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VIII

LESLIE DOSSEY

SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE LATE ANTIQUE NIGHT

The inhabitants of the Roman Empire had always made use of the night for activities other than sleeping. Night festivals such as the *pannychis* were popular in Greek cities. Men throughout the empire liked to drink at the night, whether the lower classes in their taverns or the rich in their homes. Night watchmen, carters, cloth workers, soldiers, and writers engaged in an array of nighttime work, often with the help of ceramic lamps.¹ Yet there is little evidence of a systematic effort on the part of city or imperial governments to install street lighting until the middle of the 4th century CE, when government-mandated lighting is attested for cities like Antioch, Ephesus, and Constantinople.² The goal of this paper is to explore both the nature of this lighting and the reasons why it was needed in these last centuries of Roman rule.

Antioch's streetlights are by far the best known because of the works of Libanius and, to a lesser extent, Ammianus Marcellinus. According to Ammianus, the caesar Gallus, resident in Antioch during the 350's, attempted to find out what people thought of him by wandering the shops and street-corners incognito in the evening, in imitation of the 3rd-century emperor Gallienus. However, doing this "in a city where the brightness of the lights (*lumina*) at night commonly equals the splendor of

¹ KER (2004) 217-218 and 225-229; MORRISON (2012) 2-3.

² For Late Antique street lighting, see ELLIS (2007); FOSS (1979) 56-57; and BOURAS / PARANI (2008) 20. See also WILSON (this volume).

day” proved to be a mistake.³ Antioch’s lights had removed the anonymity of the night. Libanius’s descriptions of the city’s lighting are much more extensive. In 386, Libanius criticized Tisamenus, the governor of Syria, for requiring that the workshops (*ergastêria*) provide lighting outside their doors at night.⁴ This is our most detailed description of the regulation of street lighting, and so it is worth examining in some detail. He started with the governor’s claim “that conditions in the workshops and related to the trades got better” under his administration.⁵ Libanius pointed out two recent impositions that were anything but better. The governor had forced the workshops to “have their doorways painted” (presumably with the name of the artisan and trade, as known from other eastern cities like Palmyra), and he had also required them to triple the amount of lighting: “these same people in the workshops he orders to provide triple the amount of fire in the night” (τοὺς γὰρ αὐτοὺς δὴ τούτους τοὺς ἐν τοῖς ἐργαστηρίοις κελεύει τριπλάσιον ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ παρέχειν τὸ πῦρ).⁶ Notice that the word “triple” suggests a way to count the number of lights, something we will return to below. The men of the nightwatch now patrolled the streets and pounded on the door of any workshop not burning the required number of lights. Libanius dramatized the resistance of a poor widow, who lived upstairs from her shop, crying when the nightwatch came pounding, “How can I light them? Where can I get the oil from? For long enough now I’ve never had taste of a drop of it.”⁷ Libanius concluded by questioning the very purpose of street lighting and also gave us a hint about its justification: “And yet why all the zeal about this fire, why is there so much for a sleeping city? For those who are sleeping

³ AMM. MARC. 14, 1, 9.

⁴ LIB. *Or.* 33, 35. Tisamenus was *consularis* of Syria in 386: JONES / MARTINDALE / MORRIS (1971) 916.

⁵ LIB. *Or.* 33, 33: ναί, τὰ γὰρ <τῶν> ἐν τοῖς ἐργαστηρίοις καὶ πρὸς ταύταις ταῖς τέχναις ἄμεινον ἔσχεν (my translation).

⁶ LIB. *Or.* 33, 35.

⁷ LIB. *Or.* 33, 36.

it would be beside the point, and for the watch, the previous amount is enough. Can you say that there are fewer criminals now, or that there were more before?”⁸

Libanius was a very good rhetorician and knew well how to present the governor’s attempt to light up a sleeping city as a colossal waste of money. Nevertheless, as we know from an oration he wrote 30 years earlier, the streetlights were put up with every expectation that people would continue to be active in the public sphere into the night. In his panegyric on Antioch (ca. 356 CE), written when Gallus was caesar, he boasted that the citizens of Antioch

“have repudiated the tyranny of [Sleep] from our eyelids. The lamps of the sun are supplanted by different lanterns, which outdo the illumination of the Egyptians. Among us, the night differs from the day in only one respect: in the form of the light. Handicrafts go on as usual, with some people energetically working with their hands, and others releasing themselves to laughter and song.”⁹

Travelers arriving at night in Antioch could easily find a place to buy their dinner or refresh themselves, for the shops and baths remained open.¹⁰ What is remarkable here is Libanius’s assumption that the caesar, governors and members of the Antiochene elite who listened to his orations would be impressed by this public nightlife, in contrast to earlier imperial attempts to restrict the sale of cooked food after dark.¹¹

Antiochenes, like Libanius and Ammianus, were rather like New Yorkers today. They tended to consider their city the only truly “big” city, hardly rivalled even by the capital, Constantinople. Antioch was not, however, alone in getting

⁸ LIB. *Or.* 33, 37: καίτοι τίς ἢ περὶ τοῦτο σπουδὴ <τὸ> πῦρ εἶναι τοσοῦτον ἐν καθευδούσῃ τῇ πόλει; οὐ γὰρ ἂν τοῖς καθεύδουσιν εἴη ἂν τι παρ’ αὐτοῦ τοῖς τε φύλαξιν ἀπόχρη τὸ ἀρχαῖον· κακούργους γε οὐκ ἔστιν εἰπεῖν ἥττους μὲν γεγονέναι νῦν, εἶναι δὲ πρὸ τοῦ πλείους.

⁹ LIB. *Or.* 11, 267, 2-9. See also WILSON (this volume).

¹⁰ LIB. *Or.* 11, 257.

¹¹ For imperial prohibitions on *popinae* selling meat and hot water, see TONER (1995) 80-83 and DEFELICE (2007) 479-482.

street lighting in the late 4th and 5th centuries.¹² Libanius's near contemporary, Basil of Caesarea, referred to city-financed lamps — or rather the loss of them — around 371 CE when Caesarea stopped being a provincial capital.¹³ In a rescript to the urban prefect of Constantinople, dated 424 CE, Theodosius II ordered the rents from the houses and shops of the colonnades near the famous public Bath of Zeuxippus to be used for the “provision of lights” (*luminaria*) for the bath area.¹⁴ Another early reference to imperially financed bath lighting occurs in the *Historia Augusta*, a historical forgery usually dated to the late 4th century.¹⁵ The 5th-century historian Priscus records how Cyrus, the popular urban prefect of Constantinople, “arranged that the evening lights were kindled at the workshops, and the night lights too” (ca. 440 CE).¹⁶ The reaction of the populace was ecstatic: “And the factions in the Hippodrome shouted for him the whole day, ‘Constantine founded the city, Kyros

¹² In addition to the references in n. 2, see NEUBURGER (1930) 245.

¹³ According to BASIL *Ep.* 74, 3, trans. J. DEFERRARI and R.P.M. MCGUIRE, the gymnasia were closed, and the nights became “lampless” (νύκτας ἀλαμπεῖς) when Caesarea lost its imperial officials: “we cannot take thought of them at all because of our struggle to keep alive”.

¹⁴ *Cod. Theod.* 15, 1, 52 = *Cod. Iust.* 8, 11, 19 (Constantinople; Jan. 9, 424): *Quia plurimae domus cum officinis suis in porticibus Zeuxippi esse memorantur, reditus memoratorum locorum pro quantitate, quae placuit, ad praebenda luminaria et aedificia ac tecta reparanda regiae huius urbis Lauacro sine aliqua iubemus excusatione conferri*, cited by SCOBIE (1986) 403 n. 33.

¹⁵ According to the *SHA, Alex. Sev.* 23, 7, Severus Alexander (222-235 CE) established a supply of oil for the lights (*lumina*) of the public baths (in Rome), even though previously the baths had closed before sunset; reference from DE ROBERTIS (1963) 197. The same source (*SHA, Tac.* 10, 2) claims that the later 3rd-century emperor, Tacitus (275-276 CE), stopped the practice of keeping the baths open after lamp lighting, “in case some sort of sedition arise during the night”. Although these statements have often been taken at face value, they might better reflect late 4th-century practice (and this author's discomfort with it).

¹⁶ PRISCUS, *Exc.* 3a, ed. CAROLLA (2008), 9: καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπενόησεν τὰ ἑσπερινὰ φῶτα ἄπτεσθαι εἰς τὰ ἐργαστήρια, ὁμοίως καὶ τὰ νυκτερινά. καὶ ἔκραξαν αὐτῷ τὰ μέρη εἰς τὸ Ἰππικὸν ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν, Κωνσταντῖνος ἔκτισεν, Κῦρος ἀνενέωσε; see discussion in GIVEN (2014) 27 and 33. Cyrus 7, who was originally from Egypt, was concurrently praetorian prefect of the Oriens and urban prefect of Constantinople in 439-441: MARTINDALE (1980) 337.

revived it”.¹⁷ By the end of the 5th century, governors in Edessa (the capital of the province Osroene) were requiring shopkeepers to hang cross-shaped light fixtures with five lamps each outside their shops on the sabbath and redirected the public oil from the church lamps to light up the city’s colonnades more generally.¹⁸ By Justinian’s time, it was expected that most cities used part of their revenues for the public lights (until Justinian confiscated them).¹⁹

The location of this lighting is significant in two respects. It was mostly in the imperial cities and provincial capitals of the eastern Roman Empire, and it was especially outside the bathhouses and workshops along the urban colonnades, which were expanding enormously in Late Antiquity.²⁰ Although the grander of these were multistory and paved in marble, many colonnades were utilitarian, part of the Late Antique tendency to turn any street into rows of workshops.²¹ Alexandria had over 400 porticoes according to the *Notitia Urbis Alexandrinae*, which may be the reason Libanius considered the “illumination of the Egyptians” to be the thing to beat.²²

¹⁷ PRISCUS, *Exc.* 3a.

