'SHADOWY MEGARA'

THE recent little book by Heinrich Drerup, *Griechische Baukunst in geometrischer Zeit*,[1] is considered by the fashionable school of Homer's interpreters to be the one and only study of the Homeric House. Thus, for M. I. Finley, in 'The World of Odysseus Revisited', his presidential address to the Classical Association for 1974,[2] it 'replaces all previous accounts of the subject'; and it seems to him particularly refreshing because it sees, in the rude buildings of *c.* 800 B.C., sufficient material for all the true descriptions that Homer may give of architecture. If Drerup is right, we shall need no recourse to the Bronze Age to explain anything; and in Drerup's own words, as translated by Finley (p. 21), 'the over-worked Mycenaean palace has probably played out its rôle in Homeric archaeology'. Our initial feelings, that it was rather tendentious to include a work on Geometric *Baukunst* in a series on Homeric archaeology, are thus to be rudely brushed aside.

Now I must agree that the end of the Bronze Age does mark a great, if ragged break in building science. The Mycenaean range of materials was never recovered in Classical Greece; and certain technical achievements of the Bronze Age were not repeated either in Classical Architecture or at any time since. One of my favourite examples, though one to which the textbooks give little attention, is the neat design of ceremonial doorways during the later Bronze Age. The jambs are H-shaped, and the door-leaves are so pivoted that, when the door is open, they swing neatly into the re-entrants of the H. How different was the planning of Classical Greek doorways! Nor can I deny that the Homeric Epics coalesced long after the great divide. But I do wish to deny that their composers had a horizon as miserably limited as the eighth century could afford. Though Drerup may replace earlier works—or rather, provide an indispensable supplement to the school of Doerpfeld; for he keeps narrowly to the 'Geometric' Age—he has by no means said the last word, and he may not even be arguing on the right lines.

Of course, apart from his great service in bringing together so much evidence, both of sites and models, from the Geometric Age, and also some brilliant inferences, such as that of Rumpf from walling of honeycomb-pattern at Delos and Thasos that the 'Temple of Beeswax' at Delphi was of similar workmanship,[3] Drerup has made many skilful and commendable observations of his own. For instance, it is surely important to notice, as he does on p. 84, that the long house (*oikos*) with one apsidal end is not found outside Greece at this time, but in Greece has a long indigenous history—rooted, as it were, in the continuing needs and practices of the inhabitants in both the Bronze and the Iron Age. Again, he notes on p. 90 that, when *oikoi* are especially long, as at Thermon and the Samian Heraeum, they seem to be temples, and in such cases are given peristyles, sometimes (as at Samos) added later. For the form of the 'horseshoe-ended' peristyle of the 'Geometric' Megaron B at Thermon he adduces an interesting parallel, a farmhouse in Saxony, which implies that the posts of the peristyle leant inwards, while the ridge pole perhaps rose towards the centre in a long convex curve, as it did in the famous houses of Trelleborg. Again, he sees (pp. 122–4) that most of the earliest temples had central hearths, just like the secular *megara*—the Cretan, such as Dreros, as late as the seventh century, like the oldest *cella* of the temple of Herakles on Thasos, presumably of the same period. Megaron B at Thermon, he thinks, was probably arranged in the same way a century before. For it was actually built over an old altar. So he depicts a slow and almost 'organic' transition, which seems

I should like to acknowledge the help of the editor and the very useful criticisms of Prof. A. Snodgrass and Dr J. J. Coulton.

[1] Printed as *Archaeologia Homerica* II ch. O (Göttingen, 1969).

[2] *Proceedings of the Classical Association* 71 (1974) 13–31.

[3] *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 6 (1964) 5 ff. I am not inclined to see, with J.-P. Michaud, a copy of the Delphi Temple of beeswax in the building BC at Eretria, also of the eighth century (*BCH* 1972, 759 and 761). For Michaud, 'l'extérieur est circulaire comme une ruche et l'intérieur polygonal comme un rayon de miel'. But the interior is an irregular decagon in plan—a shape that I do not associate with honeycombs—while the elliptical plan of the exterior does not remind me of hives, e.g. those figured in *BSA* 69 (1973) 443 ff.

