

## 9 | Many Nations, One Night?

### Historical Aspects of the Night in the Roman Empire

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### Historicizing Ancient Nights

Forty years have passed since sociologist Murray Melbin published his article “Night as Frontier” drawing attention to historical aspects of the night in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and thus setting the foundations for a historical research of the night. Observing that nighttime activities increased as the settlement of new regions came to an end in the nineteenth century, he argued that the night was gradually perceived as another kind of frontier, as an area that should be colonized.<sup>1</sup> A few years later (1983), Wolfgang Schivelbusch’s *Lichtblicke: Zur Geschichte der künstlichen Helligkeit im 19. Jahrhundert* discussed the dramatic impact of a technological change – artificial lighting that expanded nighttime activities – on the society, culture, and economy of nineteenth-century Europe.<sup>2</sup> In the decades that followed, especially after the turn of the century, historical research has studied significant aspects of the night in medieval and Early Modern Europe, in the Ottoman Empire, and in the modern world,<sup>3</sup> focusing on phenomena such as crime, policing, and the maintenance of order, witchcraft and Christian piety, debating, feasting, and entertaining at the royal courts, the rise of street lighting, differences between city and countryside, the emergence of new forms of entertainment, and the relation between gender and nocturnal activities.<sup>4</sup> Although

<sup>1</sup> Melbin 1978. A monographic treatment of the subject in Melbin 1987.

<sup>2</sup> English translation: Schivelbusch 1988.

<sup>3</sup> Delattre 2000; Borchhardt-Birbaumer 2003; Ekirch 2005; Bronfen 2008; Cabantoux 2009; Koslofsky 2011; Bourdin (ed.) 2013; Wishnitzer 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Crime and policing: Delattre 2000: 136–43, 268–324, 454–67; Ekirch 2005: 75–84; Cabantoux 2009: 159–90, 229–44; Koslofsky 2011: 128–56. Magic and religion: Cabantoux 2009: 69–82, 135–7, 191–227; Koslofsky 2011: 28–90, 247–51. Nightlife in royal courts: Ekirch 2005: 210–17; Koslofsky 2011: 90–127. Street lighting, gas, and electricity: Delattre 2000: 79–119; Ekirch 2005: 67–74; Cabantoux 2009: 249–62; Koslofsky 2011: 128–56. City vs. countryside: Cabantoux 2009: 245–9; Koslofsky 2011: 198–235. Entertainment: Schivelbusch 1988: 191–221; Delattre 2000: 147–204; Ekirch 2005: 213–17; Cabantoux 2009: 282–9; Koslofsky 2011: 93–103; Triolaire 2013. Gender: Ekirch 2005: 65–6, 220–2; Koslofsky 2011: 174–97.

certain aspects of the night, such as the *symposion*, dreaming, nocturnal rites, and sexuality, had long attracted the interest of Classical scholars, only in recent years have ancient historians and philologists, and to a much lesser extent archaeologists and art historians, more systematically turned their attention to what happened in the Greco-Roman world between sunset and sunrise, also at dusk and at dawn, and what perceptions and stereotypes are connected with the night.<sup>5</sup> Subjects that have been treated in this process include sleep, sleeplessness, dreaming, and supernatural assaults,<sup>6</sup> religious practices and incubation in sanctuaries,<sup>7</sup> the night as the setting of narratives and images,<sup>8</sup> nocturnal violence and safety measures,<sup>9</sup> artificial light,<sup>10</sup> private and public banquets,<sup>11</sup> and nocturnal writing and epigraphy.<sup>12</sup>

An important methodological issue in the historical study of the night is the fact that the 'night' is a marked word; it is a term that carries special social and cultural connotations, giving emphasis to a statement and enhancing emotional display.<sup>13</sup> The function of the night as an enhancer of emotions influences the representation of the night in texts; certain aspects – especially, sex, danger, violence, and supernatural phenomena – are overrepresented over more mundane subjects such as resting or working (fishing, watering the fields, going to the market, etc.). As a 'marked' interval of time, the night has been enduringly associated with a certain set of perceptions: It is intimately linked with fear, anxiety, and erotic desire; it is associated with death and the communication between mortals and the gods, the living and the dead; and it plays a great part in the creation of a sense of togetherness.<sup>14</sup> Despite the difficulties and distortions emerging from universal and diachronic perceptions of the night, one may still observe changes triggered by a variety of factors. The clearest changes

<sup>5</sup> Becker 2013 (night and darkness). Collections of essays: Scioli and (eds.) 2010; Chaniotis 2018a; Ker and Wessels (eds.) 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Sleep: Sorabella 2010; Nissin 2015, 118–9. Sleeplessness: Sacerdoti 2014. Dreaming: Harris 2009; Johnston 2010; Casali 2010; Corbeil 2010; Graf 2010; Kanaan 2010; Näf 2010. Incubation: Renberg 2010 and 2015; Harrison 2013. Supernatural assaults: Spaeth 2010;

<sup>7</sup> Religion: Patera 2010; Paleothodoros 2010; Pirenne-Delforge 2018; Carlà-Uhink 2018; Renberg 2006 and 2017; von Ehrenheim 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Casali 2010 and 2018; Kanaan 2010; Mylonopoulos 2018; De Temmerman 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Dowden 2010; Chaniotis 2017; Casali 2018; Mylonopoulos 2018.

<sup>10</sup> Dossey 2018; Wilson 2018.

<sup>11</sup> Dunbabin 2003; Vössing 2004; Stein-Hölkeskamp 2005; Nadeau 2010; Schnurbusch 2011; König 2012; Wecowski 2014; Donahue 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Writing: Ker 2004 and McGill 2014. Epigraphy of the night: Chaniotis 2019. I note that the evidence for orality in erotic graffiti in Pompeii (Wachter 1998) suggests that they were written during the night.

<sup>13</sup> Detailed discussion in Chaniotis 2017 and 2018b. <sup>14</sup> Chaniotis 2018b, 2018c, and 2019.

can be detected in the world of the Greek cities from roughly the mid fourth century BCE to the late second century CE. A close study of the documentary evidence – inscriptions and papyri – reveals a significant increase in nocturnal religious activities and ‘free time activities’ – visiting baths and gymnasia, and attending private and public dinners.<sup>15</sup> The intensive warfare in the period between Alexander and Actium and the increased nighttime activities in cities, often connected with the presence of women in sanctuaries and public spaces after sunset, forced civic authorities to address in a more systematic manner the perennial problem of nocturnal safety. The principal factors that had an impact on how the night was experienced and lived in Hellenistic cities and in the Roman East were the continuous wars, the mobility of persons that contributed to the growth of voluntary associations and their nocturnal conviviality, the popularity of mystery cults, the existence of incubation sanctuaries, and the financial contributions of benefactors.<sup>16</sup> The part played by advancements in technology and science was more limited. This general trend, visible in Hellenistic cities and continually growing in the Imperial period, reached its peak in the big urban centers of Late Antiquity. As Leslie Dossey has argued,<sup>17</sup> one may observe in the cities of the Roman East a clear shift towards late hours for dining, bathing, and routine activities, not only for religious celebrations. This shift increased the awareness of safety issues and ultimately contributed to the spread of street lighting.

