The Fifth Book of Leon Battista Alberti. On the Works of Individuals.

I How buildings, both in town and in the country, should vary to suit the
ov different ways of citizens and other inhabitants we have already explained in the previous book; we established that certain buildings were appropriate for the public as a whole, others for the higher members of society, and others for the lower ones.[1] Those suitable for the general public have already been dealt with. Here, in the fifth book, we shall consider what is necessary or desirable in the case of individuals. This is a large and complicated matter, but we shall employ all our ability and energy in our attempt to expound it; and in so doing demonstrate our resolve to omit nothing that could be considered relevant to our argument, yet equally include nothing serving more to embellish our argument than to complete our undertaking.

Let us begin with the more exalted. The highest of all are those entrusted with supreme power and judgment: this may be entrusted to several individuals or to just one. The one who alone rules over the others is he who should have the greatest honor. Let us therefore consider what is appropriate in his particular case. Above all it is important to establish precisely what type of person he is: whether he is the sort who governs reverently and piously over willing subjects, motivated, that is, less by his own gain than by the safety and comfort of his citizens, or one who would wish to control the political situation so that he could remain in power even against the will of his subjects. For each building and even the city itself should differ when under the rule of those called tyrants, as opposed to others who take up their command and care for it like a magisterial office conferred on them by their fellows. For the city of a king it is sufficient defense to be capable of holding off an enemy attack. But for a tyrant, his own people may be just as hostile as outsiders, and he must therefore fortify his city against foreigner and fellow citizen alike, and the layout of the fortifications must allow him to receive outside reinforcements, even some of his own men against their fellow citizens.

In the previous book we dealt with ways of fortifying a city against the enemy; let us now consider appropriate methods of defense against one's fellow citizens. Euripides thought the common people to be a powerful adversary in themselves, but totally invincible when they combine deceit and guile.[2] Carrae[3] in Egypt was a city so heavily populated that when fewer than a thousand people died on a single day, it was considered healthy and thriving; prudently their princes had so divided it up with water conduits that it appeared not as one but as several small towns joined together. Their motive, I believe, was not so much to distribute the advantages of the

Nile more widely as to reduce the fear of any large-scale popular uprising, and to ensure that any such disturbance might be easily quelled; just as a colossus, if divided into two or more sections, is easier to manage and transport.

It was the practice of the Romans never to send a senator to Egypt as proconsul, but to delegate the individual regions to men of equestrian rank. The reason for this, according to Arrian, was to remove the risk of revolution under a single ruler.[4] They also observed that no city was ever free of civil discord when divided naturally either by a river or by being sited on several hills, or if it was partly on hills and partly on a plain.

The best means of dividing a city is to build a wall through it. This wall, I believe, should not run diametrically across the city but should form a kind of circle within a circle. For the wealthy citizens are happier in more spacious surroundings and would readily accept being excluded by an inner wall, and would not unwillingly leave the stalls and the town-center workshops to the marketplace traders; and that rabble, as Terence's Gnatho calls them, of poulterers, butchers, cooks, and so on,[5] will be less of a risk and less of a nuisance if they do not mix with the important citizens.

Nor is what we read in Festus beside the point: Servius Tullius ordered all the patricians to live in a district where any rebellion could be instantly put down from a hilltop.[6]

This internal wall should be planned so as to touch every district of the town. As in all other city walls, so especially in this case, the construction must be robust and bold in all its details, and so high as to dominate the roofs of any private houses. It is best to fortify it with battlements and turrets on both sides, and even perhaps a moat, so as to protect the guards stationed along it from either direction. The tops of the towers ought not to be open to the inside, but completely walled, and no more exposed to those on the inside than to the approaching enemy, especially where they overlook a road or the high roof of a temple. I would prefer there to be no route up into the towers except through the walls, and no access from the castle to the walls except where the prince allows it. No arches, no towers should stand along the roads through the town. There must be no projecting balconies, from which missiles could be thrown at soldiers as they patrol the neighborhood. In short, the whole town should be planned to give the one with supreme power sole possession of all the highest structures, and to make it impossible for anyone to restrict the movement of his men and prevent them from patrolling the town. Such are the differences between the town of a tyrant and that of a king.

There might perhaps be another difference in that a free people would find a plain more convenient, whereas a tyrant would be more secure on a hill. Apart from that, buildings inhabited by kings and tyrants have further

characteristics in common, and even certain similarities with the ordinary private house, but so too differences. Their common features must first be dealt with, and then their individual requirements.

This type of building was established for necessity's sake, as is generally thought; yet it contains certain elements, such as porticoes, walkways, promenades,[7] and so on, that, although in essence items of convenience, have through use and habit come to be treated as indispensable. However, since our theory of building does not demand it, we will not distinguish convenient from necessary; we shall but state that in houses, as in towns, some parts are public, others restricted to the few, and others for single persons. ◆

The portico and the vestibule were not reserved for servants, as Diodorus thinks,[8] but are for citizens of all ranks, we would like to suggest. Within the house the corridors, yard, atrium, and salon (which I think is derived from the verb *saltare*, "to dance," because that was where the gaiety of weddings and banquets took place)[9] are intended for general use, rather than solely for those who live there. There are clearly two types of dining room, one for free men and one for slaves; then there are bedrooms for married women, young girls, and guests, almost all being single rooms. In the first book we dealt with the distribution of these parts in general terms. In their lineaments, number, size, and positioning they must be laid out in a manner appropriate to their respective uses. We shall now deal with them individually.