¹⁸ JOSHUA STYLITES, *Chronica* 29 and 87, trans. WRIGHT (2003) 20: “he gave orders that the artisans should hang over their shops on the eve of Sunday crosses with five lighted lamps (*phanoi*) attached to them” and 69, “But the oil which had been supplied to the churches and convents from the public oil-store, amounting to 6800 *keste* (per annum), the governor took away from them, and ordered it to be used for burning in the porticoes of the city”; reference from ELLIS (2007) 297. The first of these governors was Alexander 14, *praeses* of Osroene in 497-498, and the second, Eulogius 7, *praeses* of Osroene in 504/505; MARTINDALE (1980) 57 and 419.

¹⁹ According to PROC. *Arc.* 26, 7, Justinian’s confiscation of city revenues made cities in general unable to keep the lamps burning: οὐτε λύχνα ταῖς πόλεσιν ἐν δημοσίῳ ἐκάετο.

²⁰ For the growth of colonnaded streets in Late Antiquity, see DEY (2014) 87-92.

²¹ For example, LIEBESCHUETZ (2015) 261 for Gerasa.

²² FRASER (1951) 104 for the *Notitia*, a Syriac text thought to be derived from a 4th-century Greek original. Libanius may have instead simply been referring to the famous Egyptian festivals of lights, especially the Serapia, which the 2nd-century novelist ACH. TAT. 5, 2, trans. S. GASELEE, called “the greatest spectacle I ever saw; for it was evening and the sun had set, but night was nowhere to be seen

What did this lighting actually consist of? Libanius clearly indicates that these were hanging lights, strung out on ropes in front of doorways: “This copious and idle lighting which hangs in front of the bathhouses” (τὸ πολὺ καὶ μάταιον τοῦτο φῶς ... τὸ πρὸ τῶν βαλανείων κρεμάμενον). The rioters of 387 cut the “the ropes (κάλους) from which were hung those [things] providing the light in the night”.²³ The ancient world had long made use of hanging metal and ceramic lamps, but Libanius’s phrasing (and his avoidance of the normal words for lamps) suggest that he was referring to the glass lamp fixtures of Late Antiquity, a relatively new invention when he was writing. Several reused inscriptions from Ephesus, one of the largest cities of the eastern empire and the capital of Asia, confirm the impression that this street lighting would have often taken the form of glass lamps. These inscriptions, dated to the Theodosian period (between 379 and 450), record the number of *kandêlai* on certain streets. For instance, the Street of the Horses together with the Dark (Alley) had 18 *kandêlai*. A more important thoroughfare, the Arcadiane (named after the emperor Arcadius), which led from the theater to the harbor, “has 2 colonnades (and) 50 *kandêlai* up to the Boar (monument)”.²⁴ These utilitarian, not commemorative, inscriptions give us an idea of how the night watchmen would have known how many lights were supposed to be lit on a certain stretch of street. They also hint at the type of lamp being used, employing the word *kandêla* (κανδήλη), borrowed from the Latin, instead of the more literary

— rather another sun had arisen”. See PODUIN (2015) 41 and ABDELWAHED (2016) for these festivals.

²³ LIB. *Or.* 22, 6: ἐλθόντες ἐπὶ τὸ πλησιάζον βαλανεῖον κάλους ὧν ἐξήρτηντο | τὰ τὸ φῶς ἐν νυκτὶ παρέχοντα μαχαίραις ἐξέκοπτον and LIB. *Or.* 16, 41: τὸ πολὺ καὶ μάταιον τοῦτο φῶς καὶ τρυφὴν ἄχρηστον δεικνύον τὸ πρὸ τῶν βαλανείων κρεμάμενον εἰς πολλοστὸν τοῦ νῦν ὄντος καταστήσωμεν / “This copious and idle lighting which hangs in front of the bathhouses, displaying useless luxury, we ought to restore to a fraction of what it is now”.

²⁴ *I.Ephesos* 1939 and *I.Ephesos* 557 (= *SEG* XLIX 444): ἔχει ἡ Ἀρκαδιανὴ ἕως τοῦ Στάγρου αἱ β' στοὰι κανδήλας ν', discussed by FEISSEL (1999) and FOSS (1979) 56-57.

“light” or “lamp.” In early Byzantine sources, *kandêla* was the term for the glass oil lamp.²⁵

The glass oil lamp was a 4th-century invention that has been called by Margaret O’Hea “the most significant technological innovation of Late Antique architectural fittings”.²⁶ Glass lamps were vessels filled with water and oil with a cloth or fiber wick for lighting. They came in a variety of shapes. Some were cone-shaped beakers with turned out rims, others stemmed wine cups, others goblets or hemispherical bowls with three handles for hanging (fig. 8.1-8.2). The oil floated over the water, allowing the lamps to put themselves out when the oil was used up. The end of the wick needed to reach the top layer of oil and was held in place either by means of a metal wick holder, a hollow glass tube attached to the base of the vessel, or a hollow stem base.²⁷ The lamps were hung by inserting their stems or rims into the holes of circular lamp holders (sometimes made of glass themselves) or by attaching their handles to metal chains (fig. 8.2). Their paper-thin walls made them lighter and easier to hang in groups than ceramic or metal lamps.²⁸ They could also be placed in portable lamp carriers (usually made out of basket material) and used as a torch for walking around.²⁹

²⁵ See XANTHOPOULOU (2010) 39-40. Early uses of the term include the Spanish pilgrim Egeria’s comments about the lights in Jerusalem, discussed by O’HEA (2007) 238-239; the Syriac JOSHUA STYLITES, *Chronica* 27, trans. WRIGHT (2003) 18: “They placed on its bank lighted lamps (*kandelai*), and hung them in the porticoes (*stoai*), in the town-hall, in the upper streets” (495-496 CE); the 6th-century CYRIL OF SCYTHOPOLIS, *Vita Euthymii* 54, ed. SCHWARTZ (1939) 76, where a woman is cured of a demon by drinking the water from the *καυδῆλα* of a holy tomb (the presence of water in addition to oil indicating a glass lamp); and, perhaps earliest of all, the Syriac *Acts of Thomas*, ed. WRIGHT (1871) 232, 20, as discussed by BUTTS (2016) 129-130. This last text has long been considered a 3rd-century Syriac original, although LANZILLOTTA (2015) makes a good case for it being a later (4th century?) translation of the Greek.

²⁶ O’HEA (2007) 236. For glass lamps, see also OLCAY (2001) 77-87; UBOLDI (1995) 93-145; BOURAS / PARANI (2008) 6-7 and 12-14.

²⁷ For how wick holders functioned, UBOLDI (1995) 93 and BOURAS / PARANI (2008) 3-4.

²⁸ ELLIS (2007) 290.

²⁹ XANTHOPOULOU (2010) 41, n. 255; STERN (2003) 100. It is possible that this was the earliest kind of glass lamp, at least in Egypt: see n. 33 below.

What was revolutionary about them was that when hung from the ceiling or other high place, glass lamps could do what no classical lighting device had ever done before: light up an entire room or stall. Because the lamps were translucent, light travelled down, not just up as with classical clay or metal lamps. The water that filled the lower portion of the lamp “collected and intensified the light of the flame”.³⁰ The whole lamp would glow, rather like a Chinese lantern. Light emission studies have shown that a glass lamp burns almost twice as brightly and somewhat longer than a ceramic lamp, although the down side is that it uses twice as much as oil.³¹ Moreover, these glass lamps were used in groups, with three or more lamps being placed together. A new term — *polykandêlon* — was invented for these light fixtures.

The origins of the hanging glass lamp remains something of a mystery. O’Hea attributes their invention to Christian liturgical needs: the Christian basilica, unlike the Classical temple, had a large open space to be lit up at night.³² However, there is neither textual nor archaeological evidence connecting the earliest glass lamps to Christianity. The underlying technology of blown glass had been around since the 1st century BCE, and the earliest lamps made use of the existing forms of drinking vessels. There is some textual evidence for portable glass lamps as early as the 2nd century CE.³³ Yet the idea didn’t catch on,

³⁰ STERN (2001) 262.

³¹ STERN (2001) 262; HIGASHI (1990) 380-381, 433-435.

³² O’HEA (2007) 239.

