From Bed to Bedroom
A Genealogical Study of Horizontality in Domestic Space

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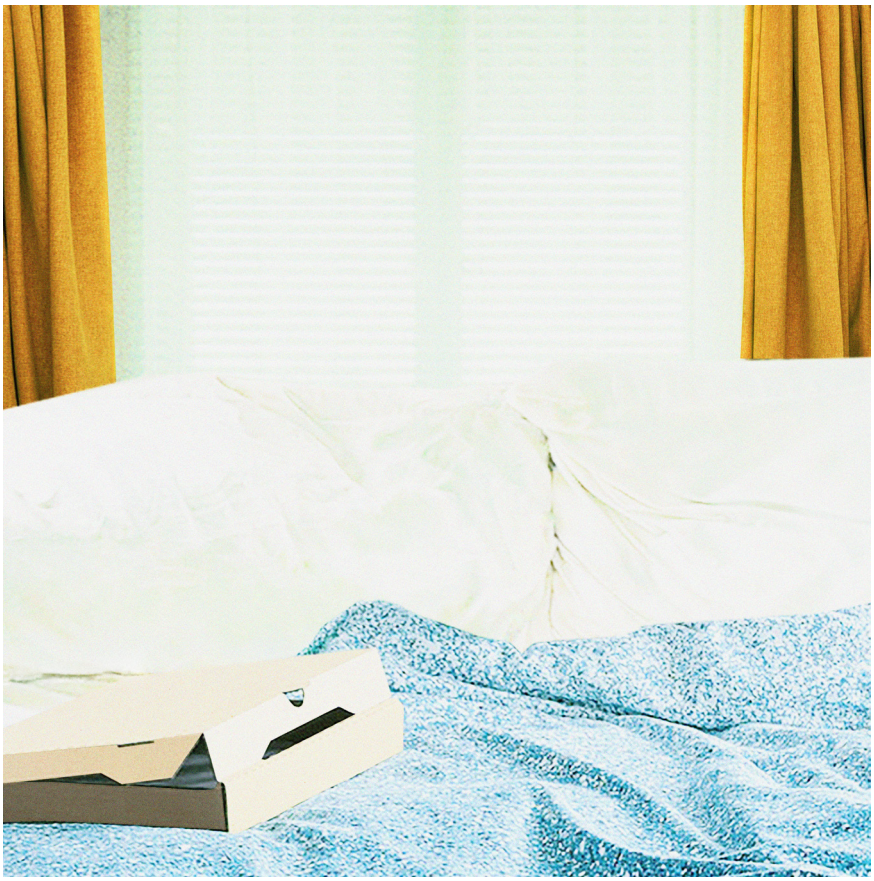


A bed by the window.
Collage by the author.

Over the past century, architecture historiography has struggled to produce a coherent body of knowledge about the bedroom. Instead, the term itself has frequently been employed as an umbrella highlighting the persistent neglect this particular room type has endured across various disciplines, often lacking precise contextualization. Despite the lack of exploration into its origins, it is immediately apparent that the bed—or more precisely, the act of *bedding*[01]—stands as the singular consistent element weaving through the passage of time. It does not merely serve as an innocent haven for nocturnal repose: the transition from the bed to the bedroom propels us through a complex tapestry of contradictions and paradoxes. In modernity, the bedroom emerged as an obvious room category, with its roots, however, anchored in the very nature of social reproduction and subjectification processes. Yet, the bedroom persists in being thought of as a timeless, unexceptional commodity. What remains largely unspoken about these four walls and their content is their role in institutionalizing reproductive labour in Western society. In this essay, the relationship between the bed and the room is called into question as an attempt to uncover the making of what we now recognize as the bedroom. The purpose of this introduction is to clarify that this essay refrains from aspiring

01 By its very nature, the custom of bedding denotes the act of reclining, necessitating a horizontal surface—be it a platform, a bed of foliage, or a mattress.

to a comprehensive survey of this horizontal history, but rather seeks to aggregate and delineate its origins.[02] The emergence of the bedroom has both an origin and a purpose. To argue for the contrary is to conceal the power its crystallization exerts over our lives. If the distinction between a fragment of the domestic interior and the household as a whole is impossible to make, what significance does the horizontal architecture of the bed hold? How did the bedroom shape the relationship between the public and private spheres, as well as define family dynamics? Moreover, how did this particular room type come to be naturalized? What can we learn from its predecessors? And how did this familiar place, seemingly neutral, yet indispensable, become the battleground for our very existence as political and social subjects?

THE BED BEFORE THE ROOM

The origins of the bed may not solely reside in its tangible form, but rather in the conditions that nurtured its essential purpose: to provide comfort and ensure secure repose, notably facilitated by the utilization of fire. Although the exact date remains a topic of debate, it is widely acknowledged that our ancestors mastered the use of fire two million years ago. Fire served multiple purposes: providing warmth, enabling cooking and, most importantly, offering protection from predators. With the acquisition of fire, our forebears transitioned to sleeping on the ground, clustering around hearths in open-air camps, and seeking refuge under rocky overhangs or within caves.[03] Social ties became important as fire facilitated food sharing, while its enticing comfort encouraged people to gather closely, fostering strong relationships within small communities. It can be speculated that the shared *primitive*[04] bed and the use of fire during nightly repose may have played an important role in turning intimate relationships from "opportunistic encounters into habitual sex with the same partner(s)."[05] The inherent pair-bonding tendency may have originated from these first technological breakthroughs. The oldest beds known to man were discovered in South Africa, abandoned around seventy thousand years ago. It is not a coincidence that many millennia later, the Proto-Germanic root of the term *bed* translates as "a resting place dug into the earth," evoking the memory of these primitive shelters.[06] Even if these beds were not more than piles of earthy grown materials, they served not only as mattresses providing a place to rest but also as the hub of daily activity. These plant beddings were found in the Sibudu rock shelter by the uThongathi River, north of Durban. The nearby landscape, embellished with "thick swaths of grasses, sedges, and rushes" thriving close to the riverbank, tells a story of unwavering and detail-oriented repose.[07] Archaeologists propose that the Sibudu people were highly resourceful and specialized in maintaining a pristine environment, devoid of any insect infestation. They shielded themselves using aromatic leaves (*Cryptocarya woodii*), which possess chemical ingredients effective in repelling insects. Additionally, they routinely burned their mattresses and crafted new ones

02 The periodization that was followed, as well as the semantic evolution, is informed by key literature, including *The Philosophy of the Bed* (1961), *Warm and Snug: The History of the Bed* (2004), *The Bedroom: An Intimate History* (2018), and *What We Did in Bed: A Horizontal History* (2019). These works are instrumental in primarily tracing the types of beds and, concomitantly, the diverse and long history of sleeping arrangements. Even so, it is notable that they predominantly focus on the bed's cultural significance, overlooking, to an extent, its broader architectural context and its defining apparatuses.

03 Brian Fagan and Nadia Durrani, *What We Did in Bed: A Horizontal History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2019), 11.

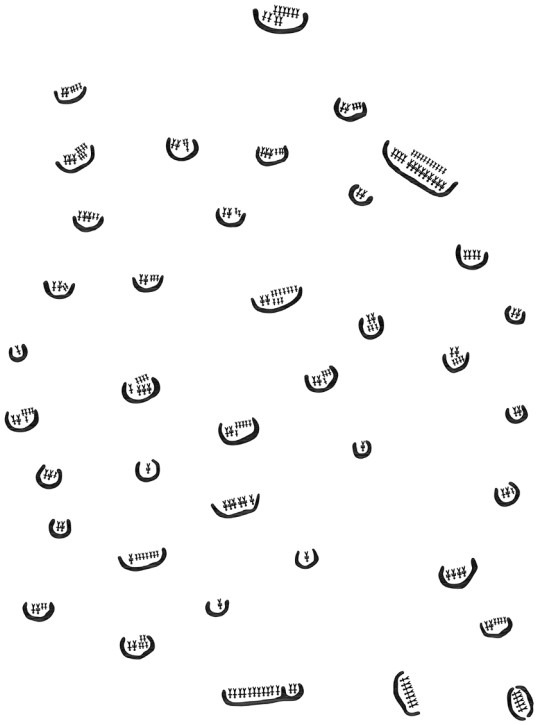
04 The term *primitive* is employed in this chapter to refer to the construction of something "original," the first of its kind, as this was often used in the eighteenth century by architects like Sir John Soane. Read more about the notion of *primitive* and its application in Adrian Forty, "Primitive: The Word and Concept," in *Primitive: Original Matters in Architecture*, ed. Jo Odgers, Flore Samuel, and Adam Sharr (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 1-14.

05 Fagan and Durrani, *What We Did in Bed: A Horizontal History*, 11.

06 Ibid., 3.

07 Ibid., 12.

for reasons of hygiene. These beds were notably expansive, each spanning a surface area of three square meters. Consequently, it is reasonable to consider that these were not only used for sleeping but as signifiers of their meticulously structured habitats made of mattresses, serving multifunctional purposes, and accommodating various activities while inhabitants lounged next to the hearth. Early humans, with their hunched postures, would sleep or rest in a semi-curled position on these mattresses. As the visual lobes of their brains developed, increasing their reliance on eyesight, the limitations of such postures—stiff muscles and sore joints—became more apparent. The evolution to upright walking necessitated the making of larger mattresses, allowing them to lie down horizontally.[08] Within these transitions, we observe the 'invention' of mattresses not only as the fundamental component of bedding but also as, most likely, the first pieces of furniture ever made.



Plan of a Pitjantjatjara camp at Konapandi in the Musgrave Ranges, Australia, 1993.
Adapted from Paul Memmott, *The Aboriginal Architecture of Australia* (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2007), 31.
Drawn by the author.

Discussions about domestic architecture can only commence when nomadic cultures, like hunter-gatherers, settled and inhabited permanent structures—a process that was far from linear.[09] With caution, we can examine the lives of certain Indigenous peoples to gain insight into the relationship between fire and sleeping arrangements, which seems to have

08 Donald A. Laird, "The Heredity of the Modern Bed and Its Inborn Weaknesses," *The Scientific Monthly*, vol. 41, n. 15 (1935): 410.
09 Dogma, *The Room of One's Own: The Architecture of the (Private) Room* (Milano: Black Square, 2017), 6.

been important to the archaeological findings at the Sibudu rock shelter.[10] In his seminal book *The Aboriginal Architecture of Australia* (2007), Paul Memmott argues that pre-contact Australian Aboriginal tribes, particularly the 300,000 Indigenous people displaced in the 1788 British colonization, who had occupied most of the continent, are regarded as hunter-gatherers.[11] The predominant social unit of their settlement was the patriclan, which controlled religious practices, hunting grounds, and food collection within its territory.[12]

Studies focusing on Northern and Central Australia highlight that domiciliary groups, or households associated with domiciliary spaces,[13] were divided into three primary categories: the nuclear family, the group of unmarried men, and the group of unmarried women. These studies from the 1960s report that in Warlpiri, the nuclear family was comprised of a man, multiple wives, their unmarried daughters, and sons who had not undergone circumcision. The nuclear family often included relatives who shared strong emotional and familial bonds such as the elderly grandfather, the widowed mother, the male spouse, or his wife's father.[14] Several components formed the structure of the domiciliary space, but the most important ones were the shelter and the hearth. Shelter types, categorized as windbreaks, enclosed shelters, and shade structures, organized campsites, resulting in predictable and recurring settlement patterns. Shelters were constructed based on factors such as prevailing weather conditions, availability of local materials, duration of stay, as well as the size and composition of the group. Activity areas were situated in front of the shelters close to the hearth, where additional structures were constructed. The size of the camps varied greatly, accommodating anywhere from a single family to several hundred people or more. In larger settlements, separate shelters were commonly designated for daytime and nighttime activities. During daylight hours, gender separation was customary, while nuclear families shared sleeping quarters at night. Husbands gathered in the unmarried men's territory, while the wives gathered in the unmarried women's territory. However, those unmarried slept apart within their own domiciliary group. Nocturnal domiciliary groups habituated their shelters separately according to class, kinship, linguistic affiliation, or other identity categories. Kinship regulations dictated that certain relatives could not camp in close proximity to one another, producing diverse socio-spatial structures. Despite territorial division, these groups were organized close enough for visual and verbal communication. As noticed in the Yankuntjatjarra camp, people would collectively engage in ritualized mourning for their departed or long-lost relatives. Screaming and crying echoed throughout the camp as the majority of its inhabitants participated from their own shelters.[15] In favourable weather conditions, the preference was for open-air living conditions with shade structures. These structures, prevalent throughout the continent, especially during warmer seasons, were constructed with natural materials, primarily leaves and wooden sticks. For colder, windier climates, a common type of shelter across the

10 Although the lives of many aboriginal cultures, such as the recent-century aboriginal cultures of Australia researched by Paul Memmott in his book *The Aboriginal Architecture of Australia* (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2007), have been used to explore connections to primitive cultures, these connections are speculative and may not correspond to reality.

11 Paul Memmott, *The Aboriginal Architecture of Australia* (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2007), 17.

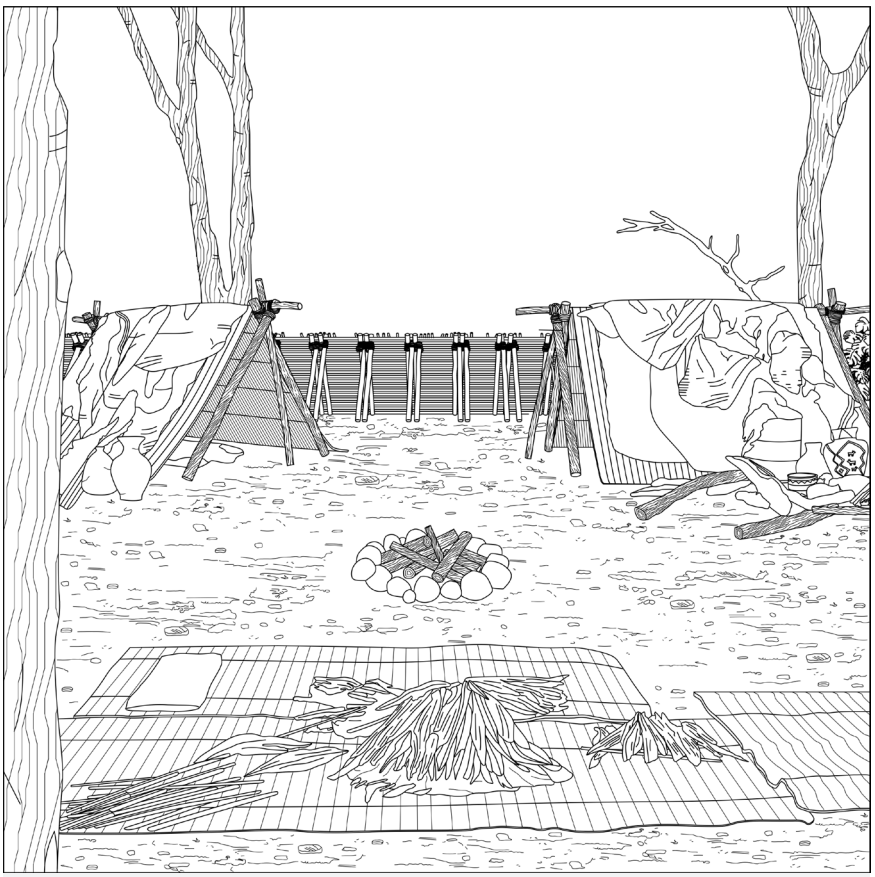
12 These groups were part of larger regional clusters, where members adhered to strict marriage rules and shared common social structures, beliefs, and traditions. Fundamental to their societal framework were kinship systems, extending beyond their immediate groups to often include broader populations as kin. Despite leading a nomadic life aimed at exploiting seasonal resources, these communities were also bound by territorial regulations and religious obligations to their lands, as well as those of their ancestors and spouse(s). Aboriginal people established camps, where they stayed anywhere from a day to several seasons. While these groups lived autonomously, water sources attracted people from different social and language groups who often gathered together. During these gatherings, festivities, rituals, trading activities, resolution of conflicts, and forms of emotional reconciliation took place. Read more in Paul Memmott, *The Aboriginal Architecture of Australia* (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2007), 5.

13 According to Paul Memmott, *domiciliary space* encompasses the "'residential space,' the 'household activity area,' the 'nuclear area' or the 'core domestic area.'" Read more in Paul Memmott, *The Aboriginal Architecture of* Australia (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2007), 33.

14 Ibid., 25, 28.

15 Ibid., 44.

Australian continent was the grass or foliage windbreak accompanied by controlled fires. In the Western Desert region, it was common to build a domed shade structure made of tree branches and arranged in a circular floor plan. These partially or fully enclosed types of shelters provided insect protection while allowing for outward visibility and permitting airflow.



A typical domiciliary space of Aboriginal Australians with sheds, windbreaks, hearths, and outdoor sleeping areas. Drawn by the author.

