

incorporated in the gable wall were being constructed at the middling level of society. Axial stacks are also not uncommon, particularly in those *manoirs* provided with heated upper rooms.

Circular buildings survive in large numbers: wellcovers, bake ovens, dovecots, windmills and even the occasional circular pigsty. Throughout northwestern France the single-cell dwelling, with common living-room on the ground floor and storage loft above, was the standard form of dwelling until recent times for those not possessing livestock. Normandy also shares in the longhouse tradition of western France, although it is difficult to identify examples of the pure longhouse as was possible in neighbouring Brittany in the 1960s.

The first-floor hall is widely distributed, both as an independent unit and as an element in a larger building. Many such 'first-floor halls' may have functioned as 'chamber blocks'. The type is chiefly to be associated with the upper levels of rural society, particularly the minor nobility and clergy.

Whilst simple one- and two-cell houses may readily be identified, more complex plan-forms exist. The two- and three-unit plan-forms are to be found in most regions, often with central axial chimney-stack, and a rear stair-turret. A feature of many of these houses – found throughout Normandy – is the provision of twin entrance doorways, implying former kin relationships. Houses are generally from 6 m (20 ft) to 7 m (23 ft) wide, occasionally narrower, and only rarely as much as 8 m (26 ft) wide. The length of available oak timber is a limiting factor. Length (including contiguous outbuildings) varies from 10 m (33 ft) to 25 m (80 ft); exceptionally, houses may be longer.

Medieval buildings are not common at the vernacular level; those which survive are mostly representative of higher social levels. As elsewhere in France, it seems likely that the 'permanent' building styles now regarded as 'traditional' came to take the place of earlier structures from the 16th century onwards.

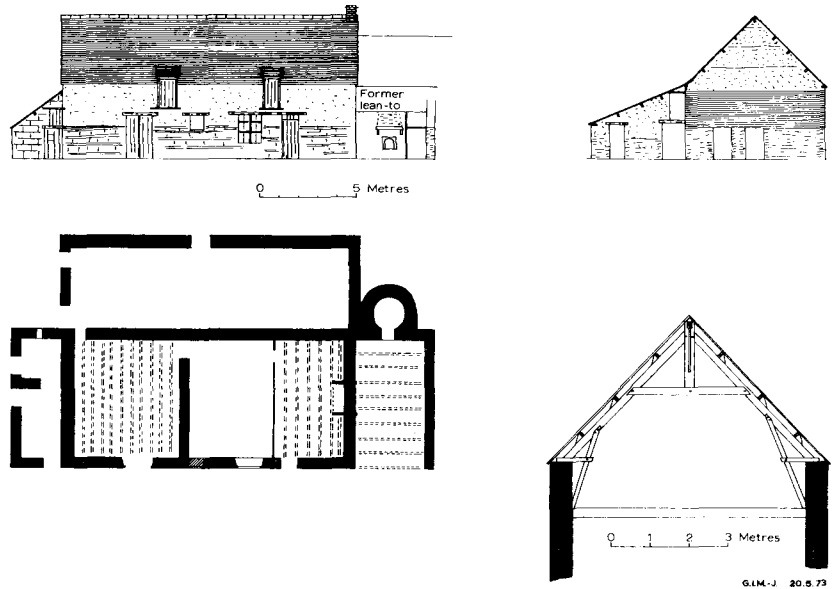
GWYN MEIRION-JONES

2.III.5.m **Pays du Centre** (France, c)

The present Centre region covers the historical territories centred on Bourges (Berry), Orléans (the Orléanais), Blois (the Blésois) and Tours (Touraine). These territories fall into twenty or so smaller areas or *pays* differentiated by geology, terrain, landscape, and so on.

Even though the 19th century saw the expansion of owner occupancy, the rural habitat of a large part of the Centre region bears the imprint of the form of tenure that prevailed throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, namely tenant farming, in which an estate (*domaine*) was let by its owner, in return for a share of the crops or fixed tithes, to a tenant farmer (*maître*) who supervised servants, farmhands and tied labourers.

The estate is centred on a farmstead with a central courtyard – either open or enclosed – and a large barn, as is the case in the Orléanais, Sologne, the Beauce Chartraine, Berry, and Brenne Tourangelle. In Sologne, two lines of buildings at right angles to the farmhouse form two sides of the yard (*aireau*), which is never totally enclosed: on one side is the barn with its porch housing the threshing floor, on the other the stables or the sheep shelter. The yard is slightly sunken to allow the making of manure. In Berry, the yard is surrounded by buildings on



all four sides, with, however, a narrow passageway left open at each angle, a layout harking back to a time when the yard was collectively owned by the inhabitants of a former hamlet, every house of which, except one, was subsequently turned into a dependency. In the Beauce Chartraine, the yard is completely enclosed, the only access being by a combined cart and pedestrian entrance.

Plan, elevation and section of a Norman dwelling with king post timber roof, Paimpont, ile-et-Vilaine.

In the estate, the farmhouse, invariably with a long-wall facade, might be a single-storey, single-roomed house, with a doorway and a window, under a two-sided roof of flat clay tiles or of thatch with a combined dormer window and loft entrance (*lucarne-porte*). Or it might be two conjoined one-room dwellings for independent families, or a central-entry house, with the owner's lodging on one side and the tenant's on the other.

A functionally and architecturally important feature of the estate is the barn with, as its most outstanding ancient type, the aisled barn with a roof supported by pairs of wooden posts, a type extant in the Champagne Berrichonne and the Pays Fort.

In the Orléanais, Sologne and Berry, the estate was run by employing an abundant workforce of tied labourers (*locaturiers*), living in nearby hamlets or villages. The *locaturier's* house (*locature*) was a low, one-room affair, flanked at one end by a

Farmstead with central courtyard; left, farmhouse; right, barn and stable. Sologne, Pays du Centre. Early 20th century.