Understandably, the attempts to sketch a ‘history of the night’ in the Hellenistic World, the Roman East, and Late Antiquity that I summarized here do not consider local peculiarities and possible short-term developments. Comparing nighttime cultures in the Mediterranean territories of the Roman Empire is an important task. However, it is severely impeded by the imbalance in the source material. There is no Pompeii in Asia Minor; private documents in papyri and ostraka survive only in Egypt and, in limited numbers, in Israel and Syria; civic honorific decrees for benefactors are a phenomenon connected with the civic traditions of Greece and Asia Minor; we only have limited narrative sources about North Africa, Gaul, or Spain; the evidence from Rome is shaped by its role as an imperial capital and the overwhelming presence of the emperor, and so on. This imbalance renders comparisons a hazardous undertaking. The scope of this chapter, which is not based on a systematic study of all available sources, is very limited. I will examine the extent to which the creation of an empire of many nations contributed to convergences in nightlife.

<sup>15</sup> Chaniotis 2018b and 2018c. <sup>16</sup> Chaniotis 2017 and 2018c. <sup>17</sup> Dossey 2018.

## The Realities behind the Nocturnal Stereotypes

The representation of the night in the textual sources is dominated by stereotypes shaped by diachronic and universal experiences. The darkness challenges vision and alerts other senses, especially listening, touching, and smelling. Emotional responses are no less enhanced than sensory. This was already known to Achilles Tatius (second century CE). In his novel *Leukippe and Kleitophon* he presents the protagonist explaining how all wounds are more painful by night and all our emotions burst out – the grief of those who mourn, the anxieties of those who are troubled, the fears of those who are in danger, and the fiery desire of those who are in love.<sup>18</sup> A man in the Arsinoite nome, a contemporary of Achilles Tatius, describes his torments when his wife abandoned him with these words: ‘I want you to know that ever since you left me I have been in mourning, weeping at night and lamenting during the day.’<sup>19</sup> In the late first century CE, Staius addressed his wife in almost exactly the same way – asking her why she sorrows by day and fetches painful sighs in the night, passing it with him in sleepless worry.<sup>20</sup> And a metrical graffito in the domus Tiberiana in Rome describes how the soul finds no peace as burning erotic desire chases sleep away.<sup>21</sup> Because of the night’s emotive impact, the explicit reference to the night in a narrative was often intended to magnify emotional arousal.<sup>22</sup> This is why we have direct references to the fact that an earthquake occurred during the night in Greek and Latin inscriptions.<sup>23</sup>

Consequently, references to the night in literary sources, inscriptions, and papyri are likely to be influenced by the function of the night as an

<sup>18</sup> Ach. Tat. 1.6.2. Discussed by De Temmerman 2014: 183–4 and 2018: 262.

<sup>19</sup> BGU III 846: γινώσκεις σε θέλω ἀφ’ ὧς ἐξήλθες ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ πένθος ἡγοῦμένη νυκτὸς κλαίων ἡμέρας δὲ πενθῶν.

<sup>20</sup> *Silvae* 3.5.1–2: *quid mihi maesta die, sociis quid noctibus, uxor, anxia pervigili ducis suspiria cura?* On love-induced insomnia, see De Temmerman 2018, 262–4, 268–72.

<sup>21</sup> *Carmina Latina Epigraphica* 943: *Vis nulla est animi, non somnus claudit ocellos, noctes atque dies aestuat omnes amor.*

<sup>22</sup> Chaniotis 2017 and Casali 2018, for narratives of violence; De Temmerman 2018, for the nocturnal setting of episodes in novels.

<sup>23</sup> IG XII.8.92, Imbros, second /first century BCE: ὀρφναίην ἀνά νύκτα | τοὺς τρισσοὺς νέκυας σταθμὸς ἔθαψε δόμου. . . νύκτα δὲ πικροτάτην μεταδόρπιον ὑπνώσαντες | οἰκοῦμεν μέλαθρον Περσεφόνης ζοφερόν] (‘in the dark night the roof of the house buried the three dead . . . We slept a bitter night after dinner, and now we inhabit the dark palace of Persephone’); discussed in Chaniotis 2018b: 8. Cf. CIL VIII 17970a (AE 2009, 1771), Besseriani / Ad Maiores (Numidia), 267 CE: [post terrae motum] quod [patria]e Pate[rno et] | Arcesilao co(n)s(ulibus) hora noc[tis - - somno fessis contigit]; cf. CIL VIII 2481.

intensifier of empathy. Nevertheless, stereotypes reflect real experiences. References to nocturnal activities in Juvenal's satires of the late first and early second century CE are a case in point. His nocturnal themes cover a limited thematic range that principally concerns sex, danger, and entertainment. There are references to nighttime lovers and the nocturnal escapades of Messalina in brothels;<sup>24</sup> to noisy drunks and to a wealthy woman who goes to the baths at night, keeping her dinner guests waiting and overcome by boredom and hunger; to parasites that party all night long;<sup>25</sup> to a millionaire who, terrified for his valuable belongings, keeps a team of slaves watching all night;<sup>26</sup> and to such a variety of dangers, that

if you go out to dinner without making a will, you might be regarded as careless, unaware of those tragic events that occur: there are as many opportunities for you to die, as there are open windows watching you, while you walk by at night.<sup>27</sup>

Tiles can fall on one's head from the highest roof; a cracked and leaky pot plunges down, pots are emptied over you – not to mention the thieves.<sup>28</sup> And when the Pontine Marsh or the Gallinarian Forest are temporarily rendered safe by an armed patrol, the ruffian vagabonds skip out of there and head for Rome.<sup>29</sup> Only the wealthy can afford to walk with a long retinue of attendants, and plenty of torches and lamps of bronze; they despise anyone who, like Juvenal, walks by the light of the moon or the flickering light of a lamp.<sup>30</sup> Those who do not fall into the group of the drunk, the oversexed, the terrified, and the dangerous are the literati, whose identity is shaped precisely by their lack of sleep and their nocturnal dedication to letters: They are the poets scribbling sublime verses all night in their tiny attics, and the young men urged by their fathers to quit sleep and turn to their wax tablets and the study of law.<sup>31</sup>

Although Juvenal's verses are clearly dominated by stereotypes, they still evince certain historical dimensions of the night and reflect realities. The night is experienced in a different manner by the poor and the rich, the urbanites and the country folk, the young and the old, the men and the women, the masters and the attendants, the educated and the common people, the owners of wealth and those who want to relieve them of it. The prevailing feelings are those of fear and erotic desire.

<sup>24</sup> Juvenal, *Satire* 3.12; 6.115–32.

<sup>25</sup> Juvenal, *Satire* 3.232–8; 6.419–29; 14.46. On drinking cf. Martial, *Epigrams* 1.28, 11.104, 12.12.

<sup>26</sup> Juvenal, *Satire* 14.305–9. <sup>27</sup> Juvenal, *Satire* 3.272–5. Cf. 3.197f.

<sup>28</sup> Juvenal, *Satire* 3.268–72, 276–80. <sup>29</sup> Juvenal, *Satire* 3.302–8. <sup>30</sup> Juvenal, *Satire* 3.282–8.

<sup>31</sup> Juvenal, *Satire* 7.27–9; 14.189–95. On nocturnal writing see Ker 2004, McGill 2014, and Wilson 2020.