³³ A 2nd-century letter from Oxyrhynchus (*P.Oxy.* XLII 3060) lists, among other goods, a “glass little basket” (κανίσκ[ι]ον ὑελοῦν), which LAPP (1999) 84 interprets to mean an open work glass lamp due to the use of the same term *kaniskion* in a 5th-century inventory of lamps studied by MONTERRAT (1995) 444. According to STERN (2003) 100, the κανίσκ[ι]ον ὑελοῦν in this letter probably meant “a little basket for glass” rather than of glass, possibly made from wicker, which was used to carry glass lamps when they were employed as torches, but could also be used to hold other types of glass vessels. Interestingly, ATH. D. 701b, who appears to be the first Greek author to employ the word *kandêla*, uses it to mean a type of torch (not explicitly of glass) that might be bought “for a copper” as guests depart the symposium: καὶ ὁ Κύνουλκος αἰεὶ ποτε τῷ

probably because the advantages of glass in terms of illumination were outweighed by its disadvantage in fragility. Our earliest physical examples of hanging glass lamps are the luxurious glass cage cups, sometimes used as lamps by the end of the 3rd century.³⁴

By the 350's, at the same time as Libanius was praising the streetlights of Antioch, a regular, standardized mass production of glass lamps had begun.³⁵ The first known workshop for these is in Jalame, Israel (near Haifa), an area where a number of both primary and secondary glass workshops had long been producing raw glass and glass products.³⁶ The Jalame lamps, which started to be made around 351 CE, were cone shaped, and decorated with blue blobs, attractive products, not luxurious, but still meant to be seen. Very similar lamps dated to around the same time (or a little earlier) have been found at Karanis (fig. 8.1), a medium-sized town in the Fayyum, which was expanding in the 4th century, and serving as a way station for various products of the imperial *annona*.³⁷ They were also used in the Sasanian Empire, although not with good enough dating to indicate whether they were inspired by the Roman lamps or vice versa.³⁸

Once they began to be attested, mass produced glass lamps appeared everywhere, a virtual explosion of glass lamps across the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans in the second half of the 4th century. They have been found at both Athens and Petra in contexts dated before the 360's.³⁹ They were thick on

Οὐλπιανῶν ἀντικορουσόμενος ἔφη· ἐμοὶ δέ, παῖ δωρόδειπνε, ἀσσαρίου κανδήλας πρίω. Could this have been a glass lamp carried in a wicker basket?

³⁴ WHITEHOUSE (1988); STERN (2003) 100; XANTHOPOULOU (2010) 42. These were a luxurious variant of *kaniskia*.

³⁵ HIGASHI (1990) 40, for the earliest dated contexts at Athens (first quarter of 4th century) and Karanis (second decade of the 4th).

³⁶ WEINBERG (1988) 87-94.

³⁷ BARNARD *et al.* (2015).

³⁸ SIMPSON (2015).

³⁹ For Petra and Athens, see HIGASHI (1990) 39 and WEINBERG / STERN (2010) 135 (from a well-dated context, a well, btwn 330/340 and 360 CE).

the ground in Egypt, not just in Karanis, but also in Alexandria: in the Kom el-Dikka excavations, conical lamps with cracked-off rims were the most popular form of glass vessel in the auditoria and bath-house areas from the late fourth century on.⁴⁰ Numerous wickholders for glass lamps have been found at Antioch, although not well published.⁴¹ Glass lamps are also well attested at Danubian fortresses in Pannonia towards the end of the 4th / beginning of the 5th centuries and perhaps produced in the area.⁴² Many of the best preserved lamps come from ecclesiastical or domestic contexts, especially the popular apsed dining rooms that became all the rage in Late Antiquity.⁴³ But they were just as common in the sort of colonnade and workshop area as the textual sources would place public lighting: the shops and colonnades of Alexandria, the commercial area near the theater at Corinth,⁴⁴ the workshop and theater area of Gerasa,⁴⁵ the colonnades and shops of the Street of the Monuments of early 6th-century Scythopolis.⁴⁶ At Karanis, surface surveys have found the highest percentage of conical glass lamp fragments in the industrial areas of the town.⁴⁷

Glass lamps never became as popular in Europe as in the eastern Mediterranean, perhaps due to urban decline and a preference for candles. Around 400 CE, Paulinus of Nola and Prudentius wrote about their use in churches and the bishop's

⁴⁰ KUCHARZYK (2011) and KUCHARCZYK (2007). Some of the lamps show wear marks from suspension.

⁴¹ RUSSELL (1982) 137.

⁴² STERN (2001) 267, 268, and 296; DÉVAI (2016).

⁴³ ELLIS (2007) 292, 300; STERN (2001) 273.

⁴⁴ WILLIAMS / ZERVOS (1982) 124-128 for handled glass lamps hidden in manholes towards the end of the 4th century CE along the colonnaded street east of the theater.

⁴⁵ OLCAY (2001) 82, 84-86.

⁴⁶ From Scythopolis, we have glass lamps from an excavated row of shops on the northern side of the Street of the Monuments from the late 4th to first half of 6th century (destroyed by fire ca. 540 CE): HADAD (1998) 63-76 (mostly stemmed lamps).

⁴⁷ SUSAK PITZER (2015) 287-288.

house with an enthusiasm suggestive of novelty.⁴⁸ Archaeological remains of glass lamps dated ca. 400 CE appear in some of the same sort of secular urban contexts as in the east — at the shops on the Palatine in Rome; quite profusely in the sewers of Classe, the port of Ravenna; in the forum area of the town Conimbriga in Portugal.⁴⁹ Yet by the second half of the fifth century, they mainly come from churches or cemeteries.⁵⁰ North Africa, as in so many other respects, comes closer to eastern Mediterranean patterns of distribution, although some fifty years later in date. By the first half of the 5th century, glass lamps are appearing everywhere: very abundantly in residential districts of Carthage, but also in smaller towns such as Nabeul. As in the east, conical lamps, suitable for insertion into light fixtures, are the first to appear, followed by the three handled types.⁵¹

All of these lamps, which joined rather than replaced the traditional ceramic lamps,⁵² would have consumed a truly tremendous amount of oil. Although residue analysis shows that their owners filled them with any oil they could get a hold of, including radish, canola, castor, linseed, sesame, and even rendered lard, olive oil was the norm.⁵³ We should take seriously Libanius's complaint that the requirement to light the lamps was driving the price of olive oil beyond some consumers' reach. Certainly not everyone was happy about them. The rioters in Antioch in 387 targeted the lamps, cutting down of ropes

⁴⁸ PRUDENT. *Cath.* 19, 416 (between 389-409 CE); PAUL. NOL. *Carm.* 23, 124-4 (dated 401); *Carm.* 19, 412-24 (dated 405 CE); RICHARDSON (2015) 117 for dating; references from HIGASHI (1990) 26.

⁴⁹ For the Palatine, WEINBERG / STERN (2010) 153-154 and for other late 4th / early 5th century contexts in Rome, UBOLDI (1995) 105, 110, 116, 123; for Classe, CURINA (1983) 167-170 (tiny, thin-walled "base knob" types are by far the most abundant); for Conimbriga: HIGASHI (1990) 81.

⁵⁰ UBOLDI (1995) 96 and WEINBERG / STERN (2010) 153 for cultic or funerary contexts in Sicily, Italy, and southern France from the second half of the 5th and 6th centuries.

⁵¹ FOY (2003) 79; XANTHOPOULOU (2010) 56.

⁵² HIGASHI (1990) 378 for Karanis.

⁵³ COPLEY *et al.* (2005) and KIMPE / JACOBS / WAELEKENS (2001).

from which the lamps hung outside the bathhouse doors.⁵⁴ In the aftermath of the riot, Libanius suggested that the boule cut “this copious and idle lighting ..., this display of useless luxury” to “a fraction of what it is now”.⁵⁵

This begs the question to be addressed in the second half of this paper: why was so much light needed? Rarely does technology change on its own accord without some sort of new demand stimulating it. Had something in people’s nighttime behavior changed to drive this technological innovation? And why at this point in Greek and Roman history, in the late 4th century?

It is useful to look at the reasons behind the later (re)invention of street lighting in the 17th century. This also started with oil lamps, which were placed in glass-paned lanterns and hung in European cities from the late 17th century on. Starting in the 1660’s in Paris and Amsterdam and spreading quickly to other European cities, royal officials began to systematically require and (sometimes) pay for oil lanterns, replacing the more haphazard arrangements of lanterns that residents may have chosen to place outside their houses or shops.⁵⁶ City governments were reluctant to undertake the expense of it; generally their rulers had to compel them to it, citing concerns about safety, morality, or simply city beautification.⁵⁷ Recent scholarship, most importantly Craig Koslofsky’s 2011 book, *Evening’s Empire*, has viewed this streetlighting not in isolation, but as part of a broader change in how people were using the night in the 16th and 17th centuries. There was a new tendency for urban dwellers to remain in the public sphere into the evening. The shift was not so much among the poor, the apprentices, prostitutes,

⁵⁴ LIB. *Or.* 22, 6, discussed above.

⁵⁵ LIB. *Or.* 16, 41: τὸ πολὺ καὶ μάταιον τοῦτο φῶς καὶ τρυφήν ἄχρηστον δεικνύον τὸ πρὸ τῶν βαλανείων κρεμάμενον εἰς πολλοστὸν τοῦ νῦν ὄντος καταστήσωμεν / “This copious and idle lighting which hangs in front of the bathhouses, displaying useless luxury, we ought to restore to a fraction of what it is now”.

