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The Bright Side of Night

Nocturnal Activities in Medieval and Early Modern Times

Edited by

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Post tenebras lux

The expression *Post tenebras lux* is emblazoned on the main building of the University of Geneva in which the symposium took place that laid the groundwork for this volume. This Latin phrase translates as «Light after darkness». It stems from the Vulgate version of Job 17:12, where it says: *Post tenebras spero lucem* («After darkness, I hope for light»). Its abbreviated form became the motto of the Reformation at the time of its first centenary in 1617. In this context, it encapsulates the Protestant idea that after the times of false belief under the Catholic Church, the Reformation had 'enlightened' its followers, allowing them to see the truth[1]. Thus *post tenebras lux* alluded to the metaphorical dimension of darkness and light, in which darkness stands for evil or for ignorance and light for good or truth[2].

1. Paul-Alexis Mellet, «*Post tenebras lux*: le temps et le corps dans la conversion aux XVI^e^ et XVII^e^ siècles», in Daniela Solfaroli Camillocci, Maria-Cristina Pitassi (eds.), *Les modes de la conversion confessionnelle à l'époque moderne: autobiographie, altérité et construction des identités religieuses*, Florence, Olschki, 2010, 21-40, at 21-22; Sebastian Kranich, «Der Geist der Zeiten: Protestantische Deutungsmuster in universitären Reformationsjubiläen», *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, 65/1 (2013), 18-31, at 21-24. – I am grateful to the Swiss National Science Foundation for the financial support.

2. Hans Blumenberg, *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2010, 7.

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While this slogan insinuates an utterly negative interpretation of darkness, darkness also functioned as an enabler. In heterodox settings, especially after the Reformation, confessional minorities saw themselves forced to practice their beliefs in clandestine gatherings. We know that such assemblies often took place in the night. The nocturnal darkness protected their secret meetings[3]. Thus, the expression *post tenebras lux* and its context remind us of the ambivalence of darkness. This latter ranges from devilish, dangerous, and destructive, on the one side, to holy, protective, and constructive on the other. Such a spectrum of ambivalence is similarly applicable to the night.

In most societies, the night is associated with danger, criminality, the liminal, or death, and pre-modern Europe is no exception. On the contrary, its image is embedded in the romanticized view of an age that feared the end of day. Despite abundant research on this aspect of darkness, there was another, less obvious attitude toward the night, which has seen much less scholarly attention: nocturnal activities that were cherished, sought after, or thought only possible during the nighttime. Such more positive attitudes *toward* and activities *of* the night feature the search for the relics of saints, nighttime prayers, the pursuit of astronomy or other sciences at the foot of a candlestick, or social events that took place when the labors of the day were over. In short, this volume scrutinizes the brighter sides of night in medieval and early modern times.

Ideally, this approach goes beyond a simple change of perspective, arguing for example that a thief conceives of darkness or the night as something positive, since it allows him to raid the larder without being seen, and so forth. Indeed, judgement regarding a nocturnal activity depends on one's point of view. But what seems more fruitful to us is to analyze the activities that took place during the night and ask to what extent it was the nocturnal setting that enabled them.

3. Craig Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire: A History of the Night in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, 47–58.

State of the Art

These questions have received less attention in scholarship on the pre-modern night[4]. Nevertheless, the field has increased its dynamics in recent years, focusing on specific aspects such as sleep, dreams, and sleepwalking, and often including literary or sometimes material approaches[5]. Further topics feature the attempts at regulating and disciplining nightlife[6] or at nocturnal spiritual contemplation[7]. Since the field is still relatively young, others have dared to apply broader frames, offering more general histories of the night[8] or of darkness[9].

4. For an exception and in regard to values of nocturnal facets in classical Antiquity, see James Ker, Antje Wessels (eds.), *The Values of Nighttime in Classical Antiquity: Between Dusk and Dawn*, Leiden, Brill, 2020.

5. Michael Beaumont, *Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London*, London, Verso, 2015; Sasha Handley, *Sleep in Early Modern England*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2016; Nadia Durrani, Brian Fagan, *What We Did in Bed: A Horizontal History*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2019; Claire Gantet, *Une histoire du rêve: Les faces nocturnes de l'âme (Allemagne, 1500-1800)*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2021 [German original 2010]; Gerrit Verhoeven, «(Pre)Modern Sleep: New Evidence from the Antwerp Criminal Court (1715-1795)», *Journal for Sleep Research*, 30/13099 (2021), 1-7.

6. Corinne Walker, «Esquisse pour une histoire de la vie nocturne à Genève au XVIII[e] siècle», *Revue du Vieux Genève*, (1989), 73-86; Birgit Emich, «Zwischen Disziplinierung und Distinktion: Der Schlaf in der Frühen Neuzeit», *WerkstattGeschichte*, 34 (2003), 53-75; Christian Casanova, *Nacht-Leben: Orte, Akteure und obrigkeitliche Disziplinierung in Zurich, 1523-1833*, Zurich, Chronos 2007; and Marco Cicchini, «Gouverner la nuit au siècle des Lumières: Entre tyrannie des heures noires et plaisirs noctambules», *XVIII.ch*, 2 (2011), 39-65.

7. Alec Ryrie, «Sleeping, Waking and Dreaming in Protestant Piety», in Id. Jessica Martin (eds.), *Private and Domestic Devotion in Early Modern Britain*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2012, 73-92; Rose Delestre, «*Je me cuiday endormir*: poétique de la vulnérabilité et identité nocturne dans l'écriture de Christine de Pizan», *Ecriture de soi-R*, 1 (2021), 99-124.

8. Jean Verdon, *La Nuit au Moyen Âge*, Paris, Perrin, [2]2003; Roger Ekirch, *At Day's Close: Night in Times Past*, New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 2006; Alain Cabantous, *Histoire de la nuit (XVII[e]-XVIII[e] siècle)*, Paris, Fayard, 2009.

9. Bryan Palmer, *Cultures of Darkness: Night Travels in the Histories of Transgression (From Medieval to Modern)*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 2000; Nina Edwards, *Darkness: A Cultural History*, Chicago, Chicago Univer-

One of these pioneering books, Craig Koslofsky's *Evening's Empire* of 2011, has suggested that during the early modern period the night was 'colonized.' Koslofsky has termed this process 'nocturnalization,' describing how diurnal activities extended increasingly into nighttime and how the night, in turn, created the space for new activities[10]. This observation fits well with the studies of the introductions of public street lighting and the use of artificial light at court[11]. Here, certain caution is required to navigate around teleological traps, since increasing nocturnal activities during the early modern period imply neither a 'dead' medieval night nor a linear development thanks to technological inventions, such as improved lighting methods. Finally, studies of the non-European night have equally indicated that there lies a vast potential for further research[12].

Characteristics of the Night

To describe the types of nocturnal activity and define the characteristics of the night respectively, one must consider geography and culture. In probably most cultures, people have had a

sity Press, 2018; Nic Dunn, Tim Edensor (eds.), *Rethinking Darkness: Cultures, Histories, Practices*, London, Routledge, 2020.

10. Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire*.

11. Craig Koslofsky, «Princes of Darkness: The Night at Court, 1650-1750», *Journal of Modern History*, 79/2 (2007), 235-73; Darrin McMahon, «Illuminating the Entlightenment: Public Lighting Practices in the Siècle des Lumières», *Past & Present*, 240 (2018), 119-59; Sophie Reculin, *'Le règne de la nuit désormais va finir': L'invention et la diffusion de l'éclairage public dans le royaume de France (1697-1789)* diss. thesis, 2017, online: https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01915183.

12. See among others Cemal Kafadar, «How Dark is the History of the Night, How Black the Story of Coffee, How Bitter the Tale of Love: The Changing Measure of Leisure and Pleasure in Early Modern Istanbul», in Arzu Öztürkmen, Evelyn Birge Vitz (eds.), *Medieval and Early Modern Performance in the Eastern Mediterranean*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2014, 243-69; Laura Hollsten, «Night Time and Entangled Spaces on Early Modern Caribbean Sugar Plantations», *Journal of Global Slavery*, 1 (2016), 248-73; Angelika Koch, «Nightless Cities: Timing the Pleasure Quarters in Early Modern Japan», *Kronoscope*, 17/1 (2017), 61-93; Nancy Gonlin, David Millard Reed (eds.), *Night and Darkness in Ancient Mesoamerica*, Boulder, University Press of Colorado, 2021.

concept of day and night. In the Christian world, the first few lines of Genesis 1 already describe the connectivity of darkness and night as well as the separation of day and night. Having invented light, «God sees that the light is good and separates it from darkness, calling the light day and the darkness night»[13]. Certainly, this radical dichotomy seldom holds its ground when one considers that the transitional phases of dusk and dawn, or evening and early morning, render the night a liminal and opaque phenomenon. Moreover, neither the night nor the day are perceived exclusively as unities if we think of monikers like 'afternoon' or the monastic dividing of the night[14]. Also, the varying amount of daylight or dark hours depends on season and latitude, influencing the behavior of both humans and nature.

In the latitudes of this volume's authors, darkness is one of the most eminent qualities of the night. It offers a) protection from being seen, which is beneficial to illegitimate love or sexual encounters or suppressed spiritual devotion, among other activities; and b) protection from distraction. This would improve spiritual meditation, astronomy, and artistic or intellectual production. The idea of the latter was called *lucubratio*, a concept already known to ancient Greeks and Romans[15]. For the topic of nocturnal activities it is interesting to examine whether these effects of darkness were limited to nighttime or could also appear during the day, inside a dark room, a cellar, tower, or cave. The more general question to ask is: to what extent were the nocturnal activities really linked to the night? To what degree were they enabled by darkness or by the nighttime as a temporal entity or by a combination of the two? Or whether none of

13. Genesis 1:1-5.

14. Cf. the chapters by Anne-Lydie Dubois and Jean-Claude Schmitt in this volume; and Christina Sanchez-Stockhammer, Jenny Arendholz, «*Abend ward, bald kommt die Nacht* …: Die Korrelation von Tages- und Uhrzeiten im deutsch-englischen Vergleich», *Lebende Sprachen*, 57 (2012), 139-61.

15. For details on *lucubratio* see for example, Mark Vessey, «Erasmus's *Lucubrationes*: Genesis of a Literary œuvre», in Stephen Partridge, Eric Kwakkel (eds.), *Author, Reader, Book: Medieval Authorship in Theory and Practice*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2018, 232-62; and James Ker, «Nocturnal Writers in Imperial Rome: The Culture of *lucubration*», *Classical Philology*, 99 (2004), 209-42.

them were preconditions for the activities, but were due to a combination of circumstances that happened to take place at night as well, such as, for example, social gatherings, sexual intercourse, spiritual devotion, etc.

Further characteristics of the (pre-modern) night include on a *natural level* limited visibility, but better observability of the stars and the moon. On a *sensory level* relative silence dominates the night, at least in areas where people live. It would be interesting to know more about the bodily difference in perceiving noise during the day as opposed to the night, with less visual distraction. The relative silence has to do with the next point that is a specificity of the night on a *social level*: reduced activity. As diurnal animals and most humans are asleep – albeit nocturnal animals are awake – noisy movements decrease during the nighttime in areas inhabited by humans. Diminished activity comes with limited mobility owing to closed town gates or the abovementioned factors. The closing of city entries leads to the *juridical level* of specific laws for nightlife. For example, by night, each person on the streets was obliged to make themselves visible by carrying a lantern or torch or by hiring a linkboy[16].

Most of these points characteristic of nighttime are interconnected or even interdependent. For example, darkness impedes some diurnal activities. Such circumstances invite people to stay at home or go to sleep, which leads to reduced outdoor activity. This again increases silence or protection from being seen or from distraction, which consequently enable deeper concentration on meditation or *lucubratio* or astronomical observations and so forth. Such interconnections render the essentials of the night more complex to grasp. They require careful analysis so as not to jump to conclusions about cause and effect.

Two last aspects of this brief definition of the night regard its temporal and spatial dimensions. On the one hand, the night functions as a temporal entity. Specific rhythms of the night show that this entity did not necessarily mean a temporal *unity*,

16. For an analysis of legal characteristics of the night see: Emich, *Zwischen Disziplinierung und Distinktion*; Casanova, *Nacht-Leben*; or Cicchini, *Gouverner la nuit au siècle des Lumières*.

as mentioned above[17]. Thus, one may ask, what makes the night a particular time? Or the other way around: to what extent is the night influenced by concepts *of* and attitudes *toward* time? On the other hand, the night is not only a time, but also a place. At least, this is the case if you consider that the night is covering half of the planet at any given time, even if continuously shifting around the earth[18]. Hence, its location always depends on temporal factors – and vice versa: its time depends on its position.

Location moreover influences the person who asks questions. Owing to the constellation of the group participating in the conference in Geneva in June 2022, it so happens that the following chapters discuss the topic from predominantly European or at least Westerners' points of view. The reason for this lies in limited resources rather than lack of interest or awareness. Future research should aim for more global approaches, as intercultural and interregional comparisons promise to be fruitful, too. In contrast to Christian attitudes, in some cultures, for example in Polynesian cosmologies, night and darkness were considered as the sacred part of daytime, while day and light referred to the profane[19]. At the very least, this volume aims at a critical reflection upon the evaluation of pre-modern nights.

Interrogating the Night

In order to explore these aspects *of* and attitudes *toward* the night, the book raises a set of questions. In particular, our attention is geared toward the *materiality* of nocturnal activities, such as the conception of beds or lighting. Furthermore, we want to understand the *social implications* of nighttime activities, and how

17. See furthermore Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Les rythmes au Moyen Âge*, Paris, Gallimard, 2016, 253-337.

18. Christopher Kyba et al., «Night Matters: Why the Interdisciplinary Field of 'Night Studies' is Needed», *Multidisciplinary Scientific Journal*, 3 (2020), 1-6, 2.

19. Christa Bausch, «Das Nachtmythologem in der polynesischen Religion und seine Auswirkungen auf protestantische Missionstätigkeit», *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, 22/3 (1970), 244-66; also mentioned in Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire*, 281.

these activities, in turn, *shaped pre-modern societies*: Who participated in nocturnal practices? And were gatherings at this time of day more intimate and private, or decidedly public? To what extent did a cultural alignment of night with divine forces of creativity, a perceived closeness to the otherworld, and the ideal of concentration beyond daily and mundane disturbances play a role in making this a preferable time for philosophical reflection, art, and science? What effects did a legal framework have on premodern nightlife? For example, did prohibitions change society's view of activities that for such reasons were forced to be nocturnal, such as alchemy, prostitution, and human dissections, among others?

Further questions refer to historiography and regard established ways of periodization. Ingrained in our definition of epochs in the history of our continent, we can easily detect how metaphorical references to light or dark were used to discredit – or at least to characterize – the differences between modernity and its immediate forerunners. The name 'Enlightenment' already uses a wordplay that associates the age of Voltaire with the modern times. The Middle Ages, though, are often described as the night that came before the sunlit day of the Enlightenment[20]. Certain exponents of German Romanticism in the early nineteenth century used this trope but twisted its meaning into a somewhat more positive perspective: «One has termed it [= the Middle Ages, V.H.] a night lasting over a thousand years. But this night is at least lightened up by stars. In it, stellar constellations are rising and falling, which are invisible in a time when the shadeless noonday sun glooms over the crown of men»[21]. With these words Ludwig Uhland praised the Middle Ages in his *Introduction to Medieval Poetry* around 1830 at the University of Tübingen particularly *because* of its nocturnal association. Two

20. John V. Fleming, *The Dark Side of the Enlightenment: Wizards, Alchemists, and Spiritual Seekers in the Age of Reason*, New York, W. W. Norton, 2013, 10.

21. Ludwig Uhland, *Uhlands Werke. Dritter Teil: Zur Geschichte der Dichtung und Sage*, ed. by Adalbert Silbermann, Berlin et al., Deutsches Verlagshaus Bong, [n.d.], 14 [our own translation]. I thank Romedio Schmitz-Esser for providing me with this quote.

centuries later we might ask whether such a way of framing the medieval period in terms of light or darkness is useful at all. Combining essays on the medieval with those on the early modern night, as this volume does, allows for a reconsideration of ruptures and continuities beyond the common borders of epochs.

Finally, we hope to stimulate reflections on the approaches and best practices in the field. What are the methodological difficulties in discussing the everyday experience of night in our sources? What implications do they have for our research, and how can we overcome such challenges? We should always ask ourselves why certain sources have been produced and conserved and what implications this has for our image of the night and of nocturnal activities. The *discourses* on night and nocturnal activities provide only limited insights into the *practices* of the night. Generally, in regard to intellectual endeavors such as literary or philosophical writing and spiritual contemplation, the night enjoyed a favorable image. In contrast, in social aspects it often had a restricting reputation, not least because the night opened up spaces[22]. We should therefore try to distinguish between intellectual or theoretical ideals and socio-political reality.

To get a grip on the history of nocturnal activities, we encourage the use of multiple and interdisciplinary approaches, as nocturnal activities are tricky to detect. As can be seen in Jan Steen's painting *Ace of Heart*, the night was full of joyful activities (see fig. 1). To discover the sources that speak of such nocturnal life we often need to look very closely. It might well be that we have to peek behind – or even through – a glass of beer to find the source that *enlightens* the scenery of nocturnal activities. Pursuing an interdisciplinary approach facilitates the quest to detect the actors and actions positioned in the darker spaces, like the smoking man at the back.

The papers take different aims and discuss individual aspects in this long list of questions, but their common focus is on the night as enabler, as a time of day that offers chances and possibilities that a sunlit workday could not provide. This urges us always to consider and challenge the specificity of the nocturnal in such

22. Cf. Cabantous, *Histoire de la nuit (XVII^e-XVIII^e siècle)*, 29.

night activities. Could these activities also have taken place during the day? And, if so, what then made them *nocturnal* activities? Only the time when they happened, or other factors too?

This Volume in a Nutshell

Uniting approaches from medieval and early modern, cultural and criminal history, from material cultures, medieval literature, and art history, this book offers an interdisciplinary and transversal look at the night. The volume comprises four sections, starting off with three chapters on the connection of the nocturnal with devotion and salvation in «Nightly Watchfulness».

Jean-Claude Schmitt begins his study of the rhythms of the night with the separation of day and night in Genesis. He underscores the fundamental role of the night in the temporal structuring of Christian medieval culture. The Rule of Saint Benedict and the books of hours stipulated a liturgical schedule, requiring believers to interrupt their nightly sleep at specific times for prayers. The ecclesiastics tirelessly endeavored to measure and identify the middle of the night, since midnight marked the pivot of this circadian rhythm.