Despite the lack of street lighting in Rome,<sup>32</sup> there is a lot of traffic in Juvenal's verses: people returning from dinner parties or going to the baths, guards patrolling dangerous places, and criminals ambushing inattentive victims. The first impression, that Juvenal's people are mostly engaged in leisurely activities – dining and drinking, visiting the baths, and having sex – is deceiving. Apart from the usual practitioners of darkness – the criminals – we encounter a young man studying the law, slaves guarding private houses and accompanying their masters in the dark streets, and night watches patrolling dangerous places; and of course the dinner parties, the brothels, and the baths presuppose not only those who enjoy themselves but also cooks, musicians, prostitutes, and bath attendants.

Juvenal's references to nighttime activities are shaped by the themes of his poetry, exactly as centuries earlier Sappho's praise of the potential offered by the night for erotic encounters and celebrations was shaped by the themes of her poetry.<sup>33</sup> But they are also shaped by the historical context: As we can judge from other sources, the background of the nocturnal scenes painted by Juvenal is the contemporary awareness that the night is more than the privileged territory of criminals, conspirators, magicians, and uncontrolled, ecstatic, or secretive worshippers as it had been in the Republican period.<sup>34</sup> One generation earlier, in Seneca's times, a certain Sextus Papinius was known as *lychnobius* ('living under the light of the lamp'), because he had reversed the functions of day and night. He went over his accounts in the third hour of the night, exercised his voice in the sixth, went out for a drive in the eighth, visited the baths before dawn, and dined in the early morning.<sup>35</sup> Admittedly, such a behavior was noted as an abnormality, exactly as an imaginary city in Iberia, described by Antonius Diogenes in his novel *The Incredible Things beyond Thoule*, where people could see during the night and were blind during the day.<sup>36</sup> But the *lychnobius*' anomalous timetable still required a bath that was accessible before dawn. Surely, not every bath was accessible in the night,<sup>37</sup> but both Seneca and Juvenal (see note 25) make clear that some

<sup>32</sup> On the scarcity of evidence for street lighting before Late Antiquity, see Dossey 2018: 292–307 and Wilson 2018: 66–72.

<sup>33</sup> See Schlesier 2018.

<sup>34</sup> On the predominantly negative perception of the night in Republican Rome, see Carlà-Uhink 2018.

<sup>35</sup> Seneca, *Epist.* 122.15–16.

<sup>36</sup> A summary is provided by Photius, *Bibl.* 166. On the possible date, see Morgan 1985. I owe this reference to Jonathan Price.

<sup>37</sup> According to the *Historia Augusta*, it was Severus Alexander (222–35 CE) who expanded the opening hours of public baths beyond sunset by supplying them with oil for the lamps (SHA, *Alex. Sev.* 23.7).

were. We can neither generalize from such references nor quantify the evidence because of the imbalances of the source material available. Questions such as ‘Were there more people awake during the night in Imperial Rome than in Republican Rome?’ or ‘Was there more nightlife in the Roman East than, say, in Roman Spain?’ are meaningless. The historical question that one can ask with a higher chance of a response is whether the creation of an empire and the social and cultural forces that this process unleashed had an impact on the night and contributed to a nocturnal *koine* in the Roman Empire. In this chapter I will consider two important factors of convergence in the Roman Empire: the emperor and his administration, and the increased mobility of people, cultural practices, ideas, cults, and rites. The establishment of the Principate and the emperor’s bundle of powers had an impact on the administration and the society of Imperium. How did it affect the nightlife of the population in Rome and the provinces? With this question I am not concerned with the extreme behavior of some Roman emperors, such as Nero’s idea to burn Christians as human torches in 64 CE,<sup>38</sup> or Elagabal’s reversal of the functions of day and night, criticized by the author of the *Historia Augusta*.<sup>39</sup> I mean primarily the impetus for policing measures and celebrations after sunset.

## Policing the Night

Although night guards are attested as early as our earliest textual sources,<sup>40</sup> the proliferation of evidence for *nyktohylakes* in the eastern provinces, especially in Asia Minor Egypt, and Palestine,<sup>41</sup> and for *vigiles* in the western provinces (see note 50) is likely to be connected, at least in part, with the attention given by Augustus to this matter. In 6 CE he established a regular service of *vigiles*, replacing the earlier system of *tresviri nocturni*,<sup>42</sup> and according to Appian he had already introduced *nyktohylakes* by 36/35 BCE.<sup>43</sup> In a letter to Knidos (6 BCE), the princeps explained his interest in public and private safety during the night. The letter concerns a man accused of the death of an enemy who, alongside some companions, had been harassing the accused man for three nights; when a slave tried to

<sup>38</sup> Tac. *Annals* 15.44.2–5. <sup>39</sup> *SHA*, Elagabalus 28.6.

<sup>40</sup> Chaniotis 2017. On night watches in the Republican period: Nippel 1995: 37, 67.

<sup>41</sup> Greece: Apuleius, *Metam.* 3.3 (*praefectus nocturnae custodiae* in Hypata). Fuhrmann 2012: 57. Asia Minor: Brélaz 2005: 82–3. Egypt: Hennig 2002: 285–8; Homoth-Kuhs 2005: 66–7; Fuhrmann 2012: 77–8, 85–6, 130–1. Palestine: Sperber 1970.

<sup>42</sup> Fuhrmann 2012: 116–18. On *vigiles* in Rome, see Nippel 1995: 96–9; Sablayrolles 1996.

<sup>43</sup> Appian, *BC* 5.132.547; cf. Fuhrmann 2012: 101–2.



empty a chamber pot on the assailants who were besieging the house, the pot fell and killed one of them. Augustus unambiguously expresses his indignation that someone was put on trial for defending his own house during the night.<sup>44</sup>

I learned that Phileinos son of Chrysippos had attacked the house of Eubulos and Tryphera for three nights in succession with violence and in the manner of a siege . . . I am amazed that you do not show indignation against those who deserved to suffer every punishment, since they attacked another's house three times at night with violence and force and were destroying the common security of all.

Beyond this general interest in security that may be attributed to influence exercised by imperial authority, there were local peculiarities. For instance, a regulation limiting the selling of wine during the night is only attested in Roman Palestine. The *Leviticus Rabba* narrates the following incident:<sup>45</sup>

It happened once that a certain man, who used regularly to drink twelve xestes of wine a day, one day drank [only] eleven. He tried to go to sleep, but sleep would not come to him. [So] he got up in the dark and went to the wine-shop, and said to [the wine-seller]: 'Sell me one xestes of wine.' [The latter] replied to him: 'I cannot, for it is dark.' He said to him: 'If you do not give [it] me, sleep will not come to me.' [To which the wine-seller] replied: 'Just now the watchmen have passed from here, and I am afraid of the watchmen and can [therefore] not give [it] to you.' [The man] raised his eyes and saw a hole in the door. [So] he said to him: 'Hold the bottle up to this hole; you pour from the inside and I shall drink from the outside.' He was insistent. What did the wine-seller do? He put the spout [of the bottle] through the crack in the door and poured from the inside, while the other drank from the outside. As soon as he finished [drinking], he fell asleep in a corner in front of the door. The watchmen passed by him before the door, and thinking him a thief, beat him.

