>5</sup> on the grounds that the tiles mentioned by Dinsmoor<sup>6</sup> were not in fact roof-tiles, and that roof-tiles were unknown in the Mycenaean period. The clay-and-reed covering suggested by Smith is possible, though difficult, for this lower pitch, but the remarks above on drainage still apply and are to my mind decisive.

We know from, *inter alia*, the fresco fragments found in the megaron at Mycenae<sup>7</sup> that flat roofs were at least known there. There is no real evidence that pitched roofs were used at all in the period.<sup>8</sup> And I know of no examples at all of apsidal buildings from the Mycenaean period: curved buildings generally mean pitched roofs. On the other hand, of the various Geometric building-models, those which correspond most closely to the megaron type of plan have steeply pitched roofs. These are, however, free-standing buildings of a later period.

It seems, then, highly probable that the shape of the roof was one of the many elements in the Mycenaean palace megaron to reflect Cretan influence.

There is little evidence from the next century and a half. For the rectangular Sub-Mycenaean and Sub-Minoan buildings we cannot in most cases be sure of the roof, and can only say that the rambling towns of Karphi and Vrokastro in Crete would have been almost impossible to cover with anything but flat

<sup>1</sup> *Les Origines de l'édifice hypostyle*, 51 f.

<sup>2</sup> So Lorimer, *HM* 422 f.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Shear, *A Land Called Crete*, 61 f.

<sup>4</sup> Advocated by Dinsmoor (*Architecture of Ancient Greece*, 19 f.), Baldwin Smith (*A.J.A.* xlv [1942], 99 ff.), and Clark Hopkins (*Studi micenei ed egeo-anatolici* xxvii [1968], 48 ff.).

<sup>5</sup> *A.J.A.* xlix (1945), 35 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *A.J.A.* xlv (1942), 370-2.

<sup>7</sup> Rodenwaldt, *Fries des Megarons von Mykenai*.

<sup>8</sup> The 'relieving triangle' over gateways had its own structural function, lessening the weight on the lintel-stone, and cannot (*contra* Leroux, *op. cit.*, 60, and Hopkins, *op. cit.*, 52) be considered to represent a house-façade.

roofs.<sup>1</sup> On the mainland, the buildings at Iolkos and Lefkandi are rectilinear and could have carried flat or pitched roofs. The megaron may be found on Naxos.<sup>2</sup> In the Protogeometric period the megaron is said to be found at Iolkos.<sup>3</sup> However, at Smyrna in Ionia there was a little oval house, built of mud brick on a foundation of small stones, which is most plausibly reconstructed with a thatched roof.<sup>4</sup>

The Geometric period provides many more remains of buildings of an almost bewildering diversity, though most are fairly late in the period. In Ionia and the Aegean islands there is a continuing tradition of apsidal and oval buildings, and two models from Samos show a roof-profile which is unmistakably thatch.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, rectangular buildings are sometimes found.<sup>6</sup> The only rectangular models from Samos, the little 'Votive-Naiskoi', have flat roofs.<sup>7</sup> In mainland Greece also, both curved and rectilinear buildings are found, the latter tending to predominate. Drerup (*GB* 5-76) gives many examples. It must be mentioned, however, that the apsidal and oval walls he describes at Solygeia and Athens respectively were both probably temenos-walls. The Athens remains therefore are irrelevant (leaving no certain examples of an oval plan) and the only roofed part of the structure at Solygeia was rectangular.<sup>8</sup> All the building-models from the mainland show steeply pitched roofs which are best taken as thatch. All have apsidal plans except that from the Argive Heraeum which is rectangular.

An apsidal or oval building is very likely to have a pitched roof, probably of thatch, as a house of curved plan is very much easier to thatch than a rectangular one, but more difficult to put a flat roof on. The choice of ground plans must often have been influenced by the material and skills available for the roof. Rubble walls are easier to construct in curves, without corners, and brick walls are easier with right angles and straight lines;<sup>9</sup> one feels that this should have been an influence too, but at Smyrna in the various periods there are plenty of curved mud-brick houses, and the only buildings largely of stone are rectangular. So it seems that the roof-shape was a more important factor affecting the plan, and the walls were constructed of whatever was available or fashionable, regardless of difficulty.