The foundations of these monastic preoccupations found their echo in medieval German spiritual poetry, as the literary scholar Agnes Rugel demonstrates based on the figure of the watchman. In medieval lyric, the watchman represents the main enabler of cherished nocturnal activities, namely of watching, sleeping, and expecting. The night sets the scene for the vigilant watchman as idealized Christian, not only to allow everyone else to sleep in peace, but also to stay watchful toward God and await the light of dawn, symbolizing salvation.

Anne-Lydie Dubois spins this thread further, as she analyzes the role of the night in medieval practices of sleep deprivation. Catherine of Siena serves as a particularly telling example – and a model to pious followers. Dubois highlights the reinforcing effect of the night for these ascetic practices, as staying awake during the day requires less discipline and devotion. Only during the nighttime did these exercises allow believers to fully prove their merits and holiness.

Following on from this, in the second section, «Liberties and Sanctities of the Night,» Romedio Schmitz-Esser revisits the image of the medieval night as associated with the fear of demons and death. Instead, he shows how ecclesiastics and devoted Christians sought contact with the dead. Especially concerning the creation of saints in the High Middle Ages, it was the night that set the scene for highly esteemed spiritual acts, such as re-embalming and pre-inspecting potentially holy bodies.

In his chapter on the night on Caribbean sugar plantations, Adrian van der Velde demonstrates how the nightly hours allowed enslaved Africans and African-descended people to gather. Protected by the darkness, they strengthened their community by social or spiritual rituals or even organized and launched attempts to rebel or escape and achieve freedom. Besides these nocturnal activities, the enslaved people also had to work in sugarcane production during the night. These nightshifts corroborated the importance of the Caribbean plantations for the Industrial Revolution.

The third section, «Lighting up the Dark,» is composed of two essays on the material culture and political challenges of in- and outdoor lighting. Maria Weber focuses on the materiality of lighting in late eighteenth-century England. Based on public debates in newspapers and Parliament on the taxation of candles, she scrutinizes the common consumption of candles. By depicting the diversity of candles and their spectrum in terms of brightness, endurance, soot, smell, and price, Weber looks beyond the material variety of lighting practices to highlight that these practices and the qualities of the candles simultaneously functioned as markers of social distinction.

Sophie Reculin describes the discussions that led to the installation of street lighting in France. Comparing evidence from several French towns, she shows how differently the people involved reasoned in favor of or against the introduction of streetlights. Her case brings to the fore that defying obscurity enabled an increase in nocturnal activities, but the causalities also worked the other way around, when increased nocturnal activities led to endeavors to light up public space.

In the fourth section, «Materiality of Sleep and Sleeping Spaces,» the art historian Ilaria Hoppe illustrates the centrality of

beds in the homes and courts of the Italian Renaissance elite. As the bed was commonly not in a secluded room but rather visible and accessible to visitors, it was a medium of social distinction, serving functions beyond sleep and sexual intercourse. With many graphic illustrations, Hoppe traces these different levels of agency and considers the bed as an enchanted, almost magical object.

Moving from the bed as a multifarious piece of furniture to the most frequent activity performed in it, Sasha Handley outlines the project on early modern sleep care that she has recently started with her team at the University of Manchester. It inquires into the practices of sleep and the ways in which environmental factors influenced how people in the British Isles and in English overseas settlements endeavored to slumber well.

In his Afterword, Craig Koslofsky guides us through the different waypoints of the night, starting from 'daytime,' 'evening,' and 'midnight' to 'the heart of the night' and finally to 'predawn.' Koslofsky identifies those nocturnal activities discussed in the essays which were typical for the different phases of the night. He thus presents a chronological tour through the night, emphasizing its enabling power.

This volume is but a first attempt to find answers to the questions raised in this introductory essay. Given the comprehensive nature of the topic, the contributions assembled here suffice only as cones of light that may serve as selective orientation for further work. With this introduction to the brighter sides of nights, we aim to present nocturnal activities as more nuanced than a simple black or white dichotomy and hope to stimulate further research on the topic.

*

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ABSTRACT

Vitus Huber, *Toward a More Positive Perspective on Nocturnal Activities in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period: An Introduction*

This introductory paper discusses both, the state of the art regarding the history of the premodern night and the corresponding desiderata. It gives a brief definition of the particularities of the night and reflects upon the implications of their specificities as factors related to space, time, and culture. It states that historiography has considered night and darkness as predominantly negative phenomena. Instead of condemning this time of the day as the sphere of ignorance, deviance, devilish temptation, and crime, the text pleads for a more nuanced perspective on the night, highlighting the more positive nocturnal activities. To this end it raises the central questions of the volume, encouraging further research especially to examine night as an enabler. It closes with a synthesis of the volume's interdisciplinary contributions.

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NIGHTLY WATCHFULNESS

Jean-Claude Schmitt

THE RHYTHMS OF THE MEDIEVAL NIGHT

Night seems to us to be a natural phenomenon whose explanation appears to be easy: the rotation of the earth around its own axis in front of the sun accounts for the more or less rapid alternation, according to season and latitude, of night and day. In short, night would be a temporary shadow dropped on a portion of the surface of the globe as long as the sun did not shine on it. Night would be the reverse of day, its negative, waiting for the situation to be reversed after a few hours. Such observations are not inaccurate, but they are insufficient. For the historian, as for the ethnologist or sociologist, night cannot be reduced to a physical or astronomical explanation. Night is just as much a social phenomenon, rich in a multitude of meanings and uses. People inhabit the night with their activities, their imagination, and their dreams. Their astronomical conceptions of the night are themselves products of history.

Numerous works of medieval and modern history, such as those of Alain Cabantous, a historian of the night focusing particularly on the night in the 'second modernity' (seventeenth to eighteenth century) in France and England, show that the night is not simply the opposite of the day, but must be studied in its 'autonomous temporality'[1]. The work of medievalists amply confirms this point of view, for example that of Frank Rexroth on

1. Alain Cabantous, «Une histoire de la nuit est-elle possible?». Conférence prononcée le 22 novembre 2017. Société d'ethnologie. *Conférence Eugène Fleischmann*, XI, Nanterre, 2019; Id., *Histoire de la nuit (XVII^e^-XVIII^e^ siècle)*, Paris, Fayard, 2009.

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late medieval London[2], of Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan in the case of Venice[3], of Jean Verdon[4] and Craig Koslofsky providing a more global perspective[5], or of Catherine Vincent on the liturgical use of candles and luminaries, one of whose functions was to bring artificial daylight into the darkness of medieval sanctuaries[6].

I would like to begin by recalling the achievements of those works, which depict in detail the social realities of the medieval night. For centuries, night has been equated with the deepest darkness. Darkness blurs the acuity and hierarchy of physical senses: during the night, the pre-eminence of sight gives way to a necessary recourse to hearing, touch, and smell. The limits of perception give rise to fear, dread, and imagination, facilitating the assimilation of night with sin, crime, the devil, and the sabbath.

After the fatigue of the day, the night invites one to a restful sleep and promises escape into dreams. It is at night that the couple finds its intimacy: night is favorable for the couple's love and desire to reproduce.

In the public space, the authorities responsible for social order seek to banish from the night the activities that prevail during the day, starting with artisanal or manufacturing work. Strictly regulated by the trade and urban authorities, working time was limited by the ringing of a certain bell, the *werkglocke*, in the Flemish towns. The night watchmen enforced the curfew, tracked down arsonists, monitored prostitutes, and increased the penalties for nighttime crime. In Venice, the Lords of the Night (*Domini de Nocte*), one for each district or *sestiere*, were charged by the Council of Ten with organizing and monitoring the 'Venetian night,' ensuring that the ban on night work was respected, repressing abuses of all kinds, and chasing down arsonists. Their

2. Frank Rexroth, *Das Milieu der Nacht. Obrigkeit und Randgruppen im spätmittelalterlichen London*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999.

3. Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, *Soppra le acque salse. Espace, pouvoir et société à Venise à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Rome, Ecole française de Rome, 1992, I, 255-57; II, 802-7.

4. Jean Verdon, *La nuit au Moyen Âge*, Paris, Perrin, 1994.

5. Craig Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire. A History of the Night in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011.

6. Catherine Vincent, *Fiat Lux. Lumière et luminaires dans la vie religieuse du XIII^e au XV^e siècle*, Paris, Cerf, 2004.

role was so important that it soon extended beyond the fluctuating limits of the night and into daytime policing. «The Lords of the Night are also the Lords of the Day», writes Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan[7]. The night laid the foundation upon which the organization of the day was established. But the authorities were not content with prohibiting and repressing; they also sought to tame the night and to control it, by promoting festivals and nocturnal processions. The improvement of public lighting, the nocturnal celebration of major public events, such as the entrance of the prince or the birth of a royal heir, and the growing popularity of fireworks, evidence the conquest of the night by the day.

It is also important, however, to observe how the night generates its own activities. Some professions cannot interrupt their activity at night: the baker kneads his dough when everyone is still asleep; the fire in the glassmaker's or bell founder's oven cannot be interrupted and must therefore be kept going all night. In the countryside, the wake gathers the whole extended family, the servants, and the close neighbors until late in the night. Night is a place and an important moment of sociability and intergenerational transmission of knowledge and beliefs. Among them, those concerning the stars, and especially the moon, are of particular importance both for the empirical knowledge of the fertility of plants and animals and for the mysteries of human fertility. The night thus has a history, which allows us to conclude with Alain Cabantous that «even if certain elements of autonomy of the dark hours existed before the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the period of the second modernity unquestionably promoted an autonomous construction of the night»[8]. Furthermore, the revolution in public lighting, with oil lanterns, then gas streetlamps, and eventually electricity, has changed the history of the night, both in the city and in the countryside.

If we look at the history of the night over a long period, we can see that night has not always been the same. The physical reality of night, at the same latitudes, has not changed over the centuries, whereas the understanding of night, the uses of night,

7. Crouzet-Pavan, *Soppra le acque salse*, 806.
8. Cabantous, «Une histoire de la nuit est-elle possible», 27.

and the beliefs engendered by it have altered profoundly in the meantime. In the imagination of artists, even the color of the night has changed: of course, night has always been said to be black, but it was less a matter of a particular color than of the absence of daylight. It was only at the end of the Middle Ages that painters immersed the scene of Christ praying on the Mount of Olives in a dark atmosphere, whereas the torches and lanterns of the Roman soldiers and the sleeping attitude of the disciples of Christ had previously been sufficient to connote the night (fig. 2)[9]. In fifteenth-century painting, the dark night sky becomes a common feature of the Passion of Christ, as do other archetypal scenes, such as the Dream of Constantine painted by Piero della Francesca in Arezzo[10], or that of Love giving the heart of the sick king to Desire, in one of the miniatures painted by Barthélemy d'Eyck for King René of Anjou's *Livre du Cœur d'amour épris* (The Book of the Love-Smitten Heart) between 1457 and 1470[11].

In order to explain the importance of all these historical changes, I shall focus on the question of the rhythms of the night[12]. The rhythms of the night are variable, but they have in common the fact that they result from a division of time: They presuppose the distinction and succession of night and day, as well as of day and night; they also invite us to divide the time of the night into units that may or may not be equally long, as the length of the night could change according to the season; they make us aware of the difference between the heart of the night (which is not necessarily its darkest moment), the fall of night or twilight, or at the other end the appearance of the first light of dawn. All these distinctions determine variable rhythms, which

9. *Agony of Christ in the Garden of Olives*, Breviary, Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms 69, fol. 28. Illumination by the Maître de l'Echevinage de Rouen, before 1498.

10. Piero della Francesca, *Emperor Constantin's Dream*, in the Legend of the Holy Cross, Basilica San Francesco of Arezzo, 1464.

11. René d'Anjou, *Livre du Coeur d'amour épris*, Vienne, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2597, attributed to Bartholomew of Eyck, between 1457 and 1470.

12. My reflection is based on the results of my book *Les rythmes au Moyen Âge*, Paris, Gallimard, 2016.

are measured and named in different ways. At the end of the Middle Ages, one could divide the night by using the astral hours, observing the sunset, the rising of the moon, the appearance of a constellation in the starry sky; monks or clerics would refer to the canonical hours, be it vespers, compline, vigils, or matins in the 'middle of the night' or lauds or prime time at sunrise. In the family, people relied more frequently on the familiar reference points of domestic tasks and family meals: An action would rather be situated 'before dinner' or 'after dinner,' 'before bedtime' or 'at sunrise,' all expressions that signify precise moments in time for those who are aware of them. One could also, and this happened more often from the fourteenth century onwards, refer to the ringing of bells and to public mechanical clocks whose single hand runs night and day through the twelve points of a circular dial, as became the custom in the cities of the late Middle Ages.

The question of the ways in which nighttime is divided is of fundamental importance. It is even primordial in the entire history of Judeo-Christian culture, since it is explicitly mentioned in the first words of the book of Genesis. We must therefore begin with this Creation myth. Let us quote Genesis 1:1-5 and underline the main words in italics:

> In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2. Now the earth was vague and empty, *darkness* covered the deep, the spirit of God hovered over the waters. 3. God said, '*Let there be light*', *and there was light*. 4. God saw that the light was good, and God *separated the light and the darkness*. 5. God called the light 'day' and *the darkness* '*night*'. There was *evening* and there was *morning*: the first day.

According to Genesis 1:2 the «darkness» was first, not the light[13]. In the second stage, the light tore apart the darkness and immediately opposed it. While creating them, God named them day and night. Their alternation immediately marked God's creative work for the next six days.

13. For the connection between the interpretation of Genesis and monks' attitudes towards the night, see Mary W. Helms, «Before the Dawn. Monks and the Night in late Antiquity and Early Medieval Europe», *Anthropos*, 99/1 (2004), 177-91.

The following verses (Gen. 1:6-8) describe the second day: God creates the firmament that separates the waters above from the waters below. Here again, the divine action is concluded by the formula: «There was evening and there was morning», which signifies the alternation of day and night.

On the third day, God raises the earth from the waters, separates it from the sea, and then sows it so that grass and fruit trees grow (Gen. 1:9-13).

On the fourth day (Gen. 1:14-19), God creates the sun on the one hand and the moon and stars on the other. Again, we should quote these verses:

> God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to *divide the day from the night*: let them be for signs, both of feasts and of days and years: 15. Let them be lights in the firmament of heaven to give light on the earth', and so it was. God made the two major lights: the great light as the power of the day and *the little light as the power of the night, and the stars*. 17. God placed them in the firmament of the sky to give light to the earth, 18. to command the day and *the night*, to separate the light and the *darkness*, and God saw that it was good. 19. And there was *evening* and there was *morning*, the fourth day.

Thus, on the fourth day, God completes the division of day and night by endowing both with the luminaries that are their signs: the sun for the day, the moon and the stars for the night. Their respective intensity distinguishes these luminaries: the 'great' luminary, the sun, on the one hand, and the moon and stars on the other. Moreover, the luminaries are preventively endowed with a social utility, even though human beings have not yet been created: it is said that they will serve as 'signs' for festivals as well as for days and years; in other words, they form the framework for the human calendar.

The six days of Creation were the subject of countless textual commentaries and iconographic representations in the Middle Ages. Consider the *Bibles moralisées* of the early thirteenth century, which have the particularity of accompanying each image with a textual commentary and attaching to each biblical scene a 'moralization' emphasizing its 'meaning' for Christian culture and society. The French manuscript of the Vienna *Bible moralisée*

opens with a full-page frontispiece showing God as a surveyor, marking with a compass the roundness of the earth surrounded by the firmament (fig. 3-4). The caption to this full-page image explicitly states: «Ici crie Dex ciel et terre, soleil et lune et toz elemens» («Here God creates heaven and earth, sun and moon, and all elements»)[14]. This frontispiece can be compared with that of the Oxford Latin *Bible moralisée*, where the Creator is not depicted in action, as in the Vienna manuscript, but is enthroned majestically in a celestial quatrefoil held by four angels. But he also displays the compass, the true attribute of the divine geometer, the instrument of the mathematical division of space and time[15].

The scene of the separation of day and night immediately follows in both manuscripts: «Ici depart Dex le jour et la nuyt» («Here God parts day and night»), depicted as two semicircles separated by a gap: at the top the white semicircle of day; at the bottom the black one for the night. The two halves of the circle are strictly equal. In the moralization, the brightness of the day is equated with that of the angels and the Church.

The third image from Vienna (top right of the folio) shows the creation of the firmament: «Ici fet dex le firmament, la terre en mi et la mer entor» («Here God makes the firmament, the earth in the middle and the sea around») and the fourth image shows the way God hung the sun, the moon, and the stars in the firmament: «Ici fet dex le soleil et la lune et les etoiles. Li soleax enlumine la lune» («Here God makes the sun and the moon and the stars. The sun illuminates the moon»)[16]. The moralization of this last image equates the light of the sun with divinity; that of the moon, which depends on the sun, with the light of the Church, which in fact depends on the light of God; and that of the stars with the lights of the clergy.

Let us have a closer look, as far as the night is concerned, at the lessons of the myth and its pictorial representation: the divine creation is compared to a geometric operation, consisting

14. *Bible moralisée*, Wien, Österreichische Nastionalbibliothek, Cod. 2554, ed. by Reiner Haussherr, Graz/Paris, Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt/Club Du Livre, 1973.

15. *Bible moralisée* of Oxford, London, Paris, Oxford, Ms. Bodl. 270b.

16. Vienna *Bible moralisée*.

of using a compass to circumscribe the world and to divide the elements; night and day spring from the tearing of the initial darkness and immediately oppose each other; night is endowed in the firmament with two specific stars, the moon, which receives its light from the sun, and the fixed stars; the alternation of day and night creates a weekly rhythm, that of the six days of Creation, followed by the seventh day of God's rest. Beyond this are the human rhythms of feasts and the calendar. The division of day and night and the knowledge of the stars are not just a matter of geometry or astronomy, the sciences of the quadrivium. Day and night mobilize a symbolic interpretation, both ecclesiological and moral, which equates the light of the stars with that of God, the Church, and the clergy. Conversely, night is symbolically linked to the Jews since they have not been able to recognize the Messiah and still take pleasure in the darkness. The Oxford *Bible moralisée* also identifies the day with good angels and virtues, and the night with rebellious angels and vices. In all respects, the alternation of night and day is not just a natural phenomenon but an object for symbolic thinking about the values of Christian society.