We cannot always determine whether policing measures were taken on a permanent basis, or only temporarily, in order to meet an emergency. Whether they were effective or not depended on numbers, budget, and competence.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> *I.Knidos* 34: ἔγνων Φιλεῖνον τὸν Χρυσίππου τρεῖς νύκτας συνεχῶς ἐπεληλυθότα τῆι οἰκίᾳ τῆι Εὐβούλου καὶ Τρυφέρας μεθ' ὕβρεως καὶ τρόπῳ τινὶ πολιορκίας . . . ἐθαύμαζον δ' ἄν, πῶς . . . μὴ κατὰ τῶν ἀξίων πᾶν ὀτιοῦν παθεῖν, ἐπ' ἄλλο[τρία]ν οἰκίαν νύκτωρ μεθ' ὕβρεως καὶ βίας τρις ἐπεληλυ[θό]των καὶ τὴν κοινὴν ἀπάντων ὑμῶν ἀσφάλειαν [ἀναι]ροῦντων ἀγανακτοῦντες. For an analysis of the legal aspects of this text, see Karabatsou 2010.

<sup>45</sup> Sperber 1970: 257–8.

<sup>46</sup> See the complaints of night guards in Oxyrrhynchus: *P.Oxy.* VII 1033 (392 CE); cf. Hennig 2002: 285–9; Fuhrmann 2012: 85–6.



Another area in which impulses for safety came from Imperial Rome was firefighting. The city of Rome had fire squads,<sup>47</sup> and at the time of Cassius Dio, the guards of apartment blocks in Rome carried bells (*kodonophorein*) in order to signal alarm in case of an emergency.<sup>48</sup> Pliny was shocked to find out that when a fire destroyed private houses as well as the Gerosusia and the Temple of Isis in Nikomedeia, the city had no fire engines, no buckets, no other implements to fight the fire. It was at his initiative that these would be procured.<sup>49</sup> In his letter to Trajan he alludes to the existence of guilds of firefighters in other cities, admitting that under certain conditions such guilds presented a threat. *Praefecti vigilum* existed in some cities of the western provinces; firefighting duties were also undertaken by *collegia*.<sup>50</sup> Of course, firefighting is not exclusively a matter of nocturnal security, but it is instructive with regard to the impact of imperial authority and administration on security measures in the provinces.

An issue related to public order is the use of water of public facilities by private individuals. An inscription of Stratonikeia (ca. mid first century BCE) lists the people who had acquired the right to use the water of a fountain 'day and night'.<sup>51</sup> Although the management of water resources had been a concern of Greek cities since early times,<sup>52</sup> this is the earliest attestation of a regulation concerning access to water during the night. The aim must have been to avoid the use of water resources without the payment of a fee and also to avoid conflicts. The explicit reference to the night is related not to the possibilities offered by darkness for illicit actions but perhaps rather to the preference to use water for irrigation after sunset. This certainly is the case in two documents of the Imperial period that explicitly refer to nocturnal access to water, showing a similar concern for nocturnal activities. An inscription from Tibur records the water rights of two landowners *ab hora noctis . . . ad horam diei*.<sup>53</sup> A contract of sale in the Babatha Archive (Maoza) determines the exact time of the night that irrigation of a piece of land was allowed (120 CE).<sup>54</sup>

Nocturnal security is a concern as old as humankind. The evidence summarized here reveals, however, an increased awareness of this issue. The similarity of practices and the uniform terminology suggest a certain

<sup>47</sup> Fuhrmann 2012: 130–1. <sup>48</sup> Cassius Dio 54.4.4. Cf. Fuhrmann 2012: 57.

<sup>49</sup> Plin. *Letters* 10.33.

<sup>50</sup> Fuhrmann 2012: 57, note 41. For firefighting duties undertaken by *collegia*, see, e.g., Kneissl 1994 and van Nijf 2002.

<sup>51</sup> *I.Stratonikeia* 1508; *SEG LV* 1145; for the interpretation, see van Bremen 2011.

<sup>52</sup> Collin-Bouffriet 2008. <sup>53</sup> *CIL XIV* 3676; Eck 2008: 229. <sup>54</sup> *P.Yadin* 7; Eck 2008: 236.

degree of convergence. A variety of factors, ranging from the imperial ideology of security and the existence of an empire-wide administration to the movement of Roman officials and, with them, of experiences and practices (as revealed by Pliny's letters), may have contributed to this.

## Emulating the Imperial Generosity and Imperial Afterlife

The display of imperial *munificentia* is another new development with an impact on the nocturnal cityscape. It was thanks to the initiative and generosity of emperors that public banquets and spectacles that in earlier periods ended around sunset now continued into the night. In the capital of the Empire, the emperors organized public banquets that allowed for the participation of representatives of different classes. Although these inclusive events could momentarily create the illusion of equality, they ultimately confirmed social barriers by explicitly referring to the participants' unequal social and legal statuses, making special spatial arrangements, and providing varied portions to different groups.<sup>55</sup>

The secular games in Rome included nocturnal performances. The most magnificent celebration was staged by Augustus in late May/early June of 17 BCE.<sup>56</sup> In accordance with an oracle, the people were to enjoy festivities and banquets 'day and night without interruption'.<sup>57</sup> A sacrifice to the Moirai in the Campus Martius took place in the evening of May 31, followed by torchlight entertainment that was presented on a stage without auditorium seats for the spectators. A select group of 110 wives of citizens held a procession and a ritual banquet symbolically attended by the gods, whose images were placed at the site; young people were allowed to attend if accompanied by an adult relative.<sup>58</sup> This model was followed by later emperors.<sup>59</sup>

Although Domitian's private entertainments were purportedly never prolonged after sunset,<sup>60</sup> the emperor also organized nocturnal banquets that drew large numbers from all *ordines*.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, his *munera* in Rome included hunts of wild animals and gladiatorial combats that continued into the night, while the circus was illuminated with artificial light (*venationes gladiatorum et noctibus ad lychnuchos*).<sup>62</sup>

<sup>55</sup> D'Arms 1990. <sup>56</sup> Beacham 1999: 114–19.

<sup>57</sup> Zosimus 2.6: ἡμᾶσι δ' ἔστω | νυξὶ τ' ἐπασσυτέρησι θεοπρέπτους κατὰ θώκους | παμπληθῆς ἄγυρις.

<sup>58</sup> Beacham 1999: 116. For these nocturnal events, see Suet., *Aug.* 31.

<sup>59</sup> For Septimius Severus, see Rantala 2013 and 2017; cf. *CIL VI* 32323 = *ILS* 5050.

<sup>60</sup> Suet., *Domitian* 21. <sup>61</sup> D'Arms 1990: 309. <sup>62</sup> Suet., *Domitian* 4.1.

Such imperial events, experienced by huge audiences, talked of and commemorated in texts, may have served as a model for local benefactors, naturally on a smaller scale.<sup>63</sup> Public dinners for the entire population, held in connection with religious festivals, were not a novelty in Greek culture.<sup>64</sup> From the late Hellenistic period on, they were among the events that offered members of the elite an opportunity to show off their generosity by extending invitations to a broad cross section of the population – male citizens, married and unmarried women, freedmen and slaves, foreign residents, and the people of the countryside; this trend continued into the Imperial period.<sup>65</sup> Traditionally, public banquets took place in the afternoon and were completed before sunset, but in the Imperial period, the continuation of festivities into the night was not uncommon.<sup>66</sup> For instance, in second-century CE Bithynia, inscriptions listing benefactors regularly include the purposes for which money had been offered: drinking parties (*oinoposion*) and concerts (*symphonia*). The lighting of lamps (*lychnapsia*) suggests nocturnal feasts.<sup>67</sup> In Stratonikeia (second century CE), a priest and his wife

offered a complete banquet in the gymnasium to all the citizens, the foreigners, and the slaves and [- -]; they also offered a banquet to all the women, those of citizen status, the free women, and the slaves [- -]; . . . they organized a contest at their own expense, paying for the most celebrated shows, throughout the day and for a large part of the night.<sup>68</sup>

Such services, unattested before the Imperial period and possibly influenced by imperial largesse, remained an extraordinary phenomenon.