very likely, from the secular *megaron* to the later temple. He also shows how old customs survived rather longer in Crete—cult-benches inside the temples, for instance (slowly replaced by pedestals for statues); just as the open spaces in Cretan towns, which in some ways resemble later *agorai*, also retain the surrounding benches derived from much earlier examples. Again, he argues from the models in a foundation-deposit on Delos (*BCH* 1947/8, pp. 193 ff.) that at no time were columns, beloved of the Mycenaeans, ever completely forgotten. So he has an eye for continuity of culture. At the same time, on pp. 57–9 he cannot bring himself to follow Blegen in his *Prosymna* (Cambridge 1937, pp. 19–20) and believe that the impressive terrace, on which the oldest-known Argive Heraeum still stands, is of the eighth century. Builders of that period simply could not have manipulated blocks so large into a structure so massive. Unhappily, Drerup goes the wrong way, and makes it *later* ('sicher nicht mehr geometrisch' p. 106). But it does not show the careful jointing of Archaic Greek, rather the wide jointing of the Bronze Age; and the stones are of the rough kind beloved of the Myceneans, contrasting poignantly with the finicky stylobate of small limestone blocks in the actual temple. Any Geometric sherds that Blegen found inside the terrace must have dropped through its chinks. Finally, Drerup makes an eloquent *apologia* for eighth-century buildings. They showed a great variety in their planning—a variety in which much of later Greek planning is adumbrated—and marked out the direction in which Greek design was to move. Though, admittedly, of small stones and with roofs either flat or steeply thatched, they contrived, by the varied dressing and polishing of their stonework, their coloured exterior and yet more by their skilful metallic decoration, both inside and out, to present a gay and colourful spectacle for the eye of a chieftain or a poet.

Unhappily, Drerup is not so perceptive as one might have expected in his strictly *architectural* thinking—when he comes to ask how designers and builders seem, on the evidence, to have tackled the problems before them. At the outset (pp. 6–7) he rules out the ingenious explanation by Marinatos (*BCH* 1936, 214 ff.) of the roof of the house-model from the Argive Heraeum, and Marinatos' application of it, *mutatis mutandis*, to his temple at Dreros. Now if there is one thing certain about the Argive model, it is that it combines flat roofs and pitched roofs. It is also surprising that even along the sides, where the steep roofs both of this and the model from Perachora meet the side-walls, there is no large overhang, such as always appears with a normal thatched roof. Finally, the painting of the thin flat 'cornice' in the Argive model seems to show the ends of horizontal joists, resembling Ionic dentils in form and scale—even though Drerup will have none of this (see below, p. 78). Consequently, Marinatos, struck no doubt by the analogy of medieval halls, where a lantern, riding on the roof, allowed the smoke to escape from the central hearth, restored a steeply pitched smoke-hood in the centre of the roof of Dreros. As carpentry a fairly small smoke-hood would not be too difficult to frame (see FIG. 1). In a large megaron, it might make a flat roof, supported only on posts down the long axis of the building, rather unstable. But it is surely possible in primitive times. The roofing of the traditional Italic atrium shows the surprising scale of heavy, unsupported timbers that an early roof might contain; and one supposes that early builders were much more confident with their carpentry than their masonry.[4]

Most often, one presumes, there was a loft, and both the horizontal joists, forming its floor, and the steep rafters above it rested upon the thick side-walls (see FIG. 2). But here too, we are not forced to follow Drerup for the construction. He infers it from the roof of the 'underground shrine' at Paestum (A. T. Hodge, *The Woodwork of Greek Roofs*, pl. 12), where, among other constructions, massive wedge-shaped cornice-blocks resist the spread of a roof of stone slabs at the later Greek pitch of fifteen degrees. What this roof has to do

[4] One is here working with many uncertain premises. One does not wish to rest too heavy a roof, with rafters at a steep angle, upon the centre of a horizontal framed roof rather than upon the outer walls of the *megaron*. This is the chief danger in Marinatos' reconstructions. On the other hand, I believe that in Greece at this time carpenters could still dispose of some hefty timbers. Not long before, the walls of Bronze Age buildings had been strengthened every few feet by long horizontal beams of their own thickness—a technique familiar to every student of the Palaces and House-Models: and in their own way the earliest Greek temples exhibit a carpentry just as wasteful. So the analogy with the earliest Italic atria need not be out of place.

with our models, I fail to see. In scale, locality, roof-pitch and materials it is surely far from the half-timbered megara that they are supposed to portray. FIG. 2 shows a different construction using mud under the thatch to caulk the gaps between joists and rafters, instead of the massive coping-stones of Drerup.