For Homer, all that can be said in general is that he knew both flat and steeply pitched roofs, and that the roof of the μέγαρον was probably pitched. The balcony-and-clerestory which the excavators restore on fairly good evidence at Pylos (*PN* 81 f.) has left no trace whatever in the poems, though in the *Odyssey* at least it could hardly have failed to play some part in the story if Homer had thought of it as existing in his houses. Although people do, of course, go up and down stairs, there is never any evidence that it is to a storey or balcony above the μέγαρον that they are going. A full second storey over the

<sup>1</sup> Karphi: *B.S.A.* xxxviii (1937-8), 57 ff. Vrokastro: Hall, *Excavations in Eastern Crete: Vrokastro*.

<sup>2</sup> Iolkos: *Ergon*, 1960, 58. Naxos: *B.C.H.* lxxxvi (1962), 858 ff., lxxxviii (1964), 803 ff., and cf. *GB* 69. Lefkandi: Popham and Sackett, *Excavations at Lefkandi, Euboea*, 1964-6, figs. 12, 14, 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ergon*, 1960, 57.

<sup>4</sup> See Nicholls's drawings in Akurgal, *Kunst Anatoliens*, 301.

<sup>5</sup> *A.M.* lxxiv (1959), 18; lv (1930), 16 ff.

<sup>6</sup> e.g. Zagora (*Ergon*, 1967, 75 ff.), Smyrna (Akurgal, *Kunst Anatoliens*, 9 ff.).

<sup>7</sup> *A.M.* lxxii (1957), 43, 51, and pl. 84. 1 and 2.

<sup>8</sup> Athens: *Hesp.* ii (1933), 542-640, and cf. *Hesp.* xxxvii (1968), 60. Solygeia: *B.C.H.* lxxxiii (1959), 608, *Archaeology* xv (1962), 184 ff.

<sup>9</sup> R. M. Cook, *The Greeks before Alexander*, 39.



μέγαρον is unlikely, as some sort of smoke-hole in the roof would have been desirable.

The roof on which Elpenor slept at Circe's house (*Od.* 11. 62) must have been flat. We cannot tell whether this flat roof covered all or part (or if so which part) of the house. But as many writers have pointed out, the description of Odysseus and Ajax wrestling 'like the rafters of a house' must refer to a house with a steeply-pitched roof (*Il.* 23. 711 ff.). And J. M. Cook is probably right that the 'houses crumpling in a great blaze' (*Il.* 17. 737 ff.) are thatched.<sup>1</sup>

It is possible to gather a few details about the structure of the μέγαρον roof. μέλαθρον is some sort of roof-beam, usually and most convincingly taken as the ridge-pole of a pitched roof.<sup>2</sup> It is always singular, which points to some unique member rather than one of which there were a number, like rafters. It is difficult to see what the word could mean in a flat roof. Ropes can be attached to it, and birds perch on it (*Od.* 11. 278, 19. 544, 22. 239): with the rafters resting on the ridge-pole and the purlins or supports for the roofing material resting in turn on the rafters, there would be something of a gap between the top of the ridge-pole and the bottom of the roofing material. Perhaps this is where Athena sat 'like a swallow'. However, the eagle in Penelope's dream sits ἐπὶ προῦχοντι μελάθρῳ; so perhaps in both passages the bird is on the end of the ridge-pole where it projects to form a smoke-hole.<sup>3</sup> It seems clear that the beams forming the framing of the roof were exposed to view; there was no ceiling, and no second storey, over the μέγαρον.<sup>4</sup>

ἀμείβοντες are the rafters of a pitched roof (*Il.* 23. 712); this is clear from the context, even though the word is not found elsewhere in Homer, nor in other writers until very late.