An imperial impulse of an entirely different nature is the influence that the apotheosis of the emperor had on the widespread perception of death as an ascent to the skies. In the Imperial period, a significant number of

<sup>63</sup> Public banquets in the Roman Empire: Dunbabin 2003: 72–9, 82–4, 89–102; Donahue 2017 (with discussion of the role played by benefactors); Chaniotis 2018b: 17–22.

<sup>64</sup> Schmitt Pantel 1992: esp. 260–89.

<sup>65</sup> Late Hellenistic period: Schmitt Pantel 1992: 380–408. Imperial period: Stavrianopoulou 2009; Chaniotis 2018b.

<sup>66</sup> Stein-Hölkeskamp 2005: 112–16; Chaniotis 2018b: 20–2.

<sup>67</sup> Οἰνοπόσιον: TAM IV.1.16 LL. 7, 9; 17 LL. 4, 11, 15, 16, 21; συμφωνία: TAM IV.1.16 L. 14; 17 LL. 6, 12; λυχναψία: TAM IV.1.16 LL. 4; 17 LL. 5, 21. See Chaniotis 2018b: 21–2, for further evidence.

<sup>68</sup> *IStratonikeia* 254 lines 4–10: [ἔδεξιῶσαντο ἐν τῷ γυμνασίῳ πάντας τοὺς τε πολίτας καὶ ξένους καὶ δούλο]ς δειπνῶ τελείῳ καὶ τοὺς [- -]αν, ἐδείπνισαν δὲ ὁμοίως [- - τὰς γυναῖκας πᾶσα]ς τὰς τε πολειτίδας καὶ ἐλευθέρους καὶ δούλας - -] . . . ἐπετέλε[σαν δὲ ἀγῶνα ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων μετὰ] καὶ πρωτευόντων ἀκροαμάτων δι’ ἄλλης ἡμέρας ἄχρι πολ[λ]οῦ μέρους τῆς νυκτός.

grave inscriptions report that a deceased individual had become a star.<sup>69</sup> An epigram from Albanum in the early third century CE presents a boy addressing his father from the grave:

Cry no longer, sweetest father, and no longer feel pain, carrying in your heart inconsolable grief. For subterranean Hades is not hiding me under the earth, but instead an eagle, Zeus' assistant, snatched me away, when I was enjoying the fire and the torch, to take my place next to the morning star and the beautiful evening star.<sup>70</sup>

We can imagine the parents turning their gaze to the sky at dusk and dawn, looking for their son or daughter among the stars. Such concepts gave the starry sky a new quality.

## Cultural Transfer and the Nocturnal Cityscapes of the Empire

The degree of homogenization and persistence of local peculiarities differed greatly in the Roman Empire, depending on a variety of factors that cannot be discussed here. But all differences notwithstanding, we can still observe certain common features, of which I only mention two that had an impact on the nightlife of urban centers: the diffusion of voluntary associations and nocturnal religious celebrations.

Private clubs are already attested in Athens in the early sixth century BCE, and *sodalitates* are mentioned in the Twelve Tables.<sup>71</sup> But the spread of voluntary associations in every major urban center is a phenomenon first of the Hellenistic period, for the Greek world, and of the Imperial period for the Empire.<sup>72</sup> In the main urban centers of both East and West, guilds became a primary mediator of social and economic interaction. Private cult

<sup>69</sup> Imperial apotheosis: Domenicucci 1996. The *katasterismos* of ordinary people: Wypustek 2012: 48–57.

<sup>70</sup> SEG XXXI 846: Greek: [οὐ γ]άρ ὑποχθόνιος κατὰ γῆς Ἄϊδος με κέκευθε, | [ἀ]λλὰ Διὸς πάρεδρος ἀετὸς ἤρπασέ με | [πιρ]σῶ ὄμοῦ καὶ δάδι γεγηθότα, ἔνθα σύνεδρος | Φωσφόρω ἠδὲ καλῶ Ἑσπέρω ὄφρα πέλω. Latin: *sed [Iovis satelles] m[e aquila arripuit] facē [atque lampade] simul ga[udentem], hic v[icinus] Phospho[ro et pulcro] Hesperio [uti fiam]*. Cf. GV 1829 (Miletos, first/second century CE): αἰθέρα δ' ὀκταέτης κατιδῶν ἄστροις ἅμα λάμπεις | πατ κέρασ ὠλενίης Αἰγὸς ἀνερχόμενος ('eight years old, you gaze at the Ether, shining among the stars, you rise close to the horn of Capricorn and the elbow of Auriga').

<sup>71</sup> Associations in Solon's laws: Ustinova 2005: 183–5. In the Twelve Tables: *XII tab.* 8.27.

<sup>72</sup> A selection of recent studies for the Imperial period: Kloppenborg and Wilson 1996; van Nijf 1997; Dittmann-Schöne 2001; Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2002; Zimmermann 2002; Harland 2003; Baslez 2004; Nigdelis 2010; Fröhlich and Hamon 2013; Gabrielsen and Thomsen 2015; Verboven 2017. For representative collections of texts from the Roman East, see Kloppenborg and Ascough 2011; Harland 2014. For the Hellenistic period, see Chaniotis 2018c.

associations were also the basis of religious worship for larger groups within the urban populations than before the conquests of Alexander in the East and the Roman expansion in the West. Regular banqueting and convivial drinking were common activities of *koina* and *collegia*.<sup>73</sup> Some of these gatherings occurred after sunset. In Rome, the *leges conviviales* mentioned in literary sources defined rules for nocturnal drinking parties in connection with the Saturnalia. An example of such norms survives in the *lex Tappula* from Vercellae, a parody of a *plebiscitum*. The statutes are stated to have been approved in the eleventh hour of the night in a shrine of Hercules.<sup>74</sup> Hercules was also the divinity to whose worship an Athenian club of the second century CE was dedicated. Its officials, the *pannychistai* ('those who conduct service during the all-night celebration'), were possibly responsible for order during the club's nocturnal gatherings.<sup>75</sup>

As we can infer from member lists of associations, membership was often open to representatives of the lower social strata. Voluntary associations accepted foreigners, craftsmen, slaves, and in some cases women as members; of course, professional *koina* and *collegia* consisted of craftsmen and the representatives of various trades. With the diffusion of private associations, a nighttime activity typically associated with the propertied classes<sup>76</sup> was opened on specific days to larger groups of the population. The diffusion of the regular nocturnal conviviality of the private clubs coincides with – and was probably influenced by – conviviality in the circle of the Roman *nobilitas* and the imperial court.<sup>77</sup>

Although nocturnal religious ceremonies are not an innovation of the Hellenistic period, the Late Republic, or the Principate, their number certainly increased along with the diffusion of cults with a soteriological or initiatory aspect.<sup>78</sup> The main celebrations of a variety of religious groups were either nocturnal – enhancing emotional arousal, engendering feelings of exclusivity and a sense of identity – or took place just before dawn. The unprecedented connectivity created by the Empire favored the diffusion of

<sup>73</sup> E.g. Harland 2003: 57–61, 74–83; Dunbabin 2003: 72–3, 78, 93–100; Reiter 2005; McRae 2011; Harland 2014: 53–4, 271; Chaniotis 2018b: 15–17.