The portico and the vestibule are dignified by the entrance. The entrance in turn may be dignified by the road on which it lies, and also by the quality of its workmanship. Inside, the dining rooms, storerooms, and so on should be appropriately located where their contents will keep well, where the air is right and they will receive the correct amount of sun and ventilation, and where they can serve their intended uses. They should be kept separate, lest excessive contact between guests and attendants detract from the dignity, comfort, and pleasure of the former or increase the insolence of the latter.

The atrium, salon, and so on should relate in the same way to the house as do the forum and public square to the city: they should not be hidden away in some tight and out-of-the-way corner, but should be prominent, with easy access to the other members. It is here that stairways and passageways begin, and here that visitors are greeted and made welcome.[10]

Then again the house should not have several entrances, but only one, to prevent anyone's removing anything or entering without the knowledge of the doorkeeper. We should avoid having windows and doors open out, where thieves or (for that matter) neighbors may be of nuisance, watching

and finding out what is being said or done inside. The Egyptians built all their private houses with no windows looking out.

It might be desirable to have a back gate for bringing in provisions by cart or mule, without fouling the main entrance court; there should also be a more private side door, for the master of the house alone, to enable him to let in secret couriers and messengers, and to go out whenever the occasion and circumstances demand, without the knowledge of his household. To these I have no objections. I would also recommend the inclusion of secret hiding places, concealed recesses, and hidden escape routes, known only to the head of the family, where he might keep his silverware and clothing in difficult times, and even hide himself, should the situation become so grave. The tomb of David contained little niches where the hereditary treasures of the king were hidden so ingeniously that no one could ever find them. And from one of these the high priest Hyrcanus was able to draw, 1,300 years later, 3,000 gold talents to ransom the city when besieged by Antiochus, according to Josephus.[11] From another, some time later, Herod is said to have taken a considerable amount of gold.

These then are the similarities between the house of a prince and that of a private citizen. And yet between a prince's and a private citizen's house there is an intrinsic difference in character. Since the palace of a prince must accommodate a large number of people, it should have rooms notable for their number and size. Whereas a private house, being intended for smaller groups or for individuals, should have rooms that are elegant rather than large. Then again in the former, even private quarters must have a regal character, as though public, since there is no part of a royal household into which the crowd will not spill; whereas in a private house, even in public quarters it is best to avoid giving the impression that in having it built the head of the family has looked any further than to his own needs.

In a royal household the quarters of the wife, the husband, and the servants should be kept quite distinct, and each should contain its own services and whatever might contribute to its grandeur, to prevent the number of servants in any one quarter from causing confusion; surely a difficult objective, and practically impossible under a single roof. Each should therefore be allocated its own zone and *area*, and accommodated within its own pavilion, with its own separate roof. Yet they should be linked by a covered walkway, so that when teams of domestics or servants are rushing to perform some task, they appear not as if summoned from some neighboring house, but as though stationed there at the ready. The prattling and noisy hordes of children and housemaids should be kept well away from the men, as should the servants with their uncleanliness.

The rooms used by the prince for receiving guests and for dining should be given the noblest setting. This may be achieved with an elevated position and a view over sea, hills, or broad landscape. The apartments of his wife

should be kept entirely separate from those of the prince, except for the most private rooms and the chamber containing the marriage bed, which should be common to both. Their quarters should be reached from the outside by the same door, guarded by a single keeper. Any further differences between the apartments of a prince and those of a private citizen belong more to the latter and will be dealt with in the appropriate place.[12]

Another characteristic common to the houses of princes is this: aside from their individual private requirements, they should all have an entrance off a military road, and especially access to a river or the sea; then there should be a generous reception area, serving as a vestibule, to receive ambassadors and distinguished company arriving by coach or on horse. ◆

3 -72v There should be roofs and colonnades, in my opinion, not only for humans but also for beasts, to protect them from sun and rain. A portico, walkway, promenade, or whatever, is most welcome by the vestibule, where young men who are waiting for the elders to return from conversation with the prince may practice at jumping, playing ball,[13] throwing quoits, and wrestling. Then before the innermost rooms should be an atrium or hall, where clients can await the chance to discuss business with their patrons, and where the prince may sit on the tribunal and give judgment.[14] Then there should be a meeting room where the elders may gather to greet the prince and give their opinion when asked.

It might be convenient to have two such rooms, one for summer and one for winter. The advanced age of the elders must be taken into account, and consideration given to their comfort, so that there is nothing detrimental to their health and not the least impediment to prevent their debating and making decisions so long as reason and time demand.

I find in Seneca that Graccus, followed by Livius Drusus, was the first not to grant everyone an audience at once, but to divide up the people, and receive some in private, some in company with others, and some en masse, thus distinguishing close friends from secondary acquaintances.[15] If you are wealthy enough, you may prefer to have a number of different doors; these will enable you to dismiss your visitors in a different part from where you had earlier received them, and to exclude any whom you do not wish to receive, without causing offense.

Watchtowers should stand out above the building, to make any disturbances easier to trace.

These are the features that they have in common. But this is how they differ: A royal palace should be sited in the city center, should be of easy access, and should be gracefully decorated, elegant, and refined, rather than ostentatious. But that of a tyrant, being a fortress rather than a house, should be positioned where it is neither inside nor outside the city. Further,