μεσόδμη is a controversial word, found only in the phrase τοῖχοι μεγάρων καλαί τε μεσόδμαι (*Od.* 19. 37, 20. 354). This has caused many to believe that the μεσόδμαι must be closely connected with the walls: revetting beams, for example.<sup>5</sup> μεσόδμη has another meaning: the fitting that holds the mast of a ship. Frisk translates 'Mittelbalken, Querbalken, von Wand zu Wand eines Gebäudes oder von Bord zu Bord eines Schiffs',<sup>6</sup> but the ship passages refer to 'putting the mast inside the hollow μεσόδμη',<sup>7</sup> which indicates more than a simple thwart. This latter point is in favour of the suggestion that architectural μεσόδμαι are some sort of attachment or bracket on the top of columns so that the beam 'really is in a sort of socket'.<sup>8</sup> But the cross-beams themselves seem

<sup>1</sup> *The Greeks in the East*, 33.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hodge, *The Woodwork of Greek Roofs*, 118.

<sup>3</sup> Like that on the oval Samos model, *A.M.* lv (1930), 16 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Drerup makes this point (*GB* 116).

<sup>5</sup> See for instance *GB* 109, where some of the many other interpretations that have been suggested are also discussed. Drerup argues that the μεσόδμαι cannot have been part of the roof-frame as this would have been out of range of the blood spattered during the slaughter (*Od.* 20. 354). However, Mr. F. Hurst, of the Forensic Section, Chemistry Division, New Zealand D.S.I.R., kindly informs me that 'blood from short swords used for stabbing or cutting could

easily be flung onto beams 8 feet or more above the floor. This would be the case particularly when swords caused neck wounds cutting the jugular vein, or head wounds.' Just such a wound is described in *Od.* 22. 328.

<sup>6</sup> *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, s.v. μεσόδμη.

<sup>7</sup> *Od.* 2. 424, 15. 289. On the strength of the nautical meaning, Lorimer is tempted to regard it as a vertical member (432, n. 5), but there is no agreement on the precise nature of the nautical μεσόδμη. Morrison calls it a thwart on the grounds that in architecture the word means a cross-beam (*Greek Oared Ships*, 52)!

<sup>8</sup> Garrido-Božić, *G.R.* xv (1946), 109.

equally likely, especially if *μεσόδμαι* are correctly identified with the later *μεσόμναι*, which are cross-beams between two rows of columns.<sup>1</sup>

If *μεσόδμαι* are cross-beams, we are left with no obvious specific meaning for the other word for roof-timbers, *δοκοί*.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps they are synonymous with *ἀμείβοντες* or *μεσόδμαι*, or, more probably, they are a general word for any large bearing beams, as in later Greek architecture.<sup>3</sup> This fits well with *Od.* 22. 176 and 193, where Melanthius is 'drawn up a column till he is near the *δοκοί*'—the roof-timbers.

It is very odd indeed, as Lorimer pointed out,<sup>4</sup> that mud-brick is never once mentioned in Homer, in spite of its frequent use in all periods. Homer seems to feel that the proper material for the walls of great houses is solid stone.<sup>5</sup> Wood, however, is mentioned: a 'fragrant, cedar-wood, high-roofed storeroom' (*Il.* 24. 191 f.). This could mean entirely wooden walls, some sort of panelling,<sup>6</sup> or just a wooden floor and/or ceiling. All that can be inferred is that the construction of Priam's palace included both stone and wood, as in fact was the case in Mycenaean palaces (*PN* 40). Mixed construction was perhaps known in all periods, though evidence for it is rare, after the Mycenaean period.<sup>7</sup> There are also the various references to *σταθμοί*,<sup>8</sup> which are clearly of wood and which could in some cases have been framing or revetting in the walls.