The hearth had multiple functions and in larger domiciliary groups, several hearths were utilized, each serving distinct purposes. They functioned as "sleeping fires, warming fires, insect-repellent fires, illumination fires, general-purpose cooking fires, roasting ovens, hearths for manufacturing artifacts, and hearths for carrying out clothes-washing."[16] Throughout the night, fires were typically kept burning, often placed between or in front of open-air bedding arrangements and shelters to indicate the separation of domiciliary households. Such positioning encouraged mutual usage between neighbouring families or people, such as in cooking. However, this mutual sharing occurred within socially prescribed rules. Food could have been distributed in silence. During winter nights, warming fires were necessary, requiring sleepers to change their position frequently in relation to the direction of the flames and wake up periodically to stroke the burning branches. Indigenous people slept either with the hearth close to their feet or in parallel, between hearths. For example, the Lardil people, also known as Kuhnanaamendaa, who lived in the Wellesley Islands chain in the Gulf of Carpentaria, used approximately one low circular-type windbreak, or *wungukk*, for every two hearths employed, placed in the entrance of each shelter. Secondary windbreaks were often used if necessary. In larger groups, straight windbreaks would also be used to separate

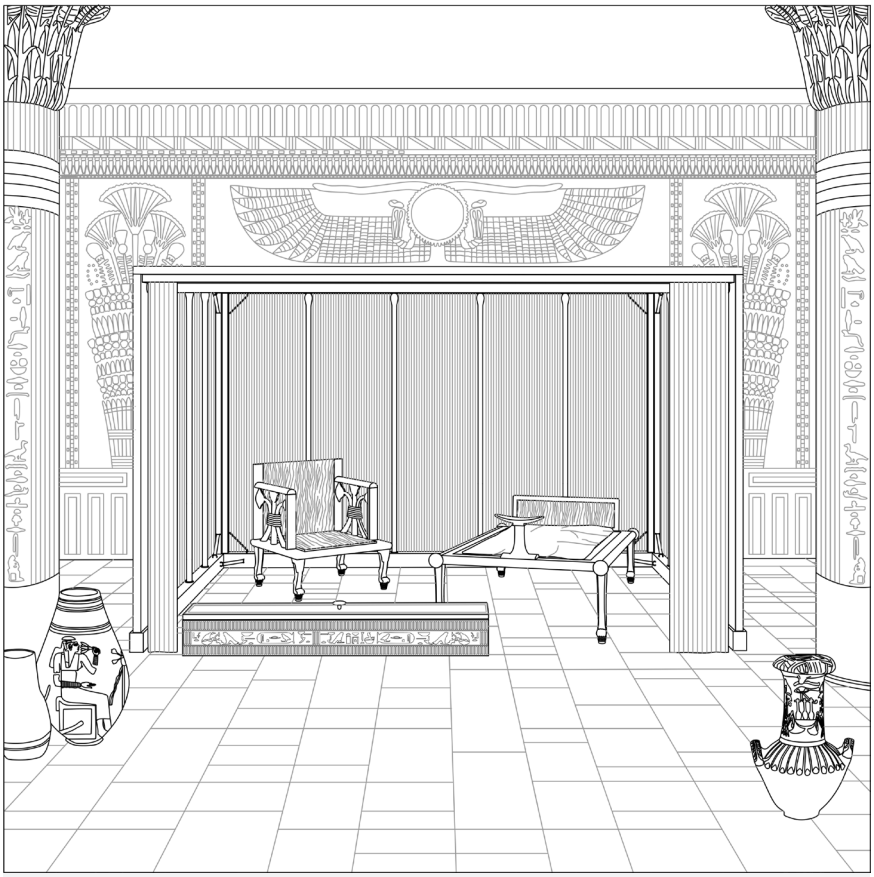
16 Ibid., 42.

the unmarried sleepers. The materials for constructing Lardil windbreaks were sourced from leaves, grass, and branches found in the surrounding environment. All windbreaks were uniformly oriented in the same direction and positioned within a few meters of each other, creating a repetitive layout in close proximity. Daytime windbreaks were often distinct from the shelters used for repose, as daytime activities typically occurred in different areas of the campsite. The ground within the windbreak perimeter was excavated to a shallow depth to clean and shape it appropriately for sleeping, while also providing an additional weather barrier of sand at the substructure. The perimeter sand mound served a dual purpose, also functioning as a burial ground for significant artifacts, while additional artifacts were stored beneath the windbreak walls, in tree branches, or on top of daytime canopies.[17] The preferred sleeping orientation, specifically for the indigenous people of Central Australia, involved positioning the head towards the east and the feet towards the west, a practice thought to enhance the quality of dreams and promote spiritual well-being.[18] If Aboriginal architectural knowledge can be used as evidence to understand primitive sleeping arrangements, then it is clear that the first beds were defined not only by the mere manipulation of earth and fire. Bedding conditions were potentially tied to climate conditions, hierarchy, class, gender, age, and other forms of social structures that determined the separation or inclusion of sleeping companions. Bed sizes could have varied, shaped by the sleepers' body measurements, ceremonial habits, and their ritualized daily lives.

THE BED WITHIN FOUR WALLS

A pivotal moment in our history is defined by the transition when bedding becomes enclosed within walls and necessitates specific types of furniture. From prehistory to antiquity, numerous examples illustrate how bedding increasingly becomes individuated within domestic space. It suffices here to briefly mention ancient Egypt, a civilization that placed great importance on the efficient functioning of households. In ancient Egypt, where forests and trees were notably absent, repositories stored surplus stocks of high-quality hardwoods and metals, especially copper, all of which were imported capital. This era, marked by a high level of craftsmanship, was exemplified in the furniture designed for the affluent, high priests, and officials, reaching a standard unparalleled in Europe until the Renaissance.[19] Queen Hetepheres I of the Old Kingdom (circa 2600 B.C.) spent her final days surrounded by pieces of furniture resembling those found in the modern-day bedroom. It was tradition for those who possessed the means to ensure that their tombs were equipped with all the essential comforts of earthly life, anticipating the continuation of enjoyment in the life that followed. Queen Hetepheres I, the wife of King Sneferu and mother of King Khufu, was no exception. Her tomb included the features to recreate a complete room for repose: a movable canopy, a 177-centimeter bed, an armchair, and the structural components of a curtain box—all meticulously crafted from wood and gold. A footrest, adorned with gold plant motifs, served both as ornament and a practical means to prevent slipping. The lion-mimicking legs on the bed symbolized the sleeper's social status. Possibly reached by steps, the tent-like portable canopy and bed were easily dismantled for transport, showcasing not only wealth but also functionality. The curtains were likely made of mosquito netting, a material used by commoners, as noted by Herodotus, who mentioned its use for fishing.[20]

17 Ibid., 59–60.
18 Ibid., 43.
19 Lawrence Wright, *Warm and Snug: The History of the Bed* (Taylor & Francis Books Ltd, 2004 [1962]), 2.
20 Ibid., 3–4.



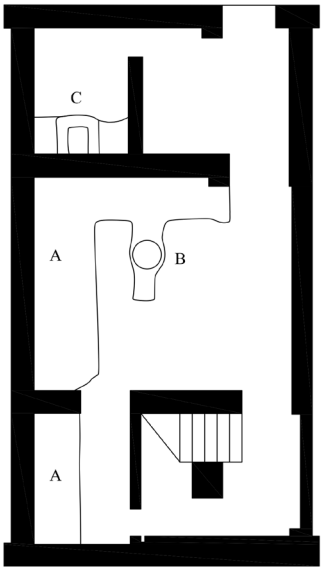
The movable bed canopy of Queen Hetepheres I, circa 2600 B.C.
Drawn by the author.

For the wealthy and those in positions of power, the bed appears to have been a movable, imposing object within their households, in stark contrast to those with less privilege, whose beds were either made of stone or clay or simply consisted of a mattress. The bed was generally well-established in Egypt around the mid-fourteenth century B.C. Often elevated, these beds came in the form of a pillow stuffed with natural materials such as hay and grass, with or without a headboard at one of its ends. It can even be argued that their rectangular design has remained, to some extent, the same ever since. Much of this evidence is drawn from the archaeological excavations of the Amarna workmen's village, located in the east part of the ancient city of Akhenaten. The village housed the workers of the Royal Tombs, constructed during the reign of Pharaoh Akhenaten. The village's territorial plan is square, surrounded by a perimeter wall with six rows of housing units. Two entrances were built in the village's southern part, subdivided by five pathways. The housing units were standardized, with a common floor area of about 5 x 10 meters. While some of these units had a staircase, on either the back or front side of the house, the interior was divided into three main, unevenly sized parts, one of which was further subdivided into even smaller parts.[21] The central space is speculated to have had a second floor with terraces, offering perhaps a private space linked to female activity. This theory finds support in excavations that uncovered painted pilasters depicting scenes of women breastfeeding infants.[22] The ground level was divided into multiple spheres, to accommodate production and reproduction, as well as hospitality and rituals. The smaller spaces were probably built for animal keeping or as storage spaces, while the rest of the rooms functioned as places where food prepa-

21 Aikaterini Koltsida, "Domestic Space and Gender Roles in Ancient Egyptian Village Households: A View from Amarna Workmen's Village and Deir El-Medina," *British School at Athens Studies* 15 (2007): 121–27.

22 Barry J. Kemp, "The Amarna Workmen's Village in Retrospect," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 73 (1987): 26.

ration and weaving took place.[23] Cooking may have taken place in one of these smaller rooms, as some included a fireplace. The front room contained a quern and was organized with one-meter-high partitions, suggesting that it may have been open to the sky, functioning as a courtyard.[24]

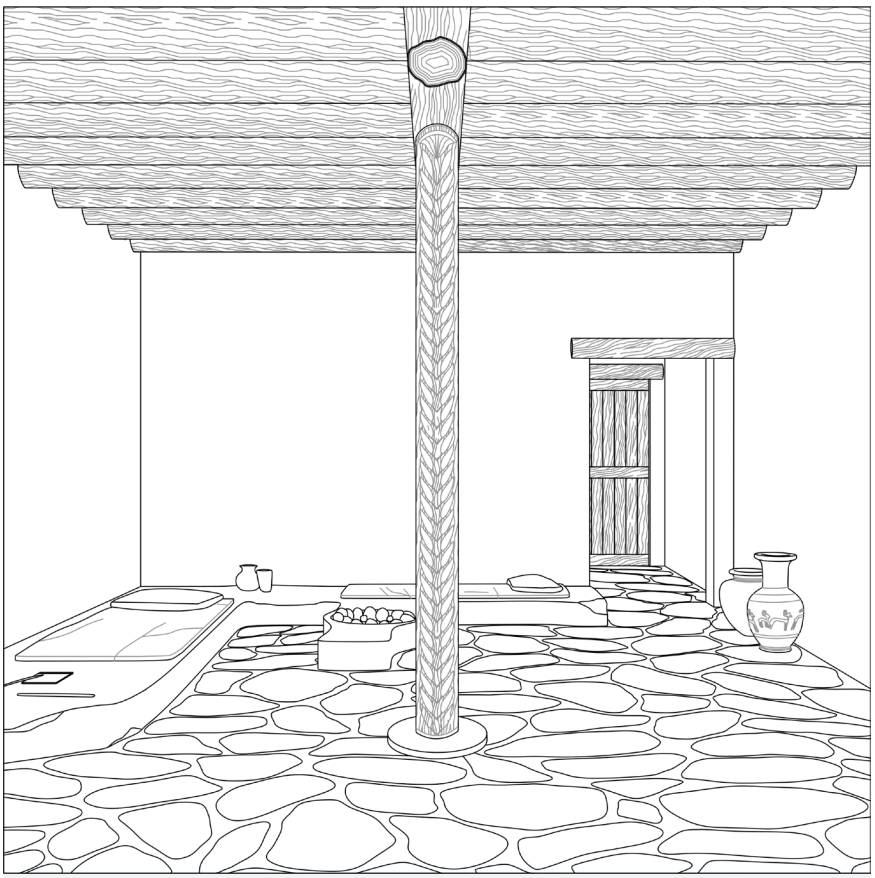


Typical worker's house at Amarna, Egypt, circa 1346 B.C.
(A) Bench. (B) Pottery Hearth. (C) Quern emplacement.
Adapted from Ibrahim M. el Saidi and Ann Cornwell, "Work Inside the Walled Village,"
in *Amarna III*, A. J Spencer, ed. (London: EES, 1986).
Drawn by the author.

The interior of the ground level, usually the middle room, included a long, low dais crossing across from one side of the wall to the other or taking the shape of an L. A cylindrical oven or hearth was constructed in the center of this room. It is speculated that within this space, people placed mats and gathered either to socialize, perform rituals, or pray.[25] As these housing units did not have many rooms for the members of the family to sleep separately, they may have all indeed even used this space as a shared sleeping area. Another dais can be found in one of the back rooms, indicating a more secluded and private space for repose. It was also common for these rooms during antiquity, in Egypt, to function as storage spaces for valuable goods, as these were more private than other parts of the households.[26] Aikaterini Koltsida argues that the "bed was related to female sexuality [...] a house altar and, as such, it could be equally applied to men and women. It seems more possible that the room was female territory during the day hours (when men were away working and women performed the daily domestic tasks), while the rest of the day the area was

23 Koltsida, "Domestic Space and Gender Roles in Ancient Egyptian Village Households," 122.
24 J. Kemp, "The Amarna Workmen's Village in Retrospect," 26.
25 Koltsida, "Domestic Space and Gender Roles in Ancient Egyptian Village Households," 124.
26 Ibid., 125.

evenly used by men and women."[27] Although archaeologists, such as Lynn Meskell, hypothesize that the more secluded rooms with dais may have been used by women during menstruation, it is uncertain if the subdivision of the household into multiple rooms was the outcome of hierarchization and gender segregation.[28] However, what is certain in cases such as the households of the Amarna workmen is that the bed during antiquity had found its place within the confines of a particular room, within houses composed of many. It appears that the bed was not merely a temporary element within the household but also played a role in the morphological development of ancient settlements.



Reconstruction of the dais within the workmen's households at Amarna, Egypt, circa 1346 B.C. Drawn by the author.

THE KAMARA, THE ANDRON, AND THE CUBICULUM

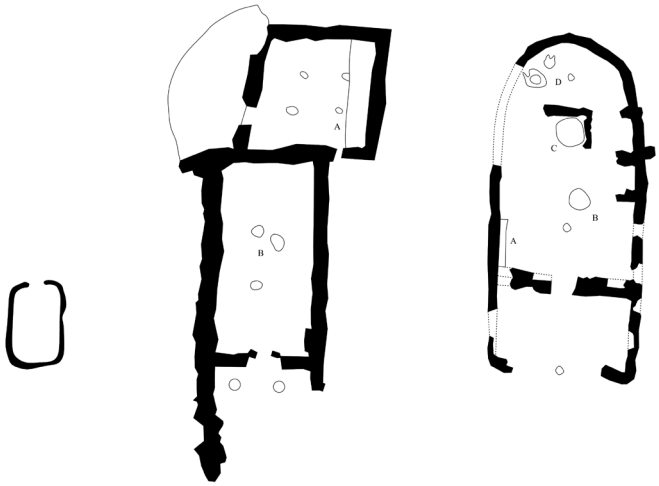
The technology of the bed and the production of its various forms originated in ancient Egypt, later spreading to other parts of the Western world. Typically, one's socio-economic status was reflected in their sleeping arrangements, where those with greater wealth and nobility enjoyed elevated beds decorated with luxurious fabrics. Sleeping above the ground enclosed by drapes served not only practical purposes like fending off mosquitoes or drafts but also symbolized social standing. Conversely, families of lower economic means had to make do with sleeping on the floor. The privileged ancient Greeks and Romans, akin to ancient pha-

27 Ibid., 126.
28 Ibid., 127.

raohs from millennia earlier, preferred sleeping on narrow beds featuring an inclined surface, higher at the head, often accompanied by cushions.[29] In the ancient Greek context, the term *kamara* emerged, used to describe not only the space for rest but, more importantly, individualized space. However, this word acquired such a meaning much later in time.[30] The ancient, primary, function of kamara was to provide shared rest among acquaintances. A thorough examination of Homer's *Odyssey*, however, sheds light on how the term was translated and understood within ancient Greek society. Written in the 8th century B.C., Homer described a room that Odysseus built for himself and Penelope around an olive tree. At the center of this kamara was their marital bed, symbolizing the desire for stability within their romantic relationship, amidst years of travesties. According to Homer's depiction, this room served as the foundation for reproduction and the sustenance of biological life.

In ancient Greece, the various single-room structures may provide the only concrete evidence of co-sleeping arrangements. These structures were typically elongated in shape, apsidal or rectangular, usually featuring a single entrance on one of the shorter sides. There was considerable variation in their size, with the largest known interior of this period being around 80 square meters, while half of these structures have a floor plan of less than 30 square meters. In the case of the smallest ones, such as the tenth-century oval house from Old Smyrna in Asia Minor, the interior space was augmented by the construction of a porch, serving as the threshold between the interior and the exterior.[31] There is little to no evidence of how these rooms were used or the number of their inhabitants. These elongated structures with a small number of rooms, incorporating a porch, are also known as *megarons*. On the island of Chios, the megaron at Emborio consisted of a hearth, often with a raised bench on one of its sides. As in the case of the Amarna's workmen village, the low bench could have been used either for repose or for the storage of pottery vessels. Due to the lack of interior subdivisions, it has been argued that the interior of these single-room structures was used flexibly. Different daily activities could have taken place simultaneously, or perhaps some domestic activities could have extended into the outdoor space. Ethnographic studies have also highlighted that these were probably inhabited by a couple or a single person.[32]

29 Fagan and Durrani, *What We Did in Bed: A Horizontal History*, 25.
30 Michelle Perrot, *The Bedroom: An Intimate History*, trans. Lauren Elkin (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018), 33.
31 Lisa C. Nevett, *Domestic Space in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 27.
32 Ibid., 28–29.

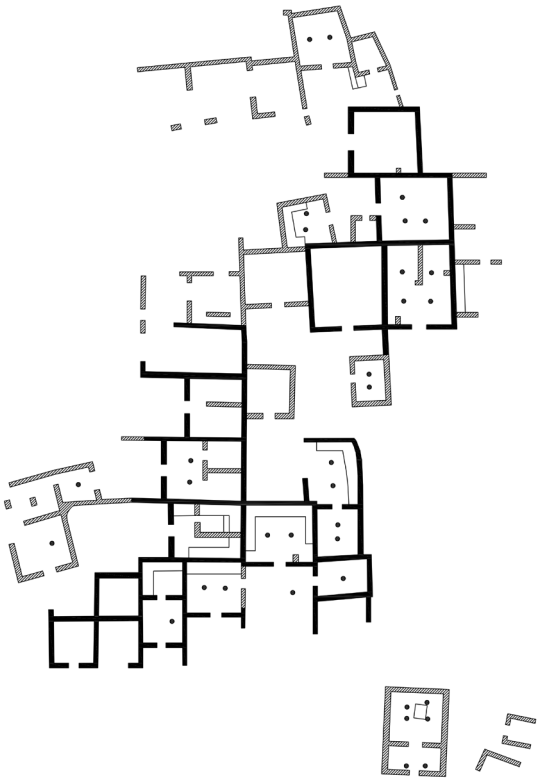


Plans of Early Iron Age single-room and two-room houses, Greece.
(A) Bench. (B) Hearth. (C) Pits.
Adapted from Lisa C. Nevett, *Domestic Space in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 28; 32.
Drawn by the author.

The need for an intimate space seemed deeply rooted in ancient Greek culture. Hence, the transition from single-room to multi-room habitats from the seventh century B.C. onwards marked the emergence of the *oikos*. The megaron-type dwelling, comprised of multifunctional rooms, was abandoned, and replaced with a type where each room was assigned a different function.[33] The ancient city of Zagora, on Andros, is a prime example of the transition from single-room to multi-room compositions. Initially, within these house-types, one room would serve multiple purposes, accommodating working, living, and sleeping. Over time, these structures were subdivided and reorganized into smaller rooms clustered around a courtyard. The site was inhabited in the eighth century, and archaeologists suggest that the dwelling units underwent modifications over time. The larger rooms were subdivided into two or three rooms, some of which contained a bench likely used for reclining. The rooms often have multiple entrances, leading to a central space—the courtyard—that seems to have had social significance. In some cases, the courtyard was enclosed by the surrounding walls of the housing unit. It may have facilitated shared activities and served as a device for surveillance.[34]

33 Read more about the transition from megaron to oikos in Alexandra Coucouzeli, "From Megaron to Oikos at Zagora," *British School at Athens Studies*, vol. 15 (2007): 169–81. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40960585.

34 Nevett, *Domestic Space in Classical Antiquity*, 38.

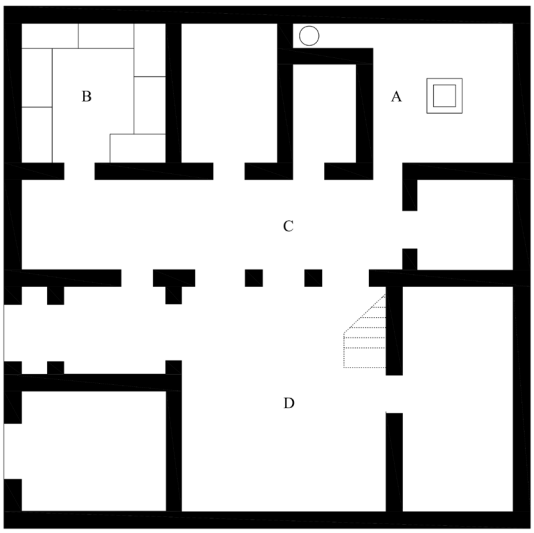


Transformation of one-room houses into multiple-room houses, Zagora, Greece, 760 to 700 B.C.
Adapted from Alexandra Coucouzeli, "From Megaron to Oikos at Zagora," *British School at Athens Studies*, vol. 15 (2007): 170.
Drawn by the author.