<sup>74</sup> *ILS* 8761 (first/second cent. CE); *AE* 1989, 331; Versnel 1994: 161–2.

<sup>75</sup> *SEG XXXI* 122 LL. 25–6: ἐὰν μὴ ὑπομένη ἢ μὴ θέλη παννυχιστῆς εἶναι λαχῶν (121/122 CE). See also *SEG XXXVI* 198.

<sup>76</sup> On the aristocratic nature of pre-Hellenistic symposia in Greece, see most recently Wecowski 2014, esp. 303–36; for Rome, see Stein-Hölkeskamp 2005: 34–111. On the expanded membership, see Harland 2003: 28–53.

<sup>77</sup> Banquets in the imperial court: Vössing 2004; Grandjean et (eds.) 2013. See also D'Arms 1990 and Dunbabin 2003: *passim*.

<sup>78</sup> Chaniotis 2018b: 23–34 and 2018c.

cults, religious practices, and religious ideas,<sup>79</sup> and can, therefore, be regarded as an important factor for the frequency of nocturnal rites. I cannot present here an inventory of such rites in the Empire, but a few examples may illustrate how cult transfer had an impact on the night.

Mystery cults are a case in point, since they are often associated with nocturnal rites and the conscious use of darkness and artificial light. This is known to have happened in Eleusis, one of the oldest and most revered mystery cults, already in the Archaic and Classical period and continued in later periods.<sup>80</sup> In the mid second century CE, the Eleusinian mysteries served as a model for the mystery cult of Glykon New Asklepios in Abonou Teichos, which included a sacred drama that took place during the night.<sup>81</sup>

The use of lamps was an important feature of Egyptian cults, and Achilles Tatius (second cent. CE) characterizes the Serapis festival of lights as the greatest spectacle that he had ever seen.<sup>82</sup> As the Egyptian cults spread in the Mediterranean, so did their nocturnal celebrations. Processions under torchlight (λαμποδεία) are attested in Athens, Delos, Priene, and Maroneia,<sup>83</sup> and in the tenth book of the *Metamorphoses* Apuleius describes nocturnal initiation rites associated with Isis.<sup>84</sup> We may attribute the introduction of the office of the *lychnaptria* – the female cult servant who lit the lamps – into the cult of Meter Theon in Leukopetra, near Beroia in Macedonia, and into the cult of Dionysus in Philippopolis to the emulation of Isiac practices.<sup>85</sup> Rites during the night are also attested in Samothrace, a sanctuary that in the Imperial period was visited by initiates from many different regions.<sup>86</sup>

Nocturnal ceremonies of an orgiastic nature were traditionally associated with the worship of Dionysus.<sup>87</sup> When introduced into Italy in the late third century BCE, they were met with suspicion by the Roman authorities and contained by the *senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus* of 186 BCE.<sup>88</sup> By

<sup>79</sup> Examples of the trendsetters for rituals in the Roman Empire: Chaniotis 2009.

<sup>80</sup> Light in the Eleusinian mysteries: Parisinou 2000: 67–71; Patera 2010. Nocturnal rites: e.g., *I. Didyma* 216 l. 20: ἐν νυχίοις Φερ[σεφ]ώνης τελετὰ[ῖς] (70 BCE); cf. *LEleusis* 515: ὄργια πάννυχτα (Eleusis, c. 170 CE); cf. *LEleusis* 175 (third century BCE); 250 l. 44 (c. 100 BCE); 515–16 (c. 170 CE).

<sup>81</sup> Lucian, *Alexander* 38–9. Discussion: Sfameni Gasparro 1999; Chaniotis 2002a.

<sup>82</sup> Lamps in the Egyptian cults: Aupert 2004; Podvin 2011, 2014, and 2015; Renberg 2016. The festival of Serapis: Ach. Tat. 5.2; Abdelwahed 2016.

<sup>83</sup> On the diffusion of Isiac cults: Bricault 2005. *Lampadeia*: Alvar 2007: 303 with note 389.

<sup>84</sup> Apuleius, *Metam.* XI 1–7, 20–1, 23–4. Cf. Griffiths 1975: 278.

<sup>85</sup> *Lychnaptriai* in the cult of Isis: *JG II*<sup>2</sup> 4771 (Athens, 120 CE). In Leukopetra: *I. Leukopetra* 39. In Philippopolis: *IGBulg III* 1, 1517 line 30 (ca. 241–4 CE).

<sup>86</sup> Cole 1984: 36–7. On the diverse origin of the initiates: Dimitrova 2008.

<sup>87</sup> Light in nocturnal Dionysiac celebrations: Parisinou 2000: 71–2, 118–23; Paleothodoros 2010.

<sup>88</sup> Pailler 1988. See also Carlà-Uhink 2018: 336–41.

the Imperial period, associations of Bacchic initiates were no longer regarded as a threat to safety, and were free to perform their nocturnal rites and celebrations.<sup>89</sup> Philo of Alexandria explicitly attributes to Dionysiac influence the introduction of nocturnal spiritual activities and wine consumption among the Jewish *therapeutai* in Egypt in the early first century CE.<sup>90</sup>

After the supper they hold the sacred vigil . . . They rise up all together and standing in the middle of the refectory (*symposion*) form themselves first into two choirs, one of men and one of women . . . Then they sing hymns to God composed of many measures and set to many melodies, sometimes chanting together, sometimes taking up the harmony antiphonally, hands and feet keeping time in accompaniment, and rapt with enthusiasm reproduce sometimes the lyrics of the procession, sometimes of the halt and of the wheeling and counter-wheeling of a choric dance. Then . . . having drunk as in the Bacchic rites of the strong wine of God's love they mix and both together become a single choir . . . Thus they continue till dawn, drunk with this drunkenness in which there is no shame.

An interesting feature of religiosity in the Imperial period is religious service at dusk and before sunrise, unattested in earlier periods. The custom of regular prayer at dawn is attested for the worshippers of Theos Hypsistos. An oracle of Apollo Klarios, associated with this cult, pronounced 'that aether is god who sees all, gazing upon whom you should pray at dawn looking towards the sunrise'.<sup>91</sup> An essential feature of the cult of Theos Hypsistos was the lighting of fire on altars and lamps.<sup>92</sup> For instance, a family in Magnesia on Sipylos dedicated to Theos Hypsistos an altar and a candelabra (λυχναψίαι).<sup>93</sup> Numerous bronze objects from the Roman East dated to the third century CE have been shown to be lamp hangers used in the cult of Theos Hypsistos (λύχνος κρεμαστός).<sup>94</sup> One of the few things that Pliny was able to discover about the Christians in the early second century CE is that they gathered to pray before dawn:

<sup>89</sup> A few examples: Lerna (*nyktelia*): Plut., *Moralia* 364 F and Paus. 2.37.5. Physkos (second century CE): *IG IX*<sup>2</sup>.1.670 (ἱερά νύξ). Thessalonike (first century CE): *IG X.2.1.259*; Nigdelis 2010: 15–16, 30, and 38 no. 12 (with the earlier bibliography).