The mentions of the night are very numerous in the whole Bible, not only in Genesis. To study them would be a subject in itself, which I will not pursue here. Let us have a closer look at the last biblical mention of night, which parallels its appearance at the time of Creation: at the end of Revelation, when the course of time is abolished for the elect who worship before the throne of God, it is said that night has no longer any reason to exist and, as the day also disappears, only the light of the Lord remains for eternity: «There will be no more night; they will do without lamp or sun to light themselves, for the Lord God will shed light on them and they will reign for ever and ever» (Rev. 22:5).

The analogical interpretation does not just characterize the *Bible moralisée*; it is common in the whole of medieval literary culture. Among many other testimonies, we can cite Hildegard of Bingen's *Liber Scivias* (I, 3) (fig. 5)[17]. Writing down the divine

17. Hildegarde de Bingen, *Scivias. 'Sache es voies' ou Livre des visions*, trad. française Pierre Monat, Paris, Cerf, 1996, 67-88. See Jean-Claude Schmitt, «Quand la lune nourrissait le temps avec du lait. Le temps du cosmos et des

words she heard in her vision, she not only describes and depicts the ovoid shape of the cosmos and the alignment of the earth – at the center of the world – with the seven planets from the closest to earth to the furthest (the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn) but also gives an abundant theological and moral interpretation of the cosmic 'egg', as well as of the shadows that surround it, the winds that animate it and the fire that devours it, nourished by quotations from the Scriptures. Hildegard pays particular attention to the power of the planet of the night – the moon, in Latin, *luna*. The grammatical gender is feminine, and the visionary abbess thus assimilated the moon to a woman and even to a mother: the nourishing mother of time. Quoting the Psalms, she writes of the divine Creator:

> He made the moon to mark the times, the sun knows its setting (Ps. 104:19). Let us understand it this way: God decreed that the moon should change according to the time, in order to nourish all the moments of time, as a mother nourishes her children, first with milk, then with solid food. When it wanes, the moon has no strength, so it feeds time with milk, as it were. When it grows, the food it provides is solid. God decided that the sun would shine above the earth, before hiding under the earth. In the same way, man watches by day with his eyes open and sleeps by night with his eyes closed; man is thus earthly in his flesh, heavenly in his soul, in accordance with the lower and higher creatures, respectively. Man knows the evolution of time which marks the universal movement and life[18].

This text is admirable in every respect: for what it tells us about the medieval conception of night as an essential time of perpetual rebirth of the living forces of Creation, and more broadly about the analogical conception of the universe in

images chez Hildegarde de Bingen (1098-1179)», *Images Revues*, hors-série 1 (2008); Id., «Quand la lune nourrissait le temps avec du lait. Le temps du cosmos et des images chez Hildegarde de Bingen (1098-1179)», in *Traditions et temporalités des images*, ed. by Giovanni Careri et al., Paris, Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 2009, 73-87, fig. 33-36.

18. *Ibid*, 84, according to the French translation: Hildegarde de Bingen, *Le Livre des œuvres divines: Visions*, présenté et traduit par Bernard Gorceix, Paris, Albin Michel, 1982, 116-17.

which the vital rhythm of the body and soul of man as a microcosm (the nursing mother, bed rest, sleep, and wakefulness) makes it possible to think of the whole cosmos (the alternation of the moon and the sun, night and day) as the creation of God.

Astronomical knowledge and encyclopedias, however, reveal a more exclusively scientific curiosity that seeks to clarify the link between the rotation of the sun and the moon around the earth – the alleged center of the world – and the alternation of light and shadow, of night and day. Many works could be cited here, for instance the *Tractatus de sphaera* (Treatise on the Sphere) by the English master of the University of Paris, Jean de Sacrobosco (died between 1244 and 1256). With its many astronomical diagrams, it had a strong influence until the seventeenth century. However, I will focus on a more modest work, which was nonetheless widely distributed. In the numerous manuscripts of Gossuin of Metz's *Image du monde*, an encyclopedic work written in French in the thirteenth century, diagrams show how the sunlight on one half of the earth plunges the other half into night (fig. 6)[19]. A miniature from one of these manuscripts reproduces in two superimposed squares the division between the two hemispheres of day and night as already observed in the *Bible moralisée*: the upper square has a background with red scrolls, which connote daylight, while the lower square has blue scrolls representing the shadow of night. At the top, we see the sun's luminous effect on the earth (shown in the center) in the morning (*solaus en orient* «sun in the east») and at noon (*solaus mi dis* «sun of midday»), while the shadow cast by the earth is indicated by black hatching. At the bottom, the positions are reversed: the sun in the west («solaus en occident») illuminates the earth in the evening, but then the sun passes under the earth (*solaus desous terre*), causing night on the opposite part of it.

This abstract and rather simplistic diagram does not take into account the phenomenon that plays a major role in social life, in agricultural production and liturgical rhythms: the unequal duration of day and night according to the seasons. The lengthening and shortening of days and nights during the year has been

19. Gossuin de Metz, *Image du monde*, Tours, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms 947, fol. 57.

observed since antiquity and measured precisely by astronomers and calendar specialists. But since it could not be explained, as it is today, within the framework of a Copernican conception of the rotation of the earth around the sun and the tilt of our planet on its axis, the Venerable Bede in the eighth century provided accurate measurements of the inequality of days and nights between the equinoxes and solstices. These calculations had an unexpected effect on the calendar of the Stammheim Missal, produced around 1170 in the abbey of Hildesheim in memory of its founder, Bernward (fig. 7-9)[20]. Normally, the iconography of the calendar shows the 12 successive signs of the zodiac and 12 labors of the months during the year. In the Stammheim Missal, the labors of the months are replaced each month by a disc divided into 24 slices representing the solar hours. The daytime hours are light; the night hours are dark. For each month, a sort of average length of night and day is used: in December, the month of the winter solstice (21 December), night lasts an average of 18 hours and day only six hours; in June, the month of the summer solstice, the reverse is true. In the months of March and September, which correspond to the spring and autumn equinoxes respectively, night and day are of equal length: 12 hours. In the meantime, night and day respectively are either increasing or decreasing. Let us stress the conventional character of these diagrams, which neglect the fact that the duration of day and night changes from one day to another and not from one month to another. It is nevertheless remarkable that such diagrams systematically illustrate the variation of astronomical rhythms. Why were these diagrams preferred to the traditional iconography of the calendar? Clearly, they would emphasize the major importance of diurnal and nocturnal rhythms for the liturgical uses of the abbey. But they had no practical use, since the time of the services changed each day. They had only an abstract and ideal value; they symbolically illustrated the role of rhythms, but they did not prescribe any liturgical use.

The rhythm of the day and night services that bring together communities of monks, canons, or nuns evolves day by day, not

20. *Stammheim Missal*, Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms 97 mg. 21, ff. 3v sq. (Hildesheim, c.1170).

from one month to the next. The eight canonical hours regulate the offices of the day, beginning with vigils, also called matins, which marks the middle of the night. This is followed by lauds, in the second half of the night, and prime, at sunrise. During the day, tierce, sext, and none follow, until vespers in the evening. After nightfall comes compline, and again matins follows in the middle of the night. The reduction in the length of the night from the spring equinox onwards tends to make matins the only truly nocturnal hour, absorbing compline on the one hand and lauds on the other. Conversely, in winter, only the offices of prime, tierce, sext, and none truly benefit from daylight.

In all cases, matins appears to be the pivot of circadian time and it was therefore imperative to determine the exact time at which to ring and celebrate matins. To measure the passage of time during the night and to fix this central moment, one could use a clepsydra or graduated candles, or make other astronomical observations.

A monastic manuscript from the eleventh century, originating perhaps from Fleury-sur-Loire[21], recommends positioning oneself at a predetermined point in the cloister (*locus deputatus*) to observe the position of the stars in relation to the monastic buildings: the alignment of the windows of the monks' dormitory, which could be counted one by one (*fenestras numerare*), the refectory, a chapel, and even a tree planted in the cloister were all used as reference points. The monk in charge of this observation, whom the texts call *significator horarum*, had the task of identifying the right moment to wake the other monks by means of a bell.

If the state of the sky allowed it, it was also possible to use a graduated instrument called *nocturlabe* or *nocturnal*. This astronomical instrument consists of a graduated disc with a sighting device in its center, which is aimed at the Polar Star; the disc

21. Giles Constable (ed.), «*Horologium stellare monasticum* (saec. XI)», in Kassius Hallinger (ed.), *Consuetudines benedictinae variae (saec. XI-saec. XIV)*, Siegburg, 1983-1986, 1-18; Eric Palazzo, «Le calendrier liturgique et l'espace monastique au Moyen Âge: l'*Horologium stellare monasticum* (XI^e^ siècle)», in Jacques Le Goff, Jean Lefort, Perrine Mane (eds.), *Les calendriers. Leurs enjeux dans l'espace et dans le temps*. Colloque de Cerisy-La-Salle, 1-8 juillet 2000, Paris, Somogy, 2002, 38-43; Schmitt, *Les rythmes au Moyen Âge*, 259.

also has an arm at the end of which a second star in the Big Dipper can be sighted. As the stars seem to revolve around the Polar Star during the night, the successive observation of this apparent movement makes it possible to know the hours by referring to the graduations of the disc[22].

An astronomical manuscript from the Mont-Saint-Michel, dated 1145-1199, presents several drawings showing how to measure various heights at a distance, such as that of a tree, but also that of a star above the horizon, by means of an astrolabe used «ad cognoscendas horas noctis que omnia per astrolapsum probare poteris» («in order to know the hours of the night you can all demonstrate thanks to the astrolabe») (fig. 10)[23]. The graduations engraved on the astrolabe's disc make it possible to follow the variation of the apparent height of a star during the night, and thus to know the time. It should be remembered that the astrolabe, in addition to its pedagogical functions or its use for navigation, served primarily to determine the time, by day and especially by night. Thus, the famous full-page frontispiece of the Psalter of Blanche of Castile shows an astronomer, flanked by two assistants noting his observations, while pointing vertically at the deep blue starry sky with an astrolabe (fig. 11)[24]. The many commentaries on this image neglect to point out that it represents a night scene dominated by the dark color of the sky, hemmed in by a lighter wavy fringe and populated by alternating blue and red stars. But something is missing from this night sky: the moon.

As the primordial Genesis account makes clear, the moon is the main 'luminary' that shines in the night by reflecting the light of the sun. The rising of the moon and its crossing of the night sky until it fades at dawn and yields to the sun's dominion contribute to the animation of the night. But the lunar rhythm is less important on a daily scale than on a monthly one. Each

22. Bernard Baudoux, *Traité du nocturlabe: une étude moderne d'un instrument ancien*, 2014, URL: https://ccs.saf-astronomie.fr/la-gnomonique/les-nocturlabes/.

23. Avranches, BM, Ms 235, fol. 32v. See Monique Dosdat, *L'enluminure romane au Mont Saint-Michel, X^e^-XII^e^ siècle*, Avranches, 1991, 87.

24. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Ms 1186 (vers 1220), fol. 1v.

page of the calendar notes in red letters the number of lunar days in each month, namely 29 or 30. The computation used to fix the date of the movable feast, especially the date of Easter, is based on the lunar cycle of 19 years as well as on the solar cycle of 28 years. The product of 19 by 28, i.e., 532 years, designates the «Great Year» at the end of which the moon and the sun return to their initial positions. The Easter tables establish the date of Easter for all the years within 532 years. The moon is thus a key element in the shifting organization of the cosmos, as demonstrated by a diagram in the *Liber floridus* of Lambert of Saint-Omer (before 1121) (fig. 12)[25]. The center of the diagram is most classical, showing the 'Isidorian scheme' of the world, centered on the word *Annus*. Around *Annus* the four elements (*aqua*, *ignis*, *aer*, *terra*), the four qualities (*humidus*, *siccus*, *calidus*, *frigidus*), the four seasons (*ver*, *estas*, *autumnus*, *hiems*), the four main winds (*septentrio*, *subsolannus*, *fabionus*, *nothus*) are arranged and juxtaposed. The four notable positions of the sun during the day are also indicated, but only the inscriptions *solis ortus* and *solis occasus* are legible: under *solis occasus* is also inscribed the word *luna*, which reminds us that the setting of the sun is the condition for the rising of the moon. What is most exceptional is that the 'Isidorian' cosmic diagram is completely surrounded by the representation of the 30-day monthly lunar cycle of the moon, starting at the bottom and rotating from left to right: the numbering in Roman numerals, from I to XXX, of the forms of the moon during the month shows first the growth of the crescent moon until the full moon (XIV) and then its decrease and complete disappearance before the cycle resumes[26]. The nocturnal character of this cycle is emphasized by the white light of the moon against the dark blue background of the circular band.

The measurement of the rhythm of the night, based on the observation of the stars and the movement of the moon, and, more specifically, the determination of the middle of the night in order to ring the bell that called monks or nuns to the matins

25. Lambert of Saint-Omer, *Liber floridus* (avant 1121), Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Ms 92, fol. 25v.

26. Strangely enough, the crescent of the moon keeps the same orientation during the whole month.

service, were of crucial importance. This was particularly true for religious communities since their members were obliged to pray almost continuously. Therefore, they had to interrupt their sleep to celebrate matins. The autobiographical testimony of the Cistercian abbot Richalm of Schöntal (who died in 1219 in his abbey near Würzburg) shows how painfully this obligation of the rule could be felt. It is true that demons, day and night, constantly beset Richalm. They disturbed his sleep with nightmares and, above all, tried to prevent him from falling asleep when he desired a little rest; the unfortunate man tossed and turned in his bed before finally finding sleep at the very moment when he had to get up for matins. Then the demons tried to dissuade him from leaving his bed. When he finally got out of bed, he had to go down the stairs with the other monks from the dormitory to the church choir. On the stairs, new pitfalls awaited them, for the demons were on the lookout and took advantage of any moment of weakness in the monks to make them stumble. Finally, when the abbot took his seat in the stalls, he was seized by sleep at the very moment he had to stand upright to pray and sing[27].

The day and night services consisted of several songs and prayers, including, first of all, the chanting of a certain number of psalm verses. The psalter is to be recited in its entirety in a single week, with a certain number of verses at each of the eight canonical hours of each of the seven days of the week. This rule and the distribution of the psalms from one canonical hour to another and from one day to another around the week have not changed much since the Rule of Saint Benedict at the beginning of the sixth century[28]. The Rule underlines the central role of the matins office in the very middle of the night. More precisely, the matins service of the *feria prima* (Sunday) marks the starting point of the weekly cycle, which resumes each midnight with the obligation to sing a new group of psalms. The first psalm

27. Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Le cloître des ombres, suivi de la traduction française du Livre des révélations de Richalm de Schöntal avec la collaboration de Gisèle Besson*, Paris, Gallimard, 2021, 198 (and on time in general, 83-91). See the Latin text: Richalm von Schöntal, *Liber revelationum*, ed. by Paul Gerhard Schmidt, Hanover, Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2009, *passim*.

28. Schmitt, *Les rythmes au Moyen Âge*, 253-65 («Le creuset monastique»).

sung at each matins service is usually distinguished by a historiated illumination contrasting in size and iconography with the simple, ornate initials of the other psalms. There is thus a strict correspondence between the division of the psalter, the iconography of the historiated initials of the main psalms (1, 26, 38, 52, 68, 80, 97, 109), and the leading role of the matins service throughout the week. Let us summarize this rhythm, which is both chronological and iconographic, in a table:

Matins of Sunday (*feria prima*): Ps. 1 (*Beatus vir*)
Matins of Monday (*feria secunda*): Ps. 26 (*Dominus illuminatio mea*)
Matins of Tuesday (*feria tertia*): Ps. 38 (*Dixi custodiam vias meas*)
Matins of Wednesday (*feria quarta*): Ps. 52 (*Dixit insipiens in corde suo*)
Matins of Thursday (*feria quinta*): Ps. 68 (*Salvum me fac Deus*)
Matins of Friday (*feria sexta*): Ps. 80 (*Exultate Deo adjutori nostro*)
Matins of Saturday (*feria septima*): Ps. 97 (*Cantate domino canticum novum*)
Vespers of Sunday (*feria prima*): Ps. 109 (*Dixit dominus… sede a dextris meis*)

As we can see, the images contribute to the rhythm of the night for the monks and nuns obliged to chant vigils (fig. 13). They helped to create a religious imagination of the night, by associating recurring images such as the *Beatus vir* of Psalm 1 or the *Dominus illuminatio mea* of Psalm 26 with specific moments of the night. The same principle, only declined differently, can be found in the illustrated books of hours, which were not intended for monks but rather for the lay aristocracy[29]. Of course, these precious manuscripts had many other functions than the individual prayer of noble and rich people, especially at night, since prayer was not usually their activity. They delegated to their chaplains the task of praying for them and their families. However, as in the psalters, although following a different logic, the iconography of the books of hours marks the time of the offices, and once again the middle of the night, i.e., the office of matins, is the starting point of the whole circadian cycle. The Hours of the Virgin, which make up the most important part of the book,

29. Baltimore, Walter Art Gallery, ms. 288 (France, c.1425–1430).

reproduce the most significant moments of her life, beginning with the Annunciation, whose meditation occupies the office of matins. The following hours are illustrated respectively by the Visitation at lauds, the Nativity at prime, the Annunciation to the shepherds at tierce, the Adoration of the Magi at sext, the Presentation to the Temple at none, the Flight into Egypt at vespers, and the Coronation of the Virgin at compline. The Incarnation of the Savior corresponds to the middle of the night – the office of matins, which is, indeed, the beginning of everything.

To conclude this brief presentation of the rhythms of the night and their figuration in images in the Middle Ages, we should recall Frank Rexroth's book title, *Das Milieu der Nacht*[30]. He intended «Milieu» in its sociological sense of 'social milieu.' I would also understand the word in its temporal meaning, as the center of the night, the hour dividing night into two equal halves: in that sense, the «middle of the night» was the object of particular attention and precise measures in the Middle Ages, because it controlled not only the rhythm of the night, but the entire circadian cycle of the eight canonical hours and the offices of each day of the week. From «midnight», this hour, which, in another context, is also said to be «the hour of crime», the human activities of waking and sleeping, praying and dreaming were organized in a regulated progression. The rhythms of the night are better known in the case of ecclesiastics than in the case of simple laymen, because among the former they have been the subject of precise prescriptions and observations. But the principle of organizing time and the importance of the «middle of the night» were not specific to monks. In the *Ménagier de Paris*, a fifteenth-century French treatise on domestic economy, the anonymous author, a Parisian bourgeois, undertook to educate his fifteen-year-old wife[31]. In the first few lines of the book, he tells her about the rising of the day and how to understand it: for laymen like him, it is the «natural day» which begins at «morning», that is at sunrise. Even if the French word «*matin*»

30. Cf. above note 2.

31. *Le Mesnagier de Paris*, texte établi par Georgina M. Bereton et Janet M. Ferrier, trad. et notes par Karin Ueltschi, Paris, Le Livre de Poche, 1994, 35-36.