When the house as the place of *oikonomia* emerged in the fifth century B.C., it was known as the *oikos* and encompassed not only the physical and architectural aspects of the house but also the family unit. The primary function of the oikos was to ensure the reproduction of its members through managing all forms of labor. Paradoxically, theories regarding the sleeping arrangements of ancient Greeks during this period are somewhat speculative. These theories primarily focus on the practice of reclining and the *andron*, a space designated for males and isolated from the rest of the household. It must be emphasized that the andron cannot be regarded as a precursor to the bedroom. Nevertheless, its form and purpose are fundamentally shaped by the act of laying down. The andron, positioned adjacent to the street, featured a side entrance and door where the cultural customary practice of the *symposium* took place. Inside, the *kline*, a type of daybed used for reclining, shaped its interior. Smaller androns could accommodate three couches, while larger ones could even fit up to five or seven.[35] Archaeological excavations in Olynthus, a fortified city in Chalcidice founded in the fifth century B.C., revealed that this room, adorned with decorative panels and a mosaic floor composed of pebbles, was part of a series of functionally non-specific spaces within the oikos. Houses in Olynthus were uniform in size, organized in blocks of 100 x 20 m, each containing two rows of five houses. The housing plans were square, typically comprising around ten rooms on the ground floor, with occasional additional rooms on the upper floor. Rooms overlooked a courtyard, often paved, separated from the street by a single doorway. These rooms were divided into zones according to hierarchy and function.

35 Ibid., 47.

It is presumed that the andron was accessed through a smaller anteroom, and through this arrangement, it was protected from the public eye.



House in Olynthus, Greece, circa 450 B.C.
(A) Oikos. (B) Andron. (C) Pastas. (D) Courtyard.
Adapted from Pier Vittorio Aureli and Maria Shéhérazade Giudici, "The Form of the Otium: Labor and Leisure in Greek and Roman Domestic Space," *Burning Farm* (October 10, 2023 [2018]).
Drawn by the author.

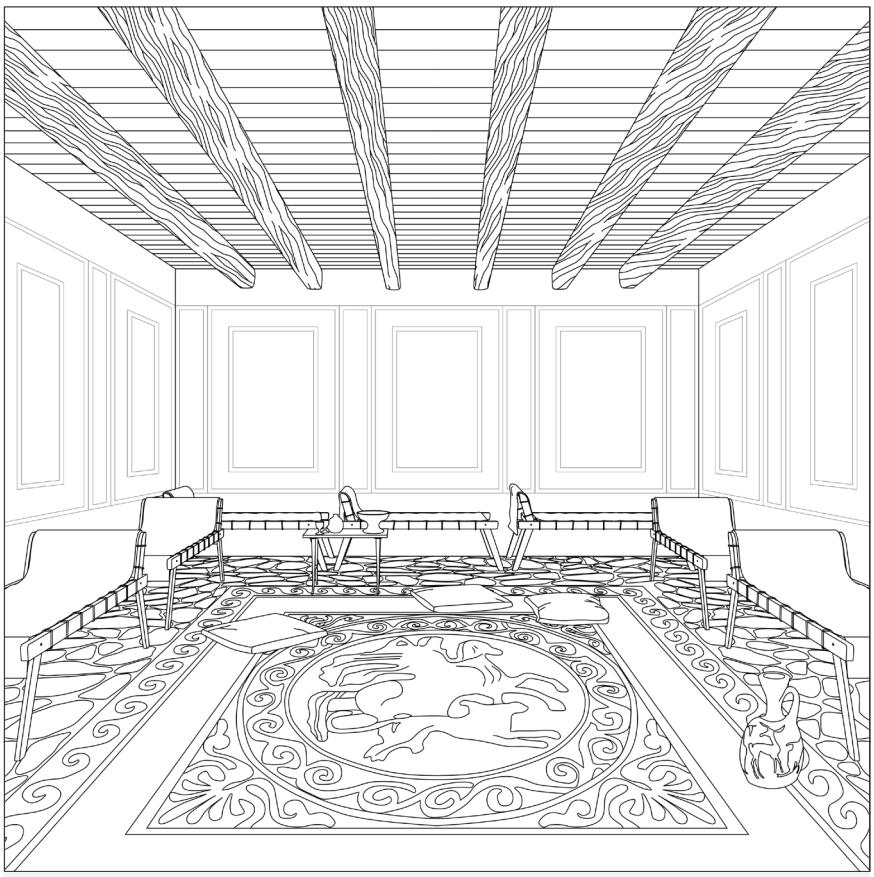
In ancient Rome, the kline was typically crafted from wood and raised on four legs, occasionally decorated, while leather straps provided support for the mattress and pillows. It seems that in the case of Olynthian houses, the kline was not just a movable piece of furniture, but rather integrated into the architecture of the room. The couches, made of cement, were formed by the raised borders of the room, measuring approximately 0,85 x 1,0 meters wide. Since the androns were located alongside other living quarters, some archaeologists speculate that gender separation in these households was more of an ideological construct. It is possible that the andron might have been used diversely by all members of the household.[36] However, Maria Shéhérazade Giudici and Pier Vittorio Aureli describe how on certain nights the andron transformed into:

> the absolute domain of the free men of the house, their male guests, and the *hetairai,* the courtesans they would hire […] On its benches, the guests would meet to drink, but never to eat: eating would be construed either as a fact of necessity or as a public ritual activity, but never an activity of leisure.

36 Lisa C. Nevett, *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 31;155.

> Drinking wine, that most unnecessary of actions, perfectly embodied the unnecessary—and therefore free—character of the event. Music, political discussions, philosophical debates, sexual play, and poetry were all integral parts of this practice, which can neither be defined as public—as the group was very small and intimate—nor private as its implications often directly impacted political alliances.[37]

This portrayal suggests that reclining in the ancient Greek world wasn't solely about rest but also symbolized a moment when life embraced collective, ritualized, and institutionalized practices.



Reconstruction of a typical andron in ancient Greek households, circa fifth century B.C. Drawn by the author.

Nevertheless, in the history of domestic space, the inclination to make room within the household, conducive to the horizontal state and liberated from the burden of domestic labor, can be traced back to ancient Greek and Egyptian civilizations. Yet, it can be remarked that it was only within the confines of the Roman Domus that such conceptualization achieved a radical embodiment, particularly materializing in the form of the *cubiculum*. The architectural term derives from the Latin word *cubō* which means "to lie down." It emerged in Latin texts beginning with Plautus and persisted through medieval and modern writings, frequently used in funerary inscriptions, where cubiculum denoted a perpetual resting place.[38] The cubiculum had a vaulted roof and was typically furnished with *lecti*, a type of day bed. It was used by the ancient Romans when they desired to

37 Pier Vittorio Aureli and Maria Shéhérazade Giudici, "The Form of the Otium: Labor and Leisure in Greek and Roman Domestic Space," *Burning Farm* (October 10, 2023 [2018]), https://burning.farm/essays/the-form-of-otium.

38 Laura Nissin, "Cubicula diurna, nocturna—Revisiting Roman Cubicula and Sleeping Arrangements," *Arctos* 43 (2009): 88.

retreat, rest, or engage in intimate relationships. It was confined to an isolated room that was decorated with frescoes and equipped with a lock and secrecy. Its purpose extended to the concealment of sexual activities, considering the associated shame, not linked to the act per se but rather to its public acknowledgment.[39] Despite being a private space par excellence, it has been argued that the cubiculum was used for the controlled display of art and for receiving "guests of a status equal to or higher than one's own," in contrast to other spaces within the Roman domus where guests of lower social status were hosted.[40] The cubiculum not only established a moral hierarchy similar to other aspects of Roman moral values but also served as a tool for regulating aristocratic competition, which posed a significant threat to aristocratic authority.[41] The Roman perspective on morality was also reflected in their attitude towards sleep. Wakefulness was considered a praiseworthy and admirable attitude, distinguishing exceptional people from the ordinary. Those who were morally dubious were often depicted as people who slept during the day and indulged in revelry at night, with excessive sleep being viewed as a sign of decadence.[42]

In ancient Rome, the provenance of moral expectations was rooted in both public and private entities, consequently manifesting in the domestic sphere. The Roman domus, exemplified by the houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum, were town houses nested with several properties, often occupying an entire block and accommodating a privileged, single family. Dating back to the second and first centuries B.C., these houses included various rooms, courtyards, gardens, and highly decorated walls with elaborate pieces of furniture. The rooms were arranged strategically according to the visual accessibility of the outside world. The public territories of the domus such as the atrium, the *tablinum* (the room of the patriarch), and the peristyle (courtyard) were visually exposed to the street, while the most private rooms were secluded from public view. Typically accessed from the street through a narrow doorway (*fauces*), the atrium was bordered by open rooms (*alae*) and the sleeping quarters (*cubicula*). The tablinum, connecting the public parts of the house (*pars urbana*) to the private parts (*pars rustica*), welcomed visitors and served as the paterfamilias's workplace, where business affairs were conducted. The latter part of the domus revolved around an open courtyard with a continuous porch, the peristyle, on its perimeter, which served as the center of family life, featuring the kitchen (*culina*), dining areas (*triclinium*), and sometimes a small garden (*hortus*). Evidence suggests that some houses had a second floor that potentially housed additional sleeping areas and storage spaces.[43] This public nature of the Roman domus compelled smaller rooms like the cubiculum to transcend their initial purpose. Despite their modest proportions and somewhat inhospitable conditions, cubicula evolved into places for tranquility, studying, and, most importantly, self-reflection.

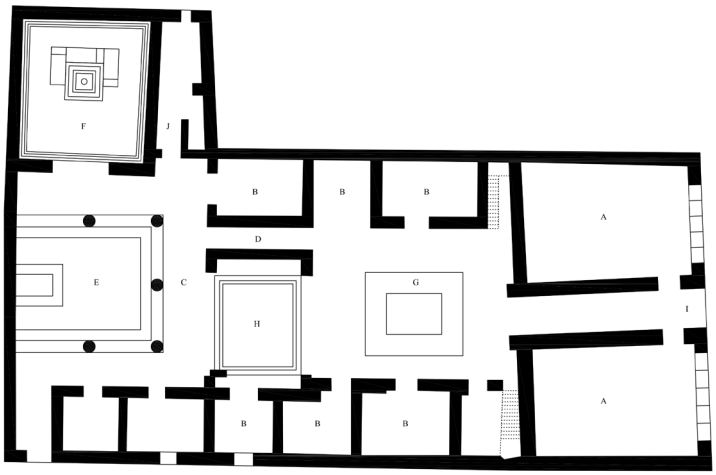
39 Perrot, *The Bedroom: An Intimate History*, 4.

40 John R. Clarke is quoted in Andrew M. Riggsby, "'Public' and 'Private' in Roman Culture: The Case of the Cubiculum," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 10 (1997): 41.

41 Andrew M. Riggsby, "'Public' and 'Private' in Roman Culture: The Case of the Cubiculum." *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 10 (1997): 54.

42 Nissin, "Cubicula diurna, nocturna," 90.

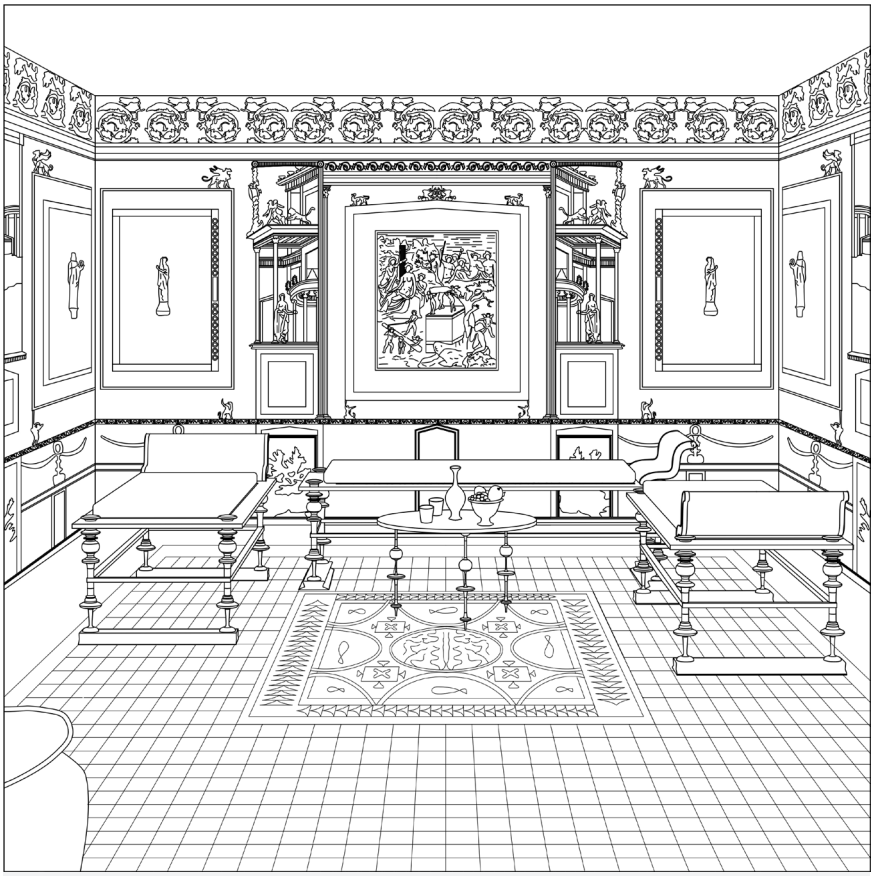
43 Read more about the Roman domus in Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).



House of the Tragic Poet, Pompeii, Italy, second century B.C.
(A) Tabernae. (B) Cubiculum. (C) Peristylium. (D) Fauces. (E) Piscina. (F) Triclinium.
(G) Atrium. (H) Tablinum. (I) Vestibulum. (J) Culina.
Adapted from Shelley Halles, *The Roman House and Social Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 114.
Drawn by the author.

Recent research has increasingly focused on examining the remnants of furniture and household artifacts, shedding new light on the activities within Roman households.[44] Stephan Mols examined all the wooden furniture remains in Herculaneum, recording thirteen wooden beds, seven of which appear to have been used for repose. These had tall boards attached to three sides of the bedframe. They were supported by four legs crafted on a lathe, covered in bronze, with their bases connected by stretchers at both ends. The mattress was held by a system of intersecting slats, placed into the bedframe's rails. The surviving examples vary in length from 204 to 222 centimeters and in width from 106 to 125 centimeters. A recess was perhaps necessary to accommodate these pieces of furniture within a room. Pompeii likewise provides evidence of beds, with plaster casts made in five houses and remains of ninety diverse types of beds from eighteen different houses. While bedding rarely survived ancient archaeological excavations, references to the cubiculum in relevant literature primarily include chairs, storage utensils, and, in some cases, tableware.[45] Other types of bed that were discovered included children's beds, cradles with rockers, and *biclinia*, meant for either one or two people, which was a pair of day beds joined together at right angles or opposite each other. These pieces of furniture are also known as lecti and were used to organize the triclinium, typically comprising three daybeds.[46] These daybeds were positioned around a low square table, referred to as *triclinares* (of the triclinium). The ancient Romans would lie on these surfaces in a partially reclined position. The open side of the table, facing the entrance, might have facilitated service.

44 Stephan Mols, "Ancient Roman Household Furniture and its Use: From Herculaneum to the Rhine," *An Marcia* 23-24 (2007-2008): 146.
45 Nissin, "Cubicula diurna, nocturna," 99.
46 Mols, "Ancient Roman Household Furniture and its Use," 149-150.



Reconstruction of the triclinium in the House of the Tragic Poet, Pompeii, Italy, second century B.C. Drawn by the author.

During antiquity, the preservation of privacy seems to have arisen as a concern, surpassing mere isolation from external grounds. It encompassed the sanctity of the household as both a bastion of seclusion and a cornerstone of economic integrity within the familial enclave. The bed played a significant role in shaping the delineation between what can be recognized as public and private within these households. Its arrangement and its position inside a room, as well as within the broader household layout, defined the choreographed management of daily life. The transition from multifunctional, single-room dwellings to more complex structures in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, highlights the bed's adaptability and its reflection of evolving cultural ideologies. A common thread that cuts across different civilizations and periods during this era is the fact that the place of repose rarely served a single purpose. Reclining in bed accommodated not only rest but also social, political, and spiritual practices. Despite its primary function as a place of repose, antiquity saw extensive writings on the subject of sleep, viewed as a pathway to the pshyche, or *psukhē* in Greek. Dreams were interpreted as signs from the gods, requiring interpretation. Greek philosophers such as Heraclitus, Plato, and Aristotle gave their depictions of this nocturnal phenomenon. Heraclitus, in particular, argued that although "the cosmos is one and in common for those who are aware […] each sleeper turns to his own private cosmos."[47] In other words, the horizontal state of sleep is conditioned exactly by the potential for alienation from the rest of the world. According to Heraclitus, it is through this experience that we become more aware of our surroundings and, inevitably, foster a deeper connection with others.

47 Hiraclitus's words were presented and interpreted by Victoria Wohl in her lecture on "The Sleep of Reason: Sleep and the Philosophical Soul in Ancient Greece" (Housman Lecture, UCL Department of Greek and Latin, May 2019).

NO BEDROOMS IN THE MONASTERY

The emergence of the cubiculum as a room for early Christian worship marked a significant development in the ritual of private contemplation. Those privileged enough to possess such a room could opt to seclude themselves, laying the groundwork for a novel concept of self and individuality rooted in Christian asceticism, which ultimately paved the way for Western monasticism.[48] The *cell*, considered archetypical, served as a space where faithful monks, anchorites, or hermits could practice asceticism in various settings—be it isolated, institutionalized, or otherwise. However, Teresa of Avila claimed that the cell should not be interpreted as a bedroom, but rather as an austere room reduced to the bare minimum; a mattress made of straw being sufficient.[49] It is worth noting that the term itself originates from the Latin word *cella,* translating to "storeroom" or "chamber," further reinforcing the argument that the ethos of self-reflection and withdrawal can occur anywhere when the broader social and political conditions allow it.[50] St. Augustine's analogy of the residents of a house being the true essence of the dwelling, rather than its walls and rooms, mirrors the evolution of Christian monasteries over centuries. St. Augustine's words emphasize the extra-familial nature of ascetic life, similar to the structure of the Roman domus, embodied in the figure of the monk. "The residents of a house are called a house… a house not walls and rooms, but the residents themselves."51The monks themselves are the true embodiment of these sacred structures. The term *monk*, derived from the Greek "monachos" (μοναχός), meaning "single" and "alone in life," underscores their individualistic nature. Yet, despite their solitary pursuits, monks are engaged in a constant negotiation with what lies beyond the self, prompted by the necessity of being alone while coexisting with others.