⁵⁶ KOSLOFSKY (2011) 130-133. See also CABANTOUS (2009) 270-289 and EKIRCH (2005) 330-331.

⁵⁷ KOSLOFSKY (2011) 136, 138, 144, 145.

and servants, who had long made use of the streets at night, as among the urban upper classes. By the late 17th century, the hours of dinner and bedtime in court and upper class circles had moved more than 4 hours later than they had been in the 16th century.⁵⁸ The “respectable classes” began to stay out in the public sphere later, going to late dinner parties and entertainments, and strolling around the city shops. The new lighting facilitated this, giving the respectable classes a sense of safety and comfort and distinguishing “their own growing nocturnal sociability” from the nightlife of the “apprentices, boys, maids and such unmarried folk found idly in the streets”.⁵⁹

Was something similar to this happening in Late Antiquity? Was there a shift towards people staying out in the public spaces later in the evening, especially among the respectable classes? And, if so, why?

What is at issue here is routine nocturnal activity, not night celebrations for special occasions. For as long as we have sources to attest them, Greek and, to a lesser extent, Roman communities, had held occasional religious and civic events at night. Special events like this do not change people’s everyday hours in the way described by Koslofsky nor push governments to establish permanent street lighting. To understand the flood of lighting that appears in the archaeological record for the fourth and fifth centuries, it is necessary to look beyond the special occasion and examine routine, mundane activity in the evening and night. Indeed, we must reconstruct the rhythm of daily time in general. This work has already been well done for Classical Antiquity.⁶⁰ For Late Antiquity, not so much. The following pages will make a first effort to compare Classical and Late Antique daily rhythms, with special attention to the patristic sermon collections, which are a valuable, though often underutilized source for ancient daily life.

⁵⁸ KOSLOFSKY (2011) 111-117 and 232-233.

⁵⁹ KOSLOFSKY (2011) 156.

⁶⁰ For daily schedules in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE, I have mainly relied on BILFINGER (1888); LAURENCE (2007) 156-166; and DE ROBERTIS (1963).

According to the mainstream scholarship on everyday life in antiquity, most people in the early Roman Empire — or at least the sort of people our sources reflect — had kept remarkably early hours. The fifth or sixth hour was the traditional lunch time, followed by a short siesta.⁶¹ The hours of the shops and baths were heavily weighted towards the diurnal — “from noon to evening” as Vitruvius says of the baths — and most shops shut even earlier.⁶² Dinner (the Latin *cena* or Greek *deipnon*) began in the afternoon (typically, at the 9th hour of the day), though it could continue well into the evening.⁶³ For example, in the probably Alexandrian novel, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, now dated to reign of Antoninus Pius,⁶⁴ people had their main meal (*deipnon*) in the afternoon and ended it when it was still light.⁶⁵ The men, in Greek fashion, sometimes prolonged their meal by

⁶¹ BILFINGER (1888) 124, 126, and 128 for the fifth or sixth hour being the traditional lunch hour, the hour between the sixth and seventh the traditional siesta time, and the ninth hour the traditional dinner time; LAURENCE (2007) 159, 163-164, for the sixth hour as siesta time.

⁶² VITR. *De arch.* 5, 10, 1: *Tempus lauandi a meridiano ad uesperum est constitutum*, from DE ROBERTIS (1963) 196. For shop hours (except for *popinae*): see LAURENCE (2013) 256. LUC. *Nigr.* 34 describes city magistrates taking baths at the agora in the middle of the day. FAGAN (1999) 22 for bathing at the eighth hour being considered optimal, although Martial often bathed at the tenth hour. The *Hermen. Montespass. coll.* 13g (dating to the 3rd or 4th century; thought to be of eastern origin due to its explicit setting in Rome) has baths at the eighth hour: DICKEY (2015) 102 and 91-92.

⁶³ STEIN-HÖLKESKAMP (2005) 112-113, and BILFINGER (1888) 119 and 128 for the ninth (or sometimes the tenth) hour being the typical dinner time; KIM (1975) 391-402, for the 8th or 9th hour for *deipnon* in 25 Egyptian papyri dating to the 1st through 3rd centuries CE. Interestingly, the two invitations with the latest chronology, one from 3rd / early 4th century and the other from the 4th century CE, lack the work to dine (*deipnesai*). Both give the eighth hour as the time for the invitation. Could this be lunch?

⁶⁴ LAPLACE (1983) 53-59.

⁶⁵ ACH. TAT. 2, 10 and 2, 9-10 for finishing dinner before dark and strolling around garden afterwards. The only example of a late dinner is ACH. TAT. 3, 16, where soldiers pitch camp and prepare *deipnon* after evening falls in preparation for a night attack. The earlier meal (*ariston*) is less important and is sometimes preceded by activity (so more a lunch than a breakfast, but still early): ACH. TAT. 2, 33 and 7, 3.

drinking.⁶⁶ In literature from this period, the lamps and torches came out during this drinking portion of the meal. For example, in Athenaeus's *Deipnosophistae*, where every stage of the banquet is discussed in excruciating detail, his guests only ask for lights at the end of the festivities, mainly in the form of torches to help light the way home.⁶⁷ These private lamps were needed because except for special festival occasions, the city streets were dark.⁶⁸ For the most part, it was the poor, not the respectable classes, who engaged in routine, everyday activities (like working, bathing, and shopping) in the public sphere after dark, and this was not because they wanted to. In Lucian, the rich took their baths in the broad day, while a humble cobbler finished his work in the late afternoon (περὶ δέιλην ὀψίαν), only then going to the baths, and purchasing the makings for a simple dinner.⁶⁹

Were hours any different in Late Antiquity?

In Latin sources from the 4th and 5th centuries, daily hours appear to have changed only a little. Augustine, Paulinus, and Sidonius all attest to lunch (*prandium*) at the fifth or sixth hour of the day.⁷⁰ Baths were taken during the daytime before meals,

⁶⁶ ACH. TAT. 1, 6.

⁶⁷ ATH. D. 699d, trans. S.D. OLSON: "when evening began to overtake us, one member of the group said 'slave! [Get me] a luchneion". This provokes a long discussion of the various terms for lights, primarily torches, as the guests begin to leave. In LUC. *Symp.* 15, the lights (φῶτα) are brought in during the drinking.

⁶⁸ For the absence of street lighting in early imperial Rome, see CARCOPINO (1940) 47-48, although lamps outside private entryways partially made up for it: see SPANO (1919).

⁶⁹ LUC. *Somn.* 22: ἀπαναστάς περὶ δέιλην ὀψίαν λουσάμενος, ἦν δοκῇ, σαπέρδην τινὰ ἢ μαινίδας ἢ κρομμύων κεφαλίδας ὀλίγας περιάμενος εὐφραίνει σεαυτὸν ἔδων τὰ πολλὰ καὶ τῇ βελτίστῃ Πενίᾳ προσφιλοσοφῶν, and LUC. *Nigr.* 34 for those who rule the cities taking baths at the agora in the middle of the day.

⁷⁰ For lunch at the traditional fifth hour, see AUGUST. *Ep.* 65, 1 (rural setting); AUGUST. *Serm.* 345, 5; and SID. APOLL. *Epist.* 2, 9, 6, the last two references from BILFINGER (1888) 125. It was at the sixth hour in the *Regula Mag.* 50, 56;

ideally before *prandium*.⁷¹ People began their *cena* shortly before evening, that is, somewhat later than in the Classical period, and the rich, at least, were assumed to dine by lamp or candle light.⁷² Despite a somewhat later dinner hour, bedtime remained early. Petrus Chrysologus, the bishop of the imperial headquarters of Ravenna in the first half of the 5th century, preached of “gentle sleep first pour[ing] itself on the bodies of those sleeping” in the first or second or third hour of the night.⁷³

In these western texts, the use of lamps outside of the house is associated more with people getting up extremely early during the long nights of winter rather than staying on the streets into the late evening. The bishop Maximus of Turin, preaching

“circa meridiem” in PAUL. NOL. *Epist.* 15, 4; “medio die” in AUGUST. *Loc. hept.* 1, 177; and “post prandium... meridianis horis” in *Vita Fulg.* 8, 24. People in late Roman Gaul appear to have taken two lunches – a “first” *prandium* and a later *prandium*: MARCELL. *Med.* 20, 89; 26, 35; and AUSON. *Epist.* 7, 2.

⁷¹ PETR. CHRYS. *Serm.* 7, 53-54 (5th century, Ravenna) connects unguent and bathing with the “habitu prandentis”; CASSIOD. *Var.* 8, 31, when describing the pleasures of urban life, places “to go to the baths with acquaintances” right before “to put on banquets (*prandia*) in competitive splendor”; SID. APOLL. *Carm.* 23, 436 (in reference to the hospitality of Consentius of Narbonne at his villa, in the 460’s CE) describes baths being taken in the late morning before a meal. However, ZENO *Tract.* 2, 4, 94-95 appears to put bathing and dressing between lunch and dinner (*gulae labore culta, lauacro nitida, unguentis oblita, uestitu uaria, monilibus tota distincta, conuiuiorum celebritate iucunda, uino madida*) and in SID. APOLL. *Epist.* 2, 9, 8, the (outdoor) bath was between lunch and dinner, although certainly while it was still day.