(i.e., morning) and the liturgical term «matins» are analogous, his young bride should not imitate the monks of the neighboring monastery, who get up in the middle of the night, at the hour of «matins». She is allowed to wait in her bed until «*matin*», next morning:

> That is why I said that «morning» [matin] comes from «matins.» I intend to have said it because matins is sounded to raise the religious to say matins and praise God, and not to say that you, my nice sister, and the women who are married, must get up at this hour[32].

So, whenever his wife hears the bell of the neighboring monastery ringing for matins in the middle of the night, she should not get up, but should simply recite an oration before going back to sleep. Later, at sunrise, she will say to the Lord and to Our Lady two prayers *suitable for awakening or rising*. The social uses of the night vary from one social «Milieu» to another, the very scansion of time differs, but the recurrent principle of the division of time at midnight is the prevailing principle.

32. *Ibid.*, quoted by Schmitt, *Les rythmes au Moyen Âge*, 337.

ABSTRACT

Jean-Claude Schmitt, *The Rhythms of the Medieval Night*

According to medieval conceptions, night is more than just darkness resulting from the rotation of the sun around the earth. In a world before the electricity revolution, a large number of documents, particularly iconographic ones, show how it was invested with multiple values (many of them inspired by the Bible, from Genesis, when God separates light from darkness, to Revelation, when the eternity of divine light takes the place of the alternation of night and day) and gave rise to an imaginary world of its own, where fear of demons and the dead mingled with fantasies of the witches' sabbath; it also justified legal regulations of productive activities, with urban trades being opposed in principle to night work, except in cases of necessity; above all, it was the subject of temporal measures based on the observation of the apparent movement of the stars and the phases of the moon, which determined the rhythm, varying from day to day, of the canonical *horae*; these controlled the circadian succession of offices and the recitation of the psalms. In all cases, the middle of the night was a critical time, requiring the monks in particular to wake up to sing *matins* or *vigils*, halfway between sunset and sunrise.

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VIGILANT THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT: THE WATCHMAN IN GERMAN MEDIEVAL SPIRITUAL POETRY

Introduction

To men and women of the Middle Ages
the figure of the watchman
in serious literature symbolized
the highest spiritual authority,
a role in good keeping with his lofty station,
looking down and watching over all[1].

This article aims to analyze three activities that take place during the night. These are watching, sleeping, and expecting. As a literary study, it will ask to what extent the nocturnal setting enables these activities, based on ideas and views about them outlined in medieval German spiritual poetry. Crucial for the following argument is the differentiation in literal meaning versus a metaphorical usage of these three activities and of night and day. Spiritual poetry, in this case spiritual poetry of the German-speaking fifteenth century, heavily relies on the interplay between both spheres.

As will be shown, the dependencies of time, light, and daytime are at the core of all metaphorical uses of night in spiritual poetry: Night and darkness coincide and both constitute one end of a spectrum, which is traversed over a certain period of time. Dawn and twilight signal a turning point as well as a transitional

1. *Eos. An Enquiry into the Theme of Lover's Meetings and Partings at Dawn in Poetry*, ed. Arthur T. Hatto, London et al., Mouton & Co., 1965, 433.

The Bright Side of Night. Nocturnal Activities in Medieval and Early Modern Times. Edited by V. Huber, R. Schmitz-Esser and M. Weber, Firenze, SISMEL - Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2024, pp. 39-63.
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state of both night and darkness to day and light. Arthur Hatto gathered evidence for this being a focal point of poetic interest in his collection of dawn songs from around the world, which bears witness to a continuous fascination with the night throughout time and various cultures.

With its focus informed by literary studies, this article aims to add another facet to the collected essays on the brighter side of the night. To uncover the positive attitude toward night exhibited in fifteenth-century spiritual song, it will analyze the watchman as the main enabler of cherished activity. It is the spiritual *tageliet*, dawn song, that most prominently features the watchman in medieval lyric, flourishing in the fifteenth century[2]. While in the romantic love form of the *tageliet* the arrival of morning is feared, the spiritual form displays several attitudes of expecting the arrival of the morning[3]. In the following, I will explore the concept of the watchman using medieval spiritual poetry originating from the southern German-speaking regions, Bohemia, and Alsace. Here we find examples in which the watchman plays an important role in the quest for salvation and as such receives a positive evaluation for his watchfulness throughout the night.

As a literary figure, he represents less the historical activity of the watchman[4]. He performs as a «figure of the Third», which

2. Jan Mohr, «Tagelied», in *Handbuch Minnesang*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2021, 534-42, see 540. Since the literature on dawn song is vast, this article will reference the newest overview by Jan Mohr, and add references where additional information is needed. For an overview of the research on the spiritual dawn song, see Marianne Derron, André Schnyder, «Das geistliche Tagelied des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit. Eine Bilanz und ein Projekt», in *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein Gesellschaft*, 12 (2000), 203-28.

3. It is important to note that the variety found within the genre has led to a broad variety of attitudes towards the morning. In its spiritual form, the *tageliet* does not only portray the coming day as something positive and therefore something that means that the night is filled with delighted expectation. It also portrays fear and denial, since the coming of the light is also used symbolically for the arrival of God and the Last Judgement. The poems selected for this argument, however, portray the expected morning as something positive.

4. The literary figure represents an idea of a watchman's task without considering specific periods of history or a certain kind of settlement, which would require specific tasks carried out by watchmen. Since the watchman's duty and his portrayal in German poetry of the fifteenth cen-

externalizes otherwise implicit information and undermines oppositions[5]. In Middle High German poetry, this watchman has roughly three main duties. The first two go together: expecting and announcing the literal «bright side of night», signs of the morning, signaling the end to the night. In this way, he observes and contemplates the passing of time[6]. This entails waiting and could be described as a mode of transitive attention, an attention form that is object-based. In focusing on one object, in this case the horizon, and in searching for the absence or presence of light, the watchman applies transitive attention. Contemplating any changes of light, he awaits «the appearance of the morning star to bring his freezing to an end»[7].

But he not only reports on the changes of light as time passes but, thirdly, looks out for danger as well. Enjoying the night as a time to rest is possible only because of the presence of the watchman. As the very essence of the watchman's duty is to remain awake and thus observant, others are able to rest. In this fashion, he exercises a mode of intransitive (objectless) attention. In anticipation of any potential danger that is not yet visible or audible, the watchman's attention is intransitive, since the danger

tury as a poetic figure are the main focus of this paper, it might suffice here for historical background to refer to the description of the watchmen's task in sources on fifteenth-century Strasbourg. These duties include providing an indication of what time it is («morgens zů thorglocken, die ir jegelicher mit sin selbes hant, und nieman anders von sinen wegen, lůten sol»; «In the morning, at the time of the gate bell, which the one shall ring by his own hand, and no one else for him») as well as raising the alarm in the case of fire («wo ein für uszgot, das got lange wende, das sü das zů rehter zit verkündent, als verre sü könnent oder mögent»; «Where a fire breaks out, which may God avert for a long time, that they may proclaim this in due time, as far as they can»), in *Strassburger Zunft- und Polizei-Verordnungen des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts*. Aus den Originalen des Stadtarchivs ausgewählt und zusammengestellt von J. Bruckner, Strassburg, Karl J. Trübner, 1889, 507-9.

5. See Christian Kiening, «Poetik des Dritten», in Id., *Zwischen Körper und Schrift. Texte vor dem Zeitalter der Literatur*, Frankfurt, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2003, 157-75, see 160.

6. Here we already encounter a slight discrepancy between poetic portrayal and historical reality, as the guards on Strasbourg Cathedral were given an hourglass in order to measure the time rather than relying on the stars and the change of light (*Strassburger Zunft- und Polizei-Verordnungen*, 508).

7. *Eos*, ed. Hatto, 434.

is irregular and may not materialize at all. It is evident that both, transitive and intransitive, coincide in as much as the watchman is looking out for something that is not yet there, without knowing how it will occur. The difference between them lies in the certainty of something to come: while the night might pass without something dangerous happening, day will most certainly break and day will come[8].

After this theoretical overview, I will now outline the argument. It will start with a short introduction to the figure of the watchman in medieval German poetry, focusing on the genre of *tageliet*, dawn song, in its romantic as well as its spiritual form. The next step will analyze a spiritual *tageliet* from the fifteenth century, Heinrich Laufenberg's *Stand vf, du sünder, laß din clag*. The focus will be on 'watching' as an activity during the night. In this poem, the watchman uses dawn as a metaphor for the story of the Incarnation in order to announce it to a so-called sinner. Although the sinner first responds with a defense of his right to sleep, the nightly activity of the watchman, watching out for the signs of light, here applied metaphorically, is the precondition for the sinner's chance on salvation. While sleep in this context is a metaphor for sin, in a literal sense it is cherished in medieval prayer practice and teachings. This will be shown in the third step, which will focus on 'sleeping' as a nightly activity. It will look at the evangelical admonition to a life of constant vigilance in the writings of different Christian writers throughout the antics up to the Middle Ages. The Ambrosian Hymn *Aeterne rerum conditor*, which entails praise for the regular change of day to night, will exemplify the outcome. This third point will end with an excerpt from the sermon *De navitate Domini* (thirteenth/fourteenth century). It shows that even a positive evaluation of sleep does not make the watchman obsolete. Returning in the fourth step to the realm of metaphor, an anonymous song, *Ich siech den margensterne* from the Hohenfurter Liederbuch (fif-

8. For a detailed discussion on the two modes of attention, see Lucy Alford, *Forms of Poetic Attention*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2020, 5-9. She approaches the topic from a literary perspective: «what is formed *by* and *in* poetic language is an event of attention generated in the acts of both reading and writing» (*ibid.*, 3).

teenth century) will be analyzed. It applies the use of metaphor to the moon, dawn, and sunrise. In praising those, God and Mary as Mother of God are being praised. Here, night is the time of 'expecting.' It is portrayed as a joyous activity, since the arrival of the day, metaphor for salvation, is assured by the regularity of the alternation of day and night.

The Watchman in Medieval German Poetry

To introduce the watchman as a figure of medieval German poetry, one genre sticks out as promising. Dawn song, *tageliet*, as shown above, is a genre of world literature[9]. Dawn song is characterized by a small, unchanged set of motifs in combination with a broad spectrum of variety[10], ranging from romantic love poetry to spiritual songs. Although the focus of this paper is on the spiritual *tageliet*, the profane romantic form helps to illuminate the watchman as a poetic figure in Middle High German poetry. Discussion has been rife throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries on whether the watchman in medieval German songs originated in the *alba*, the romance dawn song[11]. In order to learn more about the watchman's genesis, Ulrich Knoop looked at the occurrence of the watchman in Middle High German literature before 1200. Starting with «heroic epic poetry» (*Heldendichtung*), Knoop presents several passages that contain a watchman (*späher*) and describe the watchman's task of

9. It includes Egyptian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Mongol, Turkic, Indian, Burmese, Siamese, Indonesian, Malay, Dyak, Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Kurdish, Armenian, Georgian, Classical Greek, Modern Greek, Latin, Iberian, French, Italian, Rumanian, Medieval German, Dutch, English, Icelandic, Danish, Welsh, Irish, Czech and Slovak, Polish, Wend, Yugoslav, Bulgarian, Russian, Albanian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Hungarian, Estonian, Livonian, Finnish, Votyak, Quechua poetry as well as poetry from the Marquesas Islands. See also Ulrich Knoop, *Das mittelhochdeutsche Tagelied. Inhaltsanalyse und literarhistorische Untersuchungen*, Marburg, Elwert, 1976, 183; Kiening, «Poetik des Dritten», 157.

10. See Mohr, «Tagelied», 536.

11. See *Eos*, ed. Hatto, 76; Knoop, *Das mittelhochdeutsche Tagelied*, 7. The most concise summary can be found in Mohr, «Tagelied», 536. In order to describe the dependencies between the different genres, he suggests the term «Familienähnlichkeit»; see also *ibid.*, 184.

looking out for daybreak and informing others of its occurrence[12]. Early variations of this thematic nucleus suggest that by 1200 the plot was well known among courtly audiences[13]. From this perspective, 1200 appears as a watershed, since Wolfram of Eschenbach and Otto of Botenlauben are said to have had a major impact on the development of the «Wächterlied», the dawn song that contains a watchman in addition to a couple in love[14].

From then on, watchmen often feature in love songs, especially in dawn songs[15]. Dawn songs usually have the following plot (with some variations): After spending the night together, morning is accompanied by pain for a couple in love as it is the moment at which they must separate. Was it not for the watchman announcing the arrival of the day, the couple would continue enjoying each other's company until the sun pierces through the window, revealing the connection between them, which would be viewed as illegitimate by society. The figure of the watchman qualifies poetically as a «figure of the Third»[16], standing on the border between their love and separation, their security and the scorn of society, therefore being a potential friend as well as a potential enemy[17]. The concept of the «Third» tries to do justice to the phenomenon of the watchman provid-

12. Knoop claims the oldest description to be found in the «Kaiserchronik», vv. 11722, where the larch announces daybreak and the watchman features. However, he does not announce daybreak but the return of the king. Also, the night is not spent together, dedicated to acts of love. Instead, Crescentia frees the king's brother only in the morning, whom she had imprisoned during the absence of the king (her husband) in order to guard against the brother's hostilities.

13. See Mohr, «Tagelied», 537.

14. It is, however, important to note that with regard to the medieval German dawn song, it remains impossible to determine a chronological order. Mohr shows this regarding the interdependencies between the different German speaking poets such as Heinrich of Morungen, Reinmar, Walther von der Vogelweide, Wolfram of Eschenbach, Otto of Botenlauben, Markgraf of Hohenburg (Mohr, «Tagelied», 537 sg.).

15. See *ibid.*, 535.

16. Kiening, «Poetik des Dritten», 168.

17. A good summary is provided by Pia Selmayr, «Warne, ob ich entslâfen bin. Die Rolle des Wächters im Tagelied nach Wolfram», in Beate Kellner, Ludger Lieb, Stephan Müller (eds.), *Höfische Textualität. Festschrift für Peter Strohschneider*, Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag Winter, 2015, 189-210, see 191-92; see also Mohr, «Tagelied», 535.

ing a third figure in addition to the loving couple. In this understanding, the watchman materializes and offers the possibility of an externalization of that which would stay implicit without him[18]. He symbolizes the forthcoming painful separation of the couple, but at the same time enables them to reach the peak of their time spent together. When the end of their time together is signaled, their desire multiplies to enjoy their love fully in the little time left before sunrise[19]. This is often described with love scenes as seen in the following example, the fifth verse of Wolfram's *Sine clawen*:

Von den blicken
die der tach tet durh div glas
vnd do wahtære warnen sanch
si mŏse erschrischen
durh den der da bi ir was
ir brustlin an brust si dwanch
der ritter ellens niht vergaz
des wold in wenden wahtærs don
vrloup nah und naher baz
mit kusse vnd anders gab in minne lon[20].

18. See Kiening, «Poetik des Dritten», 160, 165.

19. Much discussion ensued on the question of whether erotic dawn song is the opposition to courtly *Minnesang* (medieval love song), as it portrays the fulfillment of the plea to be united in love, which in courtly love song remains unfulfilled. More recent research has agreed that it instead offers an addition to the spectrum of poetry on love. This moment of highest possible intensity and intimacy does not solve the problem posed in courtly love poetry, but rather chases it to a painful peak, which leaves the couple still unfulfilled owing to its finiteness, postponing the unfulfillment often portrayed in courtly love songs. One solution to this offered by Wolfram of Eschenbach is marriage, as it enables a legitimate and undisturbed love beyond daybreak (MF 5,34). In general, it is to be noted that the watchman as an announcer of the day appears in many of the more than 50 dawn songs from the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries onwards (Selmayr, «Warne, ob ich entslâfen bin», 193). However, there are also many dawn songs that do not include a watchman. For critical views on the qualification of the watchman as an essential element, see Ralf Breslau, *Die Tagelieder des späten Mittelalters. Rezeption und Variation eines Liedtyps der höfischen Lyrik*, Berlin, Diss. masch., 1987, 288 sg., 295 sg., 298, 339 sg., 344 sg., 382 sg.

20. Text transcribed by Christian Kiening, see Id., «Poetik des Dritten», 164. He claims this song to be among the most famous medieval love songs (*ibid.*, 161). Source: Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibl., Cgm 19.

At the bright glances day was darting through the panes and at the watchman's warning song, she started with dread for the man beside her. She pressed her breast to his. Nor did the knight spare his mettle, though the watchman had meant to forestall him with his singing! Close and closer with kiss and otherwise their parting brought them love's reward[21].

The watchman serves as the personification of a contradiction, which results from dawn as a focal point of the complex dependency of time, light, and daytime. In opposition to several other figures of annunciation of the morning, such as for example the cock, the watchman verbalizes the passing of time. This adds a level of reflection to the songs, which is demonstrated in conversations between the watchman and the couple in love and in verbal expressions of empathy from the watchman's side[22]. Already here it is evident that the figure of the watchman has the potential for a symbolic meaning, representing the judgement of society on illegitimate love connections[23].

As mentioned above, in addition to 'secular', 'profane', 'romantic', and 'erotic' dawn songs, there also exist 'spiritual' dawn songs. Not only the watchman but sleep, too, is one of the elements that both spiritual and erotic forms of dawn song share. The difference lies in the use of the small nucleus of motifs. In spiritual songs, the different motifs used have a metaphorical meaning[24]. While sleep has a literal meaning in erotic dawn songs, it boasts a metaphorical one in the spiritual form. Sleep symbolizes a life lived in sin[25]. The watchman also has a spiritual

21. Translation by Arthur Hatto, see *Eos*, ed. Hatto, 452 sg.

22. For example, see verses 1–4 of *Sine clawen* and Breslau, *Die Tagelieder des späten Mittelalters*, 293. See also Breslau, *Die Tagelieder des späten Mittelalters*, 194 as well as Kiening, «Poetik des Dritten», 160.