Roofs are controversial, and one can here accuse Drerup only of one-sidedness. More serious, perhaps, is his insistence (p. 72) that the grid of dark lines intersecting over much of the surface in the model from Chaniale Tekke, near Knossos, represents 'isodomic

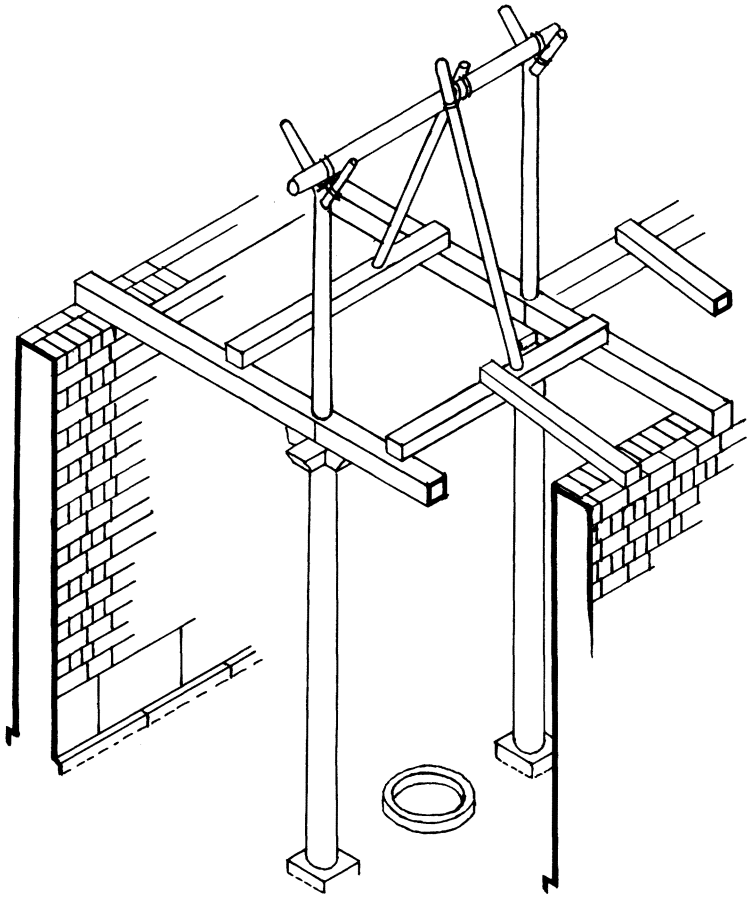

FIG. 1

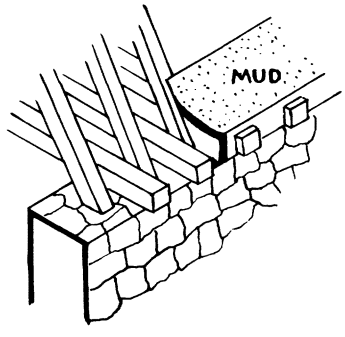

FIG. 2

masonry of large stones'. Then why do the lines never break joint? Why do they show no trace of bonding? They look more like a timber framework for wattle walls, as in the houses of Herculaneum; and, after all, according to Drerup (but see below p. 80) many Geometric buildings did have timber frames of various kinds. He is, of course, plausible when he argues that horizontal strengthening beams could hardly have been used in the numerous Geometric buildings with *curved* walls. But the building represented in the Chaniale Tekke model is not among them.

In general, his discussion on pp. 109–10 of the timber strengtheners of Geometric buildings, with its allusions to Bronze Age practices, to Phrygian methods and onward to the *regula* of the Doric Order, is too brief and elliptical for me to understand, let alone appraise.

Again, in his effort to show that real Greek architecture was now beginning, Drerup adduces on p. 104 the Samian *Hekatompedon*, indubitably 100 feet long and evidence that architects were thinking of right angles and precise dimensions, which alone make possible 'die Unterwerfung des Bauganzen unter ein gedanklicher Zahlensystem'. But, of course, this was nothing new to Greece. The Treasury of Atreus, known, I suppose, to most generations of later Greeks, is superbly proportioned. The top of the lintel above its

entrance comes exactly half way up its interior, its door-openings have a height twice their greatest width, and internally, at least, the relieving spaces above them are equilateral triangles. If Greeks studied proportion in the eighth century, they were merely recovering lost skills.