The only floor about which we have any information is that of Odysseus' *μέγαρον*. It is of earth.<sup>9</sup> Lorimer is right to point out that an earth floor is necessitated by the trench dug for the bow-contest (*HM* 335, 428). In spite of arguments to the contrary by Stubbs and Myres,<sup>10</sup> the bow-contest was certainly, as she maintains, held in the *μέγαρον*. If Telemachus went out into the *αὐλή* to dig the trench, this would surely have been mentioned. *Od.* 21. 140 ff. can only mean that the suitors stood up one by one from their seats and came forward; there was no mass exodus into the *αὐλή*. Stubbs and Myres would contend that since the man trying the bow stood on the threshold (*Od.* 21. 124) he could still address the suitors from there (130 ff.), even if the axes were set up in the *αὐλή*. But if this were so, it would be unnatural for the suitors not to go outside where they could watch the target as well as the competitor, and see that he did not merely pretend to have shot through the axes. Stubbs objects that the suitors did not seize the axes in fighting, but this is easily explained if they were not hafted. Miss Lorimer is surely right that they were regarded as bullion rather than weapons.

Earth floors have been found in some smaller Mycenaean private houses, and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hodge, *The Woodwork of Greek Roofs*, 118, *HM* 432.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* 17. 744, *Od.* 19. 38, 22. 176 and 193.

<sup>3</sup> Hodge, op. cit., 123.

<sup>4</sup> *HM* 431: she suggests on p. 214 that *πυκνὸν δόμον ἀντιτορήσας* (*Il.* 10. 267) is an oblique reference to mud-brick, but a thief could also burrow through a rubble wall.

<sup>5</sup> *Il.* 16. 212 (a simile); *Od.* 10. 211; *Il.* 6. 244–8 and *Od.* 23. 193, the latter two passages referring to walls of *θάλαμοι* built after the house was completed.

<sup>6</sup> As postulated in the bathroom at Tiryns (Dörpfeld in Schliemann's *Tiryns*, 231 f.).

<sup>7</sup> In the Artemis Orthia temple at Sparta, there were 'small flat stones in the wall set among the round stones . . . forming a kind of socket in the foundation course' (*J.H.S.* supp. v (1924), 10 f.). This is the only evidence I know of for the use of timber actually set into the wall (as opposed to timber columns, roofs, and door- and window-frames) during the Early Iron Age, and it is of course very late in the relevant period (Boardman, *B.S.A.* lviii [1963], 1 ff.).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. above, pp. 5–6.

<sup>9</sup> *Od.* 21. 120 ff. and 22. 455 ff., cf. *Od.* 23. 46 *κραταίπεδον*, 'firm-floored'.

<sup>10</sup> *C.R.* lxii (1948), 12 f. and 113 respectively.

are common in Geometric buildings.<sup>1</sup> But such a thing would be quite unheard-of in a palace megaron. We may be quite sure, therefore, that the story, at least in this form with Odysseus performing the feat in his own μέγαρον, was not current in Mycenaean times, as the audience would know this episode to be impossible.

Most thresholds in Homer are usually identified as the massive stone Mycenaean type. However, some of the stone threshold blocks at Geometric Emporio were really quite large: that of house E was 1.85 m. long and 0.45 m. wide,<sup>2</sup> which could perhaps qualify as a Homeric 'great stone threshold'.

The threshold on which Penelope sits when things get too much for her is probably the later, raised kind as seen in the Geometric models.<sup>3</sup> The threshold of the storeroom where the treasure is kept sounds a little like a hybrid: οὐδὸν τε δρύνιον προσεβήσето (Od. 21. 43). Like that of Meleager's θάλαμος (Il. 9. 582) it is big enough for you to step on it while the door is still shut (which would be quite impossible with the smaller Geometric thresholds)<sup>4</sup> but it is wooden. However, it is likely that some rooms in Mycenaean buildings had large wooden thresholds.<sup>5</sup>

The threshold of Odysseus' μέγαρον has been the centre of much argument. It is usually described as stone (e.g. Od. 20. 258), but just once (Od. 17. 339) it is said to be wooden. Many of the passages (including the last-mentioned) can only refer to the doorway between the porch and the μέγαρον, so we cannot get rid of one of the thresholds to the outer end of the porch. Myres postulated a composite threshold, a block of stone with a wooden door-sill covering part of it.<sup>6</sup> This has been criticized as unknown in the archaeological record (HM 417). In the Mycenaean period, the wooden sill over a stone threshold was not used. Fittings for jambs are found directly in the big stone threshold blocks, and signs of wear are always distributed over the whole surface. The wooden thresholds already mentioned<sup>7</sup> were instead of, not in addition to, stone ones. However, some sort of wooden sill over the stone thresholds is now thought likely by the excavators of Geometric Emporio.<sup>8</sup> Admittedly it might be difficult to fire arrows with deadly accuracy while standing in such a doorway.