23. For discussion of 'symbolic', see Breslau, *Die Tagelieder des späten Mittelalters*, 290.

24. The use of 'metaphor' relies on Hans Blumenberg's study on light as a metaphor; see Id., «Licht als Metapher der Wahrheit. Im Vorfeld der philosophischen Begriffsbildung [1957]», in Id., *Ästhetische und metaphorologische Schriften*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 2001, 139–72.

25. See, for example, Gerhard Hahn, «Es ruft ein wachter faste oder 'Verachtet mir die Meister nicht!'. Beobachtungen im geistlichen Tagelied des Hans Sachs», in Johannes Janota, Paul Sappler, Frieder Schanze (eds.), *Fest-*

dimension. Instead of guarding the city from its tower or a castle from on top of its wall, warning the sinner of this life becomes his main task. Most of the time, the uncovering of this transported meaning seems not to produce great surprise and to be rather foreseeable[26]. This common trait of late medieval poetry can be described positively as 'Ästhetik der Konventionalität'[27] or, since the metaphorical use of the wake-up call is widespread in German spiritual poetry dating from the fifteenth century, it could also be stated that it had lost all the tension a metaphor would be able to provide. The «paradox of metaphor»[28] tries to refer to «what is simultaneously ordinary and spectacular about metaphor»[29]. In this sense, the watchman in spiritual poetry has different dimensions of meaning, as several influences converge in this figure. The genesis of the watchman figure in spiritual poetry remains unclear. Past research is filled with different viewpoints on whether the romantic form of dawn song influenced the spiritual one, or the other way around[30]. Simplification in one direction, of course, brings with it the danger of covering up complex aesthetic and literary-historical links[31]. The theme of erotic love, as well as the doubt relating to the watchman's reliability, seldom finds equivalents in the spiritual realm[32]. Since dawn song in its spiritual form is characterized by a great variety, general statements need to be tested with the help of individual songs. We will therefore look at two examples in the following:

schrift Walter Haug und Burghart Wachinger, II, Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1992, 793-801, see 797 and Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller, *Schlaflose Nächte. Der Schlaf als metaphorische, moralische und metaphysische Größe im Mittelalter*, Hamburg, HHL-Verlag, 2002, 38.

26. See Hahn, «Es ruft ein wachter faste», 799.

27. Manfred Kern, *Weltflucht. Poesie und Poetik der Vergänglichkeit in der weltlichen Dichtung des 12. bis 15. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin et al., De Gruyter, 2009, 25.

28. Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr., «Metaphor and Thought», in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008 [Reprint 2010], 3-13, see 5.

29. *Ibid*.

30. See Mohr, «Tagelied», 540.

31. See Kern, *Weltflucht*, 266, note 28 as well as Kiening, «Poetik des Dritten», 166.

32. See Hahn, «Es ruft ein wachter faste», 794.

Heinrich Laufenberg's *Stand vf du sünder laß din clag* and *Ich siech den margensterne* (anonymous) in the *Hohenfurter Liederbuch*.

Heinrich Laufenberg: Stand vf du sünder laß din clag

The bright side of the night, understood literally as brought about by the slow start of morning light, is a very common topic in spiritual poetry dating from the fifteenth century. Using Heinrich Laufenberg's song as a first example, I will show how the bright side of night is used in this literal sense as the dawn that brightens the night, as well as in a metaphorical sense. In spiritual song, the use of light serves as a metaphor mostly for divinity. This has its roots in Greek and Latin philosophy[33], religious rituals, biblical writings[34], and theological thought[35], to name but a few influences.

As a poet without work[36], Heinrich Laufenberg is known owing to scattered mentions of him as a poet in manuscripts, which have survived until today[37]. It is certain that Laufenberg first lived and worked in Freiburg im Breisgau, as is evidenced by several mentions[38]. As a cleric, he was employed as a chaplain in the cathedral of Freiburg from 1421 onwards[39]. After 1433 he worked in Zofingen, Switzerland, moving to the Commandery of the Order of Saint John 'Zum grünen Wörth' in Strasbourg in

33. See Blumenberg, *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, 139-46.

34. See John William McKay, «Psalms of Vigil», *Zeitschrift für die alttestamtliche Wissenschaft*, 91/2 (1979), 229-47, see 229.

35. See Blumenberg, *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, 154-67.

36. Horst Brunner, «Dichter ohne Werk. Zu einer überlieferungbedingten Grenze mittelalterlicher Literaturgeschichte (Mit einem Textanhang: Die Dichterkataloge des Konrad Nachtigall, des Valentin Voigt und des Hans Folz)», in Konrad Kunze, Johannes G. Mayer, Bernhard Schnell, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Editionen und Studien zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters. Kurt Ruh zum 75. Geburtstag*, Tübingen, Max Niemayer 1989, 1-31. Laufenberg is author of the 15000-verse long translation of the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, which he completed in 1437 but is now lost save a few verses.

37. Balázs Nemes, *Das lyrische Œuvre von Heinrich Laufenberg in der Überlieferung des 15. Jahrhunderts. Untersuchungen und Editionen*, Stuttgart, Hirzel, 2015, 9.

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Ibid.*, 10.

1445, where he eventually died on March 31, 1460. It is questionable whether Laufenberg's songs and his œuvre had any impact outside this monastery[40]. While in 1979 Burghart Wachinger doubted whether any of the songs did actually exceed this small circle of readers[41], Balázs Nemes argued in 2015 that a few songs and prayers might well have reached audiences beyond Laufenberg's direct circle during his lifetime[42]. Most of the manuscripts containing his poetry show an audience outside Strasbourg, in monasteries of nuns, in songbooks compiled by citizens and educated Latin-speaking recipients[43].

The song *Stand vf du sünder laß din clag*[44] was in one of the manuscripts housed in the Strasbourg Library that fell victim to a fire in 1870[45]. The song was most probably written between 1421 and 1430[46]. It exists today thanks to copies made before 1870 by Philipp Wackernagel, who included it in a collection of church songs[47]. The song under scrutiny has nine verses, each verse consisting of fifteen lines. It starts with the watchman calling out:

40. *Ibid*., 22.

41. See Burghart Wachinger, «Notizen zu den Liedern Heinrich Laufenbergs», in Dietrich Huschenbett et al. (eds.), *Medium Aevum Deutsch. Beiträge zur deutschen Literatur des hohen und späten Mittelalters. Festschrift Kurt Ruh zum 65. Geburtstag*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 1979, 349-79, see 379.

42. See Nemes, *Das lyrische Œuvre von Heinrich Laufenberg*, 23.

43. For a detailed discussion on his impact, see *ibid*., 81-88.

44. 'Rise up, sinner! Quit complaining'; German text taken from André Schnyder, *Das geistliche Tagelied des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit. Textsammlung, Kommentar und Umrisse einer Gattungsgeschichte*, Tübingen et al., A. Francke, 2004, 127. A thorough discussion of the poem is found in *ibid*., 312-16. Translations by A. R. if not indicated otherwise.

45. Strassburg, ehem. Stadtbibliothek, B 121 4°, cc. 23r-25v. The library was destroyed by the fire during the attack of the Prussian army on 24 August 1870, see Nemes, *Das lyrische Œuvre von Heinrich Laufenberg*, 17 sg.

46. See Wachinger, «Notizen zu den Liedern Heinrich Laufenbergs», 353 and Nemes, *Das lyrische Œuvre von Heinrich Laufenberg*, 75.

47. See Schnyder, *Das geistliche Tagelied*, 312 relying on K. E. Philipp Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied von Martin Luther bis auf Nicolaus Herman und Ambrosius Blaurer*, Stuttgart, Liesching, 1841, n. 747 and Id., *Das deutsche Kirchenlied von der ältesten Zeit bis zu Anfang des XVII. Jahrhunderts,* II, Leipzig, Olms, 1867 (2nd reprint: 1990), n. 702.

Stand vf, du sünder, laß din clag
vnd bis in gnoden munder!
die naht erlůchtet hůt den tag,
vernim min sag,
hŏr wunder über wunder. (1, vv. 1-5)

Rise up, sinner, leave your lament and be cheerful in grace! The night illuminates the day today, hear what I say, hear miracle upon miracle.

The first of the nine verses continues this same theme, urging the sinner to wake up (and be on his way). In the middle, it reveals that the great event illuminating the night is the birth of a child, without yet revealing its identity as Jesus (*tů vf din ougen heiter: / hinacht ist dir ein kind geborn*; «Open up your eyes joyfully: tonight, a child was born for you»; 1, vv. 7 sg.). Despite the enthusiastic calling of the watchman, the sinner is reluctant to get up as he claims he has only just fallen asleep:

Jst es ein kind noch menschen art,
blos, luter vnd auch pure,
so darf ich nit so grosser wart,
won es ist zart
von blŏde der nature. (2, vv. 6-10)

If it is a child after the manner of men, naked, pure, and also innocent, there is no need for me to expect it greatly, for it is fragile and weak by nature.

In the third verse, the watchman provides further information on the child: heaven and hell submit to its reign, it is able to heal any sickness, it is entirely human and God. He then continues to verbally guide the sinner through the history of salvation, describing the child's impact on the old covenant, claiming that it played a role in the story of Moses (3, v. 13), Adam (4, vv. 1 sg.), Abraham (4, vv. 3-5), the Exodus (4, vv. 6-10), Joshua (4, vv. 11 sg.), King David (5, vv. 1 sg.), Solomon (5, vv. 3-5) and Maccabaeus (5, vv. 6-10), summarizing all of this as follows: *vil wunder in der alten e / tet es vnd me* («It performed many miracles in the Old Covenant and more»; 4, vv. 13-15). By relating all of

the above, the watchman shows the close connection of the story of Israel as God's people to this child's birth[48].

He then, in the sixth verse, announces Jesus's birth in Bethlehem, referring to Jesus as *Der sunnen glantz von einem mon* («The sun's glow from a moon»; 6, v. 6). This metaphor signals that it is still nighttime, since the moon is shining. Although the sun's light is the subject in this sentence, it describes the moon as radiating the light it originally receives from the sun. This metaphor is used to illustrate the belief that, in the same way that the moon receives the sun's light, Mary conceives Jesus from God and gives birth to him. Heinrich Laufenberg hereby refers to a common way of describing Mary's relationship with divinity in German medieval spiritual poetry. When Mary is praised for being both a virgin and a mother, she is often referred to as the (morning) star and the receiving luminary. Although describing her as «moon» is part of a comparably wider tradition, this is usually used to praise her majesty rather than her status as a virgin[49]. Therefore, Laufenberg praises Mary with an attribute that usually signifies her majesty, hereby marking her role as beyond being a vessel for another life. The seventh verse then explicitly praises Mary and the Immaculate Conception. In verse eight, the watchman goes on to describe the nativity scene and how the shepherds were called to the cradle. The song ends with anti-Jewish polemical remarks (8, vv. 9-15; 9, vv. 1-10)[50].

Throughout the song, continuous reference is made to prophecies and prophets. In referring to them, the watchman situates himself within their biblical tradition: *Von disem kindelein so zart / verkündent all wissagen* («All the prophecies have foretold

48. The birth of the child, as well as its conception by Mary, was announced by prophecies, see 5, 11-13 und 6, 11-12; see below.

49. For more examples of Mary praised as virgin by using the moon, see Anselm Salzer, *Die Sinnbilder und Beiworte Mariens in der deutschen Literatur und lateinischen Hymnenpoesie des Mittelalters. Mit Berücksichtigung der patristischen Literatur. Eine literar-historische Studie*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1886-1894 (Reprint: 1967), 79, l. 12-16, where Laufenberg is the only reference. In comparison, Salzer fills six and half pages with references to 'moon' used to praise Mary as majestic (*Sinnbilder*, 377-84). For the Virgin Mary as 'star', see *ibid*., 35, l. 23-36, l. 21.

50. See Schnyder, *Das geistliche Tagelied*, 315.

this tender little child»; 5, vv. 11 sg.), *Die edel magt, die es gebar, / ist ie vnd ie fürsehen* («The noble virgin who gave birth to it has been foreknown from time eternal»; 6, vv. 11 sg.) and finally *dis wisent all propheten gar* («All the prophets distinctly indicated that», 9, v. 8).

This analysis concentrates on the watchman, although much more could be discussed with regard to this poem[51]. It is not the sinner who is expecting daybreak, but the watchman. He is portrayed as having witnessed the events leading up to Jesus's birth, starting with the creation of man, as well as having borne witness to the birth itself. He is also present after Jesus's birth and death, as indicated by the prayer at the end, which asks the child for guidance to God's kingdom after death (9, vv. 10–15). Therefore, in this song written by Laufenberg the watchman is portrayed as a figure who continues the waiting of the prophets in the liturgical year. Just like the prophets throughout salvation history, he carries on the task of announcing the arrival of God: *verslof nit sin zuokunfte* («Do not oversleep his arrival»; 1, v. 15)[52]. Simultaneously to referring to the past event, Jesus's arrival is announced as reoccurring every liturgical year. Even though Christmas and Advent repeat on a regular basis, the sinner, in contrast to the watchman, seems unprepared. The watchman is needed to make the sinner aware of the importance of being conscious of this certain time (passing): the sinner should be *munder* (awake), listen, alert his heart, and open his eyes (1, vv. 1 and 6 sg.). The first verse finishes with:

Brich dinen slaf, wach in gemůt
in willen vnd vernunfte,
sich vmb dich mit din selbes hůt
durch sine gůt
verslof nit sin zůkunfte. (1, vv. 11–15)

Interrupt your sleep, be awake in mind, will and reason, look around prudently, for the sake of his goodness do not oversleep his arrival.

51. For a commentary on this song, *ibid.*, 312–16; and Theodor Kochs, *Das deutsche geistliche Tagelied*, Münster, Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1928, 83, 98.

52. Schnyder suggests that prophets could be understood as 'Metamorphose' of the Watchman (Schnyder, *Das geistliche Tagelied*, 316, note 254).

In waking up the sinner, the watchman also calls him to be fully aware and responsible for himself and his quest for salvation.

Resting During the Night

Without the watchman, the sinner would sleep through the arrival that is supposed to bring salvation. Although it is a special night: *die naht erluchtet hut den tag* («the night enlightens the day today»; 1, v. 3), the sinner claims that his sleep is righteous because of the night. It is therefore necessary to further explore the meaning of the night in its literal sense, providing sleep, as this entails positive attitudes toward the night. As said above, sleep, similar to the watchman, can be viewed for analytical purposes from two angles: a literal one, which is physical, and a metaphorical one. Its literal meaning is evaluated positively and viewed as part of creation as well as recreation[53].

In his study on attention in Christian medieval thought, Peter von Moos shows that even though the admonition of ceaseless prayer is present in monastic teachings, praying itself was not necessarily expected to last forever[54]. Incessant prayer is an ideal proposed by the New Testament[55]. But how is this to be understood? Early apostolic fathers believed this should be taken literally. In accordance with this literal interpretation, the desert fathers gave pragmatic advice on how this could be achieved[56].

53. See Peter v. Moos, «*Attentio est quaedam sollicitudo*. Die religiöse, ethische und politische Dimension der Aufmerksamkeit im Mittelalter», in Peter v. Moos, Gert Melville (eds.), *Rhetorik, Kommunikation und Medialität. Gesammelte Studien zum Mittelalter*, Münster, LIT, 2006, 265-307, at 277, especially relying on Thomas Aquinas; see also Hergemöller, *Schlaflose Nächte*, 39.

54. See Moos, «*Attentio est quaedam sollicitudo*», 277; Hergemöller, *Schlaflose Nächte*, 68-72.

55. Direct and indirect admonitions are, for example: Luke 18:1; 21:36; 2:36-37; 1 Thess. 5:17; Phil. 4:4; Rom. 1:9; Eph. 6:18; For an extensive list, see Radbert Kerkhoff O.S.B., *Das unablässige Gebet. Beiträge zur Lehre vom immerwährenden Beten im Neuen Testament*, München, Karl Zink, 1954, see 18-22 (citations in Ancient Greek). All references to Scripture rely on *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, ed. Robert Weber, Roger Gryson, Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, ⁵2007.

56. See Kerkhoff, *Das unablässige Gebet*, 9 sg., as well as Hergemöller, *Schlaflose Nächte*, 50.

Prayer was a weapon to employ against evil forces[57], and formed «the battlefield where the struggle between the demons and angels is decided»[58].

Radbert Kerkhoff's close reading of the New Testament claims that continuous prayer is indeed that which is sought, but not as a mathematical quantity. Instead, it expresses a new idea: one in which prayer is able to cultivate an inner expectation of the end times[59]. As such, it is developed as an attitude that forms the relationship of man with God, developed by Jesus in Luke's Gospel, Paul in his letters, and John in the apocalypse, relying on the Old Testament, and Jewish rites, as well as on a Hellenistic use of language[60]. How the directive to pray continuously was to be followed remained subject to interpretation: The Anchorites were characterized by their striving to follow this directive in a literal sense[61]. As early as the sixth century, the views of clerics and theologians on the subject were strongly opposed[62]. Thus, monastic rules attributed to the Magister Regulae and Benedict of Nursia suggest a form of life that does not regard sleep as an obstacle but rather as a means necessary in order to proceed with a life dedicated to prayer[63]. This conflict is expressed concisely in Augustine's question: *Deus, Deus meus, ad te de luce vigilo. Quid est vigilare? Utique non dormire. Quid est dormire? […] Somnum corporis debemus habere*"[64]. Therefore, in medieval thought, an acceptance of the fact that "no action can last long at its highest pitch"[65] did exist, as well as the fact that sleep during the night was a necessity. As will be shown later, the sleeping soul is a different matter[66].

57. See Michael Marx O.S.B., *Incessant Prayer in Ancient Monastic Literature*, Rome, Scuola Salesiana, 1946, 54.

58. *Ibid.*, 56.

59. See Kerkhoff, *Das unablässige Gebet*, 58.

60. *Ibid.*, 58-60.

61. See Hergemöller, *Schlaflose Nächte*, 50, 58-63. He closely connects sought sleeplessness to early monasticism, being systematized by Anthony of Egypt and being present for two centuries until approximately 430.

62. *Ibid.*, 63-68.

63. *Ibid.*, 51.