As a final sign of Drerup's lack of realism, I notice the last lines of the book, on p. 133, and the implications that he seems to draw there. 'The highest praise that Homer could give a building was for its costliness.' Having written a book on *Ausstattungsluxus* in Roman Architecture, in which he identified the luxury of Roman Republican *scaenae* as indulgence in semi-precious metals, he too easily believes that costliness implies metallic decoration. Now Vitruvius, in one of his most famous passages, at the end of his sixth book (Rose, p. 154), observes that when a work is sumptuously finished, it will be praised for its costliness —the client's province—when skilfully, for its execution—the craftsmen's. 'But when it is well-proportioned, the architect will have the glory.' Clearly the epic poets behaved very much like men in general, as described by Vitruvius. They praise buildings as much for their finish as for their extravagance, and even, if we take *ἐϋκτίμενον πτολίεθρον* in its natural sense, for their siting. There are many epithets for 'well-built', 'well-finished' and 'well-fitted'. They include *πυκινῶς ἀραρυίας*, a phrase overlooked by Drerup in his misinterpretation (p. 132) of *πυκνός* at *Odyssey* xxiii 193. Describing the bed-chamber that he built, Odysseus says he made it *πυκνῆσιν λιθάδεσσι, καὶ εὖ καθύπερθεν ἔρεψα, κολλητὰς δ' ἐπέθηκα θύρας πυκινῶς ἀραρυίας*—he used firm, or strong, stones and fastened his door-timbers firmly. For such seems to be the root meaning of *πυκνός* found also in the likening of the phalanx (*Iliad* xvi 212 ff.) to a wall firmly bonded of strong stones (*ὡς δ' ὅτε τοῖχον ἄνηρ ἀράρῃ πυκινοῖσι λίθοισι δώματος ὑψηλοῖο*). Drerup seems to me quite wrong to suppose that the poet is merely alluding to the rubble of small stones in the core of a geometric wall. In fact, the meaning 'frequent' or 'numerous' for *πυκνός* seems to be clearly attested only in authors later than Homer.

So much for cost and finish: and at times the poems seem to praise the aesthetic beauty of an ensemble, as at *Iliad* vi 242 ff. (*ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ Πριάμοιο δόμον περικαλλέ' ἵκανε*) and *Odyssey* iv 43, on the *θεῖος δόμος* of Menelaus at Lacedaemon. In any case, the poets did not single out mere costliness; nor, when they did praise this, do we have to suppose that it implied metal decoration. Paradoxically, while we have little actual evidence that eighth century buildings displayed much metal decoration, we have strong evidence for lavish metallic decoration of the Treasury of Atreus. May not other Mycenaean work have been similarly studded or encrusted?

What of the importance of this geometric architecture, so strongly stressed by Drerup, for that of Classical Greece? At first sight, one would say that our familiar Greek temples owe most of their character to their megalithic, fine-jointed construction, the pitch of their roofs (determined by the large roof-tiles invented during the later seventh century) and an unknown genius (a Corinthian?), who seems to have fixed the Doric Order in its main lines, not closely resembling anything of earlier date.[5] And indeed there is nothing, in any of the buildings or models published by Drerup, to anticipate the Doric entablature. The small, dark rectangles ('umlaufende schwarz-weisse Felderfolge') painted on the cornice of the Argive Heraeum model (see above, p. 76), in which on pp. 118–19 he seems to see the ancestry of triglyphs, are of the wrong size and in the wrong position. Furthermore, I believe that on p. 119 and in note 122 he seems to suppose that in some early Doric buildings, e.g. the Temple of Apollo at Syracuse, the *regulae* were not aligned on the triglyphs—'verlaufen Regulae und Triglyphen noch in getrennten Rhythmus'—whereas they keep tightly together and break only the rule of alignment on the *columns*. The non-alignment between triglyphs and *columns* is due, of course, to the exceptionally close spacing of columns in the earliest stone colonnades, and not to the problems of carpenters two centuries before. Eighth century cornices and copings are still nondescript.

As for plans, their wild variety in the eighth century, like the varied styles and positions

[5] Here I subscribe to the opinions of R. M. Cook.
See e.g. *BSA* 46 (1951) 50 ff.

of doors, windows and cross-walls, the rare appearance of the right angle and the microlithic or wattle construction would seem to show that real architecture had not begun in geometric times. To enlarge a house, these builders had to add to its length, the only recourse open to primitive technicians, but unknown in Classical times outside the very provincial work of Archaic Sicily; and if, in Crete, Geometric planners added room to room in a flat-roofed aggregate (of which Drerup gives general examples), such a plan might have a Minoan past but little future, even in Crete.