<sup>90</sup> *On the Contemplative Life* 83–9 (transl. F. H. Colson, Loeb); quoted by Harland 2003: 72–3.

<sup>91</sup> SEG XXVII 933: αἰ[θ]έ[ρ]α πανδερκ[ῆ] θε]ὸν ἔννεπεν, εἰς ὃν ὀρώνας | εὐχέσθ' ἠώους πρὸς ἀνατολήν ἐσορῶ[ν]τα[ς]. Busine 2005: 35–40, 203–8, 423, with further bibliography.

<sup>92</sup> Ameling 1999. <sup>93</sup> TAM V.2.1400.

<sup>94</sup> Franken 2002. On the diffusion of the cult of Theos Hypsistos in the Empire, see most recently Mitchell 2010; the connection of this cult with the Jewish religion and the association of the *theosebeis* with it are still debated.



they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so. When this was over, it was their custom to depart and to assemble again to partake of food – but ordinary and innocent food.<sup>95</sup>

Regular ceremonies after sunset and before sunrise are also attested for the sanctuary of Asclepius in Epidaurus through a fragmentary inscription (second or third century CE). In the preserved text, one recognizes references to the services that the torchbearer had to perform in the shrines of the Mother of the Gods and Aphrodite, to duties involving lamps (*lychnoi*) and the ‘sacred lamp’ (*hiera lychnia*), and to rituals at dusk (ὅταν ἑσπέρας αἰ σπον[δαὶ γίνωνται]) and dawn ([ὁ ἕω]θεν ἀνατέλλων).<sup>96</sup> In early first-century CE Teos, the priest of Tiberius was responsible for rituals that took place when the temple of Dionysus was opened and closed, that is, at dawn and dusk; these rituals included libations, the burning of incense, and the lighting of lamps.<sup>97</sup>

As mystery cults served as trendsetters, nocturnal ceremonies became more common than ever before. Among those which are unattested in early periods and seem to be either new rituals or revivals of old ones as the result of the broader trends of the Imperial period, I mention the embassy sent by Lykian Termessos to the Moon, consisting of members of the city’s elite,<sup>98</sup> the cult of the star-god Astros Kakasbos in the same polis,<sup>99</sup> the cult of *Nocturnus* and the *Nocturni* in Pannonia,<sup>100</sup> and the nighttime sacrifices for Saturnus in Numidia.<sup>101</sup>

## Euergetic Nights

I have already mentioned the role played by benefactors in the organization of public banquets. A leisurely activity that in the Imperial period took place after sunset more often than before was visiting public baths. Bathing culture was significantly enlarged, diffused, and transformed in the eastern

<sup>95</sup> Plin. *Letters* 10.96.    <sup>96</sup> IG IV<sup>2</sup>.1.742.    <sup>97</sup> LSAM 28 lines 11–13.

<sup>98</sup> SEG LVII 1482 (ca. 212–30 CE): δωδεκάκ[ις σύν | τοῖσδε πρεσ]βευταῖς Θεῶν Σελήνη συνεπρέσβευσεν.

<sup>99</sup> SEG LVII 1483 (third century CE).

<sup>100</sup> *Nocturni*: CIL III 12539, 13461, 13462. *Nocturnus*: CIL III 1956, 9753, 14243(2); V 4287.

<sup>101</sup> AE 2006, 1802: *d(omino) S(ancto) S(aturno) | sacrum mag(num) nocturnum | anim[a] pro anima vita pro | vita s[an]g(uine) pro sang(uine)*.

provinces and introduced into the western ones during the Imperial period.<sup>102</sup> Emperors and local benefactors, more than local authorities, made the greatest contribution towards the construction, upkeep, and improvement of bathing facilities in both Rome and the provinces.<sup>103</sup> Although baths were typically visited before sunset and dinner,<sup>104</sup> in large cities like Rome, baths were also accessible after sunset. As cited earlier, Juvenal mentions a lady who visits the baths in the night, keeping her dinner guests waiting. The regulations concerning the operation of a bathhouse at Metallum Vipascense in Lusitania provide for the opening of the facility until the second hour of the night.<sup>105</sup> The operation of public baths during the night was not a common phenomenon in the Roman East, but it is nevertheless attested in connection with festivals and as a result of the public services of benefactors. It was thanks to euergetic generosity that in Stratonikeia the baths of men and women remained open for a significant part of the night during the festivals of Zeus and Hera.<sup>106</sup>

In the Roman East, the bathing facilities were usually associated with gymnasia. Typically, gymnasia were open from sunrise to sunset.<sup>107</sup> For instance, the recently published ephebarchal law of Amphipolis (23 BCE) obliged the *ephebarchos* to make sure that the ephebes did not leave their home before daybreak and returned before sunset; they clearly were not allowed to be at a *gymnasion* after sunset;<sup>108</sup> in Magnesia on Sipylos someone was honored for providing oil to all men, young and old, but *until* the night, not *during* the night.<sup>109</sup> To the best of my knowledge, all evidence for gymnasia that were in operation night and day (νυκτός και ἡμέρας) or for a large part of the night (τὸ πλεῖστον/ἐπὶ πολὺ μέρος τῆς νυκτός) concerns the generosity and initiative of wealthy supervisors of gymnasia in Asia Minor (first to third

<sup>102</sup> On the spread of Roman bathing in Italy and the provinces, see Nielsen 1999; Fagan 1999: 40–74; Farrington 1999, with earlier bibliography.

<sup>103</sup> Fagan 1999: 104–75.

<sup>104</sup> Fagan 1999: 22–4. Greek inscriptions often state that baths (and gymnasia) were open from sunrise to sunset: e.g., *IG IV* 597, 606.

<sup>105</sup> Juvenal, *Satire* 6.419–29; *CIL II* 5181 = *ILS* 6891 (Hadrian's reign); Fagan 1999: 324–6 no. 282.

<sup>106</sup> *I.Stratonikeia* 254: [ἔθεσαν ἔλαιον πάσῃ] τύχη και ἡλικία ἐν τοῖς δυσὶν βαλανείοις και ἡμέρας και νυκτός τῶ σύνπαντι πλήθει τῶν τε [ἐντοπίων και τῶν ἐπι]δημησάντων ξένων ('they offered olive oil to every property and age class in both baths, both day and night, to all the people, both to the locals and to the foreigners who had arrived as visitors'); *I.Stratonikeia* 324: [ἐ]θήκαμεν δε κ[αί] τῶν γυναικῶν π[ά]σῃ τύχη και ἡλ[ι]κία ἐν τοῖς γυναικίοις βαλαν[ι]οῖς ἀπὸ νυκτός[ς]. Cf. *I. Stratonikeia* 205, 245, 248, 311, 312, 324.

<sup>107</sup> Aeschines, *Against Timarchos* 10. <sup>108</sup> Hatzopoulos 2016: 27.