There is one remaining important question, to which the answer is not at all clear-cut: was house-building, according to Homer, a specialized craft? Certainly there are occasions when heroes build houses, or parts of houses. Odysseus, of course, built his own θάλαμος, and the text clearly indicates that he did the job with his own hands, not just that he had it done (Od. 23. 178, 189 ff.). Paris had a hand in the building of his own house (Il. 6. 314). Yet there are also references to skilled carpenters, many of them in relation to ship-building, but some concerned with houses.<sup>9</sup> It would be easy to say that the references to people building their own houses are reflections of contemporary life creeping into a general picture of Mycenaean specialization: too easy, since

<sup>1</sup> e.g. Mycenaean: Blegen, *Korakou*, 82. Geometric: Boardman, *Emporio*, 41, 42, 47, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Boardman, *Emporio*, 43. (On p. 46 of the same book, the dimension 0.80 m. given for the threshold of house G should surely be length, not width?)

<sup>3</sup> Od. 4. 718, cf. HM 420.

<sup>4</sup> Unless προσεβήσето just means 'ap-

proached'—however, Meleager's father definitely did 'mount' the threshold.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Wace, *Mycenae*, 66, *P.N.* 38.

<sup>6</sup> *J.H.S.* xx (1900), 136–9.

<sup>7</sup> See above, with n. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Boardman, *Emporio*, 37.

<sup>9</sup> e.g. Od. 21. 43 ff., where the fine craftsmanship of Penelope's θάλαμος is described.

there is a 'famed builder of houses' in the simile which is generally accepted as referring to Geometric-type thatched houses.<sup>1</sup>

Yet house-building in Mycenaean times was certainly a skilled occupation. The tablets refer to masons and carpenters.<sup>2</sup> Probably the answer is to be found in one of the passages already cited. Paris built his own house

σὺν ἀνδράσιν οἳ τότε ἄριστοι  
ἦσαν ἐνὶ Τροίῃ ἐριβώλακι τέκτονες ἄνδρες.<sup>3</sup>

To Homer, the normal thing would be for a man to get help, if the job was a major one, from men with special carpentering skills. There are ethnographic parallels for such a system, and it must have been a common one ever since man first built permanent dwellings. In fact something very like it is often found in our own society. The Kabyles of northern Algeria provide a good modern parallel, as they do for several other aspects of Homeric society,<sup>4</sup> although in technology and 'culture' (in the narrow sense) they are less advanced than the Greeks ever were, even at the darkest point of the 'dark age'.

Members of a lineage have their houses grouped together around a private courtyard.<sup>5</sup> A new house is built when one of the young men of the family gets married. If there is room, his house is built within the family courtyard (otherwise a new site must be found, and often a new group of houses is thus started). Sometimes an unmarried son also seems to have his own small apartment. This is obviously very like the situation in Homer: Telemachus' bedroom springs to mind, and the extreme example is Priam's fabulous palace, with its fifty bedrooms for his sons and their wives, and twelve for his daughters and their husbands (*Il.* 6. 243 ff.). The latter are explicitly said to be within the courtyard, and the former probably were also.

The houses of the Kabyles are mostly built of roughly shaped stones set in clay mortar, with either a tile- or a mud-roof supported by wooden posts (not too unlike some of the Greek houses we are concerned with). The future owner of the house plays a leading part in the building, and together with the head of the family makes many of the important decisions. Close relatives and friends give a great deal of help throughout, and for the two heaviest jobs (digging the foundation trench, and transporting and raising the roof-beams) the entire village is called in. All this assistance is given free: the house-owner is expected to reciprocate in his turn. But the technical supervision and the skilled work are entrusted to a professional mason, who may have to be summoned from another village. The actual laying of stones, for example, is done by the mason, though he has at least two volunteer helpers at all times, one mixing mortar and the other handing up the stones. The mason is paid, and also provided with meals while the work is in progress. He has fields of his own, which he cultivates like anyone else, but he gets much of his living from building.

