oîkos aiônios

PROF. J. N. BAKHUIZEN VAN DEN BRINK has sent to Dr Darwell Stone, as editor of the Lexicon of Patristic Greek, a very valuable and kind communication (in reference to my article aiôv, J. T. S. xxxvi 265-283, 390-404) on the phrase oîkos aiônios which occurs in sepulchral inscriptions, both pagan and Christian, through the study of which I have compiled the following statement:

A. (1) Christian.

(a) C. Bayet de tit. Atticae Christ. antiquissimis no. 107 oîkos aiônios ἀγάθωνος ἀναγνώστου καὶ Εὐφημίας ἐν ἀυτή θήκαι, ἵνα ἑκάστῳ ἥμων. εἰ δὲ τις ἐνενεργείων σῶμα καταθήκαια ἐνταῦθα παρέξε τῶν δύο ἡμῶν, λόγον δόῃ τῷ Θεῷ καὶ ἀνάθεμα ἕτω μαρὰν ἅθαν (cf. 1 Cor. 16. 22) [4th or 5th cent. A.D.].

(b) Inscr. Gr. vii. 1646 Đoukianou oîkodômou oîkos [ai'jav(e)os oîkos (oîkos aiônios sepulchri appellatio in eo genere frequentissima)].

(c) ib. xiv. 463 (videtur Chr. tit.) Ἀδρῆλι οὗ ἐνθάδε κείμαι Κόσμου πλάνην προλιπών εἰς αἰώνιον οὐκ ἀνελθὼν Μηδένα λυπής οἷμαλόν βίον ὥστε διάγω.

(2) Pagan or indeterminate.

(a) Princeton Univ. Arch. Exped. to Syria in 1904–1905 and 1909 Div. iii. Sect. A Pt. 4 Παλλαδίῳ νῦν μήτηρ Θεῷ ἀνέθηκα Ἐξ ἱδίων οἴκων αἰῶνιον (oîkos aiônios, like sedes aeterna, a euphemism for tomb, is found frequently in late inscriptions. In Egyptian and Semitic inscriptions 'house of eternity' is used in a like fashion).

(b) Inscr. Gr. xiv. 1464 Ἀδρῆλιος ... ἵππεος Ἠρμαίων ζῶν [ἐποίησα] ἔμαντώ καὶ Σαλῆθυ ... συμβιώ μου τόν αἰώνιον] οἴκων καὶ ... ἀπελευθέρως ...

B. οἰκητήριον αἰῶνιον also occurs

(2) Pagan.

W. K. Prentice Pt. iii of Publications of an American Arch. Exped. to Syria 1899–1900 no. 317 Χέρ(ε)τε μοι, φίλε τόπο (Hail, beloved place or perhaps Farewell, loved places) (Ἐ)χθρῶν χαρά, τέκνων λύπη, γερώντων προσδοκία, τόνων ἱστρε, πλουσίων ἀγώνια, ἅθ(λ)ων εὐχή, ἀπροσωπόλη(πτ)ε, πάντας ἵππο σάξων, ὦ φυγὼν ἀμήχανον. Οἰκητήριον αἰῶνιον Θαλάβαθος ... ἐαυτῷ κὲ τέκνων κὲ ἐπιτηδείους. Θάρσοι, ψυχή, οὐδεὶς ἄθανα[τος].

C. αἰῶνιον οἰκήτερον (7 -ος) τόπο also occurs

(1) Christian.

The phrase oikos aiwvios seems to imply that the grave is man's home for ever. This appears most clearly in no. 317 sup. B, but it may be doubted whether this was the meaning of aiwvios even here. The epitaph referred to is a rhetorical comment in the manner of epitaph-writers on a common phrase: aiwvios does not mean, at the date of these epitaphs at all events, eternal in the strict sense. It is otherwise with ádios, and the only two passages which speak in clear terms of the grave as man's everlasting home use ádios, not aiwvios—Xen. Ages. 11. 16 (Aphigilaos) eis tìn ádion oikogvn kataqýgevo and Diod. Sic. 1. 51 of those living near Memphis tois ... tòv teteleustikónon taýofos ádious oikous prósagoreúonon, ós èn ádov diateloúntwn tòn ápteiron aiwvn.

Let us examine the usage of both words.

D. oikos means not only house or home, but a room in a house, public building, e.g. temple, a treasury at Delphi, household goods, in Attic law an estate, inheritance. Among other things a tomb.

Bulletin de correspondance hellénique vol. 2 p. 610 no. 29 (1) 'Ovthesis-mos ... katestekivase tòn oikov éantw òon kai ... tì gynaikei.

(2) 'Artevou katastikivase tòn oikov ... éantw kai tòv tèknon: cf. no. 30 p. 611.

so oikhtírovn.


E. aiwvios is used on tombs not only with oikos, oikhtírion, but with mnêmeion, kúsmma, tímh, géras.

with mnêmeion.

Princeton Univ. Arch. Exped. to Syria in 1904-1905 and 1909 Div. iii. Sect. A Pt. 2 no. 164 ó dévna ... oikódómyes ... aiwvion mnêmeion ... oî theoi àd(h)dnavato(i).

with kúsmma.


tímh.

Le Bas etc. Inscr. vol. 3. 2618 to kúsmma toûto èstiv aiwvios tímh, týphos: cf. 2621.

géras id. 2614 mnêmeion, aiwvion géras, oikódómyes ktl.
For its use with ταχή and γέρας there are plenty of examples (v. αἰώνιος iv 3 and 4); with these, as with their opposites, it means, in a quite loose sense, ever-memorable, undying, indelible.