Earlier recollections of monks' tales, however, reclaim the idea that monastic perfection is solely achieved through solitary life. Their communal sleeping arrangements appear to have facilitated forms of individual autonomy. These early years of monastic life, characterized by hermit monks residing in secluded caves or small communities, didn't yield much in terms of architectural remnants, but their memoirs shed light on their living and sleeping arrangements. In John Moscos's *Spiritual Meadow*,[52] written between the sixth and seventh centuries, it is argued that singleness is attained through companionship, by acknowledging the inner conflict between perfection and desire. [53] Moschos and Sophronios spent most of their lives together traveling across the Dark Sea, with the latter considered as the spiritual guide of the former. When the two sought counsel from an elder regarding the conditions of monastic companionship, Moschos wrote that:

> I took my lord Sophronios and we went in search of a particularly distinguished elder, an Egyptian, at the lavra that is located eighteen miles from Alexandria. I said to the elder: "Give us a word, Lord Abba, about the way in which we ought to live with each other for my lord the sophist here has a desire to renounce the world." The elder said: "Well done indeed, my child, if you renounce the world and save your soul. Settle yourselves in a cell. Where does not matter: only

48 The connection between the cubiculum and the cell has been asserted by Andrew M. Riggsby in his article titled "'Public' and 'Private' in Roman Culture: The Case of the Cubiculum," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 10 (1997): 35-56, as well as by Pier Vittorio Aureli and Maria Shéhérazade Giudici in their article titled "The Form of the Otium: Labor and Leisure in Greek and Roman Domestic Space," *Burning Farm* (October 10, 2023 [2018]), https://burning.farm/essays/the-form-of-otium.

49 Perrot, *The Bedroom: An Intimate History,* 70.

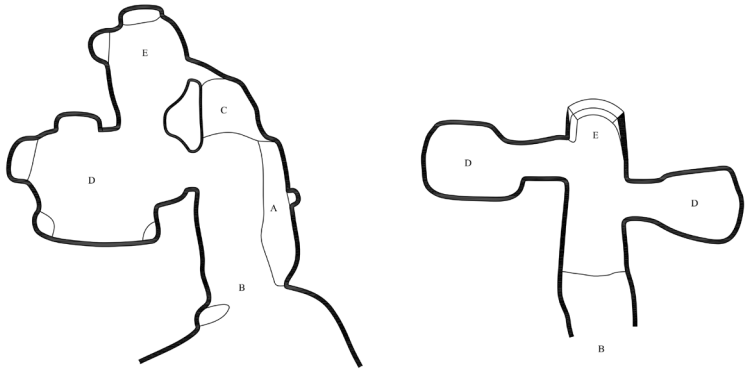
50 Julia Creswell, *Oxford Dictionary of Word Origins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010 [2002]), 78.

51 David Herlihy, "Family," *The American Historical Review* 96, no. 1 (1991): 5.

52 John Moschos is also known as John Eviratus. Read more in John Moscos, *The Spiritual Meadow (pratum Spirituale),* trans. John Wortley (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1992).

53 Derek Krueger, "Between Monks: Tales of Monastic Companionship in Early Byzantium," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 20, no. 1 (2011): 30.

that you live there in sobriety and maintaining quietude, praying unceasingly."[54]

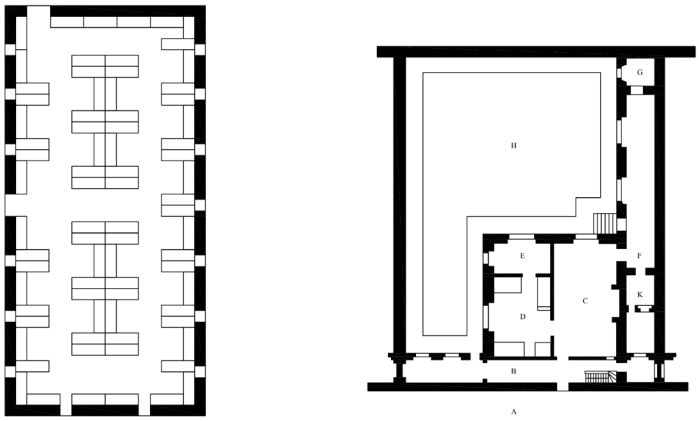


Early Christian cave cells, Lavra, Egypt, circa fifth century A.D.
Bench (B) Entrance (C) Apse (D) Living chamber (E) Prayer room
Adapted from Mohammad Waheeb, "The Discovery of Byzantine Laura of St Mary the Egyptian in Site of Jesus Baptism," *Annals of Archaeology*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2019): 8.
Drawn by the author.

The architecture of these first cells can only be, speculatively, imagined. However, the elder's instructions are clear. They did not discourage the monks from living together; what they imply is that the cell provides a window to the divine. Moschos's book even suggests that same-sex monastic pairs were prevalent in the late sixth and early seventh-century practice of asceticism.[55] This was also evident in the portrayal of monastic companions in the writings of Leontios of Neapolis, *Life of Symeon the Fool*. Symeon and John lived as hermits in the Judean desert for more than two decades, after parting ways to promote Christianity. Their separation was accompanied by grief, emphasizing their initial agreement never to be separated. Their union echoes what was mentioned in Genesis 2:24, where "the two become one flesh." Ultimately, John comes to realize that nothing, perhaps not even death, would separate them.[56] The accounts of early Christian hermitic life presented here depict exceptional conditions within societies. Together, they demonstrate that within these sacred houses, the understanding of withdrawal took various forms and differed significantly from the divisions that later emerged within the context of religious devotion. It is evident that the pursuit of solitude coexisted with a profound recognition of interconnectedness and shared spiritual journeys. Their isolation was not merely a quest for privacy, but rather a form of redemption for Christ's crucifixion. The absence of a term equivalent to privacy until then enforces the argument that their seclusion was not about individual isolation but rather a shared commitment to austerity

54 Some words within the passage were accompanied by their Greek translation in parentheses. which were removed to improve readability. This passage is quoted in Derek Krueger, "Between Monks: Tales of Monastic Companionship in Early Byzantium," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 20, no. 1 (University of Texas, 2011): 34.
55 Krueger, "Between Monks: Tales of Monastic Companionship in Early Byzantium," 37.
56 Ibid., 30.

and spiritual development. The Latin word *privation* encapsulates this notion, implying a deliberate act of "taking away," associated with dispossession and reduction.[57]

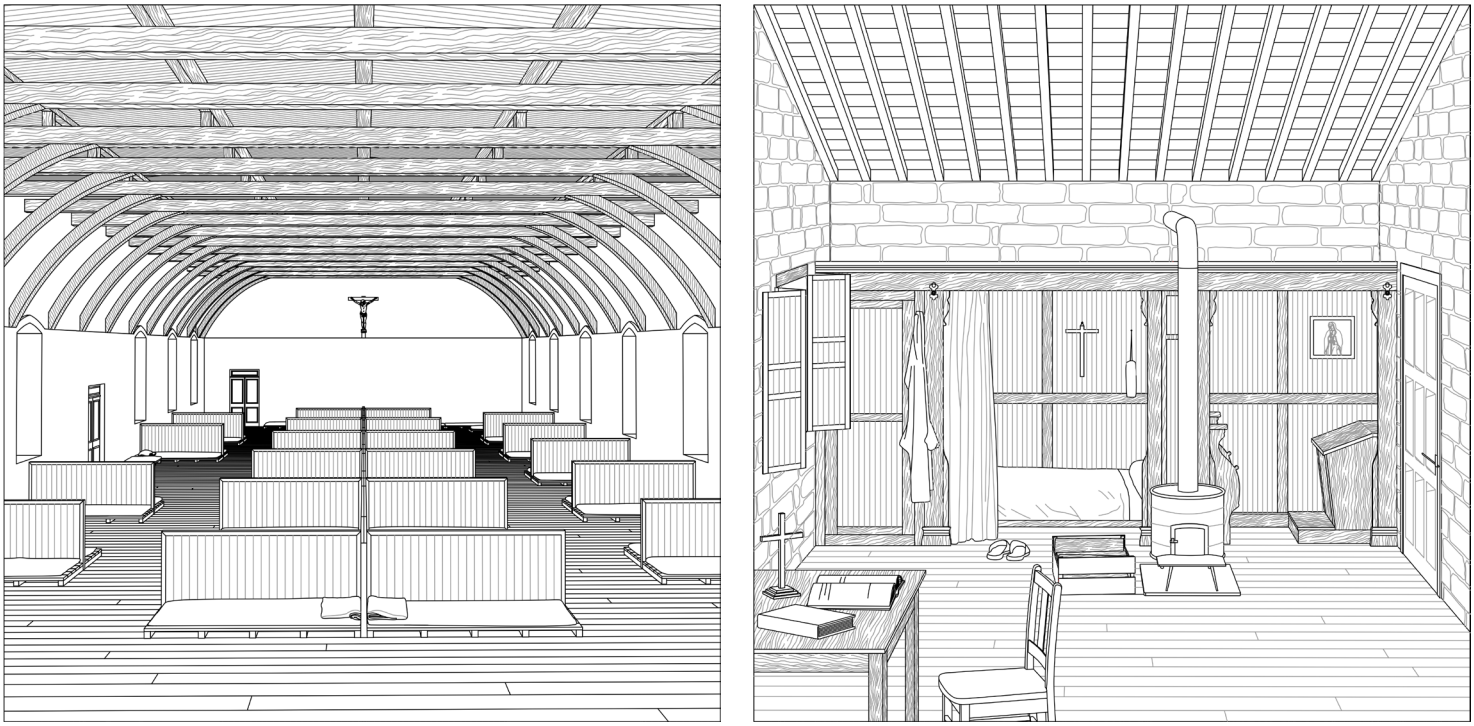


Left: The dormitory from the ideal plan of St. Gall, St. Gallen, Switzerland, 820-830 A.D. Adapted from Lorna Price, *The Plan of St. Gall in Brief: An Overview of the Three Volume Work of by Walter Horn and Ernest Born* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 10.
Right: Plan of a Carthusian cell, Chartreuse de Port-Sainte-Marie, or Clermont, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France, thirteenth century.
(A) Cloister Gallery. (B) Corridor. (C) Living Room. (D) Sleeping Room. (E) Closets. (F) Covered Walk. (G) Necessary. (H) Garden. (K) Wood-House.
Adapted from Eugène Viollet-le-Duc in *Dictionary of French Architecture from 11th to 16th Century* (1865). Drawn by the author.

Even when monasticism transitioned to a cenobitic form, characterized by organization as a collective household, the individuality of the monk persisted and was spatially manifested in the singularity of the single-person bed. In reflecting on institutional forms of ascetic life, one may recall the seminal depiction of a bed in the eighth-century ideal plan of St. Gall, alongside the strict Benedictine rules dictating specific sleeping arrangements.[58] The Rule of Saint Benedict mandated that all monks sleep collectively in a communal space known as the dormitory, with the abbot's bed positioned centrally. According to their regulations, monks were required to sleep in separate beds, provided with bedding suitable for the austere monastic life by the abbot. Ideally, they would sleep together in one location, but if the community size necessitated otherwise, they would sleep in groups of ten or twenty under the supervision of seniors. A lamp was to be kept lit in the room until morning, and monks were to sleep clothed, while removing their knives to prevent accidental self-injury during sleep. Younger monks were to have their beds interspersed among those of elders and, upon awakening for the work of God, they were to quietly encourage one another, as drowsiness often led to excuses.[59] After centuries of Benedictine dominance in Europe, the inherent contradictions arising from their rigid rules became increasingly unsustainable. The emergence

57 Fagan and Durrani, *What We Did in Bed: A Horizontal History*, 163-164.
58 Read more about the ideal plan of St. Gall and its origins in Walter Horn, "The Origins of the Cloister," *Gesta*, vol. 12, no. 1/2 (1973): 13-52. https://www.jstor.org/stable/766633.
59 Timothy Fry (ed.), *The Rule of St. Benedict in English* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1982), 49.

of the Carthusian movement can be primarily seen as a response to this, focusing on reintroducing the individual cell as the fundamental element for organizing monastic life. St. Bruno established the Carthusian order in Grenoble in 1084. The Carthusian cells, meticulously documented by Eugene Viollet-le-Duc in the *Dictionary of French Architecture from 11th to 16th Century* (1856), serve as a prime example of the resurgence of the single-person cell in medieval monasticism. Each cell consisted of a house with a garden, separated from the cloister through a corridor. These elaborate, individually inhabited structures were comprised of several rooms, accommodating distinct functions—including a heated anteroom, a study, and a sleeping room—emphasizing a contemplative solitude within communal confines. Their private possessions were limited to a straw mattress with a pillow, bed coverings, some pieces of furniture, and a few books. Not only did they live alone, but their religious values demanded that they also feel alone. The distinctive characteristic of the Carthusian cell lies in its functional segregation, particularly in the individualization of the sleeping area, akin to what could be seen as a "proto-bedroom." [60]



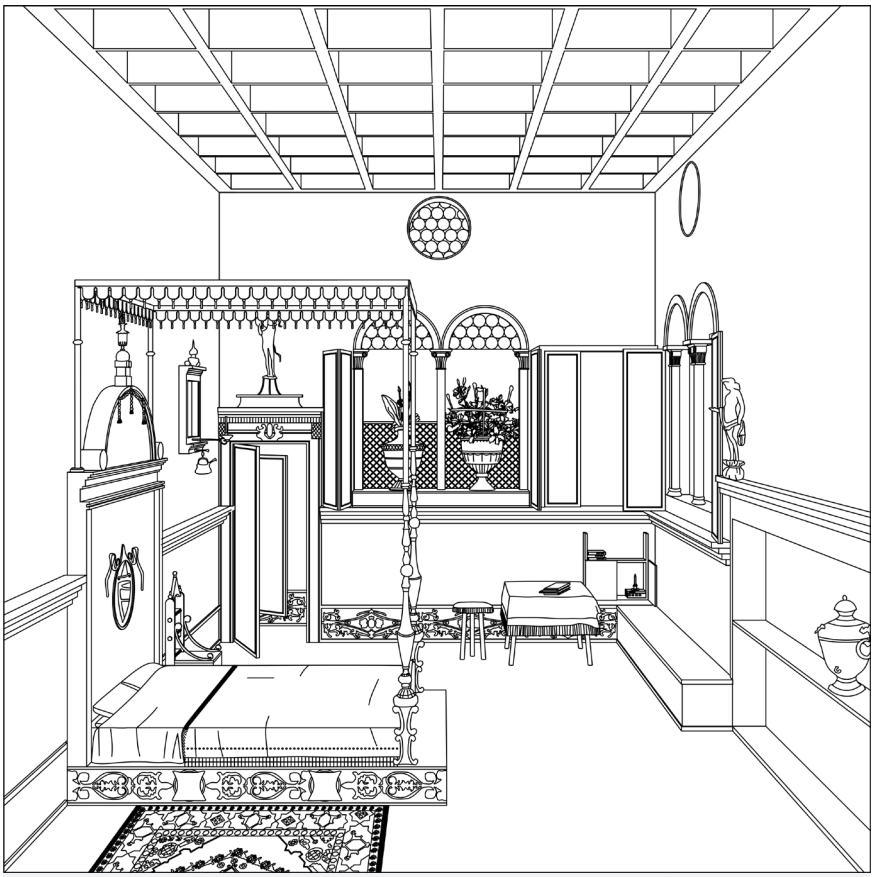
Reconstruction of a Benedictine dormitory based on the ideal plan of St. Gall, alongside a reconstruction of a typical Carthusian sleeping room.
Drawn by the author.

FROM (BED) CHAMBER TO BOUDOIR

Complexity heightened from the Middle Ages, a period requiring a more in-depth exploration of the domestic interior's overlapping semantics, as the influence of state politics and societal expectations encroached further into the household. Social stratification among nobles, the wealthy, and commoners continued throughout medieval Europe. Peasants, consti-

60 Read more about the living conditions of the Carthusian monks in Wolfgang Braunfels and Alastair Laing, *Monasteries of Western Europe: The Architecture of the Orders* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, 1980), 112-113.

tuting the majority, often resorted to bedding on hay, sometimes wrapped in blankets. Possessing a spare bed during this era was considered a sign of great wealth, as highlighted by the seventeenth-century diarist Samuel Pepys, who took pride in being able to provide a spare bed for his visitors.[61] Bedding varied widely, ranging from basic straw heaps on floors to straw-filled sacks on elevated platforms, box beds integrated into walls, and wheel truckle beds.[62] Bed designs evolved into more elaborate structures compared to their predecessors. In the twelfth century, beds expanded in width, sometimes reaching up to four meters, becoming pieces of furniture conducive for storage beneath. By the late medieval period, beds incorporated raised bolsters for head support, wooden carved structures, embroidered mattresses, and coverings matching decorative inlays, along with cushions, enhancing both comfort and the potential for partially seated repose.[63] This seated position was possibly tied to concerns about the mattress sagging or a cultural aversion to lying flat, associated with death. Beds of the elite were designed to impress, often enclosed within canopies suspended by iron beams from the ceiling. In an era where fresh air was deemed unhealthy, these drapes not only retained warmth but also offered a sense of security against superstitions and beliefs in nocturnal entities. In the late fifteenth century, the Italians introduced a novel model: a four-poster bed with curtains and a canopy supported by four slender columns. Elevated and elaborately carved, this model, often featuring biblical scenes or sky representations, gained popularity among the wealthy across Europe, enduring until the eighteenth century. [64]



Reconstruction of the chamber with a four-poster bed in Vittore Carpaccio's *The Dream of St. Ursula* (1495). Original painting in Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, Italy. Drawn by the author.

61 Fagan and Durrani, *What We Did in Bed: A Horizontal History*, 27.
62 Ibid., 25–26.
63 Mary Eden and Richard Carrington, *The Philosophy of the Bed* (London: Hutchinson & Co. LTD, 1961) 20.
64 Ibid., 24.

The commitment to furniture paralleled significant transitions in domestic architecture. These shifts largely diffused from Florence, and more specifically, from the construction of Italian palaces during the period often described as the Renaissance. A longstanding tradition traced back to Roman times dictated that noble palaces should serve as a prominent symbol of their local authority. This tradition was later reinforced and formalized by the authors of *specula principum*, who regarded *magnificence*, particularly in architectural grandeur, as an important virtue for sovereigns to have. Palaces were intended not only to exhibit magnificence but also to project an image of unattainable superiority, deterring potential uprisings and accommodating an expanding court.[65] Despite the rise of local princely dynasties from the thirteenth century onwards, these dynasties never entirely shed their municipal and commercial origins nor fully embraced a monarchic image.[66] However, their privately owned townhouses, known as *palazzi*, differed greatly from their predecessors, the fortresses that were built until then, abandoning the architecture of military security and incorporating potential commercial usage of ground floor spaces and facades facing squares or main streets. [67] Architects and patrons looked to the literary descriptions of the Roman domus as a theoretical and regulatory framework, adapting it to the complexities of late-medieval urban contexts. Although their external appearance can be described as imposing, a considerable portion of the palaces' interiors were occupied by square or rectangular courtyards featuring ground-level arcades, accessible to the citizens, and open loggia on one of the upper levels, preserving remnants of the past. Their layouts often lacked a coherent structure and evolved according to changing needs. The process of solidifying the ruling family's authority was gradual and challenging, evident in the development and the sometimes-contradictory nature of dynastic residences.