Perhaps Homer's 'skilled builders' had other occupations too, and just helped out when needed. But more likely they were full-time builders and carpenters, probably working on ships when there was no house-building to be done and

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 23. 712 f., cf. p. 17 above.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Il.* 6. 313 ff. Walcot ignores the passage in arguing that the varied practical skills of Odysseus were for Homer and his audience something exceptional and

astonishing (*Greek Peasants*, 34 ff.).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Finley, *The World of Odysseus*, 51-2, Walcot, *Greek Peasants*, 8-9.

<sup>5</sup> R. Maunier, *La Construction collective de la maison en Kabylie* (Paris, 1926).

vice versa. This is borne out by the interesting fact that in Homer the one word, τέκτων, is used for a builder, a carpenter, or a shipwright.<sup>1</sup> Some such system seems a likely one for the size and type of buildings in the Geometric period. But it contrasts sharply with the Mycenaean tablets, which have different words for a mason (*to-ko-do-mo*), a carpenter (*te-ko-to*), and a shipwright (*na-u-do-mo*).<sup>2</sup>

It will be apparent by now that many aspects of domestic architecture in Homer either cannot be understood sufficiently precisely to be assigned to any particular period, or refer to things common to several periods. But there are a few interesting exceptions.

It can no longer be maintained<sup>3</sup> that the complex, many-roomed house is exclusively Mycenaean, though its great size and elaboration, and some details of its layout and decoration, may well owe something to Mycenaean memories. On the other hand, the earth floor of Odysseus' μέγαρον, its probably pitched roof and the assumption that meat is cooked on its hearth, the form of the αὐλή and the θόλος it contains, the degree of specialization in the building industry—all these reflect the Iron Age. Some of them (particularly the first) are more or less essential to the story.<sup>4</sup>

But this is not to conclude, with Drerup (*GB* 130), that the total architectural scene of the *Odyssey* is Iron Age. Corridors, for example, are not found in Iron Age buildings.<sup>5</sup> Alcinoüs' water-conduit seems to be Mycenaean. The use of basements and upper storeys is at least rare in the Iron Age and their normality in Homer is likely to be a genuine Mycenaean memory. None of these, however, are essential to the story in the same way as the earth floor, for although many of them are mentioned at crucial points, the main action would not be affected if they were altered.

This is a rather unexpected result; most writers have expected to find Mycenaean elements playing an essential role in the story, with the Iron Age providing descriptive detail.<sup>6</sup> As far as houses, at least, are concerned, the opposite seems now to be the case. The elements essential to the story are, where identifiable at all, Iron Age; details which are mere background are quite likely to have a Mycenaean origin.<sup>7</sup>

In fact, it seems as though Iron Age poets, starting from a kernel of tradition (poetic or otherwise) about the great palaces and their Mycenaean rulers, have created long, complex epic stories set in an elaborated version of the daily life of their own time. These stories have been authenticated with descriptive detail, some of it genuinely recalling Mycenaean things.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Roebuck, *Ionian Trade and Colonisation*, 36.

<sup>2</sup> Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, 123.

<sup>3</sup> Since the excavations at Zagora, cf. p. 14, n. 4 above.

<sup>4</sup> See above, pp. 18–19, on the axe-episode. Similarly, Phoinix' escape must have been devised after it was normal to surround a

courtyard with a mere wall.

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 8 and n. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Gray, *Fifty Years of Classical Scholarship* (ed. Platnauer), 29 f.

<sup>7</sup> The same conclusion is yielded by a study of town plans, which I hope to discuss elsewhere. Admittedly the quantity of evidence is still small, and I do not claim an overwhelming statistical probability.