Geometric aggregates of rooms are higgledy piggledy, and do not point the way to Classical Greek houses, where the normal plan, so far as we know and as Drerup himself admits, consists of a square (on a side of about fifty feet at Olynthus), with a yard in the centre of its south side and a broad corridor (the *pastas*) to the north of the yard, from which it is divided by an open colonnade. This *pastas* runs the whole width of the house. The principal rooms, asymmetrically arranged, line its north side, and to its south are the two side wings of the house. This is a very distinctive plan; and such houses can fit happily into the *insulae* of a regular Hippodamian street-grid. Drerup appears to think one feature of the plan of Geometric Vroulia, in Rhodes, is sufficient to prove its direct ancestry of the *pastas*-house. As at Olynthus, a number of rooms at Vroulia abut on one thick, straight, continuous wall. The plan is actually rectangular, because it is of the end of Drerup's period; and in his enthusiasm for it he writes (p. 100); 'Aus der Reihung von Einraumzellen entwickelt sich durch Vorlagerung eines riegelartig Zusammenfassenden Korridors und weiter eines entsprechend gestalteten Hofes der Organismus des sogenanntes Parastashauses'. In other words, invent a pastas, a court and wings, and bring the fronts of the small butt-and-ben houses of Vroulia into line (as they are not at Vroulia; but as they must be, to fit a *pastas*), and you then have the complete Classical house. But anyone who, like Drerup here, can add so much to a single room and porch, and can then say that the final result is explained by what he takes for the nucleus, must surely forfeit much of his credibility as an historian of planning. Now Vroulia has, indeed, its importance here in quite another direction—as evidence of the defences of primitive cities. It may show how the first Greek colonists planned their settlements, the backs of the houses joining to form a single defensive wall. It suggests, too, that the second row of houses, if finished, would have repeated the process. The system is not unknown in small towns in the Islands today (see e.g. W. A. Eden on the plan of Mesta, in Chios, in *BSA* 1950, pp. 16 ff.), and seems to have saved Perinthus during Philip's determined attacks. So Diodorus xvi 76. He calls Perinthus θεατροειδης, because the backs of the houses formed continuous tiers, one above another, like the seating in a theatre. But to claim, with Drerup, that Vroulia also foreshadows the Greek *pastas*-house is surely too much.

Contemplating the grouped rectangular houses of Vroulia, Drerup would make yet another claim for them. 'Regelmässig angeordnete Wohnblöcke sind der orientalischen Stadt unbekannt' (p. 99). Only in Egypt, as he admits, were they known (some seven centuries earlier) at Amarna. He also admits that Gordium, which has more elaborate examples (see below, p. 81), is also eighth century. But his praise of Vroulia is surely misconceived. Numberless combinations of rectangular units had been realised at Uruk and Ur and in the palace of Niqmepa at Atchana (*c.* 1500 B.C.), as they had in Minoan Crete. It is just an accident that all the rooms in the primitive plan of Vroulia are of much the same size; and such equality marks no *architectural* progress.

One can sympathize with Drerup more easily when, like Miss Lorimer (*e.g.* in *Homer and the Monuments*, pp. 410 ff.) he supposes that the Homeric *megaron*-house survived almost unchanged in Ionia during the Classical period, to 'surface' again for modern archaeological inquirers in the house-plans of Hellenistic Priene. But I do not agree with him. We are dealing with building-types of some simplicity. The client needs a southward-facing living-room, giving on to a verandah and a yard. These features are naturally included in the *pastas*-house, described above. But the houses of Priene, as a rule, are small, and cover less than half the area of the regular Olynthian house or the *Maison de la Colline* at Delos. The textbooks (including my own, I fear) figure as typical of Priene a house that is abnormally large. For others, of more normal size (averaging some 12 m by 8 m, or

40 by 27 feet), see Th. Wiegand, *Priene* (Berlin, 1904), figs. 303–7. So the plan at Priene has to be pinched, and the long axis must run from north to south. The *pastas* and the wide side-rooms of Olynthus have to be omitted. It is not surprising, then, that the house shrinks into the likeness of an early *megaron*. It is also, perhaps, significant that no one has yet found evidence that the south front of the verandah had a pediment. But in any case I consider the reversion to a *megaron*-plan merely a result of the size of the house and the requirements of its owner. Unlike Miss Lorimer, who was truly worried by Priene,[6] I invoke no principle of belated survival.