64. See Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum LXII*, in Id., *En. in Psalmos*, PL 36, Sp. 750.

65. See Moos, «*Attentio est quaedam sollicitudo*», 279.

66. See Hergemöller, *Schlaflose Nächte*, 27, 40.

The following hymn will show more of the positive attitudes toward the night. Hymns formed an integral part of the monastic Liturgy of the Hours and, as regards content, composition and use, can be located at the crossroads between liturgy and poetry[67]. As such they convey the contents of the daily liturgy and the Bible. Hymns are spiritual songs, meant for the praise of God[68]. *Aeterne rerum conditor*[69] is attributed to Ambrose and is part of monastic morning prayer to this day[70]. Originally, however, it was not situated in a monastic context but instead sung by the church community[71].

Three of the four semantic oppositions of the text are 'darkness-light', 'asleep-awake' and 'sin-guilt'[72]. Here, a cock symbolizes daybreak. On the intertextual level, the animal shows the close connection to the gospel, referring to Mark 13:35, where the admonition to watch out (*vigilate ergo*) is explained by a warning that the Lord might arrive at cockcrow[73]. It also refers to Luke 22:60, where Peter is reminded by a cockcrow that Jesus

67. See Ansgar Franz, «Aufstehen, Auferstehung, Aufstand. Der Morgenhymnus des Ambrosius von Mailand als Beispiel doxologischer Ethik», in Ulrich Vop, Friedrich Wilhelm Horn, Ruben Zimmermann (eds.), *Metapher – Narratio – Mimesis – Doxologie. Begründungsformen frühchristlicher und antiker Ethik. Kontexte und Normen neutestamentlicher Ethik / Contexts and Norms of New Testament Ethics*, VII, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2016, 403-19, see 405; see also Heike Wennemuth, *Vom lateinischen Hymnus zum deutschen Kirchenlied. Zur Übersetzungs- und Rezeptionsgeschichte von Christe qui lux es et dies*, Tübingen, Francke, 2003, 17.

68. See Wennemuth, *Vom lateinischen Hymnus*, 14.

69. A systematic interpretation can be found in Ansgar Franz, «*Aeterne rerum Conditor*», in Id., *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte. Untersuchungen zum literarischen Text und liturgischen Kontext der Tagzeitenhymnen des Ambrosius von Mailand*, St. Ottilien, EOS, 1994, 147-273; a shorter, newer version is the above-mentioned article (Franz, «Aufstehen, Auferstehung, Aufstand»).

70. It is noteworthy that this hymn, one of the 14 attributed to Ambrose, was incorporated into prayer on a daily basis, as for some time it was the only hymn used in morning prayer (see Franz, «Aufstehen, Auferstehung, Aufstand», 405).

71. See Ansgar Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte. Untersuchungen zum literarischen Text und liturgischen Kontext der Tagzeitenhymnen des Ambrosius von Mailand*, St. Ottilien 1994, 17; see also Wennemuth, *Vom lateinischen Hymnus*, 32.

72. Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte*, 153; Id., «Aufstehen, Auferstehung, Aufstand», 408 sg.

73. Mc 13:35: «Vigilate ergo / nescitis enim quando dominus domus veniat / sero an media nocte an galli cantu an mane».

foretold that he would deny him before the cock cried three times[74]. In the hymn, the cock is equipped with attributes that identify it as a metaphor for Jesus[75]. For the present argument, however, the focus is on the invocation, the first verse. It praises God for the regular change of times in order to diminish man's weariness or exasperation – *fastidium*[76]:

Aeterne rerum conditor,
noctem diemque qui regis
et temporum das tempora,
ut alleues fastidium,

Here, time is not only viewed as a series of sequences that can be added up to abstract measurements, but is qualified by the change from light to darkness[77]. God is praised as being beyond time because he gives time to time (1, v. 3) and therefore reigns over night and day, which refers to Genesis, recounting this as the first act of creation[78]. The regularly sung hymn and Genesis shed light on each other, since it suggests that with every morning the

74. Luke 22:60-62: «et ait Petrus / homo nescio quid dicis / et continuo adhuc illo loquente cantavit gallus / 61 Et conversus Dominus respexit Petrum / et recordatus est Petrus verbi Domini sicut dixit / quia priusquam gallus cantet ter me negabis / 62 et egressus foras Petrus flevit amare»; see Franz, «Aufstehen, Auferstehung, Aufstand», 406; 407 sg., for a summary of the references to different meanings attributed to the cock from ancient Greek and Christian literature to Shakespeare up to Umberto Eco. For a more detailed overview see Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte*, 161-86.

75. Ansgar Franz describes this as «semantische Identität» (410) and quotes Ambrose, who describes Jesus in a Maundy Thursday homily as *iste gallus mysticus*, who calls the sinner to return and forgives sin (see 410). Franz explains this in an analysis of Ambrose's homily Hexameron 5, 88-92 (31,1,201-203), see Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte*, 177 sg.

76. Text from Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte*, 147. *fastidium* is «vrdruzze» in a twelfth century German vernacular version: «Ewiger der dinge scepfaere / die naht un̄ den tach dv rihtes / vn̄ der zite gibes zite / daz dv ringes vrdrvzze» (see Joseph Kehrein, *Kirchen- und religiöse Lieder aus dem zwölften bis fünfzehnten Jahrhundert. Theils Übersetzungen lateinischer Kirchenhymnen (mit dem lateinischen Text), theils Originallieder aus Handschriften der k. k. Hofbibliothek zu Wien*, Paderborn, Ferdinand Schoeningh, 1853, 4 sg.).

77. See Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte*, 188.

78. See Gen. 1:3-5; Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte*, 191; see also Jean-Claude Schmitt's chapter in this volume.

original act of creation is repeated[79]. In the context of this article, the thankfulness for the reliable change from day to night (and vice versa) is noteworthy, as it implicitly shows an acceptance of night as something positive. Ansgar Franz believes that the reason behind this gratitude lies in humanity's fundamental desire for change, which, according to him, stems from a higher appreciation of things that are temporarily unavailable[80]. The validity of this argument would require further investigation, but in this context it is sufficient to observe that night as such is viewed as something that constitutes a reason to praise God.

From the above discussion on incessant prayer and this short example from a well-known hymn, it can be concluded that appreciation of the night as a time for rest and as a necessary part of existence was nourished in medieval poetry and prayer practice. The sinner in Heinrich Laufenberg's song could be viewed as being rightfully asleep, at least from a physical perspective. Nonetheless, in the song, the watchman urgently wants the sinner to wake up. This draws our attention and needs further questioning. For the physical point of view on sleep, it was established that his watchfulness renders rest during the night possible. Rest as physical activity is seen as positive and necessary. Sleep of the soul, in contrast, is not seen as something positive; therefore, we will once again turn to the spiritual perspective on sleep as metaphor.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Anton Schönbach edited excerpts from three sermon drafts (A, B and C)[81]. They were composed on Psalm 97, 1, *cantata Domino canticum novum*. In these sermons dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth cen-

79. See Franz, *Tageslauf und Heilsgeschichte*, 192.

80. See *ibid.*, 193: He wants «change» to be understood as follows: «not primarily in the sense of distraction, entertainment, but the human trait of being able to appreciate things only when they are withdrawn for a certain time».

81. See Anton Schönbach, «Ein Zeugnis zur Geschichte der mittelhochdeutschen Lyrik», *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, N.F. 22 = 34 (1890), 213-18 (containing 'A') and Id., «Zur Geschichte der mittelhochdeutschen Lyrik», *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, N.F. 34 = 46, 1/2 (1902), 93-101 (containing 'B' and 'C'). They include transcriptions of Graz University Library Ms 730, Nr. 53 and Ms 176.

turies, the genres of secular poetry are enumerated, with each given a corresponding spiritual genre. The first genre is that of dawn song, as presented at the beginning of this essay, as the profane version. Sermon *De navitate Domini* (Graz University Library, Ms 176; C) describes the corresponding spiritual form as follows:

> primus; diei, ein taglied. istum cantum vigiles, trege leut in aurora excitando. istum debent modo cantare vigiles, hujusmodi sunt prelati et predicatores, die tregen bruder, una homines desides excitando, qui in lecto se vertunt de uno latere ad aliud sic, sicut hostium, quod vertitur in cardine. hii sunt vigiles, de quibus dicit Dominus: 'super muros tuos, Jerusalem, constitui custodes tota die, et [tota] nocte non tacebunt'[82].

These sermon drafts portray the genre of dawn song as sung by *vigiles*, watchful ones. A singer of a dawn song therefore must be fitting to the description of the adjective *vigil*. The sermon defines the office to which this adjective may be applied: preachers and clerics[83]. Their task is to turn the sleepers, those living in sin, away from sin and to call them to readiness for salvation. A biblical citation tries to further describe the task as «the watchman on the wall of Jerusalem». Here, the homily refers to Isaiah 62, 6[84], in which God is speaking to Jerusalem as if it were a beloved. The *vigiles*, the clerics and preachers, are hereby assigned a role that not only calls them to their duty toward their fellow Christians. This reference also lays out its eschatological and figurative meaning, as it parallels their office with the watchmen in what is described as «heavenly Jerusalem.» Dawn

82. Text from Schönbach, «Zur Geschichte der mhd. Lyrik», 95 sg. («The first: of the day/for the day, a Dawn song. Watchful ones (…) this song in order to wake idle people to the dawn. Only watchful ones must sing this, such are prelates or preachers, the indolent brethren, at the same time waking up idle people who turn from side to side in bed, like the enemy turning in the hinge of the door. These are watchful ones of whom the Lord says: 'Upon your walls, Jerusalem, I have set watchmen. All day and all night, never will they be silent'»).

83. See Schönbach, «Ein Zeugnis zur Geschichte der mittelhochdeutschen Lyrik», 216.

84. See Id., «Zur Geschichte der mittelhochdeutschen Lyrik», 96. Is 62, 6: «super muros tuos Hierusalem constitui custodies / tota die et tota nocte perpetuo non tacebunt».

song, in this context, is then intended in particular to prevent sinners from turning back to sin[85], connecting the watchman's duty with its impact on the sinners' chances of achieving eternal life, for which the here-intended Christian existence aims. In the context of the spiritual perspective on sleep, which is equated with a life led in sin, the sleeper depends on the watchman for his salvation.

Hohenfurter Liederbuch: Ich siech den margensterne

The second poetic example describes itself in the last verse as a dawn song, set in a spiritual context. *Ich siech den margensterne* is song number 65 in the *Hohenfurter Liederbuch*, a songbook from the fifteenth century, stored in the Cistercian monastery of Vyšší Brod in the South Bohemian Region[86]. The song praises Mary using the metaphor of light, this time as the morning star[87]. The song has eleven verses, each encompassing four lines. In the first three verses a voice expresses joy about the break of day, speaking of the *margensterne* («Morningstar»; 1, v. 1) and *dy schonen margenrötte* («the beautiful red dawn»; 1, v. 3). As the earliest signs of day, both are praised as they end the night: *Dy nacht wil sy verdringen, / den tag nach ir her weist* («She wants to dispel the night / She points to the day after her»; 3, vv. 1 sg.). Early on, it is revealed that the singer praises Mary as the queen of heaven (3, vv. 3 sg.). Verses four to nine then are apostrophes, spoken to Mary as the morning glory, asking her to slowly fill the earth with light, wishing for the ubiquity of that light. Dawn is praised as a precondition for sunrise, which symbolizes God. Just as the day announces itself gradually, so too does this song invite its reader to gradually connect the process of daybreak to the history of salvation and to interpret sunrise as the Incarna-

85. See Mohr, «Tagelied», 535.

86. Vyšší Brod/Hohenfurt, ms. 8b (I see the Morningstar). Text in *Ein deutsches geistliches Liederbuch mit Melodien aus dem XV. Jahrhundert*, ed. and introd. by Wilhelm Bäumker, Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1895 (Reprint: Hildesheim, Olms 1970).

87. For references, see Salzer, *Die Sinnbilder* as mentioned above.

tion. This is not explicitly mentioned, but this recognition is suggested to the recipient when God is referred to as *dy sunn der grechtigkait* («the sun of justice»; 9, v. 4)[88] and *das war liecht auf die erd* («the true light on the Earth»; 10, v. 4), alluding to the first chapter of John's Gospel[89]. Therefore, both Jesus and the process of the Incarnation are implied by the sunlight. The time before Jesus's birth is characterized by the wait during which dawn gradually breaks. The metaphors of dawn and the morning star, symbolizing Mary[90], are revealed throughout the song, simultaneously leaving it open to interpretation what image should be attributed to whom. The song does not provide one definitive image for Mary – that of the morning star or of the red dawn. The morning star is praised as one of the earliest signs of daybreak. This expresses a high appreciation for Mary, since the voice of the poem rejoices in praising the morning star, even if it only constitutes a faint sign of daylight. Without a doubt, the light is at the center of the praise. Because the light while dawn breaks comes from the sun, the aim of the praise therefore oscillates throughout the song between Mary and Jesus. Focusing on the light, it directs the reader toward salvation, which becomes attainable through the Incarnation – God becoming man. The song in its structure, starting with the morning star (1, v. 1) and arriving at the sun (9, v. 4), portrays daybreak as something – though strongly desired – surprisingly unexpected. This is noteworthy since the pattern in which night and day alternate is reliable and expectable, but as a topic it still enjoys a broad metaphorical, philosophical, and lyrical tradition[91]. This paradoxical attitude toward Incarnation plays an important role in this song, as the Incarnation in Christian doctrine is said to have taken place around 1400 years before the *Hohenfurter Liederbuch* was composed. Nonetheless, most of the song implores dawn to

88. This attribute originates from Mal 4:2: «et orietur vobis timentibus nomen meum sol iustitiae et sanitas in pinnis eius et egrediemini et saietis sicut vituli de armento».

89. See Io 1:4-5.

90. For more examples, see Salzer, *Die Sinnbilder*, 23, l. 7-24, l. 36; 384, l. 13-388, l. 18.

91. See Blumenberg, «Licht als Metapher der Wahrheit»; Hergemöller, *Schlaflose Nächte*; *Eos*, ed. Hatto.

bring forth daylight. Therefore, although night is seen as a time of darkness, symbolizing a life lived in sin, this song shows how night also symbolizes a cherished devotional attitude of expectation. The twofold aim of the praise of Mary and Jesus and the different sources of light make it evident that waiting itself is something desirable and enjoyable[92]. This spiritual dawn song connects the joy of awaiting the Incarnation, portrayed as an event belonging to a certain place and time in history, to the daily alternation of night and day. This is something it holds in common with Laufenberg's *Stand vf du sünder laß din clag*. The metaphor of night and day, darkness and light hereby does not solve the contradiction between punctual event and recurring pattern. Instead, both aspects emphasize waiting in readiness as an enjoyed attitude and something to be striven for on a daily basis.

Conclusion

In German spiritual poetry of the late Middle Ages, there seem to be two ways of enjoying the night: one encompasses sleep and rest; the other entails remaining awake, in expectation of the sunrise. Both are dependent on each other and constitute the other's cherishing of the night. Thanks to the watchman, the sinner can rest. The former's watchfulness and his call would be senseless if it did not serve to deliver new information to those asleep. In addition, as has been shown, sleep as a physical activity is viewed as necessary and as one that is a cherished activity, too. With regard to a sleeping soul, however, there is a clear hierarchy between sleeping and being awake: the sinner must wake up to see the light observed by the watchman, as it signifies salvation. In this view, sleep as a state of sinfulness is an obstacle to salvation.

It is the expected light that renders the night enjoyable for the watchman and the watchfulness desirable to the sleeper. In Heinrich Laufenberg's *Stand vf du sünder laß din clag*, he calls the sinner to join in the ready watchfulness in order to celebrate

92. This is further expressed by the melody that accompanies the song. For further information on the melody, see *Ein deutsches geistliches Liederbuch*, ed. Bäumker, 71.

Christmas. In *Ich siech den margensterne*, the watchman describes what he sees while keeping watch for daybreak, which can be read as a description of a watchman's activity during the night. He is the first to see the morning star as a sign of the soon-to-rise sun. In being a song with a noted melody, this activity is presented as a positive and enjoyable one. This perspective on expectation is expressed with the night as metaphor. It needs the metaphor of night changing to day as an event that will assuredly take place in order to symbolize the certainty of the salvation to come.

The expectation thereby becomes hopeful: it employs the mode of transitive attention, which focuses on an object and a certainty that the expected will happen. Of metaphorical use is also the tension between the moment when the sun appears and the process of dawn that precedes the visible sunrise. This tension is depicted in Laufenberg's song as one witnessed mainly by the watchman while the sinner remains asleep for the duration of the night. Here, the watchman is situated on the border between an individual's history and the history of salvation, between a virtuous life and a life wasted. In the *Hohenfurter Liederbuch*, this tension becomes evident in the undifferentiated praise of carriers and sources of light, oscillating between (signs of) dawn, Mary, and the sun, God. This tension helps to emphasize the watchfulness performed by the singer of the song.

The vigilance of the watchman models the ideal Christian existence: one of being able to live a life spent in expectation, which itself is enjoyable owing to the belief in the salvation of humanity and the certainty of its taking place. The sinner is called to imitate the watchman's vigilance. His call helps the sinner, just as preachers and clerics are expected to help sinners as *vigils*, as shown in the sermon. The vigilant watchman in these songs is portrayed as an enabler of Christian watchfulness. Therefore, the night serves as a 'chiffre'[93] for the Christian existence between vigilance and sleep. Both activities can be justified in their own right, but ultimately favored is vigilance. Only when awake is a joyous awaiting of salvation possible, joyous because the arrival of salvation is believed to be as certain as the sun rising each morning.

93. Blumenberg, «Licht als Metapher der Wahrheit», 140.

ABSTRACT

Agnes Rugel, *Vigilant Throughout the Night: The Watchman in German Medieval Spiritual Poetry*

This literary study aims to show different positive attitudes towards the night as they appear in a variety of pre-modern sacred vernacular and Latin texts. With the focus on Heinrich Laufenberg's *Stand vf du sünder* and *Ich siech den margensterne* in the Hohenfurt songbook as two examples of the German medieval genre of spiritual dawn song (*tageliet*), it discusses how night and sleep are used metaphorically to depict a life in sin. However, the positive evaluation of the night as a time of rest and transition to day in Latin hymns and theological discussions is taken up in the ubiquitous figure of the watchman in German medieval poetry, who portrays the night in the light of salvation history as a time of waiting that is positively connoted by faith in the coming salvation.