<sup>109</sup> *TAM V.2.1367* (Imperial period): θέντα τὰ ἀλείμματα ἐξ ὀλκ[ε]ῖ[ι]ων μεστῶν τοῖς νέοις και γέρου [σι] και παισὶ και ἀπαλαίστρο<ις> δι' ὅλης ἡμέ<ρ>ας ἀχ<ρ>ι νυκτός.

century CE).<sup>110</sup> This was not to be taken for granted. But still, the largesse of some men could become a model and inspiration for their successors.

## The Night as a Frontier

The phenomena that I briefly discussed in this chapter are but a small part of what filled the nights in the Roman Empire with life. I have intentionally avoided the discussion of evidence whose existence or abundance in the Imperial period might be attributed to the ‘epigraphic habit’ or to the increased number of inscriptions and papyri. Such evidence, relevant for a comprehensive study of the night but connected with specific methodological problems, includes changes in private dining,<sup>111</sup> Latin inscriptions of the Imperial period that record the time of death as during the night,<sup>112</sup> the custom of setting up dedications in accordance with a divine command received during a dream (κατ’ ὄναρ, *ex visu*),<sup>113</sup> and the existence of incubation sanctuaries.<sup>114</sup>

A shared feature of some nocturnal phenomena that can be observed in many parts of the Empire is that activities that typically ended before or at sunset were extended beyond the ‘boundary’ of darkness: partaking of food and wine, celebrating, bathing, training in athletic facilities, organizing processions. The ‘boundary’ of darkness was crossed thanks to the human agency of the emperor, local benefactors, and religious officials. This was regarded as a service worthy of mention in honorific inscriptions and, in the case of the emperors, record by historians. We can understand the mentality behind the commemoration of such achievements – offering hunts of wild animals and gladiatorial combats under artificial light, having a contest last ‘throughout the day and for a large part of the night’, offering

<sup>110</sup> *I.Magnesia* 163 (Magnesia on the Maeander, first century CE); *SEG* LVII 1364 (Hierapolis, second century CE); Robert and Robert 1954, 169–70 no. 56 and 190–1 no. 94 (Herakleia Salbake, 73/74 and 124/125 CE); *SEG* LXIII 1344 (Patara, early second century CE); *I.Stratonikeia* 203, 205, 222, 224, 244–8, 281, 311, 312, 345, 1050+1034, 1325A (second to third century CE). See also Chaniotis 2018b: 18–19.

<sup>111</sup> E.g. for the introduction of Roman practices, such as the presence of women in the banquets and the use of the triclinium, in Greek areas, see Nadeau 2010.

<sup>112</sup> E.g. *CIL* VI 28923; VIII 22842; *AE* 1994, 796. Death during one’s sleep is occasionally mentioned in grave epigrams: e.g., *JG* X.2.1.719 (Thessalonike, second century CE); *SEG* LIX 286 (Athens, third century CE).

<sup>113</sup> These dedications have been collected by G. Renberg and will be presented in a forthcoming book.

<sup>114</sup> Renberg 2017; for a discussion of problematic cases, see Renberg 2017: 523–64.

olive oil ‘to every property and age class in both baths, both day and night’, leaving the gymnasia open ‘for a large part of the night’ and so on – if we compare them with the praise for the pancratiast Tiberius Claudius Rufus: While pursuing victory in Olympia, ‘he endured to continue the fight until the night, until the stars came out, as his hope of victory encouraged him to fight more vigorously’.<sup>115</sup> What the emperors and the benefactors did was similar: Displaying motivation and engagement, they crossed a frontier that others hesitated or were not accustomed to cross. This is why their services were extraordinary. But extraordinary services can become trendsetters.

Another group of the phenomena that I discussed – improving the security during the night and improving the communication between mortals and gods – also perceive the darkness of the night as a ‘boundary’: the boundary of a world that either needs to be tamed and become secure or to be placed in the service of humans, facilitating their communication with divine or superhuman powers. There is a whole range of activities in the Roman Empire that fall under this category and could not be discussed here: going to sanctuaries to dream of the gods, interpreting and inducing dreams, understanding the movement of the stars through astrology, and recruiting the chthonic powers against adversaries through magic. The circulation of handbooks of dream interpretation, astrology, and magic contributed to a certain homogeneity of practices that primarily took place during the night.<sup>116</sup>

Despite their criticism against those who reversed the functions of day and night, intellectuals of the Imperial period reveal a similar attitude towards the night. They regarded it as a frontier that confronts people with challenges and requires efforts in order to place it under control. Seneca’s treatise *On Darkness as a Veil for Wickedness* evidences a strong interest in the rational use of the night. After complaining about the fact that some people in contemporary Rome had reversed the functions of light and darkness, passing their evenings amid wine and perfumes and eating dinners of multiple courses, he goes on to advise his readers to lengthen their lives by cutting the night short and using it for the day’s business.<sup>117</sup> In his recommendations to orators, Lucian alludes to the necessity of

<sup>115</sup> *IvO* 54 (early second century CE): ὅτι μέχρι νυκτός, ὡς ἄστρα καταλαβεῖν, διεκατέρησε, ὑπὸ τῆς περὶ τὴν νείκην ἐλπίδος ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἀγωνίσζεσθαι προτρεπόμενος.

<sup>116</sup> *Oneirokritika*: Harris-McCoy 2012; du Bouchet and (eds.) 2012; (ed.) 2015; dream interpreters in the Roman Empire: Renberg 2015, with the earlier bibliography. Magical handbooks and inducement of dreams: Graf 1996: 177; Johnston 2010.

<sup>117</sup> Seneca, *Epist.* 122.1 and 3. Work during the night: Wilson 2018, 75–76.

nighttime work, when he writes that the Classical statues reveal sleepless nights, toil, abstinence from wine, and simple food.<sup>118</sup> The *Paedagogus* of Clement of Alexandria, written around 200 CE, prescribes to Christians a nocturnal behavior that is contrasted to what we must regard as a common practice. Clement recommended to fill the night with activities other than banquets accompanied by music and excessive drinking. His readers should often rise by night and bless God, and devote themselves to literature and art; women should turn to the distaff. People should fight against sleep, in order to partake of life for a longer period through wakefulness.<sup>119</sup> The gradual improvement of artificial lighting, which reached its peak in Late Antiquity with the development of glass lamps and the introduction of street lighting,<sup>120</sup> is part of the same process of facing the challenges of the night.

So, how do we answer the question implied by the title of this chapter: many nations, one night? The diffusion of sources is uneven, reflecting local differences in institutions, cultural practices, the persistence of older traditions, and the levels of literacy and urbanization. Wherever and whenever sufficient numbers of relevant sources survive – especially honorific inscriptions and dedications – we observe the same trend: the night was a frontier that invited the adventurous and the inventive, the generous and the ambitious, the faithful and the hopeful to cross it.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Luc., *Rhetorum praeceptor* 9: πόνον δὲ καὶ ἀγρυπνίαν καὶ ὕδατοποσίαν καὶ τὸ ἀλιπαρές.

<sup>119</sup> Clement, *Paedagogus* 2.4 and 2.9.

<sup>120</sup> Lamps made of glass: Engle 1987. Artificial light: Seidel 2012: 108–15; Dossey 2018; Wilson 2018: 63–72.

<sup>121</sup> I am very grateful to Emyr Dakin (City University of New York) and Matthew Peebles (Columbia University) for correcting my English. Studies that appeared after the summer of 2018 could not be considered.