⁷² In Sulp. Sev. *Dial.* 1, 13, 5 (in a village in the Libyan desert), *cena* had already ended before it became evening, but in Sulp. Sev. *Dial.* 3, 17, 1, the learned participants in a discussion only went to *cena* when evening came. Macrobius *Sat.* 1, 15 (LCL 510: 18-19) is similar. In Max. Taur. 30, 2, the residents of Turin were finishing their *cena* and drink in the *uespertinis ... horis*. Petrus Chrys. *Serm.* 174, 5 associates *cena* with evening and shadows. Lighting at the table during dinner is found in Petrus Chrys. *Serm.* 26, 119: *Pone aduenienti sellam tuam, pone mensam tuam, candelabrum, lucernam* and Orient. *Comm.* 25, 129 (Gaul, first half of 5th century), where the candle flame shines on noble tables.

⁷³ PETR. CHRYS. *Serm.* 39, 47: *Quasi non et prima et secunda et tertia hora noctis, cum se sopor blandus dormientibus primum fundit in corpora, et uisceribus diurno labore fessis dulcis ac totus inlabitur, molesta et aspera sit inquietantis improbitas.*

during Christmastide in the first half of the 5th century, refers to people using a lamp before dawn for practical purposes.⁷⁴ The senator Symmachus, in a rare reference to lights in a public space in Rome, describes the Senate meeting during the night just before dawn on January 1, with the lights (*lumina*) lit, in order to hear the traditional New Year's letter from the emperor Gratian.⁷⁵

Those who pushed their hours too late into the night were considered dissolute and luxurious. Augustine satirizes a Manichaean who while avoiding meat and wine, consumes a well seasoned vegetarian lunch at the “ninth hour” of the day and then has dinner and a complex sweetened fruit drink (in place of wine) at night (*noctis principio*).⁷⁶ All told, these Latin texts do not suggest a dramatic shift towards later hours.

The timing of everyday activities in eastern Mediterranean sources from the same period is quite a different story. Urban dwellers, at least, were strolling, bathing, and dining later in the day than had been the norm in early imperial authors (this paper makes no attempt to compare the Classical Greek or Hellenistic period).

Lunch (*ariston*) and the siesta that often followed it had moved into the slot once occupied by *deipnon* in the late afternoon. In Libanius's Antioch, the governors were finishing their lunch (*ariston*) in the afternoon (δείλη) when petitioners began to show up and prevent them from taking their post-prandial

⁷⁴ MAX. TAUR. 62, 3: “Nevertheless, on account of the necessary needs of people when it is still before light, a lamp is accustomed to come before this sun of the world, before it dawns” / *Tamen istum mundi solem priusquam oriatur adhuc ante lucem propter necessarios usus hominum solet lucerna praecedere.*

⁷⁵ SYMM. *Epist.* 1, 13, 2 (376 CE): *Frequens senatus mature in curiam ueneramus, priusquam manifestus dies creperum noctis absolueret ... luminibus accensis noui saeculi fata recitantur.*

⁷⁶ AUGUST. *Mor. Manich.* 2, 13, 29. Compare Augustine teasing his congregation for being impatient if his sermons go on too long, when their *prandia* — to which they hasten — can last until evening: AUGUST. *Serm.* 264 (PL 38: 1212).

siesta.⁷⁷ The petitioners then stayed with them until “evening and the lamps”, which was not far off.⁷⁸ The patristic sources allow us to pinpoint this afternoon lunch / siesta time as around the ninth hour.⁷⁹ When commenting on a verse in Acts about the apostles Peter and John being in the temple “around the ninth hour”, Chrysostom explained: “Around the ninth hour. At a time when other men are sleeping off their lunch (*ariston*) and drink with a deep sleep, these men are alert and awake”.⁸⁰ This afternoon siesta that followed lunch often didn’t end until dusk was approaching: “but after you have had lunch and slept, when you head out to the market-place, and see the day already pressing on towards evening, come to this church”.⁸¹ We seem to be on the way towards the traditional ‘double-day’ schedule of portions of Egypt or Greece in more recent times, where people take a break in the afternoon for a substantial lunch and siesta before returning to the public sphere around dusk.⁸²

Baths were now frequently taken in the evening, and not just by people like Lucian’s humble cobbler. Libanius and his associates, after strolling (or riding) around the city in the late afternoon dusk, generally bathed when it got dark.⁸³ John

⁷⁷ LIB. *Or.* 51, 4 (388 CE). For this being in the δειλή, see LIB. *Or.* 52, 4, on the same subject (οἱ δὲ δειλῆς ἐμπιπλάντες τὴν καταγωγὴν).

⁷⁸ LIB. *Or.* 51, 5: ἐσπέρα καὶ λύχνος, καὶ οὐδὲν μᾶλλον ἀπέρχονται. ἀλλὰ καὶ λουτρὸν τὸ τῶν ἀρχόντων αὐτοῖς, ὥστ’ ἐκείνοις μηδὲ προῖξαι τι τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἐνεῖναι.

⁷⁹ VAN DE PAVERD (1991) 167, 170, 180-182.

⁸⁰ CHRYS. *Act. hom.* 2, 4 (PG 51: 84), preached in Antioch according to MAYER (2005) 174, 291 and 368. Other examples of a late lunch occur in CHRYS. *Compunct. Dem.* 1, 9 (PG 47: 408) and *In John* 18, 2 (PG 59: 116) (on John the Baptist preaching at the tenth hour of the day without thinking it untimely, since he, unlike them, hadn’t just eaten).

⁸¹ CHRYS. *De Anna serm.* 1, 1 (PG 54: 633). Reference from VAN DE PAVERD (1991) 177. This sermon was probably preached the Monday before Ascension in Antioch in 387 and therefore during the relatively long days of early May: see MAYER (2005) 90-91.

⁸² BRUNT / STEGER (2004) 17; WORTHMAN / BROWN (2013); LEE *et al.* (2007).

⁸³ LIB. *Or.* 1, 259: when leaving the baths in the evening, Libanius was almost trampled by the horses waiting in the colonnades; LIB. *Epist.* 364, 3: evening called an acquaintance to the baths, though he was detained by the pleasure of conversation; LIB. *Epist.* 1458, 1: Libanius recollected an evening

Chrysostom similarly assumes that men would bathe in the evening after leaving the market-place and before going home for dinner.⁸⁴ The governor's baths were particularly popular in the evening, as an avenue for asking for favors.⁸⁵ Evening bathing may be one possible reason for the growing Late Antique popularity of semi-private baths attached to luxury residences, since these smaller baths would have been significantly easier to light at night.⁸⁶

Shopping was also becoming an evening activity. When trying to dissuade celibates from living with virgins, Chrysostom warned them that they would end up spending their evening, without dinner, in the workshops, purchasing the perfume, linens, tents, and various other items that the virgins would need.⁸⁷ In another sermon, he mentioned that, in Antioch, you could pass time in the market-place (*agora*) until very late in the evening "in complete fearlessness", a likely allusion to the greater sense of safety brought by the public lights.⁸⁸ In Constantinople during the time of the historian Priscus, even a woman might do her shopping in the evening by lamplight, although not always with positive results, as will be discussed below.⁸⁹

bath and dinner in Athens; LIB. *Or.* 7, 3: beggars stood in front of baths in the evening when the rich bathers were leaving by torchlight; LIB. *Or.* 56, 17: the deposed governor Lucianus set out to bathe in the evening, but ended up partying (ἐκώμαζον) with some of his supporters with torches quenched.

⁸⁴ CHRYS. *In 1 Cor. hom.* 11, 5 (PG 61: 94); CHRYS. *In Matt. hom.* 51, 4 (PG 58: 515) (followed by dinner); CHRYS. *In epistulam In 2 Tim. hom.* 6, 4 (PG 62: 635) (followed by church).

⁸⁵ LIB. *Or.* 51, 5: ἐσπέρα καὶ λύχνος, καὶ οὐδὲν μᾶλλον ἀπέρχονται. ἀλλὰ καὶ λουτρὸν τὸ τῶν ἀρχόντων αὐτοῖς and LIB. *Or.* 51, 9 for the *balaneia* of the governors. LIB. *Or.* 52, 7 narrates a specific instance.

⁸⁶ See MARÉCHAL (2015) and MARÉCHAL (2016) for the growing popularity of this sort of bath.

⁸⁷ CHRYS. *C. eos qui subintr.* 10, 1-13, ed. DUMORTIER, 79. CHRYS. *De Phoca* 1, 4 (PG 50: 706), preached in Constantinople, similarly presumes that men would be shopping for their household and wives right before they return home for dinner.

⁸⁸ CHRYS. *De stat.* 17, 3 (PG 49: 179).

⁸⁹ PRISCUS, Fr. 75* (from EVAGRIUS, *HE* 2, 13), ed. CAROLLA (2008), 103 (among the dubia).