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LES LUMIÈRES DE LA NUIT MÉDIÉVALE: SOMMEIL, RÊVES ET SPIRITUALITÉ (XIII^{e}-XIV^{e} SIÈCLES)

Au Moyen Âge central, la première représentation de la nuit que laissent transparaître les sources cléricales est loin d'être lumineuse. Temps du péché, la nuit est propice aux tentations diaboliques qui tourmentent l'âme du dormeur. Cette thématique apparaît de manière fréquente au sein des récits hagiographiques et autobiographiques. Les *Monodiae* du moine Guibert de Nogent au XII^{e} siècle, truffées d'apparitions démoniaques, en sont l'illustration[1]. Dans les sermons et les traités éducatifs, des avertissements sont donnés aux novices et aux laïcs, y compris aux enfants, contre les tentations nocturnes liées à la sexualité[2]. La nuit et le sommeil sont associés à la chair dans cette représentation. Cependant, en scrutant d'un regard plus attentif ces textes et en considérant également d'autres documents, notamment les vies des mystiques, la nuit apparaît aussi comme un moment de lumière, un temps de communication avec Dieu. Pensée comme un espace

1. Voir Guibert de Nogent, *Autobiographie*, éd. et trad. Edmond-René Labande, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1981, ainsi que Raoul Glaber, *Histoires*, éd. et trad. Mathieu Arnoux, Thurnout, Brepols, 1996. À ce sujet, voir Ginette Ashby et al., *Le diable au Moyen Âge. Doctrine, problèmes moraux, représentations*, Aix-en-Provence, Presses universitaires de Provence, 1979; Dominique Barthélemy, Rolf Grosse (dir.), *Moines et démons. Autobiographie et individualité au Moyen Âge (VII^{e}-XIII^{e} siècle)*, Genève, Droz, 2014 et les travaux de Jean-Claude Schmitt, notamment: «Récits et images de rêves au Moyen Âge», *Éthnologie française*, 33 (2003), 553-63; Id., «Rêver au XII^{e} siècle», in Tullio Gregory (éd.), *I sogni nel Medioevo*, Rome, Ateneo, 1985, 291-16.

2. À ce propos, voir Anne-Lydie Dubois, *Former la masculinité. Éducation, exégèse et pastorale mendiante au XIII^{e} siècle*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2022, 351-55.

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favorable à l'intériorisation, elle révèle alors le meilleur comme le pire habitant l'âme de chaque individu, selon sa nature[3].

Souvent liée au sommeil dans ce contexte, la nuit accroît la vertu des saints et des moines de plusieurs manières. En tant que moment d'abstraction du corps, elle favorise les activités de l'esprit sur le plan spirituel. Un contact privilégié avec Dieu se réalise à travers des extases, des visions mystiques ou des rêves prophétiques[4]. Bien que ces visions n'aient pas nécessairement lieu pendant la nuit, ni même au cours du sommeil, la nuit est souvent associée à une élévation de l'âme comme le démontrent l'exégèse biblique, les sermons ou encore le discours hagiographique des XII^e^-XIII^e^ siècles. En transformant ce moment habituellement dédié au sommeil en temps de prière, au détriment des besoins du corps, la nuit se fait par ailleurs l'occasion de prouver les vertus spirituelles. Au lieu d'un laisser-aller à la paresse du sommeil, la nuit active met alors en évidence les capacités hors du commun de certains individus, tout en leur conférant un pouvoir particulier. Elle offre l'occasion de démontrer une résistance au diable, en surmontant les tentations présentées aux dormeurs à ce moment. Cette aptitude permet de renverser la connotation habituellement dangereuse que lui attribue le discours clérical.

Dans un premier temps, cet article mettra en lumière la question de la privation de sommeil comme moyen de sublimer la nuit et d'en faire un moment de lumière. Certaines sources monastiques et hagiographiques des XII^e^-XIV^e^ siècles, en particulier les vies de deux mystiques, sont particulièrement éclairantes à cet égard. Par la suite, le discours médical sera mis en relation avec ces écrits. À travers des encyclopédies du XIII^e^ siècle et les explications naturalistes qui y figurent, il s'agira de montrer comment la nuit et le sommeil activent les aptitudes secrètes de l'esprit.

3. À propos du caractère ambivalent des songes que dévoilent les théologiens médiévaux, voir Jeannine Quillet, «Le songe», in Geneviève Hasenohr, Jean Longère (éd.), *Culture et travail intellectuel dans l'Occident médiéval*, Paris, CNRS, 1981, 82.

Veillées nocturnes

La *Règle du maître* valorise particulièrement la privation de sommeil des moines pendant la nuit. Datant du début du Moyen Âge, mais exerçant une grande influence dans les siècles suivants, ce document dicte les préceptes et les pratiques de la vie monastique. Pendant les longues nuits d'hiver, «une lampe ou une veilleuse»[5] est allumée dans le dortoir. En effet, la *Règle* stipule que si un moine prend sur son sommeil pour s'adonner à des activités vertueuses et spirituelles, il prouve qu'il «aime vraiment l'esprit plus que la chair»[6]. Antérieure aux textes étudiés ici, cette règle met en évidence l'ancrage pérenne de la représentation du sommeil – et des moments de la nuit dédiés à cet effet – du côté de la chair. S'abstenir de sommeil en ce sens démontre le caractère exemplaire ainsi que les capacités exceptionnelles d'un individu, en particulier dans la sphère religieuse. Dans le cas des moines, le mérite qu'entraîne cette privation est d'autant plus grand que leur temps de sommeil est court suivant les saisons[7]. Comme elle est un lieu de dangers et de tentations, ou du moins de paresse lorsqu'elle est associée au sommeil, la nuit devient alors un moyen de montrer sa capacité à vaincre le corps et à maîtriser ses besoins fondamentaux.

4. À propos du très vaste sujet des visions, qui dépasse le cadre de notre propos, nous nous limitons à renvoyer à: Jacqueline Amat, *Songes et visions. L'au-delà dans la littérature latine tardive*, Paris, Études augustiniennes, 1985; Peter Dinzelbacher, *Mittelalterliche Visionsliteratur. Eine Anthologie*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989; Jesse Keskiaho, *Dreams and Visions in the Early Middle Ages: the Reception and Use of Patristic Ideas, 400-900*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015; ainsi qu'à leurs bibliographies.

5. *La Règle du Maître*, éd. et trad. Adalbert de Vogüé, Paris, Cerf, 1964, II, 44, 205.

6. *Ibid*. Cf. Anne-Lydie Dubois, «Rituels d'endormissement et vertueuse insomnie dans quelques sermons et *exempla* médiévaux», in Bernard Andenmatten, Karine Crousaz, Agostino Paravicini Bagliani (éds.), *Le sommeil. Théories, représentations et pratiques (Moyen Âge et époque moderne)*, Florence, Sismel, 2024, 51-69.

7. Voir à ce propos Maria Elisabeth Wittmer-Butsch, *Zur Bedeutung von Schlaf und Traum im Mittelalter*, Krems, Medium Aevum Quotidianum, 1990, 41-45; Léo Moulin, *La vie quotidienne des religieux au Moyen Âge*, Paris, Hachette, 1978, 27-33.

Vers 1144, Guillaume de Saint-Thierry écrit une lettre de recommandations aux chartreux du Mont-Dieu, plus particulièrement aux novices. Cette *Lettre d'or* pourrait être comparée à un «manuel d'ascétisme»[8]. Dans ce contexte, il met en garde les moines contre un sommeil qu'il qualifie de «lourd et charnel»[9]. Cette expression dote le sommeil d'une substance physique, matérielle et pondérable, renforçant son association à la chair. Guillaume de Saint-Thierry encourage les novices à ne jamais «dormir tout entier»[10] afin de pouvoir combattre les péchés, car la raison s'assoupit à ce moment-là[11]. Pour lui, reprenant un lieu commun de la littérature monastique, le sommeil est une perte de temps dans cette perspective érémitique[12].

Pour éviter un abandon total au corps pendant le sommeil, il incite donc les chartreux à dormir d'un sommeil mesuré, léger, leur permettant de se réveiller facilement et de reprendre leurs activités. Le discours de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry n'incite toutefois pas à se priver de sommeil, contrairement à l'ascétisme des mystiques. Il loue les avantages de ce repos exercé dans la juste mesure, qu'il situe explicitement durant la nuit[13]. Sous l'effet de cette bonne pratique du sommeil, Guillaume de Saint-Thierry transforme l'obscurité de la nuit en lumière lorsqu'il ajoute: «Ainsi pour vous la nuit sera éclairée comme le jour; la nuit sera votre lumière au milieu de vos délices»[14]. La thématique

8. Jean Déchanet, «Introduction», in Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, *Lettre aux frères du Mont-Dieu (Lettre d'or)*, éd. Jean Déchanet, Paris, Cerf, 2004, 31.

9. *Ibid.*, 249; Paul Bretel, «L'expérience du sommeil dans la Vie des Pères et dans les Miracles de la Vierge», in Christine Ferlampin-Acher et al. (éd.), *Sommeil, songes et insomnies*, Paris, SLLMOO, 2008, 145-63, 145; Dubois, «Rituels d'endormissement» (à paraître).

10. Traduction puisée dans Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, *Lettre aux frères du Mont-Dieu*, 249; «Cave in quatum potes, serve Dei, ne totus aliquando dormias», *ibid.*, 248.

11. «Exceptis enim vitiis, quibus in dormiente, cum corpore dormitante ratione, non est qui contradicat, quantum ad debitum continui profectus, nil temporis tam deperit de vita nostra, quam quod somno deputatur», *ibid.*, 248.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*, 250-51.

14. Cette phrase est inspirée du Psaume 138, 11-12. Ce passage se retrouve également dans les propos de Guigues 1er le Chartreux, comme le souligne Moulin, *La vie quotidienne des religieux au Moyen Âge*, 32.

de la nuit lumineuse traverse ainsi différentes sources relatives à la vie monastique. Figurant la présence divine durant la nuit, ce symbolisme spirituel s'incarne sur le plan concret par l'usage d'allumer une lampe dans les dortoirs monastiques[15]. La lumière de la nuit permet également de surveiller les moines, comme le montre l'activité du *circator*, rapportée par exemple par le *Coutumier de Fleury* au XI^e^ siècle. Cette fonction illustre bien la conjonction entre lumière de nuit et justesse du comportement spirituel et moral. Comparé à un «inquisiteur spirituel», il porte en effet une lumière durant la nuit afin de surveiller les dortoirs[16].

Ce n'est pas seulement aux moines que l'on conseille de rendre la nuit féconde et lumineuse sur le plan spirituel. En effet, au début du XIII^e^ siècle, un sermon *ad status* que le prédicateur de renom, Jacques de Vitry, adresse aux veuves, investit la nuit d'une valeur particulière dans la probation de la vertu[17]. Il les incite à l'employer comme une échappatoire au monde terrestre. Jacques de Vitry les encourage ainsi: «vous devez résister de manière vigoureuse (*viriliter*) aux péchés et aux tentations du diable, en demeurant dans les prières nuit et jour, en plaçant votre espérance dans le Seigneur»[18]. La mortification de la chair,

15. Comme en témoignent différentes règles et coutumiers. Cf. aussi la mention de la *Règle du Maître* à ce propos *supra*, ainsi que *La Règle de saint Benoît*, éd. et trad. Adalbert de Vogüé, Paris, Cerf, 1971, II, 22, 541. Voir Jean Verdon, «Dormir au Moyen Âge», *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 72/4 (1994), 749-59.

16. Thierry d'Amorbach, *Le coutumier de Fleury*, éd. et trad. Anselme Davril, L. Donnat in *L'abbaye de Fleury en l'an mil*, Paris, CNRS Éd., 2004, 185-89. À propos du *circator*: Moulin, *La vie quotidienne des religieux au Moyen Âge*, 223-24.

17. À propos de Jacques de Vitry et de sa collection de sermons *ad status*, nous renvoyons à: Jean Longère, *Les chanoines réguliers d'après trois prédicateurs du XIII^e^ siècle: Jacques de Vitry, Guibert de Tournai, Humbert de Romans*, in *Le monde des chanoines (XI^e^-XIV^e^ s.)*, Paris, Privat, 1988, 257-83; Jacques de Vitry, *Sermones vulgares*, éd. Jean Longère, Turnhout, Brepols, 2013; Id., *La vie et les œuvres*, in Jacques de Vitry, *Histoire occidentale*. Historia occidentalis. *Tableau de l'Occident du XIII^e^ siècle*, trad. Gaston Duchet-Suchaux, Paris, Cerf, 1997, 7-54.

18. Notre traduction. Cf. Dubois, *Former la masculinité*, 251: «Viriliter igitur resistere debetis peccatis et temptationibus diaboli in stando obsecrationibus nocte ac die, ponentes spem in domino», Jacques de Vitry, RLS 434, ms. Riant 35, fol. 114v. La fin de ce passage laisse deviner la référence à I Tim. 5, 4 («Quae autem vere vidua est, et desolata, speravit in Deum, et instat obsecrationibus, et orationibus nocte ac die»). Les sermons de la col-

à laquelle les veuves sont vivement exhortées dans ce sermon, s'exprime à travers la privation de sommeil. Cette attitude ascétique fait partie d'une lutte vigoureuse et active contre les tentations. Les veilles apparaissent en effet fréquemment à côté du jeûne comme moyens de dépasser les élans corporels, en particulier dans les conseils adressés par des clercs à l'intention des femmes[19].

Vers 1265-1270, le franciscain Jean de Galles propose de la matière à prêcher dans un vaste traité – intitulé le *Communiloquium* – dont une partie s'adresse spécifiquement aux veuves[20]. La réclusion, la macération de la chair et l'abstinence sont ici encore au cœur des conseils prodigués. À travers une citation biblique, très proche de celle de Jacques de Vitry, il incite la veuve à passer ses jours et ses nuits à prier[21]. Jean de Galles suggère aux veuves de se retirer dans un espace à l'abri du monde, soit dans une chambre à l'écart (*secretum cubiculum*) afin de prier[22]. Cette pièce hors de la vie domestique et hors du temps est un lieu concret de même que symbolique. Elle représente un espace intérieur dans lequel s'extraire du monde matériel pour rejoindre à la fois son âme, mais également les sphères célestes. En tant que temps de prière, la nuit représente ici la constance et la persévérance dans la voie vertueuse, un moment de quiétude loin du monde.

lection *ad status* de Jacques de Vitry sont indiqués selon leur numérotation (RLS) in Johannes Baptist Schneyer, *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters*, Münster, Aschendorff, 1969-1990, 11 vol.

19. Voir Caroline Bynum, *Jeûnes et festins sacrés: les femmes et la nourriture dans la spiritualité médiévale*, Paris, Cerf, 1994; Rudolph M. Bell, *L'anorexie sainte. Jeûne et mysticisme du Moyen Âge à nos jours*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1985, ch. 2, 31-77.

20. À propos de cet auteur et de son œuvre, voir Jenny Swanson, *John of Wales. A Study of the Works and Ideas of a Thirteenth-Century Friar*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

21. Jean de Galles, *Communiloquium* (in *Summa de regimine vitae humanae*), Venise, éd. Georgio Arrivabene, 1496, III, dist. 6, ch. 2, fol. 103r; 1 Timothée 5:3-13. Cf. Dubois, *Former la masculinité*, 250. À propos du vaste sujet de la spiritualité des veuves, voir notamment Cindy Carlson, Angela Jane Weisl (éd.), *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity in the Middle Ages*, Londres, Macmillan, 1999; Katherine Clark, «Purgatory, punishment, and the Discourse of Holy Widowhood in the High and Later Middle Ages», *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 16/2 (2007), 169-203; Dubois, *Former la masculinité*, 244-55.

22. Jean de Galles, *Communiloquium*, III, dist. 6, ch. 2, fol. 103r en citant Judith 8, 5.

Les nuits mystiques

Fréquemment associé à un espace d'intériorité, le motif de la nuit constitue un moyen d'exprimer une dévotion féminine personnelle, celle des saintes mystiques. Deux exemples des XIII^e^ et XIV^e^ siècles sont particulièrement révélateurs à cet égard[23]. Le récit hagiographique de la vie de Catherine de Sienne (morte en 1380) est composé par son confesseur, le dominicain Raymond de Capoue, dans les années 1385-1395[24]. Ce dernier évoque le retrait de Catherine de Sienne dans une chambre intérieure – une cellule mentale et imaginaire – comme moyen d'échapper au monde et de se consacrer à Dieu[25]. En plus d'un enfermement physique dans la demeure familiale durant ses années d'adolescence, la réclusion que choisit Catherine de Sienne est d'ordre spirituel et mobilise avec détermination la force de son esprit[26]. La solidité de cet espace mental, dans lequel elle puise sa

23. Ces exemples s'inscrivent au sein de la recherche plus vaste quant aux privations de sommeil dans les vies de mystiques du Moyen Âge que nous sommes en train d'entreprendre et qui n'est pas terminée.

24. Silvia Nocentini, «Prolegomena», in Raymond de Capoue, *Legenda maior*, éd. Silvia Nocentini, Florence, Sismel, 2013, 4.

25. Catherine de Sienne, *Œuvres complètes suivies de La vie de Catherine de Sienne par le bienheureux Raymond de Capoue son confesseur*, éd. et trad. Étienne Cartier et al., Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2019, 1404: «Nam in nullo mota ex omnibus hiis cellam sibi secretam fecit Spiritu sancto dictante in propria mente, de qua statuit propter quodcumque negotium non exire», Raymond de Capoue, *Legenda*, 150.