During the fifteenth century, particularly in the latter half, many of these magnificent townhouses underwent significant renovations, with some even rebuilt entirely. A key focus was on organizing the interior spaces to maintain distinct activities, with public reception rooms separated from private quarters, including libraries, oratories, and music rooms, reflecting the growing importance of court life. Palazzi gained significance, with Italian poet and historian Benedetto Dei considering them as equally important to public buildings.[68] While one of their purposes was to establish a family presence for those privileged in their geographical surroundings, their interiors were organized to ensure privacy for immediate family members. When palaces were built by fathers for their descendants, they were divided into several parts, each with separate entrances. This condition gave rise to the establishment of privileged routes within their interior, as well as to the concept of apartments, often spanning multiple floors. Emphasis on privacy was acknowledged not only as a withdrawal from the public sphere but also as a separation from extended family members. [69]

The Palazzo Medici, located on Via Larga, Florence, and constructed by Michelozzo di Bartolomeo for Cosimo de' Medici in 1444, serves as the archetype for the palaces that followed, featuring a standardized plan and axial configuration that exerted a profound influence on other Italian cities. [70] While the general layout is symmetrical, the courtyard exhibits asymmetry, with one side expanded to accommodate outdoor gatherings beneath a barrel vaulted ceiling. A visual axis connects the ar-

65 Marco Folin, "Princes, Towns, Palaces: A Renaissance 'Architecture of Power,'" in *A Renaissance Architecture of Power: Princely Palaces in the Italian Quattrocento,* Silvia Beltramo, Flavia Cantatore, and Marco Folin, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 3.

66 Ibid., 4.

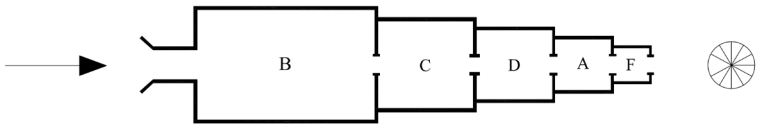
67 Ibid., 10.

68 Benedetto Dei referred to Florence as the "city of palaces," highlighting their importance as structures within Italian cities. Read more about the fifteenth-century construction of Florence in Benedetto Dei, *La Cronica dall'anno 1400 all'anno 1500*, ed. Roberto Barducci (Florence: Francesco Papafava, 1985).

69 Richard A. Goldthwaite, "The Florentine Palace as Domestic Architecture," *The American Historical Review* 77, no. 4 (1972): 977–980.

70 Folin, "Princes, Towns, Palaces: A Renaissance 'Architecture of Power,'" 10.

rangement of spaces, while the passageway that leads to the garden (*hortus*) is adorned with a series of sculptures. The ground floor of the palace follows a clear structure, featuring the sequence hallway-courtyard-stairs. The initial flight of stairs leads to the vestibule, granting access to the chapel and the great hall overlooking the courtyard.[71] The southern wing of the ground level comprises an apartment arranged by a large hall and a bedchamber, with an additional smaller space (antechamber) leading to the *studiolo*; the husband's library or study. This apartment likely served as a summer residence, given its proximity to the garden and adjoining loggia. The room in the northern part of the porticoed wing is known as *camera grande terrena di Lorenzo*. The function of the camera terrena remains uncertain, but it may have served as a guest room.[72] The first floor included three apartments arranged with identical room sequences. Cosimo's private quarters occupy the south wing, overviewing the garden. The corner hall on this level contains the great hall, known as the *sala grande*, which was 20 x 10 meters wide, with seven windows on its two walls. Notably the family chapel, considered the oldest surviving example within a palazzo in Florence, is where Cosimo the Elder received the Duke of Milan, Galeazzo Maria Sforza in 1459, according to Leon Battista Alberti.[73]



The apartment: a gradient between privacy and publicity, as described through the sequence of rooms in Leon Battista Alberti's *De Re aedificatoria,* circa 1485.
(A) Bedchamber. (B) Main Hall. (C) Private Dining Hall. (D) Ante-chamber. (F) Closet (studio).
Adapted from Peter Thorton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior, 1400-1600* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1991), 302.
Drawn by the author.

It was inevitable that treatises like Leon Battista Alberti's fifteenth-century *De re Aedificatoria* would soon argue that the purpose of the private house is to orchestrate family life.[74] Focusing on private buildings, Alberti believed that a wealthy couple should sleep in separate rooms, recognizing that their private chambers were not just places for rest and intimacy but also central for incorporating other functions such as business affairs.[75] These rooms were to be connected by a private corridor, providing the couple with the opportunity to share intimate moments while maintaining some degree of separation. This arrangement is evident in Florentine

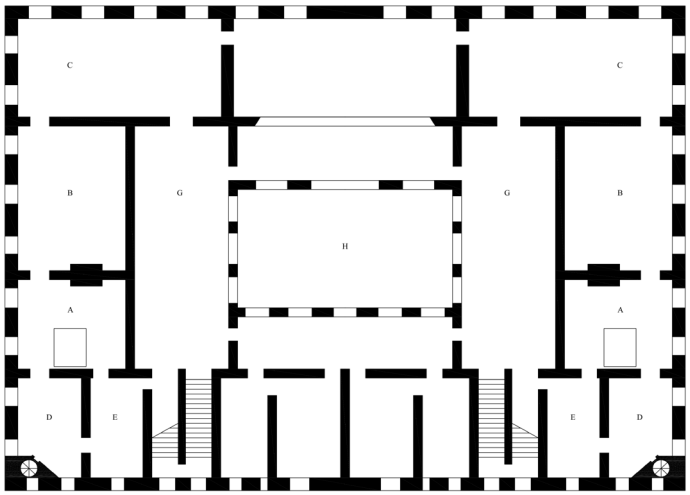
71 Emanuela Ferretti, "The Medici Palace, Cosimo the Elder, and Michelozzo: A Historiographical Survey," in *A Renaissance Architecture of Power: Princely Palaces in the Italian Quattrocento*, ed., Silvia Beltramo, Flavia Cantatore, Marco Folin (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 273–274.
72 Ibid., 278.
73 Ibid.
74 Leon Battista Alberti, *L'architettura [De re aedificatoria]*, ed. Giovanni Orlandi (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1966).
75 Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), 149.

palazzos of this era, such as Pallazzo Corsi designed by Giuliano da Sangallo. Alberti also proposed that the wife's chamber should be adjacent to a dressing room and the husband's to a library or a study. These antechambers served to organize the household's spaces into public and private, emphasizing the homeowner's position as the head of the family.[76] Often organized in a linear sequence, these chambers became themselves passages, serving interior circulation, as in the case of Palazzo Medici or Palazzo Strozzi, designed by architects Benedetto da Maiano, followed by Simone del Pollaiolo detto II Crònaca in the late fifteenth century.

The Palazzo Strozzi comprises two symmetrical apartments accessed through an open loggia, which is connected to the ground floor with a staircase. The sala is the first enclosed space upon entry, leading to an antechamber and finally to the bedchamber. In this particular case, the bedchamber connects to what appears to be a *guardaroba* (wardrobe) and a closet. What is interesting about this closet is that it is the only room connected to the loggia, along with the sala, as if it were available for public display.[77] Within this context, private rooms like the studiolo, or cabinet, took on symbolic significance, representing the owner's societal standing and authority over the household. The studiolo, a modest room equipped with a built-in seat, table, and cupboard, found its origins in the monk's cell, offering a secluded area for contemplation. Some studioli incorporated bookshelves into the room's architecture, as seen in Antonello da Messina's painting of *Saint Jerome in his Study*. Here the room is portrayed as an intricate piece of furniture, rather than a mere enclosed space.[78] The Florentine political theorist and statesman Niccolò Machiavelli had, in fact, written a letter to a friend, describing the studiolo as a remarkable solitary space:

When evening comes, I return home and go into my study. On the threshold I strip off my muddy, sweaty workday clothes, and put on the robes of court and palace, and in this graver dress I enter the antique courts of the ancients and am welcomed by them [...] Then I make bold to speak to them and ask the motives for their actions and they, in their humanity, reply to me. And for the space of four hours I forget the world, remember no vexations, fear poverty no more, tremble no more at death: I pass into their world.[79]

76 Dogma, *The Room of One's Own: The Architecture of the (Private) Room*, 20.
77 Peter Thorton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior, 1400–1600* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1991), 305.
78 Dogma, *The Room of One's Own: The Architecture of the (Private) Room,* 22.
79 Leonardo da Vinci, *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, trans. Jean Paul Richter (London: Phaidon, 1970 [1883]), 1: 56.



Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, Italy, 1489-1490.
(A) Bedchamber. (B) Antechamber. (C) Sala. (D) Guardaroba. (E) Closet. (F) Staircase. (G) Open loggia. (H) Courtyard.
Adapted from Peter Thorton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior, 1400-1600* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1991), 306.
Drawn by the author.

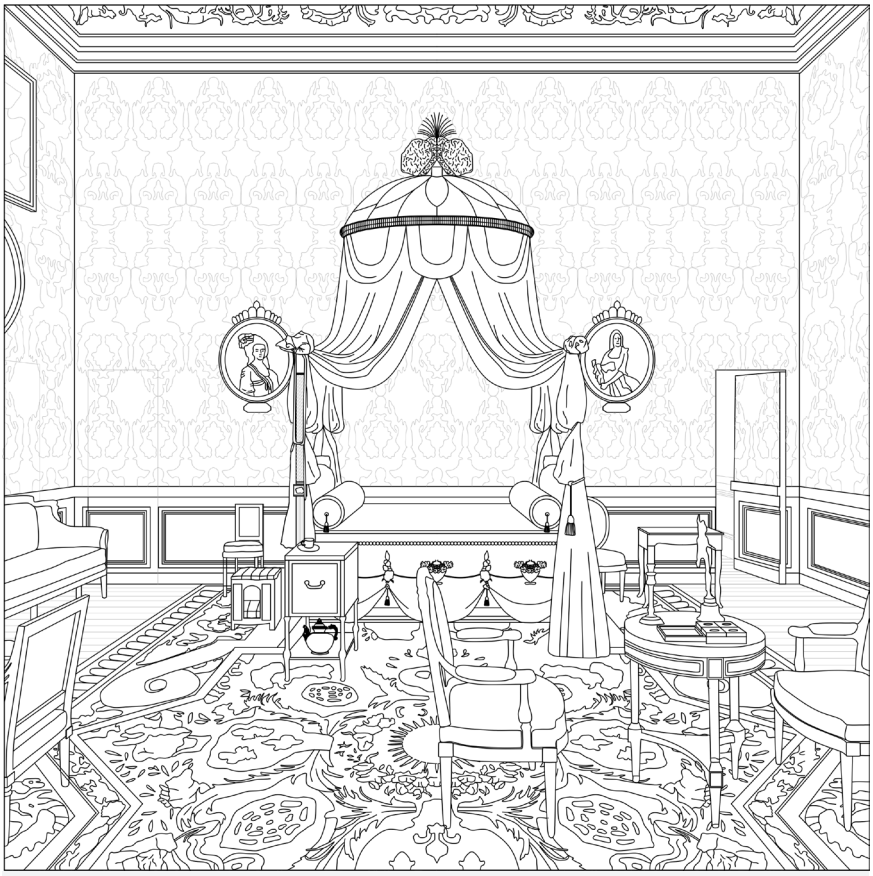
Initially, the functions incorporated in private rooms like the studioli occurred within chambers that served multiple purposes—a common feature within wealthy European households. These versatile rooms were used for sitting, resting, studying, and social gatherings, as well as for pose. It is no coincidence that bed manufacturing reflected the growing need for privacy. Canopies, curtains suspended from the ceiling or supported on the chamber's walls, four-poster beds, and alcoves, as depicted in paintings between 1400 and 1600, were common for noble households and emphasized the inhabitant's desire for privacy. These types of beds, which embraced the enclosure provided by curtains, often gave the appearance of a room within a room, as seen in the triptych *Birth of the Virgin*, painted by Paolo di Giovanni Fei in the fourteenth century. Here, the highly decorated curtains with rich golden-colored embroidery, star patterns, and three-checkered color fringes are suspended from a rectangular frame above the bed. Extending beyond the bed's boundaries, the curtain runs across every side, creating a secondary backdrop to the bed. In the scene of the birth, women are portrayed carrying several objects within the room, perhaps gifts or instruments associated with birth, while others assist with bathing the newborn child. Behind the curtain, the men are shown waiting patiently.[80] These box-types of beds are often not explicitly mentioned in the inventories of their time. While curtains and bedding are well documented in inventories, it is difficult to ascertain whether the curtains were specifically used for enclosing the bed. Additionally, some of these beds were recesses in the wall, integrated into the house's structure within paneling. Such architectural features wouldn't typically be listed among movable objects or furnishings.[81]

80 Thorton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior 1400–1600*, 122.
81 Ibid., 113.

Reconstruction of the chamber with a platform and curtains in Paolo di Giovanni Fei's *Birth of the Virgin* (1381). Original painting in Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, Italy. Drawn by the author.

In Northern Europe, where the tradition of palazzi was absent, luxury and comfort emerged in a more discrete and bourgeois fashion. Around 1550 in Britain, evidence shows the widespread adoption of bedchambers. The chamber underwent a division into withdrawing chambers, primarily used for intimate gatherings, and bedchambers, dedicated to rest. In France, however, this evolution took a different journey. During the 17th century, the *chambre*, which included a bed, retained its character as a grand bed-sitting room, encompassing all the mentioned functions. The entry room to the chambre operated as an anteroom for visitors awaiting reception. Adjacent to the chambre, a small cabinet was often placed, comparatively more isolated than the anteroom, serving as a safekeep for the occupant's private belongings. This series of interconnected rooms often led to the *salle*, a place for social gatherings and various common household functions. This arrangement gave rise to the French apartment, closely tied to behavioral patterns established by Louis XIV at the French court in Versailles. The king's bed involved social and political rituals associated with waking and sleeping, open to high-ranking individuals.[82]

82 Joanna Banham, *Encyclopedia of Interior Design* (London; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015 [1997]), 1-2: 114.



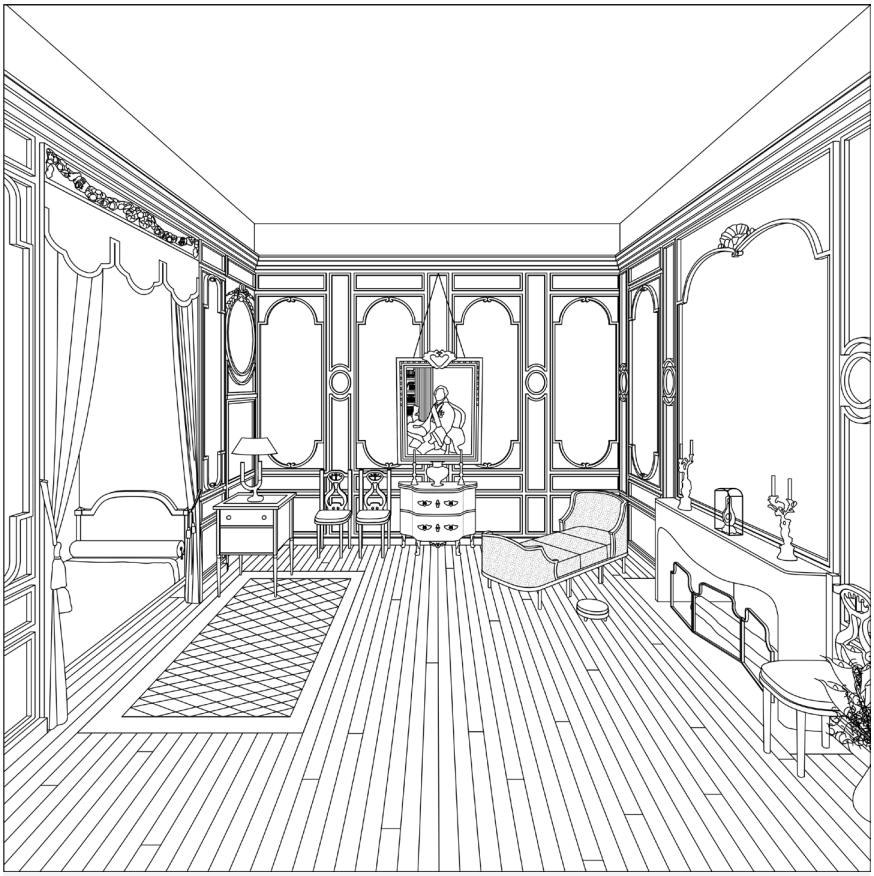
Hôtel de la Marine's grand-bed sitting chamber with a canopy bed, Paris, eighteenth century. Drawn by the author.

The architect Jean-Francois Blondel described a range of rooms "from the throne room to the king's bed[chamber] and from council chambers to the chamber of commerce." Generally speaking, Blondel stated, "the word chamber refers to the place in an apartment designated for sleeping, and so it is called, according to the rank of the people who live there and the decorations they have received."[83] Denis Diderot was more interested in the legal and political definition of the chamber. He argued that the term was used to describe places "in which people assembled to discuss various matters, then applied it to the people who assembled there, and then eventually to a space closed off by walls, pierced by a door and by windows, which became the simplest understanding of a chamber, and then applied it to any other space that had some analogy in the Arts with the usage of a small room or apartment, or with its character."[84] Therefore, the word chamber was used to describe any type of room, according to its function, decoration, hierarchical, political, domestic, or institutional meaning; sometimes even both. Examples include the "golden room" (*chambre dorée*), or "the 'upper house of Parliament' (*chambre haute*) for the House of Lords and the 'lower' (*chambre basse*) for the House of Commons."[85]

83 Perrot, *The Bedroom: An Intimate History*, 5.

84 Jean-Francois Blondel is quoted in Michelle Perrot, *The Bedroom: An Intimate History,* trans. Lauren Elkin (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018), 6.

85 Denis Diderot is quoted in Michelle Perrot, *The Bedroom: An Intimate History,* trans. Lauren Elkin (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018), 6.



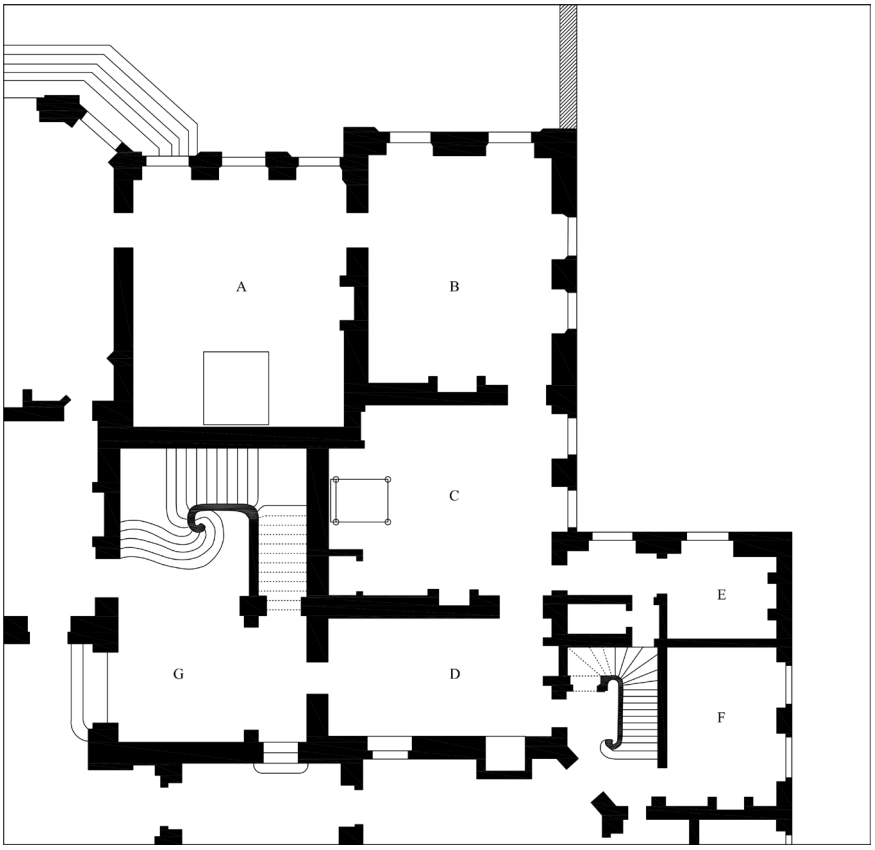
Chamber with a niche in Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte, Paris, France, seventeenth century. Drawn by the author.