In these eastern Mediterranean cities, the second meal of the day, *deipnon*, was now clearly an evening or even a night meal. Dinner started in the evening not only in the writings of Libanius, whose social circles were hardly typical,⁹⁰ but in a variety of authors ranging from the 4th-century novelist, Heliodorus of Emesa,⁹¹ to the 5th-century epic poet, Nonnus of Panopolis,⁹² to Christian sermon writers and exegetes such as John Chrysostom,⁹³ Cyril of Alexandria,⁹⁴ and Theodoret of Cyrrhus. To give one example from Theodoret, the bishop

⁹⁰ LIB. *Epist.* 1458, 1 (with reference to his student days in Athens): καὶ παλαιᾶς ἀνεμνήσθην εὐδαιμονίας, ὡς ἐπέβην τῶν Θησέως Ἀθηνῶν, ὡς ἐσπέρα τότε ἦν, τοῦ λουτροῦ, τοῦ δεῖπνου; LIB. *Or.* 7, 3: λελουμένοι τινὲς σοβοῦντες ἤεσαν ὑπὸ λαμπάδων ἐπὶ δεῖπνα; LIB. *Epist.* 1113, 1-3 for an evening *deipnon* with the governor of Syria; LIB. *Or.* 45, 21 for a criticism of governors who attend shows into the night and then talk about them while having *deipnon*.

⁹¹ Heliodorus, a Hellene from the Syrian city of Emesa, probably between 350 and 376, consistently puts dinners in the evenings: for example, HLD. *Aeth.* 7, 11, 3: the priest Kalasiris, returning home, gives a big banquet (εὐωχία) κατὰ τὴν ἐσπέραν; *Aeth.* 1, 7, 2-3: robbers arrive at sunset at their quarters, and, after conversing for a while, have their *deipnon*; *Aeth.* 1, 10, 2: the father of the family, ἐσπέρας γενομένης, goes to a festive drinking party at the townhall and spends the night there; and *Aeth.* 5, 27, 7 travellers disembark in late afternoon, send people to market to get supplies, and then (*Aeth.* 5, 28, 1) begin to prepare a banquet (εὐωχία) that lasts into the night. For the date of Heliodorus, see FUTRE PINHEIRO (2014) 76-77.

⁹² NONNUS, *Dion.* 3, 51-52: sailors after disembarking at sunset, have their evening meal (ἐσπερίην δαΐτα); 6, 25-36 an evening meal (δεῖπνον) for Demeter; 26, 357: Deriades hosts the leaders of giant host for ἐσπερα δεῖπνα. Nonnus uses the same term “evening *deipnon*” in his Christian epic, with reference to the Last Supper: NONNUS, *Paraphrasis sancti euangelii Ioannei*, Demonstratio 13, 7: ἐσπερίου δὲ δεῖπνου γινομένοιο.

⁹³ In addition to those below, CHRYS. *In Gen. serm.* 6, 4 (PG 54: 603); CHRYS. *De Paenitentia* 3, 4 (PG 49: 296); CHRYS. *De prod. Iud. hom.* 1, 4 (PG 49: 378); and CHRYS. *Compunct. Dem.* 1, 9 (PG 47: 408) for pleasure-lovers stretching their dinners (*deipna*) until midnight.

⁹⁴ CYRIL, *Festal Homily* 5, 2 (SC 372: 286-288), discussed below. CYRIL, *Commentarii in Lucam in catenae* (PG 72: 789, 3-9), also makes it clear that for him, *deipnon* was an evening meal. When commenting on Luke 14:16 (Ἀνθρώπος τις ἐποίησε δεῖπνον μέγα), he asks why the man gave a big *deipnon* instead of *ariston* (the more common choice for a festive meal in his time). His answer was typically eschatological. It was *deipnon* because Christ was sent late in the world, in the evening and under lamps, which is also when lambs were to sacrificed by Jewish law.

of a small city in northern Syria, who was himself a native of Antioch: two holy men were visiting Antioch, and were invited over for a meal by a woman who had met them in church. Well before the table was set before them, it had already become “evening and dark” (ἑσπέρας οὐσης καὶ σκότους), so dark that the woman’s small son fell into a well while she was supervising the preparations for their meal. Later when he discerned the mishap (which she, in her hospitality, had tried to conceal), one of the holy men left his dinner and ordered lights (φῶτα) to be provided. He found the boy sitting unharmed on the surface of the water.⁹⁵

As suggested by this story, the lighting that was needed in earlier authors to get home after dinner was now desirable to get to dinner, as well as to light up the house, both inside and out, during the preparation for the meal. As Libanius describes in *Oration* 7, people “in the evening” (ἑσπέρας) proceeded by torchlight (ὑπὸ λαμπάδων) from the bathhouses to their luxurious *deipna*, while the ragged beggars in front of the baths asked for bread or a coin.⁹⁶ (This was during the long nights of winter). Cyril of Alexandria, writing in the spring of 414, describes much the same thing: those going from the decorated public spaces to their even brighter dining tables, “arm themselves with torches against the darkness of the night, and they do not submit their home to the blackening evening. Instead, by festooning their dwelling with lamps, they drive out the gloom from the darkness with sparklings there”.⁹⁷ In John Chrysostom’s sermons, people lit their portable lamps in the agora before returning home, being careful not to dally and

⁹⁵ THEODORET. *Philotheus* 2, 17 (SC 234: 234-236), although dinner may have been especially late because the holy men had only just arrived in town.

⁹⁶ LIB. *Or.* 7, 3.

⁹⁷ CYRIL, *Festal Homily* 5, 2 (SC 372: 286-288): Δῆδας ἐκεῖνοι τῷ τῆς νυκτὸς ἀνθοπλίζουσι σκότῳ, καὶ μελαινοῦσης τῆς ἑσπέρας αὐτοῖς τὴν ἐστίαν οὐκ ἀνέχονται, ὅλον δὲ λύχνοις τὸ δωμάτιον καταστέψαντες, ταῖς ἐντεῦθεν μαρμαρυγαῖς τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ σκότου καττήφειαν ἐξελαύνουσιν. For the date of these festal homilies, aimed at Cyril’s clerics, see MCGUCKIN (2003) 223.

use up all the oil before reaching the house.⁹⁸ Then the lamps at home were also lit up.⁹⁹ The public street lighting should not be seen in isolation, but as part of this broader network of lighting that stretched from the streets, to people's hands, to their homes.

And here we find one reason why governors may have wanted to provide street lighting that went beyond the torches people carried for themselves: to make the streets safer. Moving around in the dark in these continually refurbished cities was itself dangerous. Cyril's sermons are full of the dangers of walking the streets without a light at night — not because you might be seen as up to no good (as in Maximus of Turin), but because you might stumble into a hole.¹⁰⁰ Yet the lamps could themselves pose a danger. Priscus narrated a particularly unfortunate shopping trip by a working woman, who visited a store around the "hours of the lamps" in Constantinople. She was herself carrying a lamp, and by setting it down carelessly (or, as rumor reported, malevolently), ended up setting a large portion of Constantinople on fire. The "little basket" torches helped contain the lighted lamps to some extent. Nonnus describes portable lamps nestled in spherical basket carriers, shooting rays of light through the basket like stars, which suggests he is thinking of *kandêlai*.¹⁰¹ Sidewalk and shop lighting were an even better solution, for they could eliminate the need for a

⁹⁸ CHRYS. *De sanct. mart.* 4 (PG 50: 652).

⁹⁹ CHRYS. *De sanct. mart.* 4 (PG 50: 652). See also CHRYS. *In 1 Cor. hom.* 11, 5 (PG 61: 94): "when you recline on a couch, with a bright light around your house and an abundant table prepared, then remember that miserable and unhappy man, who is wandering the alleys just like the dogs, in darkness and mud".

¹⁰⁰ CYRIL, *Commentarius in xii prophetas minores* (PUSEY 1: 667) alludes to someone walking around in the dark (ἐν σκότῳ περιπατεῖν), refusing a lamp and then falling into a large hole; in CYRIL, *Commentarii in Ioannem* (PUSEY 3: 17), people in the evening use lights and torches (φανοὺς δὲ καὶ δ᾿δδας) to prevent common misfortunes such as tripping in the dark and falling into pits.

¹⁰¹ NONNUS, *Paraphrasis sancti euangelii Ioannei*, Demonstratio 18, 18-24. The context is the torch carried by Judas and those accompanying him when arresting Jesus at night.

torch altogether. A late version of the Greek-Latin *Hermenmata*, with lots of 4th or 5th-century vocabulary (including a reference to a portable *kandêla* after dinner), suggests walking to the baths through the colonnades (*stoa*) “because of the light (*lumen*)”, possibly an allusion to public lighting.¹⁰²

However, we still haven’t answered the question of why people were keeping these later hours, in the face of the serious inconvenience of engaging in practical activities in the dark. The beginning of an answer may be found in the ways authors react to the more traditional hours.

Libanius associates the traditional early hours with the lazy or unemployed. He makes fun of the parasite who, not having any business of his own to do, encourages his patron to leave the agora and take an early *ariston*. Afterwards, he has his siesta and dreams of more food. In the afternoon, he quickly bathes so that he will be in good time for dinner. This meal ends towards evening and is immediately followed by sleep.¹⁰³ Some of his own students behaved this way, issuing secret invitations to one another during his lectures about visiting the baths even *before* lunch: “for some people really do waste money on such things”.¹⁰⁴ Libanius, when taking a break from his school duties because of illness, was himself spotted at the baths around of midday (*mesembria*) “for the illness in my head makes this my practice”. The point of his letter was to refute any idea that he was enjoying leisure (*scholê*); the demands on his time were just as onerous as ever.¹⁰⁵ Keeping early hours was something to apologize for; they suggested you may not be sufficiently devoted to work.