Drerup would also derive the Classical Greek *anta* from a feature that he finds in his Geometric buildings. Some *megara*, he thinks, were of framed construction, with walls strengthened by large upright posts (the 'eingebundener Pfosten' of p. 98), which he identifies with Homer's μεσόδμαι. The first and last post on each long side, projecting beyond the entrance-wall and the rear cross-wall, as in the model from the Argive Heraeum, are forerunners (p. 109) of the *antae* of Classical Greece. But, since μεσόδμη is such a difficult word both in the references to *megara* and ships' masts,[7] he has to ground his firm evidence chiefly on the vertical lines painted down the sides of the model, and incidentally interrupted by some of the triangular 'windows'.[8] There is very little in surviving Geometric ground-courses, as shown in Drerup, figs. 3–17, to suggest that they supported walls of such workmanship.[9] Nor, on the other hand, do the cella-buildings of Classical Greek temples show *antae* at intervals along their walls, either inside or outside. Why, in this case, was the ancient timber construction so rigorously suppressed? As for the Heraeum at Olympia, whatever the purpose of the projecting spur-walls unearthed along the interior of the cella, they appear only on the inner-face of the side-walls, and are placed, as A. Mallwitz rightly sees (*JdI* 1966, pp. 310 ff.), in careful alignment with the columns of the peristyle outside. It seems, then, to me, that they were originally designed to support bearer-beams right across the structure, which in turn held up the heavy pitched roof. If so, they will have no obvious connection with Drerup's Geometric wall-strengtheners. The same building, still largely of timber though as late as *c.* 600 B.C., is notable for showing that its *antae* were mere timber sheaths, surrounding the ends of the stone ground-courses and the mud-brick walls above them. The responds, with their un-architectural decoration, on the Etruscan *Tomba Cima* (Drerup, pl. VIc) cannot supply the evidence that is lacking, even contradicted, in Greece itself.

We come at last to Homer. Were eighth-century buildings the only examples that he understood, and did he invent everything in his poems that lay outside their range?

Drerup begins by alleging that while the Homeric *megaron* and its immediate appurtenances are clearly described, everything outside them is tenuous and incomprehensible. But is this really so? For Drerup (p. 130) the Homeric αὐλή, or forecourt, 'ein vorgelagter und mauerumschlossener Hof', is 'dem geometrischen Haus durchaus bekannt'. As Homer described it? For Homer, it was surrounded by colonnaded walks (αἰθούσαι), echoing and smoothly dressed.[10] At the outer entrance to the αὐλή stood a *prothyron*, reminding us of the later Greek *propylon*. Athene stood there, upon a stone threshold, and watched the suitors gaming in the αὐλή (*Odyssey* i 103–7); and it seems to me that in *Odyssey* x 310 ff. Odysseus

[6] She is puzzled (*loc. cit.*) by the survival of the Homeric *megaron* to so late a date. But she assumes that the *megara* of Priene and Homer are in one line of descent; for each of them has a secondary door in its side (the *orsothyre*). But since the houses of Priene are not real *megara*, only Classical houses curtailed, side-doors are the most natural thing imaginable and very common. See Wiegand, *Priene*, pl. XXI ('Westviertel von Priene').

[7] Apparently a thwart across the ship, midway between prow and stern, with a hole for the mast in its centre (J. S. Morrison and R. T. Williams, *Greek Oared Ships* 52–3).

[8] This does not, of course, mean that I doubt the existence of the triangular windows in actual buildings of the time—only that they would have pierced the main vertical supports of the structure. Such openings are found in Cypriot huts to this day (*Perachora* I fig. 6a); and Prof. Snodgrass adduces for me a good Geometric example at Zagora (*Praktika* 1972, 264).

[9] As Dr J. Coulton reminds me, even the broadened ground-course of the second Samian Heraion is not considered a suitable support for recurrent posts in the side wall, even by Drerup himself (p. 126 n. 149).

[10] 'Echoing' in *Odyssey* iii 309, where Telemachus and Peisistratus sleep in its shelter.

stands at a similar point, and that Circe, opening the doors of her *megaron*, calls to him across the *αὐλή*. Again, a *prothyron* seems to be thought of as a roofed building, with open fronts, as we see from *Odyssey* iv 20 ff., where Telemachus, Peisistratos and their chariot stand inside it. It also seems likely that there was a similar open *prothyron* between the *megaron* proper and the *αὐλή*. The order of the buildings as they figure in Theoklymenos' vision (*Odyssey* xx 351 ff.) seems to show as much; and it is indeed possible that in *Odyssey* iv 20 ff. Telemachus' group stands in the *prothyron* of the *megaron* proper. But, however we interpret these passages—even if we stress the plural, *prothyra*, of *Odyssey* iv 20, and suppose that the visitors stood in the *aule* among the various porches—we still picture the same sort of palace. The poet is a little unclear, not because he is imagining a visionary ensemble, but because his lines once took for granted a grouping of buildings all too clear to him. And that grouping, in spite of all Drerup's arguments, reminds me irresistibly of Doerpfeld's Tiryns. I think of Tiryns, too, at *Iliad* viii 381 ff., describing the glorified palace on Mount Olympus. Here, it seems, one mounted one's chariot in the *aule*, and drove it through a *prothyron* or *propylon*, which had great pivoted gates (vv. 393–4), and then through an outer gate some distance beyond. Before they reached the last, the two recalcitrant goddesses were warned, and turned back. It is possible, too, that both horses and chariots were kept at places easily accessible to the *aule* (vv. 434–5). Elsewhere in the poems, too, there seems sufficient evidence that one drove one's chariots along roads to the inner entrances of the actual palaces, and there dismounted; and all this is so strikingly like the Bronze Age civilisation and so very unlike anything of later times, that I am loth to believe it all the lucky guess of a 'Geometric' poet.