Once the bed was formally assigned to a room in the mid-eighteenth century, and thus appearing in dictionaries, the term *chamber* became primarily associated with rest. This space was described as *la chambre à coucher,* literally translating to a room for sleeping; in other words, a bedchamber. While some of these chambers were distinguished by their location, such as the attic chamber (*chambre en galetas*), or their function, which did not necessarily involve solely repose, others were defined by the type of bed they housed in their interior arrangement. Blondel was the one who emphasized that the manner of separation between the room and the bed was crucial. According to the architect, there were three primary types: the alcove chamber (*chambre en alcove*), where the bed is fully incorporated within a recess; the niche chamber (*chambre en niche*), featuring a semi-enclosed bed; and to some degree, the platform chamber (*chambre en estrade*), where the bed is elevated on a platform.[86] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with the separation of rooms and the thematization of room types, made possible by hallways and corridors, adjacent rooms, vestibules, or antechambers specifically allocated for personal use became popular among the elite, further separating the sleeping area from other household functions.[87] The idea of large rooms used for various purposes, including sleeping, gradually fell out of favor and remained more common in the Italian context, where the warmer climate encouraged it. Noble households organized with a simple corps-de-logis, where one room had to be crossed to access the next, did not endure in France. The necessity and desire for comfort and protection from cold weather, which these large rooms could not adequately provide, eventual-

86 Myral Yael Ecker, "Architecture and Etiquette: Changes in Design of Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Parisian Hôtels Particuliers (of the nobility) in relation to Users' Requirements and Modes of Life, and the Changing Interpretation of the Rules of Architecture and of Architectural Practices," Phd diss., (University College of London, 1995), 158–160.

87 Perrot, *The Bedroom: An Intimate History,* 15.

ly prompted the transformation of the *hôtel particulier*, emphasizing the act of withdrawal.[88] While spaces for withdrawal existed from the Middle Ages in royal households for solitary worship, studying, or household management, the idea of privacy was redefined, emphasizing a withdrawal that extended beyond communal engagements to encompass the entirety of the household.89 Although rooms, such as closets or cabinets, can be traced to mid-eighteenth-century lower-class households, they "imply very different modes of existence."[90]



Apartment in Hôtel Matignon, Paris, France, eighteenth century.
Chambre de parade. (B) Grand Cabinet. (C) Chambre à coucher. (D) Antichambre ou est la chapelle. (E) Cabinet de toilette. (F) Garderobe. (G) Grand Escalier.
Adapted from Michael Dennis, *Court and Garden: From the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge; London: The MIT Press, 1986), 102.
Drawn by the author.

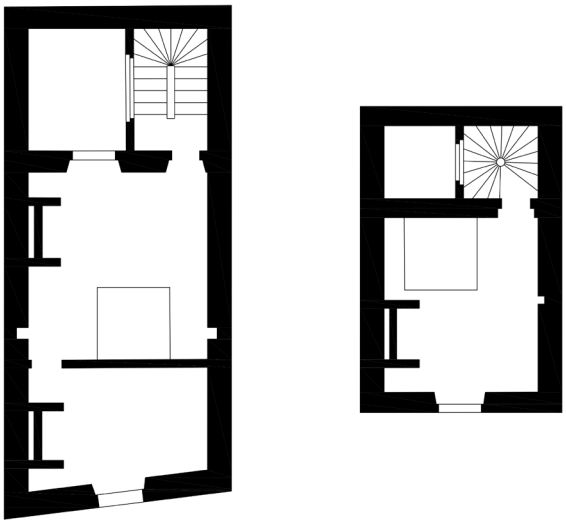
Although the idea of the bedchamber did not fully emerge until the 1700s, there was a notable surge in interest among theorists in the 1600s regarding domestic space, especially focusing on the relationship between chambers and beds. One of these was Louis Savot's *Architecture francoise*, initially printed in 1624. The treatise addressed various topics such as organizational principles and room types, providing extensive descriptions of their dimensions and proportions, as well as the placement of doors

88 The precise origin of the term *hôtel* remains uncertain. However, during the sixteenth century, it was primarily used to describe the residences of French nobility and a select few public buildings like the Hôtel-Dieu and the Hôtel de Ville. A distinct hierarchy was evident: *palais* denoted royal residences and those of high-ranking nobles, *hôtel* referred to the dwellings of the lower nobility, and *maison* was used for bourgeois homes. Over time, particularly by the late seventeenth century, these distinctions began to blur, and by the eighteenth century, with diminishing class boundaries between nobility and bourgeoisie, the term hôtel became less strictly defined. Read more in Michael Dennis, *Court and Garden: From the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge; London: The MIT Press, 1986), 4.

89 Read, for instance, the use of private rooms in Alan Stewart, "The Early Modern Closet Discovered" in *Representations*, no. 50 (1995): 81.

90 Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore, Md.: John Hopkins University Press, 2005), 329.

and fireplaces. Additionally, a significant portion of the book focuses on practical aspects of construction, including Paris's building regulations and material costs. The second treatise was Pierre Le Muet's *Maniere de bastic pour toutes sortes des personnes,* published in 1623. Le Muet's handbook is illustrated, featuring a wide range of designs tailored to the client, the site, and the size of the household. Le Muet was the one who, within the concise text of his treatise, drew attention to a novel subject in French architecture known as *la distribution*, or the functional arrangement of floor plans. This quality was regarded as of equal importance to aesthetics and structural integrity, and it progressively gained significance among French architects. By the eighteenth century, it would be elevated to the status of *l'art de la distribution*, related to the plan, differentiated from *la decoration*, related to the facade.[91] Both Le Muet and Savot emphasized the strategic placement of beds within the domestic interior. While Le Muet depicted various types of beds in his plans for chambers and some garde-robes, Savot focused on the practical layout of chambers. He observed that these rooms were typically square, ranging from 5 to 10 meters per side and suggested that they should be spacious enough to include a pathway, a bed, and a chair. Beds were ideally positioned to face windows, with a pathway between the bed and the wall containing the fireplace. This layout facilitated the accommodation of guests near the bed, when necessary, while keeping them away from the fireplace.[92]

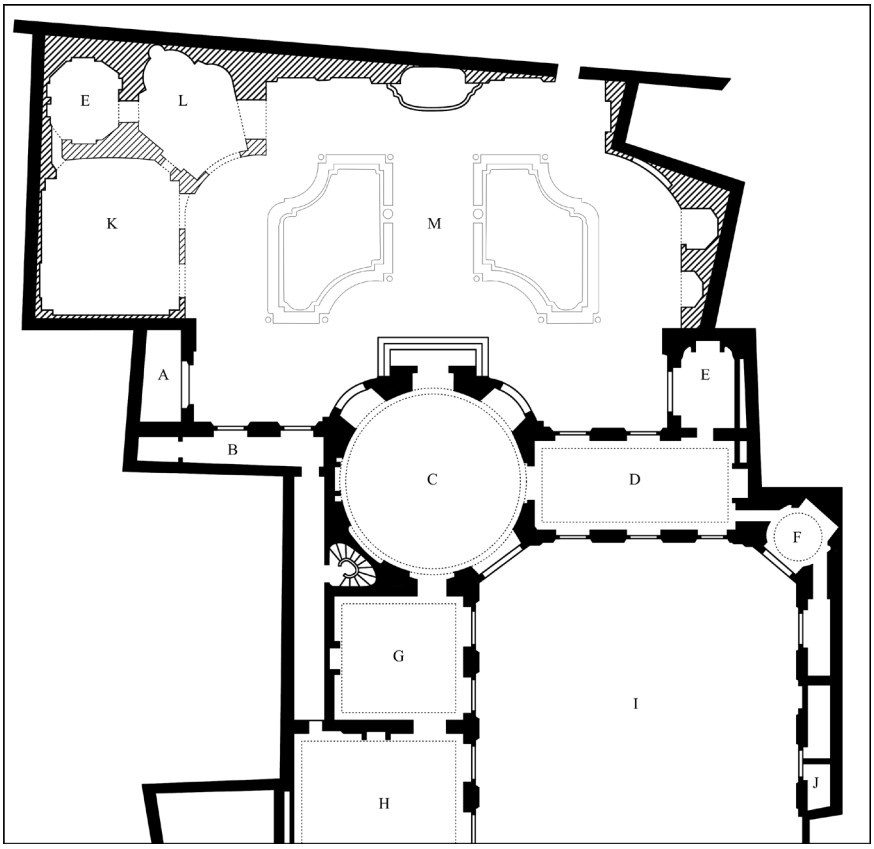


The diverse bedchamber arrangements in Pierre Le Muet's plans.
Adapted from Pierre Le Muet, *Maniere de bastic pour toutes sortes des personnes* (Paris: Francois Jollain, 1623). Drawn by the author.

One of the earliest treatises on domestic architecture after those of Savot and Le Muet was Augustin-Charles d'Aviler's *Cours d'architecture*, first published in 1691. This exceptional book appears to serve as a comprehensive guide to the prevailing architectural practices, and it evidently served as a blueprint for Jacques-Francois Blondel's treatise of 1737. The initial volume of d'Aviler's handbook covered a wide range of topics from sample site and garden layouts to details of gardens, hôtel arrangements,

91 Michael Dennis, *Court and Garden: From the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge; London: The MIT Press, 1986), 52.
92 Ecker, "Architecture and Etiquette: Changes in Design of Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Parisian Hôtels Particuliers (of the nobility) in relation to Users' Requirements and Modes of Life, and the Changing Interpretation of the Rules of Architecture and of Architectural Practices," 157–158.

and window frames. The second volume functions as a dictionary of terms related to the art of making, where d'Aviler explains all the terms featured in the first volume. One significant difference between d'Aviler's treatise and earlier practices is his advocacy not only for an *appartement de parade* ("that of the grand rooms on the *bel étage*") but also for an *appartement de commodité*, ("that which is less grand and more used") and an *appartement des bains* ("a suite of rooms ordinarily on the ground floor which includes a salle, a *chambre*, a *garde-robe*, a *salle de bain*, and the *étuve*… and is richly decorated"). This reflects his inclination to rationalize formal preferences as functional necessities, as seen when he explains that the corners of the bedchamber are rounded to allow for easy movement on one side and to provide space for the chaise longue in the garde-robe on the other.[93] Although Le Muet's earlier plans were not highly detailed, D'Aviler addressed the height of alcove beds, ensuring that they were proportionately lower than the cornices and ceiling height of the adjacent chamber.[94] D'Aviler's *Cours* saw numerous editions throughout the century of the Rococo, with the 1710 edition emerging as the most important manual of the era. It featured thirteen new pages of pages on *la distribution*, drawings and sections of four new hotels, as well as details of architectural elements. Contrasted with the first edition, the differences lay in the diversity of sequence and the in-depth description of the appartements and the service rooms.



House for the Marquis de Villefranche, Avignon, France, eighteenth century.
(A) Serre. (B) Boudoir. (C) Salon. (D) Cabinet en Gallerie. (E) Cabinet. (F) Méridienne .(G) Salle de compagne. (H) Antichambre / Servant de Salle à Manger. (I) Grand Cour. (J) Latrine. (K) Bosquet. (L) Verdure. (M) Jardin.
Adapted from Ed Lilley, "The Name of the Boudoir," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 53, no. 2 (1994): 196.
Drawn by the author.

93 Dennis, *Court and Garden: From the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture*, 105.
94 Ecker, "Architecture and Etiquette: Changes in Design of Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Parisian Hôtels Particuliers (of the nobility) in relation to Users' Requirements and Modes of Life, and the Changing Interpretation of the Rules of Architecture and of Architectural Practices," 160.

Alexandre Le Blond, who edited the book, introduced his addition as "De la nouvelle manière de distribuer les plans" by asserting: "Buildings differ from one another, and one cannot provide absolute rule for plan layouts. One can only offer general observations about arrangements of rooms."[95]

In these varied layouts, despite bedchambers often being positioned adjacent to functionally diverse private rooms that offered opportunities for withdrawal, they seldom facilitated reclining. It was not until the mid-eighteenth century in France, with the emergence of the *boudoir*—a female-assigned closet first appearing in the Rococo-style hôtels—that the arrangement and furnishings within these private rooms encouraged occupants to recline in a horizontal position.[96] Unlike the male-assigned private rooms such as the studiolo, cabinets, and closets, the boudoir seemed to foster, among other functions, rest and daytime repose. Nicolas Le Camus Mezières, one of the first architects to discuss the boudoir, described it as a luxurious private room with decorated walls and ceilings, incorporating a niche in which to place the bed.[97]Although historically portrayed in various art forms as a space of sexual intrigue and sulking out of the public eye, where women recline on chaise longues "unbothered by the troubles of daily life," contemporary historians have claimed otherwise, examining its place within the larger social diagram of the household.[98] For instance, in Pavilion Hocquart, designed by Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, the sequence of rooms in the female apartment is that of a bedchamber-dressing room-boudoir-garde-robe. However, in the Hôtel Thelusson, designed by the same architect, a different pattern was followed: garde-robe-bedchamber-cabinet-boudoir.[99] These variations may suggest that the function of the boudoir differed, as well as the degree of its privacy. In the House for the Marquis de Villefranche, designed by Francois Francque in 1762, the boudoir is strategically positioned adjacent to the *salon* and connected via a corridor with the *servant de salle à manger.* A series of windows offer exposure to the garden, while a staircase leads to the upper-floor cabinet. An adjoining smaller room, perhaps functioning as a latrine, completes this peculiar arrangement.[100] The layout is not only unconventional due to the boudoir's distinctive shape but also because of its placement within the household. The *mèridienne,* designated for moments of solitude or contemplation, occupies a distinct space, interlinked with the *cabinet en gallerie.* One could speculate that the narrow boudoir in Francque's plan, akin to a closet, served functions beyond the expected, potentially facilitating the acquisition or production of knowledge. In doing so, it could have played a role in transcending gender roles and norms prevalent in earlier times. Ed Lilley suggests that "it was at precisely the time of the boudoir, around mid-century, that the watershed occurred in the educational process of women."[101] It is clear that the idea of privacy, as exemplified by rooms such as the boudoir, evolved from being instruments of patriarchal hegemony to fostering emancipatory conditions for individual emergence. This marked a pivotal moment in history when rooms were not merely used but also "owned" within familial contexts. There was a

95 Alexandre Le Blond is quoted in Michael Dennis, *Court and Garden: From the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge; London: The MIT Press, 1986), 105.

96 When examined chronologically, the evolution of the hôtel can be categorized into three architectural types: *Baroque*, *Rococo*, and *Neoclassical*. The Baroque type is characterized by its irregular urban infill structure, often sharing walls with neighbouring structures. It is positioned around a geometrical and regularly shaped exterior courtyard directly connected to the street. The service areas of the building are typically spread along one or both sides of the court, while the primary living quarters are located at the end of the forecourt, far from the street, often overlooking a private garden. On some occasions, where space is limited, the primary living quarters may occupy the street side of the court, lacking a garden. The Rococo type, although it shares similarities with the Baroque, is emphasized as an independent pavilion between the court and the large, extensive garden. Similarly, the Neoclassical type features a standalone, geometrically defined structure positioned between the forecourt and the garden. Service areas, like stables, are minimized in size and are commonly situated on the street side of the forecourt. Read more in Michael Dennis, *Court and Garden: From the French Hôtel to the City of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge; London: The MIT Press, 1986), 5.

97 Ecker, "Architecture and Etiquette: Changes in Design of Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Parisian Hôtels Particuliers (of the nobility) in relation to Users' Requirements and Modes of Life, and the Changing Interpretation of the Rules of Architecture and of Architectural Practices," 160.

98 See, for instance, Ed Lilley, "The Name of the Boudoir," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 53, no. 2 (1994): 193–198.

99 Ibid., 194.

100 Ibid., 195.

101 Ibid.

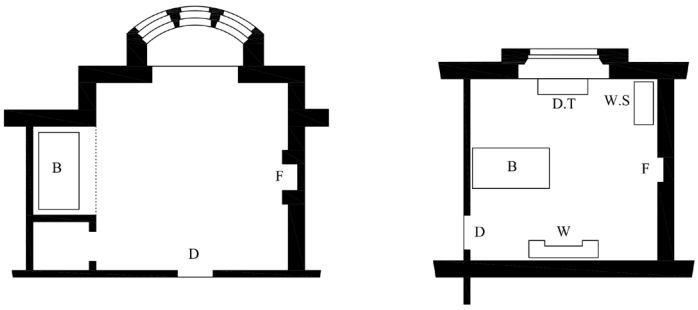
notable shift in social relationships, which to a certain extent, and within binary constraints, reflected a transition from prioritizing the collective "we," to emphasizing the nurturing of the individual "I."

The boudoir in the Hôtel de Crillon, Paris, France, circa 1777-1780.
Drawn by the author.

A BEDROOM OF OUR OWN

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* William Shakespeare employed the term *bedroom* for the first time, describing a furnished room that offers a place to sleep.[102] Although it entered the English vocabulary in the sixteenth century through Shakespeare's writings, the widespread usage of the term only took root in the nineteenth century.[103] During this time, what was previously known as the bedchamber witnessed two significant ideological shifts. The abandonment of separate bedchambers, a practice inherited from privileged households, led to the emergence of the marital bedroom as a room type that embraced the centrally located double bed with a headboard—the conjugal bed—rather than a smaller curtained bed adjacent to a wall. The aristocratic model of the bedchamber, initially an open and public space for visitors and other family members, closed its doors. The bed came to symbolize bourgeois marital union and fertility.[104]

102 Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "bedroom (n.), sense 1," July 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/9158180578.
103 William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.2. 57–58.
104 Francesca Berry, "Bedrooms: Corporeality and Subjectivity" in Georgina Downey (ed.), *Domestic Interiors: Representing Homes From the Victorians to the Moderns* (London; New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 131.