But it is not only with words such as these that αἰώνιος means something less than everlasting. It is used of the covenants and promises of God, which, though themselves unchanging, may be affected by the disobedience of men (ib. iv 5); of something which will last to the end of the world, e.g. Const. Apost. 5. 19. 7 of the Sacrifice of the Altar; and, what is particularly to the point here, of the long sleep of death, in the mouth of an author who believes in immortality, test. xii Patr. Iss. 8. 9 ὑπνωτεν ὑπνον αἰώνων. Pallad. Hist. Laus. ch. 104 M. 34. 1210 D (not in Butler) (Adolius) τὸν αἰώνιον ὑπνον κοιμᾶται ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις, καὶ βάπτεται. Here the sense is for all time to come, for an indefinite time. It is this sense which αἰώνιος bears in the phrase οἶκος αἰώνιος which we are considering.


F. Sometimes there occurs on tombs an inscription with αἰών instead of αἰώνιος—

Princeton Univ. Arch. Exped. to Syria Div. iii Sect. B Pt. 2 no. 943 (Christian inscr.) † "Κ(ύμων) φυλαξιν ὑπνον τοῦτον καὶ "τὴν εἰσόδον καὶ ἔξοδον αἰῶνου ἐκ τοῦ νέου ἐως τοῦ αἰῶνος" †: (from Ps. 120 (121). 8 LXX) cf. 930. Here αἰών has the sense of a long but definite period, as long as the world lasts, till the end of the world (v. αἰών vi. 4 a) e.g. Test. xii Patr. Dan. 6. 10 ἐσται τὸ γένος ὑμῶν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐως τοῦ αἰῶνος.

This may be compared, as Leclercq points out (Dict. d'Archéol. Chrét. et de Liturgie vol. 1 Pt. 1 pp. 339, 340), with Corp. Inscr. Gr. Boeckh vol. 4 9439 Καλόκερως . . . τοῦ γλυκτάτου γονέων τοῦ κοιμ[η]τη[τ]ρι[ον] ἐως ἀναστάσεως (3rd or 2nd cent.) and another inscr., also Ante-Nicene—Κάλλιστος . . . ἐποίησαν τὸ κοιμητήριον τοῦτο ἐαυτῷ καὶ τῇ συμβιβῇ . . . ἄμα θυγατρὶ ἐως ἀναστάσεως: cf. another cited by him of the same date (p. 340) θέτο σώμα δὲ γαίη Ἐισόκαι ἀναστάσεως εὐάγγελον ἡμαρ ἴκητε.

E. C. E. Owen.

THE NAME Ἠρεμ

The etymology of the word Ἠρεμ 'Levite' has been a long-standing problem. The prevailing view to-day seems to be that it is connected with the Minaean ἱλαρ 'priest', but even this arresting comparison does not

settle the question of derivation. It is therefore perhaps permissible to attempt yet another solution of the puzzle.

In several South Arabian inscriptions, recently discussed by Hößner and Rhodokanakis,¹ there occurs a word ḫewš with the meaning of ‘priest’.² As those scholars have pointed out, the term derives from the well-known root ḫew (Acc. sahāru Qatab. ḫewš, &c.) ‘to go round’, and refers in the first instance to the ritual circumambulation of the altar, as in the Arabic rite known as the ṭawāf. The ḫewš is thus primarily ‘the circumambulator’.

The antiquity of the rite in question is attested by the presence in the South Arabian vocabulary of the words ḫin and ḫem in the sense of ‘altar’, i.e. a circumambulated table-stone.³ Analogous is the Arabic ḥaw deriving from the root ḫaw ‘to go round’, whilst in the Ras Shamra texts a similar meaning attaches to a word ṣu, which connects with the Arabic ṣu‘a and Ethiopic ṣu ‘to go round’.⁴ The rite is mentioned, moreover, in the Old Testament in ḥewš ṭawāfūb (Ps. xxvi. 6), as already observed by Wensinck.⁵

Now is it not possible that in this South Arabian ḫewš or ‘ritual circumambulator’, we have a direct counterpart to the Hebrew ḫewš and the Minaean ḫewš ?

The term ḫewš, as has in itself long been observed, admits of ready derivation from the root ḫaw, ḫā, the primary meaning of which is ‘to go round, encircle’. It is therefore an exact parallel to ḫewš, and would originally have borne the same specific and technical meaning.⁶

It should be observed that no originality is here claimed for the association of ḫewš with the root ḫaw, ḫā. This has already been proposed times beyond number. The object of the present note is merely to strengthen that view by reference to the analogy of the South Arabian ḫewš and to the known place of the rite of circumambulation in early Semitic cultus.

Theodorus H. Gaster.

² Exact references to inscriptions will be found in the article cited.
³ Cf. Mortmann-Mittwoch, p. 33. The root is ḫun, as in Heb. ḫusaf, cognate with ḫun II.
⁴ Cf. O.L.Z. 1936, p. 400.
⁵ In Theol. Tijdschr., 1919, p. 103.
⁶ If so, the form must be like that of ḫun, a proper name meaning the same thing as ḫun ‘boar’, namely a qasil-form with the active sense usually associated with the qasîl-form; cp. Bauer and Leander, Hist. Gr. d. Hebr. Spr. i. 470-471 [G.R.D.].