While, too, we cannot be sure that the owners of 'Geometric' buildings did not offer visitors baths (for even Classical Greeks took baths oftener than one might think[11]), I cannot but think of the beautiful and well-appointed bathroom at Tiryns as fitting the Homeric descriptions most happily. In Menelaus' palace, at least, the baths were *ἐϋξέσται*, so should not have been of metal, Drerup's favourite material. There is nothing, actually, to preclude their being built-in baths of polished stone, like the first Bronze Age *ἀσάμινθοι*—the word used in the *Odyssey* here.

Then there are those mysterious passages, the *λαύρη* and the *ῥῶγες μεγάροιο*, which seem to run around the back of the *megaron* to *thalamoi*, treasuries and the like (*Odyssey* xxii 43 etc.). According to Drerup, there is no reason why these should not be Geometric. The fact is that Tiryns offers the most developed examples of such passages, and that Drerup is driven to far-away Gordium to find even *plausible* examples from the eighth century. But these, even in the Phrygian city, are rudimentary, and are not connected with rooms, as they were at Tiryns and in the House of Odysseus (see *AJA* 1964, pl. 85, fig. 15).

The actual workmanship of the Homeric House seems often to recall Mycenaean building. Anyone familiar with Mycenaean sites will know that this is a style of polished stone *par excellence*. Limestone, sandstone, serpentine, porphyry, even conglomerate are brought to remarkable smoothness. So it is no accident that the word *ξεστός*, applicable to stone and wood but not to metal, is found so often in Homer. Like the numerous bedchambers of Priam's palace (*Iliad* vi 242 ff.), the house of Circe was built of polished stone (Odyssey x 211)—*ξεστοῖσιν λάεσσι*, polished like the *ξεστοὶ λίθοι* on which the elders sat in assembly in *Iliad* xviii 504. Nestor had a judgment seat of polished white stones, inherited from Neleus, in front of his high doors—again, apparently, in the *aule*—and kept fragrant (?) with olive-oil, according to *Odyssey* iii 406 ff. None of this suits buildings of the period 1000–600 B.C. But nearly all would suit the Mycenaean remains, which must have dotted the country in a very visible way. When Greek architecture really began, about 600 B.C., its creators evidently adopted a good many Mycenaean details from them—the Mycenaean interlocking S-spiral, for instance, found not only on some Early Doric roof-revetments and as a frieze on the great *Krater* of Vix, but even at the centre of the

[11] See not only the general interpretation of such words as *βαλανειόμφαλος*, used by Cratinus, but also the capacious and frequent cold baths in gymnasia—not to mention Cleon's fate at the end of the *Knights*.

volutes on the primitive Ionic capital below the Naxian Sphinx at Delphi.[12] In the later sixth century, this spiral fades out.

The ruins of the Bronze Age were not regarded with dread by the later Greeks, but might even become *heroa* (the fate of Bronze Age Lacedaemon); just as Hesiod calls the figures associated with many of them the ὄλβιοι ἥρωες. Indeed, I believe that they were the inspiration of poets, as they were later to be of the first Archaic designers.

As for decorative detail, it is true that Alcinous' metallic palace of bronze and gold (*Odyssey* vii 84 ff.) looks more like a poet's fancy, and has no obvious parallel in Mycenaean or Geometric times—none, indeed, until one reaches the mysterious Sicyonian *thalamoi* at Olympia, which must be at earliest sixth century.[13] The fact remains that its coping of 'kyanos' has its most obvious analogy in the decorative blue strip-ornament discovered by Doerpfeld at Tiryns, the patterning and position of which has analogies in the monumental doorway of the Treasury of Atreus. All that Drerup can say (p. 107) is that possibly the 'Geometric' palaces also had applied decorative friezes. But he can find only a few small facings imitating masonry on a few sites, notably Artemis Orthia—certainly no paste or enamel of dark blue, such as existed at Tiryns.