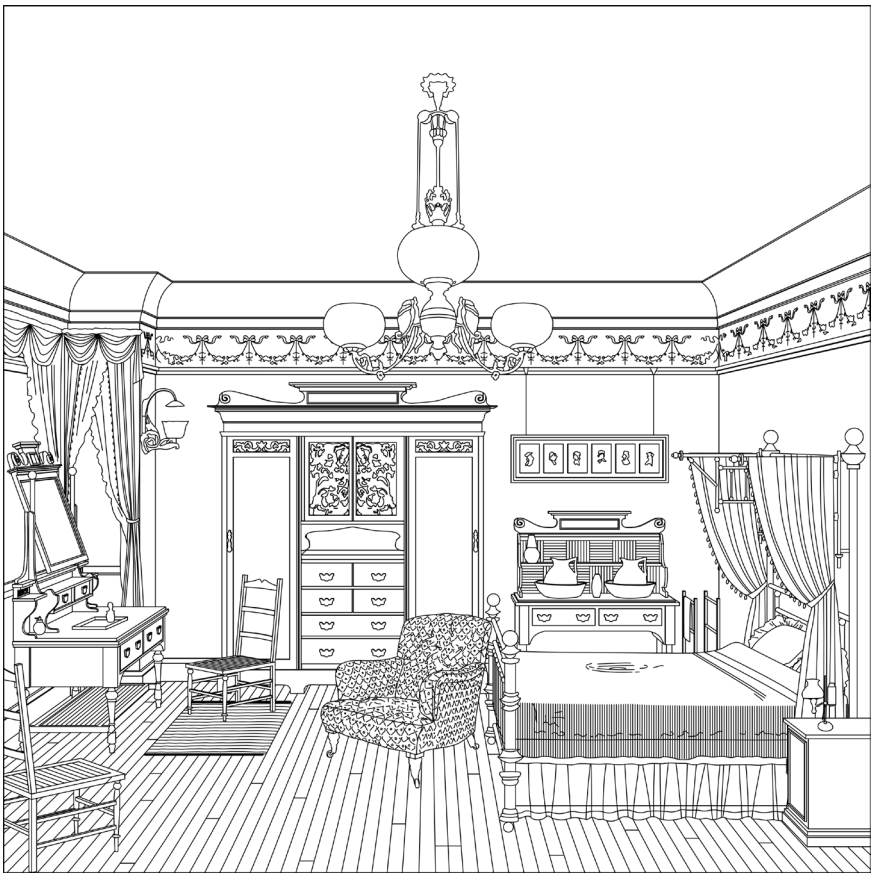


Typical nineteenth-century plans for a French Bedchamber and an English Bedroom. Adapted from Robert Kerr, *The Gentleman's House; or, How to Plan English Residences, from the Parsonage to the Palace (*London: J. Murray, 1865), 147. Drawn by the author.

Domesticity underwent further radical changes, particularly in Britain, from the late eighteenth century until the late nineteenth century, leaning towards a standardized approach to the interior in comparison to Georgian London. This shift was characterized by the infiltration of Victorian values into the home. One of the most important aspects of Victorian households was the notion that the rooms within the domestic interior, as well as their arrangement, had to be rigidly subordinated to the overall composition of a house that no longer prioritized "appearances," but instead turned its focus inwards. It is important to note that the term "Victorian" is not strictly defined. Victorianism emerged long before Queen Victoria's coronation in 1837, and the later Victorian era can be seen as extending into the twentieth century.[105] During this period, the philosophy of *laissez-faire* prevailed— the idea that the structure of society is determined by conditions beyond state affairs. This transition was driven by a combination of factors, including the separation of the public sphere, designated for work, and the private sphere, dedicated to the household. The rise of the Industrial Revolution also saw the emergence of significant religious movements such as Methodism and Evangelicalism, shaping moral principles and the general standards of living.[106] These religious movements sought to integrate their beliefs into every facet of daily life, viewing the home as a microcosm—a sacred refuge—distinct from the capitalist aspects of the external world. Deeply ingrained in society, these religious beliefs regarded marriage as a means for a woman to achieve completeness, serving as a wife and as a mother. Despite a notable increase in women working outside the household by the end of the nineteenth century, the majority still worked at home to fulfill various tasks, primarily emphasizing the virtue of good housekeeping. The home was considered a woman's domain, a feminine sanctuary shielding its inhabitants from the challenges of everyday life. These ideals eventually became a secular norm. Simultaneously, technological progress also invaded the home, alongside concerns about sanitation and hygiene. Middle-class families experienced an increase in disposable income, allowing them to

105 L.C.B. Seaman, "London Surveyed: 1837 and After," in *Life in Victorian London* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1973), 9–29
106 Read more in Judith Flanders, *The Victorian House: Domestic Life from Childbirth to Deathbed* (London: Harper Perennial, 2003).

invest in their households. Land was not the only source of income; hence, merchants as well as other professionals, were able to mirror the affluent living conditions of their social counterparts. These factors, among others, led to a "cult of innocence," the development of a child-centered home, where the relationship between family members and their dwelling conditions became the most pressing matter to be addressed from within.[107] Discussions concerning privacy and solitude intensified through the decades, as these were acknowledged as essential rights. In 1868, the Supreme Court ruled that privacy served as a way for a man to assert control over both the public and private aspects of his wife's life, even extending to the right to inflict physical abuse. During an era when the British Empire held vast influence globally, Victorian values and household practices had a profound impact on distant Commonwealth regions, spanning from Australia through to Africa.[108]



A Victorian master bedroom with furniture from the Army and Navy Stores, London, England, nineteenth century. Adapted from Evangeline Holland, "Edwardian Housekeeping: Furnishing the Home," *Edwardian Promenade* (July, 3, 2013). Drawn by the author.

According to Michel Foucault, prior to the Victorian era, sexual practices were characterized by a remarkable openness. Conversations about sex were conducted with frankness, and engagements in sexual activities occurred with minimal concealment. Society displayed leniency toward what was deemed crude or obscene, a stark contrast to the rigid moral standards of the nineteenth century. Bodies were freely exposed, and children often bore witness to the actions of adults, their presence a testament to a culture unburdened by shame. This epoch of transparency and

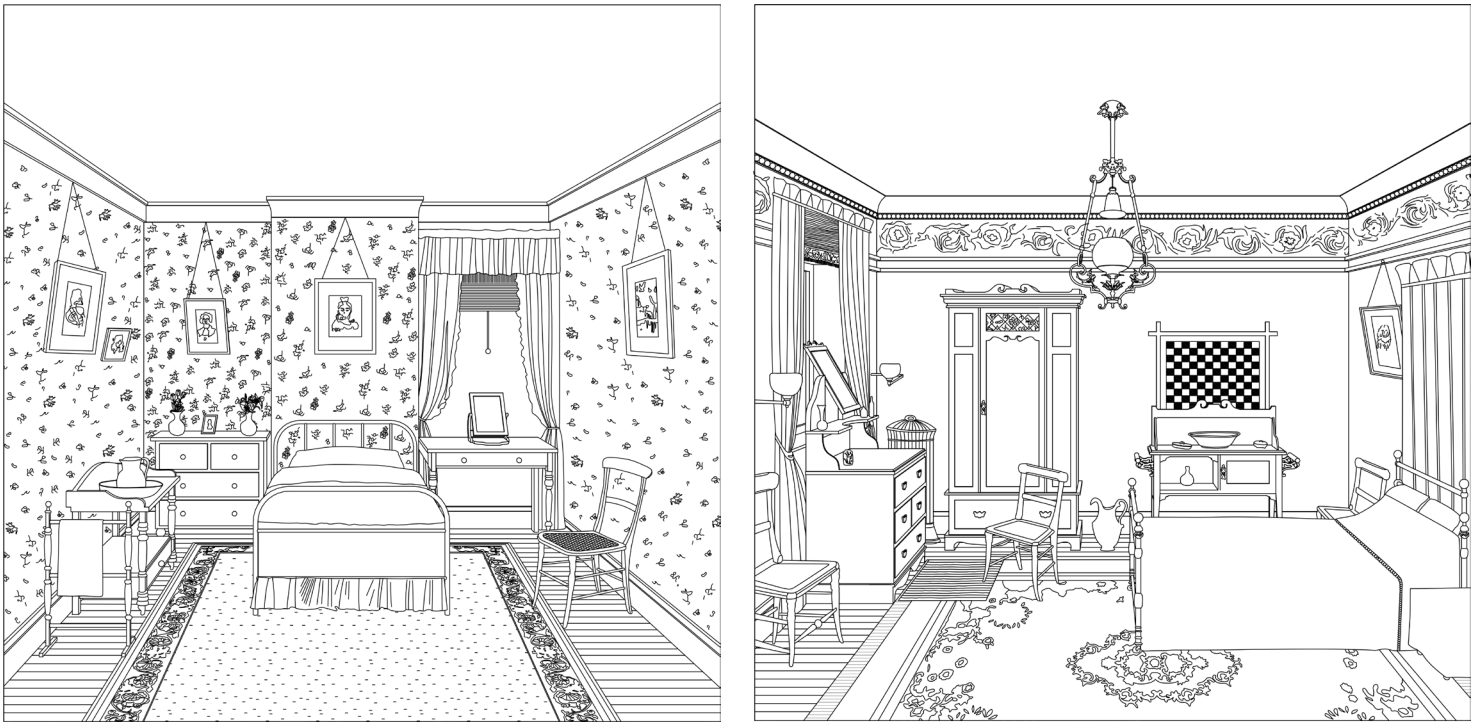
107 Judith Flanders, "Introduction: House and Home," in *The Victorian House: Domestic Life from Childbirth to Deathbed* (London: Harper Perennial, 2003).

108 Fagan and Durrani, *What We Did in Bed: A Horizontal History*, 169.

corporeal freedom, however, was eclipsed by the advent of the Victorian era. Sexuality was relegated to the private domain of the home, enshrined within the confines of the nuclear family, and oriented toward the function of reproduction. The locus of acceptable sexual expression became the parents' bedroom, transforming it into a sanctum of sanctioned intimacy. Beyond this space, physical contact was eschewed, and conversations were governed by a decorum that sanitized and constrained speech. The Victorian bourgeoisie imposed a regime of propriety, promoting discretion and restraint regarding sex.[109] Sex was also considered a political and economic issue, especially in relation to the perceived over-sexualization of the labouring class, necessitating regulation.[110] Victorian reformers grew increasingly concerned about the spread of diseases like cholera and typhoid in the promiscuous and overcrowded living conditions of the labouring class, leading them to initiate a series of pioneering investigations. These investigations notably focused on the crowded sleeping arrangements in proletarian houses, which were believed to contribute to what was seen as their over-sexualized nature. Specifically, these highlighted the number of beds within a room as well as the general architectural features, dimensions, lighting, and ventilation.[111] Although the consolidated eight-hour period of nocturnal sleep seems natural today, before the Industrial Revolution, people typically experienced fragmented rest. This included a first period of sleep ending around midnight, followed by an hour or two of activity before another period of sleep.[112] The notion of an individualized space to facilitate uninterrupted rest did not align with the priorities of the lower working class until then. The imperative to meticulously define the sleeping arrangements of the working class and regulate their sexual activity by assigning it a designated space ignited substantial typological investigations, which in turn shaped modern and contemporary notions surrounding the bedroom.

In 1825, the *Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes* was established by Benjamin Wills. Initially, this Society published a book containing plans for cottages and schools for the lower class living in the countryside, drawn by the architect John Hall. Their aim was to achieve "an increase of comfort and happiness to the labouring classes: an encouragement towards the attainment of a true independence, which, while it makes them superior to idleness, intemperance, and parochial relief, will tend to lessen their vices, and create a pleasurable observance of all the duties of society. In short, an inducement to preserve health by the exercise of cleanliness, delicacy, and industrious morality […] For delicacy: There must be three sleeping rooms, to enable the parents, the boys, and the girls to sleep separate; an arrangement very little known at present."[113] It appears that in nineteenth-century family life, only two possibilities seemed viable: either to embrace the collectivization of family members, or to rigidly atomize and further separate them, targeting all classes, which, as it turned out, became the dominantly preferred approach.

109 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978 [1976]), 3.
110 Ibid., 23.
111 See, for instance, Michelle Perrot, *The Bedroom: An Intimate History,* trans. Lauren Elkin (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018 [2009]), 181–183.
112 Hilary Hinds, *A Cultural History of Twin Beds* (London, New York, Oxford, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 5.
113 John Hall quote in Pamela Lofthouse, "The Development of English Semi-detached Dwellings During the Nineteenth Century," *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology* 22 (2013): 86.



Servants' bedroom and the master bedroom as advertised by the store Heal's & Son, London, England, nineteenth century. Adapted from Judith Flanders, *The Victorian House: Domestic Life from Childbirth to Deathbed* (London: Harper Perennial, 2003), 8; 5. Drawn by the author.

In previous centuries, rooms often served various functions, and furniture lacked a fixed position. However, during the Victorian era, each room became a physical embodiment of segregation, encompassing hierarchy, functionality, and rigid divisions between public and private spaces. Until then, it was common for servants and apprentices to share sleeping quarters with their masters or family members, where gender or age did not dictate sleeping arrangements. Over time, the layout of houses evolved to accommodate the spatial implications of these segregations. There emerged a distinction between zones for sleeping and zones for living, the latter including the rooms accessible to guests, such as the dining room or the drawing room. Parents no longer shared bedrooms with their infants, and children were no longer expected to share a bed. Children's bedrooms were designated according to gender and, if feasible, younger children were separated from older ones. In principle, the home was acknowledged as a private domain par excellence, but in reality, the home represented another facet of public life, frequently overlooked.[114]

The architects of the time considered using the bedroom for anything other than resting as immoral, believing that every function, when possible, required its own room within the household. The furniture in the bedroom varied, according to social status, but whenever possible, elaborate furnishings were incorporated to meet the standards of parlour rooms. For those who were financially privileged, the ideal bed was a four-poster, with drapes, and the bedroom would include a wardrobe, washstand, a table, chairs, a chaise longue, bookcases, and a high-quality carpet. Furniture that was no longer in good enough condition to be part of the ground level's reception areas was used to organize the bedroom. Until the late nineteenth century, the lack of lighting also played an important role in the positioning of these pieces of furniture. The bed was placed far from the window, the door, and the fireplace not only to avoid the possibility

114 Judith Flanders, "Introduction: House and Home," in *The Victorian House: Domestic Life from Childbirth to Deathbed* (London: Harper Perennial, 2003).

of draught but also to minimize the sleeper's exposure to natural light. However, considering these numerous aspirations and the limitations of typical terraced house floor plans, these details were likely acknowledged more in theory. [115]

In 1834, a law was introduced—the *Poor Law*—forcing the lower classes to move into workhouses as a requirement to receive any financial assistance from the state. The urban working classes were encouraged to abandon their unsanitary cellars, lodging houses, or back-to-backs. As a result of hygiene reports such as the one conducted by Edwin Chadwick in 1842, various philanthropic organizations were formed to design and build workmen's dwellings. Indeed, one of the most impactful reformist societies was the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes, endorsed by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Eventually, the Society's plans carried the name of Henry Roberts, who was their honorary architect and exclusively designed all the published model dwellings that were realized.[116] It was the architect's Evangelical beliefs that connected him with those who wished to better society through their charitable work. Roberts designed a diverse array of exemplary buildings, including lodging-houses; however, his most influential project is considered to be his model housing for families, exhibited at the Crystal Palace's Exhibition in 1851, as a response to the housing distress faced by the working class. The repeatable spatial and social arrangement promoted by these nuclear family dwellings provides a compelling example of how an unassuming architectural prototype can play a decisive role, not only in shaping the urban landscape but also in producing a specific form of subjectivity. Roberts's plans introduced the bedroom as a room type with a clear definition of what a family should be like, representing social attitudes toward intimacy and reproduction, still regarded, more than a century later, as the locus of the *labour of love*. Although the apartment had once been associated with privileged homeowners' need for privacy, Roberts believed that the apartment was a suitable form of dwelling for working-class families. The apartments, all identical, are primarily centered around the living room. The smaller bedrooms are entered through the living room, while the master bedroom and water room can be reached through the scullery. The apartments' layout clearly outlines the intended family dynamic: the parents would sleep in the main bedroom, affording the mother convenient access to the scullery and visual oversight of the living room. The children's rooms are segregated by gender. While it cannot be asserted that Roberts invented this meticulously orchestrated layout that persists even today, its replicability represents the moment when the home was acknowledged as crystalizing the conditions that define the nuclear family—reproduction: a husband, a wife, their offspring.[117] In his book *The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes: Their Arrangement and Construction*, published in 1855, it was more than evident, not only through his housing schemes but also through his words that the compartmentalization of family members was achieved by understanding the household as a series of enclosures:

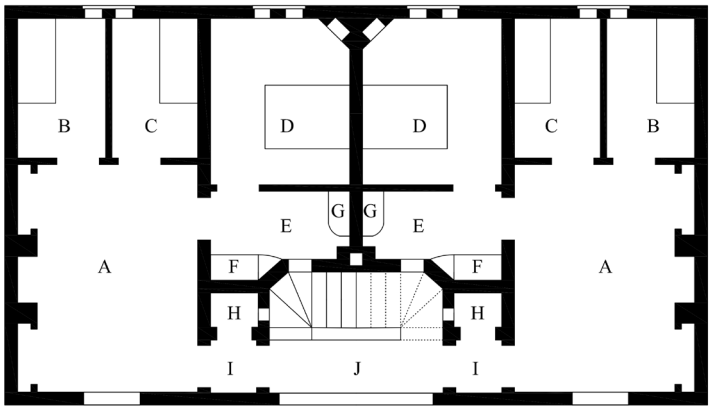
> In providing for the accommodation of a large number of families in one pile of building, a leading feature of the plan should be the preservation of the domestic privacy and independence of each distinct family, and the disconnection of their apartments, so as effectually to prevent the communication of contagious diseases […] This is accomplished in the model houses […] The plans fully describe the general arrangement of the several floors: that on a large scale exhibits two tenements or sets of apartments with their ap-

115 Judith Flanders, *The Victorian House: Domestic Life from Childbirth to Deathbed* (London: Harper Perennial, 2003), 2–9.

116 Pamela Lofthouse, "The Development of English Semi-detached Dwellings During the Nineteenth Century", *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology* 22 (2013): 88.

117 Maria S. Giudici, "Counter-planning From the Kitchen: For a Feminist Critique of Type," *The Journal of Architecture* 23, no. 7–8 (2018): 1203–1205.

propriate fittings, which comprise all the conveniences requisite for a well-ordered family, and include, in addition to the bed-rooms, a provision of an enclosed bed for boys in a closet out of the living-room.[118]



Henry Roberts' Plan of Model House for Families, London, England, 1851.
(A) Living Room. (B) Boys' Room. (C) Girls' Room. (D) Parents' Bedroom. (E) Scullery. (F) Safe. (G) Sink. (H) W. Closet. (I) Lobby. (J) Gallery.
Adapted from Henry Roberts, *The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes: Their Arrangement and Construction* (London, Society for the Improvement of the Labouring Classes, 1855), 58. Drawn by the author.

According to arrangements like Roberts's, various members of a household could lay claim to beds or individual rooms at night, with allocation depending on factors such as the house's size, gender split, and the number of occupants. While no concrete documentation exists, to my knowledge, regarding the interior of these bedrooms, the furniture and homeware catalogues of the time, particularly Heal and Sons (founded in 1810), provide insight into how these interiors may have been arranged and decorated.[119] The restrained use of furniture was not solely dictated by the financial constraints of the occupants but also perhaps by the spatial limitations of these rooms. One can assume that the parents' bedroom would feature a centrally positioned double bed, crafted from iron for its hygienic qualities, accompanied by nightstands on each side.[120] The walls were plastered with a type of cement paint, as wallpapers only became accessible in the latter part of the century, possibly embellished with decorative wooden panels along the ceiling's periphery. Additionally, the room likely included a dressing table, a mirror, and a couch or a rocking chair. The absence of a closet or wardrobe in the architect's plan suggests that clothes were likely stored in boxes or a chiffonier, a low cupboard. In contrast, the elon-

118 Henry Roberts, *The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes: Their Arrangement and Construction* (London: Society for the Improvement of the Labouring Classes, 1855), 10–11.