¹⁰² *Hermen. Monac. coll.* 10e, ed. DICKEY (2012) 122: *Hinc uis per porticum, propter lumen?* The Greek portion, which would have been aimed at the Latin speakers learning Greek, has “rain” instead of *lumen*. See DICKEY (2012) 95 for the late vocabulary in this colloquium and *Hermen. Monac. coll.* 11s for *kandêla* (used here to mean portable lamp).

¹⁰³ LIB. *Decl.* 29, 1, 16-17.

¹⁰⁴ LIB. *Or.* 3, 14: νῦν δ’ ἐπὶ λουτρὸν κλήσει τὸ πρὸ ἀρίστου, δαπανῶνται γὰρ δὴ καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτά τινες.

¹⁰⁵ LIB. *Epist.* 650, 3 (361 CE).

Cyril of Alexandria appears to have been defending Jesus against a similar impression of laziness when trying to explain to his audience why Jesus was described in the Gospels as resting at a well at the sixth hour of the day. He can easily “refute the charge of luxury” (τὴν ἐπὶ τρυφαῖς αἰτίαν) since this was the hottest, therefore the most suitable time of the day, especially for one travelling.¹⁰⁶ In another of his sermons, even the 10th hour of the day was not an appropriate time for rest for the truly diligent. He holds up the example of the apostles, who are found staying in a house with Jesus at the tenth hour of the day. They were not in any way resting, but rather served as an example of scholarly toil: “The disciples were assiduously being instructed in the knowledge of the divine mysteries: for I do not think it right for those desirous of knowledge to have an easily sated disposition, but rather a toil-loving one”.¹⁰⁷ A toil-loving disposition (διάνοιαν φιλοπονωτάτην) was now desired in the highest echelons of late imperial society, including in the Christian academic circles of Alexandria that Cyril was a leader of. It was demonstrated by spending the day and often part of the evening in work.

In Late Antiquity, the powerful and respectable, not merely the humble artisans or slaves, were expected to be working late in the day, and by doing so, pushed their daily necessities into the public spaces after dark. Libanius wrote to the emperor Julian about officials who had used to bathe and rest before the middle of the day. Under a strict new governor, they now toiled the whole day — and some of the night — before the governor’s doors.¹⁰⁸ Libanius approved. The governors themselves worked nights: “evening not uncommonly finds them in

¹⁰⁶ CYRIL, *Commentarii in Ioannem* (PUSEY 1: 266).

¹⁰⁷ CYRIL, *Commentarii in Ioannem* (PUSEY 1: 195): Εὐπαρέδρως οἱ μαθηταὶ τὴν τῶν θεῶν μυστηρίων ἐπαιδεύοντο γινώσιν· οὐ γὰρ οἶμαι πρέπειν ἀψίκορον τοῖς φιλομαθέσιν ἐνυπάρχειν διάνοιαν, φιλοπονωτάτην δὲ μᾶλλον.

¹⁰⁸ LIB. *Epist.* 811, 2 (363 CE): οἱ γὰρ δὴ πρὸ μεσημβρίας ἐκεῖνοι λελουμένοι καὶ κοιμώμενοι Λακωνικοὶ τινες γεγέννηνται τοὺς τρόπους καὶ καρτερικοί, καὶ πρὸς τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς νυκτὸς οὐκ ὀλίγον πονοῦσιν ὥσπερ προσηλωμένοι ταῖς Ἀλεξάνδρου θύραις.

court, and the verdict which takes away their dinner still doesn't end the case".¹⁰⁹ In his *Declamation on Servitude*, Libanius asserts that even the governors are servants now: "the night drives the governors to the law court, with the complete neglect of baths and dinner ... and bearing the want of sleep on his eyelids".¹¹⁰ Of course he is exaggerating here; the governors did not in fact skip their baths or dinner because the nocturnal hours of their courts. What they did was facilitate the transformation of the world around them so that it would conform to their own and their associates' later hours.

The proliferation of glass lamps in the 4th and 5th centuries, of which street lighting was only the tip of the iceberg, is not simply an interesting change in lighting technology. It represents a transformation of people's daily hours, at least in the eastern Mediterranean. Routine activities such as bathing, dining, and shopping that had previously been done during the day were being pushed back into the evening or even the night. This meant there was a greater need for lighting in all sorts of contexts, bringing about change in both lighting technology (glass lamps) and people's habits. City officials and imperial governors were willing to accommodate these changes by attempting to institute street lighting, because they were themselves part of what was driving hours later. We are perhaps seeing the temporal implications of the new imperial service aristocracy of the late Roman Empire.

What does this mean for the history of the night in antiquity? The nights were becoming busier, more pressured, more like part of the day. This last frontier of leisure was being eroded as people attempted with their inadequate, expensive,

¹⁰⁹ LIB. *Or.* 45, 18.

¹¹⁰ LIB. *Decl.* 25, 43: Φαίη ἄν ὁ βουλευὼν ὑβρίσθαι τοῖς λόγοις, εἰ πόλεως τε προστατεύων λαμπράς τε ἐνδύμενος ἐσθῆτας ἔπειτα ἐν δούλοις τάττοιτο. ἀλλ' ἐγὼ μὲν αὐτὸν ἐβουλόμην <ἄν> εἶναι ἐλεύθερον, αὐτὸς δέ με ἕτερα διδάσκει πυνθανόμενος μὲν, εἰ ἡ νύξ ἐπὶ δικαστήριον ἄξει τοὺς ἄρχοντας, λουτρῶν δὲ καὶ δείπνων τὸ μὲν ὅλως ἀπολλύς, τοῦ δὲ οὐχ ἱκανῶς μετέχων, καθεύδων τε οὐδὲ ὅσον ἔξεστιν ὑπὸ δέους φέρων τε ἐπὶ τῶν βλεφάρων τὴν τοῦ ὕπνου χρεῖαν.

and fragile little lamps to engage in what they would have once only done during the clear light of day. It is easy to see this as something positive — a modernization — for we today use the night this way. Libanius perhaps had more insight when he compared it to slavery. The ancient night had its own beauties, its own enjoyments, which we hear about less, or at least less positively, in these Late Antique sources. Much of the distinctiveness, pleasure, and mystery of the night is lost when too much light is shed on it.

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DISCUSSION

F. Carlà-Uhink: Your paper has shown perfectly what you called the “colonization of the night” in the practice of Late Antique city life — and still, this change in practice does not seem to have changed very much the discourses about the night and the stereotypes to which they are connected. It may have even aided in the spreading of the ‘negative’ idea of the night in the Greek East, which we find earlier in Rome. Or would you see major changes occurring also in this field? Would you speak of a ‘Latinization’ of the Late Antique night?

L. Dossey: I do think a negative discourse about the night was created in the 4th century that accompanied this “colonization of the night” by the day. Whereas in the earlier period Greeks such as Plutarch regarded the pleasures of the night favorably, this is no longer the case by the late 4th century. Nighttime drinking, socializing, and sex had become evils to be avoided if possible. The night should be put to more productive use. There was also an increasingly diabolical view of the night sky. The moon, for instance, in the writings of Cyril of Alexandria, is satanic. This is quite a contrast with the previously positive view of the moon, as discussed by Sarah Johnston’s *Hekate Soteira*. However, none of these changes in discourse and stereotypes were universal; they coexisted with more traditional views, especially in the Latin sources.

As for the question of Latinization or Romanization, this, I think, was probably happening sooner, in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE when Greeks began to enter into imperial service. I have noticed a difference in attitudes towards the night in Greek authors who are writing in Rome, a greater emphasis on the importance of the night as a time for rest, for instance. The

founding of the new capital Constantinople and the creation of an eastern Mediterranean imperial bureaucracy probably had more of an impact on the changes my paper was focusing on rather than continued Romanization.

F. Carlà-Uhink: The change in the nightlife that you presented is as in every form of cultural change, a process, and it is probably not monocausal. Still, I was wondering if we should not attribute more importance to the political, or rather, a 'top-down' model. I mean by this that as Late Antique law forbids a series of practices during the night, especially night sacrifices from the 4th century onwards, increased illumination might also be connected with a political desire to 'control the night'. Of course, I do not want to say that this is the only, or even the main reason, but I think this resonates with a certain 'obsession' for safety and its connection with light that the sources you presented show...

L. Dossey: Yes, I would absolutely agree that there was a political desire to better control the night in the 4th century, especially on the part of governors. Streetlights were useful as a form of surveillance. I see this as part of the shift towards using the night for more practical, productive purposes and the stigmatization of time-wasting social and festive activities at night. As for the prohibition of night sacrifices, wouldn't this be part of the gradual outlawing of ancient polytheism in general? A desire to suppress raucous night festivals, Christian as well as pagan, would fit better with what I was discussing.