Inquiry into other details still leaves the questions of the style and the date of Homeric houses very open. Once, clearly, Homer imagines a *megaron* with steeply-pitched principal-rafters—at *Iliad* xxiii 713, where their shape is recalled by two standing wrestlers as they bend forward to take a grip, and tug each other to and fro. But nowhere, outside this simile, do we find a clear description of the shape or covering of a roof. The smoke-holes described by Homer (and Herodotus viii 137, for that matter) could be of any pattern and in almost any position. If, in *Odyssey* i 320, Athena did vanish through one of the smoke-holes from Odysseus' house, there is nothing to tell us whether these were crevices in a timber roof, as in the typical Italic hut-urn (Drerup pl. 5b), or small triangular openings near the top of the wall, as in the model from Perachora (Drerup pl. 2). Nor does the student, who regards the Homeric poems as a compound rather than a mixture, and who believes that their poets delved for the most telling phrase in a rich traditional repertory, at any time need to expect entire consistency in the whole picture that they present. The unprejudiced inquirer will not, for instance, reach a premature decision about the prince's *thronos*, or armchair, which Homer pictures inside the halls. Does he have in mind the stately arrangement of Pylos or the less elegant but more nearly contemporary example of Leukanti in Euboea (Drerup fig. 54)? Or again, what was the 'tholos' to which the cord was tied, when the unfaithful serving-girls were hanged 'on high' (*Odyssey* xxii 467) by the victorious Odysseus? It was once supposed to be something like a dovecote, opposite the façade of the megaron, to which the other end of the cord was strung. Now Drerup and others think of it as the upper, protruding part of a typical 'Geometric' building, the small granary, half-buried in the ground, as at Old Smyrna (Drerup, fig. 39, from R. V. Nicholls). Odysseus' *tholos* was a large one (v 466), perhaps the largest of a group—though the grouped granaries of Geometric yards all seem much of a size. But, if it resembled these granaries, to which part of it could one tie a rope? The truth is that, whether as shown in a 'geometric' model from the Athenian *Agora*, or even as restored on fig. 39, they seem too

[12] This spiral is everywhere in Mycenaean: *e.g.*, on the doorway of the Treasury of Atreus (Wace, *Mycenae* pll. 49–51). Rodenwaldt, *Korkyra* I pl. 23 shows it well on revetments of the early sixth century at Corcyra. Its appearance on the Treasure of Vix (*Monuments Piot* 1954, p. 12, pll. 7 ff.) helps to suggest to me that this, too, is Corinthian work, perhaps of the mid-6th century. For the Naxian volute see P. Amandry, *La Colonne des Naxiens* (1953), pll. XI and XII. This volute is interesting, because at first sight, its design could have no point of connection with a Mycenaean (or Corinthian) spiral frieze. Yet the interlocking pattern at the very centre, where later capitals would have an eye, seems to me to show the connection clearly. Contrast the lame ending of the roll in the volute at Ephesus (D. S. Robertson, *Greek and Roman Architecture*, fig. 40). I have not the space to discuss here the capital from Arkades in Crete, most recently treated by B. Wesenberg, *Kapitelle und Basen* (Düsseldorf, 1972) 93 ff. The spiral is carved rather carelessly along its abacus. It seems to me a provincial, perhaps earlier attempt to effect a synthesis of Bronze Age wreckage. The attempt of the Central Greeks seems to me more successful, although still short-lived.

[13] Pausanias (vi, 19) makes it clear that they belong to recognisable Orders of architecture, however keenly he may wish to put them back into the seventh century and assign them to the tyrant Myron.

low up to their eaves and perhaps too frail and slippery at the apex of the roof to allow anything tough to be roped around them. So here, as elsewhere, I am loath to press Homer to yield a single cut-and-dried certainty, and one of eighth-century date at that.

If I were asked for my own view of ninth- and eighth-century trends in architecture, I should reply that I saw none. Architecture, as I should hope to define it, did not then exist. No one was consciously applying a well-reasoned aesthetic, acquired in a school of design, to the fulfilment, with firmness and elegance, of recognised needs, practical and artistic. There was everywhere a series of hits and misses, and the highest common factor among designs was still very low indeed. Homer would need all the memories of Mycenae, all possible contacts with the far-away palaces of Asia and Egypt, to render any vision of grandeur at all plausible and self-consistent. But, for reasons which are obscure to me, all this suddenly altered toward the end of the seventh century. Architecture, like Sculpture, could at last aspire to some artistic excellence.

Though I am grateful, then, for the diligence with which Drerup has compiled his inventory, I cannot see that it shakes many of the arguments, by now almost traditional, which connect Homer and Mycenae. The future course of this particular Homeric study, Homer and the History of Greek Building, seems to me in no way obvious or predetermined; and I cannot see that even Drerup has put it on a certain, predictable course.

HUGH PLOMMER

Museum of Classical Archaeology, Cambridge