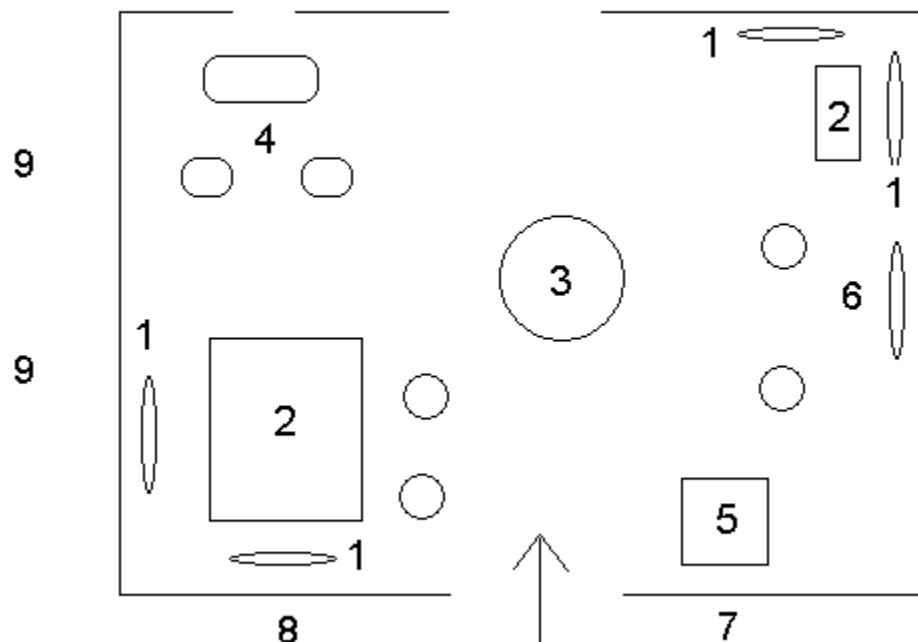


BALZAC's ROOM (15 E)



You are entering the eastern side of the house. Until the late 18th century there was here a suite of rooms without any corridor. So one had to cross Mr X's and Mrs Y's rooms to go to one's own room. It was not until the 19th century that the corridor, which you have just taken, was made. The room in which you are now was redecorated at the same time: one discovers the cosy and homely style of Louis-Philip, "the Citizen King" (1830-1848). Solid mahogany furniture was preferred to the gold of the Empire style: sober comfort and family intimacy became the rule of the day. This atmosphere is very noticeable in the way the characters are painted. They seem to come out of a novel by Balzac. They represent the Guillaumot dynasty. A daughter married a contractor from the Central Massif, Jean Lagarde. They moved up to Paris where their business thrived by participating in the reconstruction of the city under Hausmann, and hence they entered the upper middle class.

- (1) Portraits of the Guillaumot family (the parents and their two children).
- (2) Bed and chairs in Louis-Philip style; two opaline lamps on a chest of drawers in the same style.
- (3) A globe, where Belgium is still part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and where the region going from Texas up to California belongs to Mexico.

- (4) The dolls drawing room testifies to the new importance of children in the family.
- (5) A writing desk where one used to keep the accounts standing up.
- (6) The mantelpiece was nicely centred until the construction of the corridor reduced the width of the room.

On the mantelpiece, photos of the last five Dukes of Beaufort-Spontin.

Some of the photos (those from the 19th century) come from Freÿr, the others (those from the 20th century) come from Kainach - Styria (south-eastern Austria), the current residence of the Duke of Beaufort.

During the Napoleonic era, even though France annexed our country, the Beauforts remained faithful to the Habsburgs. Facing the threat of seizure by Fouché, the Beauforts sold half of their properties in the region, and bought instead land in Austria-Hungary (Weinern and Petschau). It became their second country after Franz-Joseph conferred on them the title of Serene Highness, and became their unique country at the end of the 19th century after they sold Florennes castle.

The bonds that attached the Beauforts to Freÿr, as evidenced by the letters exchanged until 1914, became loose after the First World War and came to a halt after the Second. But should we speak of World Wars or rather European Civil Wars?

The relationship was restored a few years ago, as evidenced by this set of photos.

In the corridor, you will discover:

- (7) A portrait of Odette Lagarde (Paris 1890 - Brussels 1956), granddaughter of Jean Lagarde and wife of Humbert of Laubespain. She is surrounded by her two children, Gilda (Paris 1919 - Yvoir 1987) and John (Paris 1922 – Freÿr 2008). She looks sad because her husband has just passed away (1929).
- (8) A portrait of Benedict XIII (1649-1730), third pope of the Orsini family, who was related to the Beaufort-Spontins. An ascetic person (look at his face), he tried to reform the manners of the Italian clergy, but he was not gifted at governing and left the reins of power to the somewhat disreputable Cardinal Coscia, who emptied the Vatican's coffers for his own benefit.
- (9) Two charming landscape paintings from the Gilles Neyts school (1623-1687).