A. Chaniotis: I do not have a question, only a few observations. This brilliant paper has illuminated very important aspects of the night in Late Antiquity. But when seen in connection with the other presentations of the last days it also shows the necessity to study phenomena such as the perceptions and the realities of the night in the *longue durée*, in order to be able to recognize continuities and changes. What your

paper also made clear, especially with the study of the contradictory references of Libanius to his 'city that never sleeps', his 'cité des lumières', is the necessity to contextualize the references to the night. It is important to examine what kind of sources refer to the night — legal texts, orations, etc. — and, more importantly, with what aim. Thanks to your paper we need to rethink social and geographical differentiations with regard to nightlife. Finally, I should stress the importance of sources such as amulets, phylacteries, and magical papyri both for practices (rituals) and perceptions of the night (its association with fearful events, ghosts, and demonic threats).

L. Dossey: Thank you for your observations. An analysis of how nighttime magic changes over time would be very interesting, especially one that took into account, as you suggest, remnants of actual use like curse tablets and papyri. Not all-night-time magic is frightening or diabolical; gathering certain herbs by moonlight in Lucian, for instance, is just taking advantage of certain perceived effects of the night on plants. Certainly by the time of the Paris Magical Papyrus (early 4th-century Egypt?), night magic had become something quite disturbing. Your comment about geographical differentiations would be important, I think, for understanding nocturnal magic. Egypt with its weaker city governments and longer history of imperial control was not like Asia Minor or even Syria, and might be precocious in the appearance of a more frightening, demonic night.

I. Mylonopoulos: How can we explain the difference in the use of artificial light in public open spaces during the night between the Eastern and the Western part of the Roman Empire? You associated the rather intense use of artificial light in the East with a change in habits, work ethics, mentality, etc. Are we to presuppose a completely different mentality in the West?

L. Dossey: Well, yes, I think the Western Roman Empire did indeed have a different experience, especially after the

4th century. There may have been certain cities where artificial light in public open spaces was experimented with, for example, Carthage, Ravenna, or even Rome. It would be interesting to examine the archaeology in greater depth for the period around 400 CE. However, glass lamps came later to the West, and then in the 5th century, the western Roman economy went into freefall and the barbarians were invading. This was not a context for the sort of intensification of urban time use that my paper was examining, and the Latin sources appear to bear that out.

I. Mylonopoulos: A more detailed remark: Although I do believe that you are absolutely right about the intensity of the use of glass lamps in the East, I fail to see how the generic term *φῶς* used by Libanios in his *Or.* 16, 41 can be seen as a clear reference to these kinds of glass lamps.

L. Dossey: No, it is not a clear reference to glass lamps at all; it is a vague reference to some sort of lighting. The only reason to think he meant glass lamps is that it fits the chronology of their appearance in the archaeology and the use of a term for glass lamp in the inscriptions about streetlighting from Ephesus. My point about Libanios was that he may have been intentionally vague because a new technology was being employed.

R. Schlesier: Was ist die Voraussetzung dafür, um allgemeine Schlussfolgerungen über stattgefundenen Veränderungen aus den Quellen zu ziehen? Was ist wirklich neu, und was hängt allein vom jeweiligen situativen Kontext ab? Wie steht es um die Gleichzeitigkeit unterschiedlicher Bewertungen der Nacht?

L. Dossey: One thing I have tried to do is find a coincidence in time in different types of sources — for instance, the appearance of glass lamps in urban street contexts at the same time as street lamps are mentioned in our textual sources, or shifts in

the time for bathing or meals in both Christian and non-Christian authors. I would agree that just one example or context would tell us very little, but if we find changes in a variety of contexts and sources, we may have discovered something significant. The Christian patristic sermons have been understudied as an avenue for discerning the rhythms of daily life in Late Antiquity. When we compare them with better understood authors like Libanius, we see that Christians and pagans were in fact inhabiting the same world.

V. Pirenne-Delforge: Peut-on évaluer l'impact du christianisme sur la manière dont ceux que Pierre Chuvin appelle "les derniers païens" ont envisagé les rites nocturnes?¹ On a souvent souligné l'intérêt des intellectuels comme Prétextat pour les cultes à mystères (par ex. *CIL* VI 1780 = *ILS* 1260) en invoquant l'argument de l'expérience émotionnelle, voire les espérances eschatologiques, qu'ils revêtaient. Mais en écoutant la communication de Leslie, je m'interroge sur la dimension nocturne de certains de ces rites et sur l'intérêt de ce cadre rituel pour affirmer une 'spécificité' polythéiste face au christianisme à la fin du IV^e siècle.

L. Dossey: The use of the night by the "last pagans" in Rome is not something that I have explored. Perhaps they were engaging in nocturnal mystery rites (and boasting of it) as a way differentiate themselves from the Christians. It may have also been their idea of traditionalism. Night ritual was already a very important part of these mystery religions in the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE (at least in the East), long before anyone would want to imitate the Christians, and included some of the specific cults mentioned in Praetextatus's epitaph (Hekate, Cybele). What is interesting to me is that these Romans were embracing the sort of nocturnal mysteries that earlier Romans regarded with suspicion (as discussed by Filippo's paper). I would see

¹ P. CHUVIN (1990), *Chronique des derniers païens* (Paris).

this as another sign that the time pressures placed on the night were easing in the Western Roman Empire at the very time that they were increasing in the East.

A. Chaniotis: The strong interest in mysteries in Late Antiquity cannot be separated from an interest in the night. It is noteworthy that an interest in the 'metaphysical' aspects of the night is suggested by epitaphs of Late Antique polytheists — for instance in Aphrodisias — that present death as a transformation into a star.

L. Dossey: I would say that a strong interest in nocturnal mysteries in Late Antiquity would fly in the face of the type of intensified practical use of the night that my paper focused on. This interest may have existed, but I would expect it to be contested. Many of the old nighttime pagan festivals were suppressed in the eastern Mediterranean in Late Antiquity — and all-night Christian vigils were sometimes attacked as well (for example, the fuss about the Messalians). However, I wonder if the belief that a virtuous dead person could transform into a star (which Plutarch also attests to) is really evidence of nocturnal mysteries. It is certainly a benign view of the luminaries that would go against the diabolical night sky of authors such as Cyril of Alexandria. There seems to have been a lot of disagreement in Late Antiquity about what the stars actually were. I should take a look at these epitaphs.

I. Mylonopoulos: I am very thankful to you because of the emphasis you placed on the different uses of the night by different social strata, the distinction between the night of pleasure and the night of *ponos*. This is probably more a question to myself than to you: The so-called Hellenistic genre sculpture showing peasants, workmen, fishermen and other members of the lower classes is something entirely new in Greek art, and it does attract the attention of the Romans, who seem to like copies of such works in their gardens. The people rendered in the so-called

genre sculpture have long been associated with the night, but art historians were always puzzled by the sudden interest of the members of the elite in these figures, an interest that must have been big enough so as to motivate them into paying for such a statue. I wonder whether the phenomenon you described, with members of the elite using more and more the night either for pleasure, or as part of an extension of their intellectual *ponos*, is not one of the reasons that made this kind of themes in sculpture more attractive, since it created the temporal framework for members of the upper class to come into contact with these 'creatures of the night' on a more socially acceptable level and probably sparked their interest in the lives of the working classes.

L. Dossey: This is an interesting idea — that encountering others who were laboring or otherwise miserable at night could promote a sort of interest in and empathy for the lower social classes. This could be compared to Libanius's description of beggars outside the bathhouses at night that I mentioned in my paper. The beggars were certainly hoping for empathy from the rich patrons of the baths. Libanius must have been a disappointment to them.

The other possibility, of course, is that these depictions are similar to images of laboring African-Americans in the 19th and early 20th century southern United States. It gives the slave-holding and land-holding class pleasure to see the sources of their wealth toiling away.

F. Carlà-Uhink: Could you comment on the possible impact of Christianity in the developments that you described?

L. Dossey: If the question is whether I think Christianity brought the changes to the Late Antique night that my paper focused on, I would say no. One of my goals was to show that people's use of nighttime was changing irrespective of religion, and that in the case of the glass lamps, the secular contexts were as early (if not earlier) than the Christian.

Although your paper provided some examples of Christian night ritual that I wasn't aware of (I was especially fascinated by the references to Christians meeting with the lights off), in my own research I have found more evidence for night ritual among the polytheists of the 1st through 3rd centuries CE than among the Christians. Angelos's paper confirms this impression. The Christians had their Easter night vigil, but not much else until the 4th century. (The predawn meetings mentioned by Pliny *Epist.* 10, 96 does not seem to me to be night ritual.) Perhaps the Christians were the ones trying to compete with the mystery cults.

K. De Temmerman: Are there also elements of continuity in addition to the elements of change that you have discussed?

L. Dossey: Yes, although I didn't emphasize them in this paper. There are signs that in the countryside, meal times remained earlier, closer to what you see in the earlier Roman Empire. Also, I would see certain kinds of Christian monasticism (the kind discussed by Daniel Caner, in his *Wandering, Begging Monks*) as a 'slow-time' reaction against the intensified practical use of the night. The monks were not, admittedly, reviving the more pleasurable aspects of the night such as sex and dancing. But they did (sometimes) promote singing all night in public spaces, holidays from work, an appreciation for the natural night sky, and lingering conversations over meals. And they got in trouble for it!