119 The company's archive belongs to the Victoria and Albert Museum. However, some of their nineteenth-century designs have been included in Judith Flanders, *The Victorian House: Domestic Life from Childbirth to Deathbed* (London: Harper Perennial, 2003).

120 For more information about nineteenth and twentieth-century types of beds in relation to domestic hygiene, refer to Hilary Hinds, *A Cultural History of Twin Beds* (London, New York, Oxford, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

gated yet narrow shape of the children's bedrooms would have accommodated no more than a single bed positioned against the wall, alongside a nightstand. A drawer may have also been placed in the corner next to the door. Undeniably, the pragmatic approach to designing these rooms allowed for limited flexibility in their interior organization.

However, despite the appearance of speculative housing types by visionary architects for lower, working-class households, their homes retained, to a certain extent, their traditional role as a place of combining living and working. This arrangement not only provided a means for maintaining financial independence, especially for women and elderly people but also blurred the boundaries between private and public spheres. In such households, family members of all ages and genders, along with occasionally extended family members, slept, worked, and performed various other activities within the same rooms. Privacy for them was not an expectation but rather a privilege.[121] By the end of the nineteenth century, the versatile character of the bedrooms of lower-class households was particularly targeted by architects and furniture manufacturers, marking the widespread desire for individual bedrooms. This is evident in the publications of the time, such as Gervase Wheeler's *Homes for the People* (1867) and others focusing on furniture innovations. Wheeler's book, for example, included designs suitable for various social classes within different settings in the U.S., illustrating how even existing houses, specifically farmhouses, could be adapted to accommodate additional bedrooms. The folding beds of the time were also popular, allowing for multiple functions to take place within a room. These came in various forms but were typically characterized by their clever disguise: resembling pianos, desks, fireplaces, or wardrobes, while covertly transforming into beds. These types of beds were considered a commercial success in 1885 by *Decorator and Furnisher*, as they eliminated the necessity for expanding the household. Folding beds gained popularity due to their attractive design, in contrast to the bulky and unwieldy furniture of the past that cluttered rooms. In 1896, *Scientific American* reported on a patent by Thomas Langdon for a multifunctional piece of furniture combining a single bed, a double bed, a sofa, and a detachable crib into one item. Another issue of *Scientific American* from 1898 described a metal bedstead adjustable in both length and width using sliding rails. Among its claimed advantages are structural stability and adaptability to fit different room sizes. [122]

At the turn of the century, persisting health concerns, particularly the threat of tuberculosis, prompted a re-evaluation of the domestic interior. Believed to be attainable through exposure to fresh air, Dr. Benjamin Ward Richardson stressed the significance of the bedroom deeming it "the most important room in the house by far and far again," and advocating for its placement to the south-west for optimal ventilation and sun exposure, both of which are beneficial for health.[123] *Scientific American* echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the role of fresh air in warding off not only tuberculosis but also other respiratory illnesses such as bronchitis, cold, and pneumonia. Various measures were proposed and put into practice in countries such as the U.S., primarily involving sleeping outdoors, which was thought to have numerous health benefits, including enhanced sleep quality, appetite stimulation, and greater disease resistance. Alternative solutions included the application of a twin bed system for married couples, window beds, and fresh-air tents.[124] Window beds entailed positioning the head of the bed over the windowsill, with a waning to protect the sleeper from the rain. Fresh air tents were structures installed around open windows, with the head of the bed as well as that of

121 Ibid., 25.

122 Elizabeth Collins Cromley, "Sleeping around: A History of American Beds and Bedrooms: The Second Banham Memorial Lecture," *Journal of Design History* 3, no. 1 (1990): 2; 10–11.

123 Dr. Benjamin Ward Richardson is quoted in Elizabeth Collins Cromley, "Sleeping around: A History of American Beds and Bedrooms: The Second Banham Memorial Lecture," *Journal of Design History* 3, no. 1 (1990): 11.

124 Read more about the twin bed system in Hilary Hinds, *A Cultural History of Twin Beds* (London: Routledge, 2019).

the sleeper being enclosed within them, providing protection from drafts and inclement weather. While each household member would typically have their own designated room for resting, a screened sleeping porch was often constructed and, inevitably, often shared. People rested in sleeping bags, wearing specialized garments with hoods that left only the mouth, nose, and eyes exposed. However, the transition from warmer indoor temperatures to cooler conditions posed several challenges. As a result, in the decades that followed, the porch was also seen as a means of treating insomnia and stress, becoming as essential as the bedrooms themselves. This architectural feature was evident in model homes of the time, where porches had to be attached not only to the bedrooms, but also to the living and dining areas.[125]

THE CENTURY OF THE BEDROOM

In the twentieth century, it could be argued that the world experienced what has been described as The Century of the Bed, and, consequently, of the bedroom.[126] The bedroom became widely adopted, exemplified in the works of the Better Homes in America movement. In the aftermath of World War I, a group of individuals in the U.S. embarked on a large-scale campaign to address the critical housing shortage, known as Better Homes in America. The movement originated in *The Delineator*, a household magazine with a circulation of over one million female readers, under the leadership of editor Marie Mattingly Meloney. Its committee also comprised high state officials, such as Henry Wallace, the Secretary of Agriculture, and Julius Barnes, the President of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Their nationwide campaign aimed to address neglect in home design through an educational approach, extolling the benefits of owning, preserving, and improving homes, presenting these activities as tools to encourage responsible consumer behaviour and stimulate the consumer market. Drawing from popular references, such as John Howard Payne's song "Home, Sweet Home," the architects of the movement conveyed deliberate cultural messages to a national audience through the making of their model homes.[127] The Better Homes campaign further supported an annual competition involving model demonstration homes, organized by local committees. These committees adorned these houses to provide lessons in aesthetic and effective housekeeping to visitors. During an annual Better Homes Week, these houses were made accessible to the public, and the National Advisory Council accessed and selected a national winner from the demonstration homes. Participation in Better Homes in America was regarded by *The Delineator* as "the most important public work to which women in this country could give their time."[128] The movement, encompassing every aspect of domestic life, advocated publicly for "America to become again as far as practicable a nation of families dwelling in single, detached houses," placing particular emphasis on providing homes for families with modest or moderate incomes. In 1922, approximately five hundred demonstrations of model homes were conducted. In parallel, publications, endorsed by well-known architects across the nation and the Architects Small House Service Bureau, Inc. (ASHSB), were initiated and promoted by the movement. Their purpose was "to facilitate the planning and building of attractive and economical homes."[129]

125 Cromley, "Sleeping around: A History of American Beds and Bedrooms: The Second Banham Memorial Lecture," 11–12.

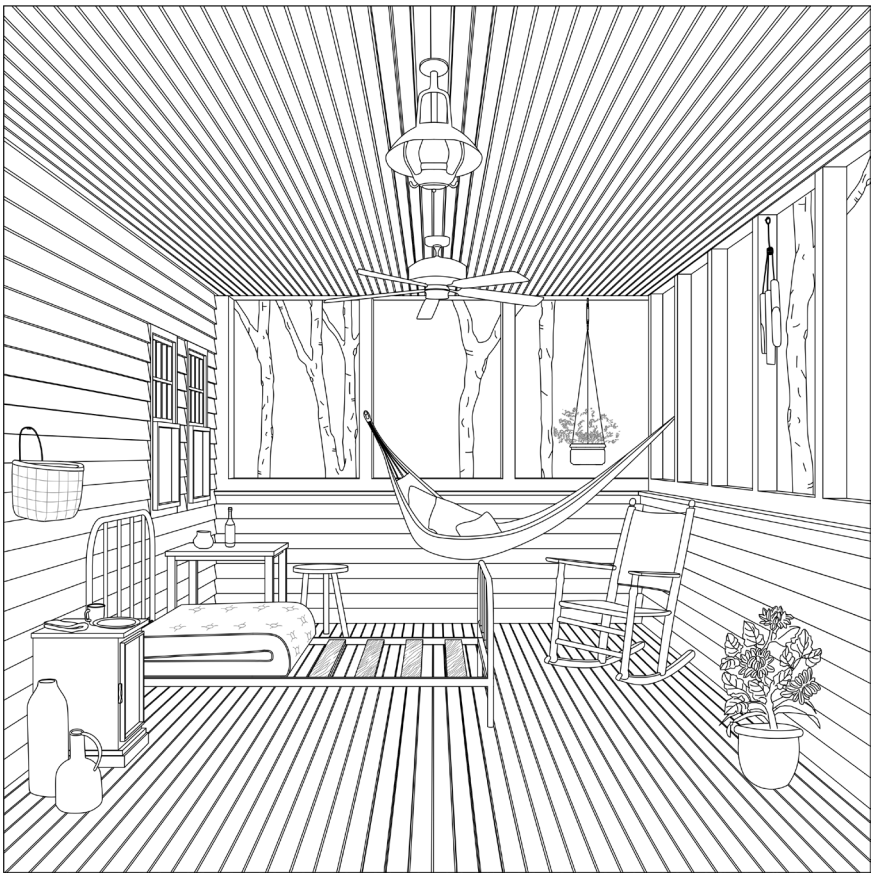
126 Read more in Beatriz Colomina, "The Century of the Bed," in *The Century of the Bed*, Beatriz Colomina, Andreas Rumpfhuber, and August Ruhs, ed. (Vienna: Moderne Kunst Nürnberg, 2015), 20–23.

127 Henry R. Bishop, Columbia Stellar Quartette, and John Howard Payne, "Home, Sweet Home" (New York: Columbia, 1917). Audio, https://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox-657764/.

128 Janet Hutchison, "The Cure for Domestic Neglect: Better Homes in America, 1922–1935," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture,* vol.2 (1986): 173.

129 "Better Homes in America Movement Emphasizing Need of Single-Family Detached Homes as American Ideal," *The Capital Journal* (Salem) (May 10, 1924), U.S. National Archives.

The Architects' Small House Service Bureau, Inc. (ASHSB) and Better Homes in America both advocated for a particular approach to homeownership. They claimed that prospective homeowners should acquire a vacant lot, select a pre-designed plan drawn by an architect, and maintain close communication with the contractor during construction to ensure the best quality. Although this method required more effort from the homeowner, it was seen as a safeguard against purchasing poorly constructed homes rushed into production to meet market demands or financial targets. In the *Book of Small Homes* (1924) by Better Homes in America, a spread spanning two pages illustrates nine possible configurations for a five-room house, allowing for customization based on the homeowner's budget and preferences. These variations involve adjustments such as relocating the entrance porch, incorporating or omitting a side porch, repositioning the doors, merging the dining room with the living room, and introducing a dining alcove into the kitchen. The plans were devised to facilitate future room additions as homeowner's income grew, without compromising the architectural integrity and aesthetic coherence carefully crafted by the architect. [130]

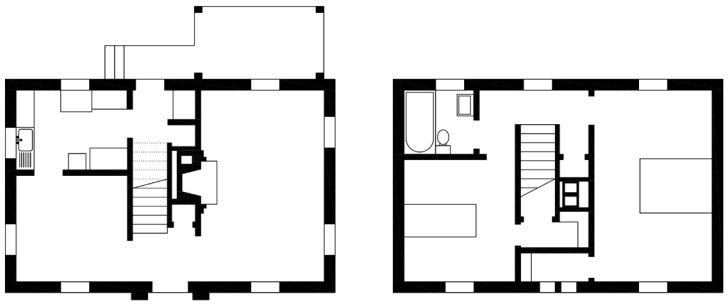


A typical sleeping porch for a Better Homes in America household, 1900s.
Drawn by the author.

A typical housing plan was rectangular with windows on all elevations of the house. The ground floor included the kitchen and dining room which were positioned to the left part of the house, with the kitchen connecting to the living room. The living room, organized around a fireplace, also led to a back porch. A central staircase provided access to the second-sto-

130 Valerie Smith, "The Small House Movement of the 1920s: Preserving Small 'Better' Houses," Postgraduate Thesis (Columbia University, 2022), 36; 49–50.

ry passage, surrounded by two-to-four bedrooms and a bathroom. Each bedroom had its own closet in the form of a separate room. The home was viewed as a laboratory, emphasizing the importance of every detail within the home contributing to its functionality. This included various built-in conveniences such as bookshelves, cabinets, fold-down tables, and other devices strategically placed within the domestic interior. The ASHSB's monthly periodical, *The Small Home*, featured numerous advertisements for interior accessories aimed at enhancing home efficiency. In addition, the magazine profiled the importance of compartmentalizing the family's belongings within separate closets. Closets were often placed under the eaves and below stairs, along with built-in cupboards, china cabinets, breakfast nooks, towel closets, broom closets, and linen closets to enhance comfort and housekeeping convenience.[131]



Plans of a *Better Home in America* designed by the Architects Small House Service Bureau, U.S, 1920s. Adapted from "Better Homes in America Movement Emphasizing Need of Single-Family Detached Homes as American Ideal," *The Capital Journal* (Salem) (May 10, 1924), U.S. National Archives.
Drawn by the author.

Although the married couple's bedroom was commonly known as the master bedroom, literary descriptions from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries typically exhibit a bias towards the wife's requirements.[132] In 1924, Caroline Crane published the book *Everyman's Home* in which she described her award-winning model house and its ideal occupants. Crane discussed the importance of a mother's room, a room quite common at the time. While the girls' and boys' rooms were located on the upper floor, the mother's room was preferably on the ground floor, equipped with a double bed, a crib, and various amenities designed for nursing and soothing the infant to sleep. The mother's room, bathroom, and the kitchen were considered as the mother's suite. Ideally, the proximity of the mother's room to the kitchen facilitated her ability to care for her baby while attending to household chores. The inclusion of a downstairs bathroom reduced the woman's need to traverse the home unnecessarily. Furthermore, the bedroom and bathroom could serve as a sick room when necessary. The home, centered around the mother and baby, limited the father's involvement and responsibilities. Although the father likely slept in the mother's room,

131 Lisa Marie Tucker, "The Architects' Small House Service Bureau and Interior Design in the 1920s and 1930s," *Journal of Interior Design* 34, no. 1 (2008): 62.

132 Read, for instance, about the "mother's room" in Caroline Bartlett Crane, *Everyman's Home* (Michigan: Western Michigan University, 1925).

his presence there was not explicitly mentioned in Crane's book. One presumes that he is typically confined to reading the newspaper in the living room after work or joining the family for meals. These ideas focused on the mother as the skilled manager of the reformed domestic environment, while the father's role remained primarily outside the house.[133]

As highlighted by Sally McMurry, the idea of the nursery designed for infants and children began to infiltrate the domestic interior from the mid-nineteenth century and onwards to support their discipline and education. It was expected that the rooms and furniture would reflect the various stages of a child's development, as well as their gender, from infancy to adolescence. For infants, it was recommended in numerous magazines that they should sleep in their own beds, separate from their mothers. This practice was suggested to prevent them from inhaling impure air and to protect them from the risk of the mother accidentally rolling over them. Some of these magazines, which often shared home decorating advice, considered the bedroom as a place for the occupants to express their "individuality." For example, Ella Rodman Church wrote in her 1877 column for *Appleton's Journal* that one must be able to distinguish the mother's room from the brother's room at a glance. Girls should have dressing tables, while all boys should decorate their rooms with baseball bats. Mothers' rooms, however, should provide security and project the image of a nurturing place.[134] It appears that the bedroom interior was promoted in such ways to shape occupants into traditional gender roles, contributing to the construction of masculinity and femininity, rather than embodying individual autonomy.

From the latter half of the nineteenth century and onwards, it became increasingly apparent that the idea of the home, as presented by architects such as Roberts and later on by the Better Homes in America movement, had evolved into a cornerstone of middle-class identity formation. The bedroom emerged as a significant site of meaning, intertwined with modern notions of privacy, gender roles, and family dynamics. Dictionaries from the early twentieth century began associating the bedroom with connotations related to sexuality. This shift coincided with the ascendance of the economically stable middle class, which openly embraced and asserted heterosexuality as the natural order, thus embodying prevailing ideals for marriage and family life.[135] Consequently, any form of labour performed within middle-class households was viewed through the lens of contributing to reproduction.

THE BEDROOM IS MARRIAGE ITSELF

In the foregoing, I have attempted to compile the antecedents of contemporary sleeping arrangements, moving away from the assumption that they merely occupied space and satisfied the basic human need for rest. Instead, they have, since the dawn of civilization, played an instrumental role in shaping daily life and human relationships. It could be argued that, if anything is portrayed in an architectural plan, it is the nature of human relationships. However, conspicuously absent are the human figures involved. The bed may indeed be the only obvious sign of human life in an architectural drawing, its significance diversified by the different vocabulary employed across different locales and centuries to describe its architectural context. But perhaps not even words can capture bedding's inherent complexity. The evolution of sleeping arrangements defies a linear narrative. Throughout history, they have served as reflections of broader societal values, cultural practices, and technological advancements. From the collective hearths of primitive cultures to the individ-

133 Hutchison, "The Cure for Domestic Neglect: Better Homes in America, 1922–1935," 173–177.
134 Cromley, "Sleeping around: A History of American Beds and Bedrooms: The Second Banham Memorial Lecture," 6–9.
135 Elizabeth A. Patton, *Easy Living: The Rise of the Home Office* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2020), 19–23.

ualized bedrooms of modernity, the horizontal architecture of the bed has, since its inception, embodied a nuanced negotiation of self-definition, privacy, intimacy, and social hierarchy. As societies progressed, so did the function and the spatial position of the bed and its various forms within the domestic sphere, evolving towards increasingly monolithic arrangements. Before the invention of the bed, mattresses served as temporary accommodations for the horizontal position. Being the earliest pieces of furniture, mattresses fostered hybrid conditions, all of which were lost during the Victorian era when rooms and family members were individuated. The concept of privacy, as we understand it today, was non-existent, with social norms surrounding sleeping arrangements being adaptable, often leading to frequent changes in bedfellows, particularly among lower-class households. However, in the nineteenth century, the emergence of the bedroom as a distinctive and standardized room category coincided with the crystallization of the nuclear family structure and the imposition of the heteronormative standards of existence. By the mid-twentieth century, it was evident that the bedroom had become an indispensable feature in households across Europe and the U.S. It appears to be dedicated primarily to the functioning and reproduction of the nuclear family. This condition is exemplified by Henry Roberts's model houses of the nineteenth century and the subsequent Better Homes in America initiative nearly seven decades later. Undoubtedly, the bedroom serves today as a stage where the tension between individual agency and social conformity unfolds, shifting amidst moments of self-realization and the imminent dissolution of personal autonomy. While the bedroom is undeniably ubiquitous, its history remains elusive and tracing its origins has proven to be a challenging task. One wonders whether, with the passage of time, it might slip into the shadows of obscurity. Yet, in its enduring presence, let us refrain from assuming that we fully comprehend its significance.

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