26. Comme le met en évidence Allison Clark Thurber, le contexte historique et social des recluses à Sienne, principalement des femmes, au moment de sa jeunesse n'est certainement pas étranger au choix de Catherine de s'enfermer dans la maison familiale, avant son entrée chez les *Mantellate*, et à cette thématique au sein de sa *Vita*. Toutefois, André Vauchez relève la mauvaise réputation des recluses depuis la fin du XIII^e^ siècle à Sienne et le déclin de cette pratique, au profit d'autres manifestations dévotionnelles. Une séparation est établie à travers un ensemble de textes normatifs fixant une limite entre pénitentes dominicaines et recluses, comme le souligne également Allison Clark Thurber. Catherine de Sienne choisira la vie de laïque consacrée en adhérant au *Mantellate*. Allison Clark Thurber, «Female Urban Reclusion in Siena at the Time of Catherine of Siena», in Carolyn Muessig et al. (éd.), *A Companion to Catherine of Siena*, Leiden, Brill, 2012, 47-72; André Vauchez, *Catherine de Sienne. Vie et passions*, Paris, Cerf, 2015, 33-34.

volonté d'affirmation grandissante, s'illustre tout au long des épisodes de privations qu'elle endure jusqu'à sa mort[27]. Les mortifications qu'elle s'impose, au sein desquelles ses veillées nocturnes occupent une place importante, lui confèrent une reconnaissance ainsi qu'un pouvoir sur le plan social et spirituel. Elles accordent à Catherine de Sienne une légitimité d'action dans la sphère politique, dont elle usera comme en témoignent les lettres qu'elle adresse aux papes et aux souverains[28]. La sainte élève l'ascèse à son paroxysme, ce qui explique d'ailleurs sa mort à un jeune âge[29]. Célèbre pour ses privations alimentaires confinant à l'extrême, notamment mises en lumière par Caroline Walker Bynum et Rudolph Bell, ses veilles ont cependant été moins étudiées. La privation de sommeil qu'elle s'inflige, allant de pair avec ses jeûnes prolongés, est pourtant spectaculaire et significative de son *imitatio Christi*.

Raymond de Capoue raconte que durant sa jeunesse, avant qu'elle n'adhère à la confrérie des *Mantellate* – les sœurs de la Pénitence de saint Dominique – Catherine de Sienne vivait chez ses parents et était sujette à leurs remontrances concernant ses mortifications. Dans la maison familiale, elle ressent le besoin de s'isoler pour se consacrer à ses activités spirituelles et pour échapper aux paroles méprisantes de son entourage[30]. À défaut de pouvoir s'écarter physiquement, puisqu'une chambre particulière lui est refusée, Raymond de Capoue précise qu'elle se constitue un refuge intérieur. En effet, dit-il: «elle se fit dans son cœur, sous l'inspiration de l'Esprit Saint, une cellule bien secrète, d'où elle résolut de ne jamais sortir pour quelque affaire exté-

27. Comme le souligne André Vauchez, *Catherine de Sienne*, 37, cette affirmation de soi ne se fait pas dans un but narcissique, mais dans une recherche de vérité sur elle-même et sur Dieu.

28. Vauchez, *Catherine de Sienne*, 37 et 139-42; Blake Beattie, «Catherine of Siena and the Papacy», in Carolyn Muessig et al. (éd.), *A Companion to Catherine of Siena*, 73-98.

29. Le récit hagiographique ne présente bien entendu pas sa mort de cette manière. À propos de cette interprétation de la mort de Catherine de Sienne, imputée à ses privations corporelles, notamment à son anorexie mentale, voir l'étude de Bell, *L'anorexie sainte*, 77, ainsi que cet ouvrage plus largement; et Jacques Maître, «Sainte Catherine de Sienne: patronne des anorexiques?», *Clio. Histoire, femmes et société*, 2 (1995), 109-32, here 114.

30. Catherine de Sienne, *Œuvres complètes*, 1404.

rieure que ce fût»[31]. Cet espace mental dans lequel elle puise ses ressources lui permet de poursuivre les austérités qu'elle inflige à son corps, notamment ses veilles nocturnes. Ces dernières sont explicitement mises en relation avec la thématique de la cellule, à la fois physique et intérieure. Ses veilles prennent explicitement place dans la chambre individuelle qu'elle obtient par la suite, grâce à l'influence paternelle. Espace propice à la prière en toute quiétude, cette chambre l'isole au point d'être présentée comme «un désert dans sa propre maison»[32] au sens érémitique. Elle reflète sa ferveur dans la poursuite de ses aspirations religieuses. Raymond de Capoue rapporte la manière dont elle occupe ses nuits qui deviennent, sous sa plume, un espace de dévotion et le terrain d'une lutte ardue contre le corps:

> Au temps où je l'ai connue, nul doute que, s'entretenant avec des gens qui l'aient comprise, elle n'ait pu parler de Dieu pendant cent jours et cent nuits, sans manger ni boire. À cela, pour elle, point de fatigue; bien plus, elle y trouvait toujours une gaieté et des forces nouvelles[33].

Par un renversement significatif, ce passage souligne l'habileté de Catherine de Sienne à surpasser son caractère humain, de manière extraordinaire, ainsi qu'à transformer sa fatigue en une énergie de dévotion et une joie de l'esprit. Son mérite est d'autant plus manifeste que le combat contre le sommeil et la fatigue constitue le plus redoutable qu'elle ait dû mener dans sa vocation ascétique. Décrite comme une «guerre du sommeil» (*bellum somni*), cette lutte s'inscrit pourtant parmi des pratiques qui malmènent son corps à l'extrême selon son hagiographe:

> En outre, dès le début, elle prolongea ses veilles jusqu'à l'heure de matines, ainsi que nous le dirons plus loin avec la grâce de Dieu. Dans la suite, elle arriva peu à peu à triompher si bien du sommeil que, pour deux jours, elle dormait à peine une demi-heure. Elle m'a dit une fois qu'en aucune lutte la victoire ne lui avait autant coûté que dans cette

31. Plus tard, une chambre privée lui sera accordée dans la demeure familiale.
32. Catherine de Sienne, *Œuvres complètes*, 1424.
33. *Ibid.*, 1412.

lutte contre le sommeil. C'est la difficulté la plus grande qu'elle ait rencontré [*sic*][34].

Matines se situant vers deux heures du matin[35], le texte suggère qu'elle ne dort pas une bonne partie de la nuit, jusqu'au moment où les communautés monastiques se réunissent pour prier, bien qu'elle n'en fasse pas partie. Un autre exemple décrit les veilles de Catherine de Sienne jusqu'à matines, depuis sa chambre dans la maison familiale, tandis que les frères Prêcheurs dorment:

> Qui pourrait dire et raconter ses veilles, ses oraisons, ses méditations et ses larmes? Elle s'était fait une règle de veiller chaque jour pendant le sommeil des frères Prêcheurs, qu'elle appelait ses frères. Puis, quand les frères sonnaient matines au second signal, et non pas avant, elle disait à son Époux: «Voici, Seigneur, que mes frères, vos serviteurs, ont dormi jusqu'à ce moment, et moi, j'ai veillé pour eux devant vous, afin que vous les préserviez de tout mal et des pièges de l'ennemi. Maintenant qu'eux-mêmes se sont levés pour vous louer, gardez-les, et moi je me reposerai un peu.» Elle étendait alors son frêle corps sur les planches, avec un morceau de bois pour oreiller[36].

Le contraste mis en évidence entre Catherine de Sienne qui parvient à veiller et les dominicains qui dorment à ce moment-là dans un autre lieu, religieux et hommes de surcroît, rehausse le caractère exceptionnel de la sainte[37]. Elle est en effet présentée

34. *Ibid.*: «Insuper vigilias in principio extendebat usque ad horam matutinalem, prout infra latius dante Deo dicetur, postmodum vero sic paulatim datum est sibi vincere sompnum, quod infra duos dies vix dormiebat dimidiam horam, nec huic etiam sompno consentiebat nisi quando ad hoc corporei langores cogebant. Dixitque mihi quandoque quod in nullius belli victoria tantum laboraverat quantum in bello sompni, nec alicubi reperit tantam difficultatem», Raymond de Capoue, *Legenda*, 158-59.

35. Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Les rythmes au Moyen Âge*, Paris, Gallimard, 2016, 258. D'autres études situent matines au lever du jour ou vers quatre heures du matin: Moulin, *La vie quotidienne des religieux au Moyen Âge*, 28; Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum, *L'histoire de l'heure. L'horlogerie et l'organisation moderne du temps*, Paris, éd. de la maison des sciences de l'homme, 1992, 31.

36. Catherine de Sienne, *Œuvres complètes*, 1424.

37. À propos de cette hiérarchie dans les comportements genrés, voir Vern Bullough, «Transvestites in the Middle Ages», *American Journal of Sociology*, 79/6 (1974), 1381-94.

par Raymond de Capoue comme supérieure, par son comportement, à ceux qui sont habituellement définis comme tels par le genre et par le statut. Évoquant l'endormissement des disciples à Gethsémani, cet épisode accroît la ressemblance de Catherine de Sienne avec le Christ qui prie, alors que ceux-ci ne parviennent pas à veiller[38]. La maîtrise et la résistance dont fait montre Catherine de Sienne est un argument en faveur d'un dépassement de son statut féminin, considéré comme inférieur autant dans le discours clérical que dans la hiérarchie religieuse. Le repos qu'elle s'accorde par la suite, par sa brièveté et par l'inconfort qui le caractérise, va de pair avec la souffrance physique qu'elle s'inflige dans sa quête de faire corps avec le Christ. Comme André Vauchez le met en lumière, cette insistance, voire cette exagération, à propos du caractère excessif de l'ascèse de la sainte correspond probablement à la volonté de Raymond de Capoue de la conformer aux 'stéréotypes' féminins de son temps en matière de spiritualité. Il s'agit par ce biais de compenser 'l'infériorité naturelle' attribuée aux femmes, dans ce discours masculin et clérical[39]. Contredisant les besoins fondamentaux primaires, ces privations éprouvantes ne sont par ailleurs possibles qu'avec l'aide divine. Le texte de Raymond de Capoue construit ainsi les arguments en faveur du caractère surnaturel de la sainte[40], dont la privation de sommeil forme un des enjeux majeurs. Raymond de Capoue dépeint en effet cette sainte figure en affirmant que toute sa vie tient du miracle[41]. Sa quête d'être maîtresse d'elle-même se réalise à travers le détachement «de toutes les sensations humaines»[42], tels la fatigue, la faim ou encore le désir sexuel.

Un autre épisode place l'ascèse relative au sommeil au cœur de la relation de pouvoir qui s'instaure entre elle et sa mère,

38. Voir par exemple Marc 14, 27-42.

39. Vauchez, *Catherine de Sienne*, 38.

40. Catherine de Sienne, *Œuvres complètes*, 1411. Il le déclare explicitement, notamment à cet endroit.

41. Catherine de Sienne, *Œuvres complètes*, 1423: «Cum tamen clara viderent non modo miracula, sed totam vitam suam fore miraculum», Raymond de Capoue, *Legenda*, 172. Au sujet de la transformation de la vie des mystiques par leurs hagiographes, voir Michel Lauwers, «Mystique», in André Vauchez (dir.), *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du Moyen Âge*, Paris, Cerf, 1997, II, 1050-51.

42. Bell, *L'anorexie sainte*, 27.

Lapa, telle que Raymond de Capoue la présente[43]. Plutôt qu'une tentative d'obliger sa fille à se nourrir, l'épisode qui révèle une opposition claire en actes de la part de Lapa envers les privations de Catherine de Sienne se cristallise autour du dormir, dans un moment qu'on peut aisément deviner être la nuit. Lapa cherche désespérément à freiner les mortifications de sa fille. Elle l'amène «de force»[44] dans sa propre chambre sur son lit à la place de l'austère planche sur laquelle la sainte s'allonge. La détermination de la mère, empreinte d'amour charnel, ne met que davantage en évidence la volonté inébranlable de Catherine de Sienne devant laquelle Lapa finit par abdiquer, en acceptant ses austérités nocturnes. Se situant après l'évocation des veilles prolongées de Catherine de Sienne, ce passage certes dit l'intention de la mère de faire dormir sa fille dans un lieu confortable, mais ne décrit pas Catherine en train de dormir. À la place, elle médite en étant allongée, s'échappant du lit lorsque sa mère, elle, s'est endormie. Deux modèles de comportement féminin, deux choix de vie, se confrontent dans cet épisode autour du lieu où passer la nuit. Il est question sinon de privation totale de sommeil, du moins d'un inconfort permettant de résister à un sommeil prolongé.

La douleur qu'engendrent les veilles nocturnes participe pour Catherine de Sienne à revendiquer une relation intime et personnelle avec le Christ, sans l'intermédiaire des saints ou des prêtres[45]. Son ascétisme lui permet alors de sortir du «statut de perpétuelle mineure»[46] dans lequel son genre la situe d'emblée, par le refus d'être épouse et mère, mais également en se hissant au-dessus de la hiérarchie ecclésiastique, instaurant toujours une tutelle masculine entre les femmes et le Christ. Telle qu'elle est narrée, la quête de Catherine de Sienne l'incite non seulement à ressembler au Christ par l'imitation, en rejouant la Passion, mais également à le rejoindre par une union physique, en se «fondant»

43. Catherine de Sienne, *Œuvres complètes*, 1415.

44. *Ibid.*: «Cum hoc etiam prospiciens quod super nudas tabulas dormiebat, secum violenter ipsam ad cameram suam trahebat, cogebatque ut secum in lecto dormiendo iaceret», Raymond de Capoue, *Legenda*, 162.

45. Bell, *L'anorexie sainte*, 26, 75; Lauwers, «Mystique», 1050.

46. Vauchez, *Catherine de Sienne*, 37.

en lui[47]. Les visions de Catherine de Sienne sont en effet emplies de descriptions sensorielles, évoquant le fait de toucher et de goûter le corps du Christ, dans une proximité corporelle exacerbée[48]. Plus encore, à travers son ascèse, notamment nocturne, la sainte transforme son corps en un «corps christique»[49], qui atteint son paroxysme lorsqu'elle reçoit les stigmates[50].

Ces épisodes de veilles s'inscrivent au sein du rapport particulier qu'entretiennent les religieux avec la nuit, en suivant l'éloge de saint Bernard pour les prières nocturnes. La nuit est pensée comme étant propice aux pratiques ascétiques et à l'union spirituelle avec le Christ, raison pour laquelle les moines prient durant ce temps[51]. Dans ce sens, comme dans le sermon de Jacques de Vitry aux veuves, la nuit rend visible la maîtrise de soi dont fait preuve Catherine de Sienne. Elle lui permet d'aller au-delà de son humanité pour se constituer un «corps spirituel»[52], tandis que son esprit est en état de «grande réceptivité»[53] aux messages divins. Hors de l'agitation de la journée, ce moment rend plus aigus le retrait du monde et la résistance contre les besoins humains. Il est révélateur de la richesse de l'intériorité de la sainte et de ses forces exceptionnelles.

L'exemple de Marie d'Oignies met encore davantage en lumière l'emploi de la nuit non pas comme moment de repos, mais d'activité spirituelle qui rehausse la sainteté. La vie de cette mystique, entre le XII^e^ et le XIII^e^ siècle, est racontée par Jacques

47. Lauwers, «Mystique», 1050.

48. Catherine de Sienne, *Œuvres complètes*; Maître, «Sainte Catherine de Sienne», 109-32.

49. Vauchez, *Catherine de Sienne*, 133.

50. *Ibid*., 135-37; Ulrike Wiethaus, «Bride of Christ: Imagery», in Margaret Schaus (éd.), *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe. An Encyclopedia*, New York, Routledge, 2006, 95; Bell, *L'anorexie sainte*, 167; Tamar Herzig, «Stigmatized Holy Women as Female Christs», in Gábor Klaniczay (dir.), *Discours sur les stigmates du Moyen Âge à l'époque contemporaine*, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2013, 151-76.

51. Moulin, *La vie quotidienne des religieux au Moyen Âge*, 30.

52. Vauchez, *Catherine de Sienne*, 37. À propos du concept de corps spirituel, voir Jérôme Baschet, «Âme et corps dans l'Occident médiéval: une dualité dynamique, entre pluralité et dualisme», *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, 112 (2000), 5-30.

53. Bretel, «L'expérience du sommeil», 152.

de Vitry. Le motif du sommeil comme perte de temps est là encore présent, mis en opposition avec le caractère 'énergique' de la sainte[54]. Contre la fuite irrémédiable du temps, la nuit constitue un moment à mettre à profit en vue de préparer la vie éternelle. Il ne s'agit pas de perdre ce temps dans le repos, mais de l'employer à des activités de l'esprit:

> Cette femme si énergique, si avisée, ne supportait pas de perdre son temps à ne rien faire – ce temps qui a tant de prix […]. Elle s'efforçait donc, dans la mesure du possible, de ne jamais passer une heure du jour ou même de la nuit à ne rien faire. De fait, la nuit, elle dormait rarement […]. Se privant de sommeil autant qu'elle le pouvait, elle servait le Seigneur en lui consacrant ses veilles – et ce avec d'autant plus de dévotion que l'absence de son entourage lui laissait une liberté et une tranquillité entières[55].

Le temps nocturne est privilégié pour les activités spirituelles justement parce que l'absence de compagnie laisse de la place au déploiement de ces occupations. Les nuits de Marie d'Oignies sont alors habitées par le chant des anges, qui lui tiennent compagnie durant ces longues heures. Active à son tour, elle chante et danse avec ces êtres célestes, dont elle se rapproche par les vertus autant que par la négation de son essence humaine:

> L'abstinence qui desséchait son corps à force de l'amaigrir, conjuguée au feu de l'amour qui l'embrasait intérieurement, avait la vertu de tenir Marie constamment en éveil. De plus, les chants suaves des esprits angéliques, avec lesquels elle passait souvent ses nuits sans sommeil, lui ôtaient toute envie de dormir, sans qu'il en résultât aucun préjudice pour sa santé[56].

54. Jacques de Vitry, *Vie de Marie d'Oignies*, trad. Jean Miniac, Arles, Actes Sud, 1997, 68.

55. *Ibid.*: «Gravem et intolerabilem temporis ociosi iacturam fortis illa prudensque mulier reputabat […] Unde summo studio sibi cavebat ne unquam aliquam diei vel noctis horam, quantum ei licebat, ociosam preteriret. Noctibus raro dormiebat […] Unde quantum poterat a somno abstinens, nocturnis vigiliis tanto devotius quanto liberius et sine aliquo circumstantium strepitu domino serviebat», Jacques de Vitry, *Vita Marie de Oegnies*, éd. Robert Burchard Constantijn Huygens, Turnhout, Brepols, 2012, 79.

56. *Ibid.*, 68-69: «[V]irtus enim abstinentie, corpus attenuando desiccans, et ignis amoris interius ardens omnem ab ea somnolentiam expellebant,

Tout comme chez Catherine de Sienne, le jeûne est ici mis en relation avec la privation de sommeil durant la nuit, donnant à Marie d'Oignies la capacité de se maintenir éveillée, en chassant d'elle toute somnolence ou envie de dormir (*ab ea somnolentiam expelleb[at]*)[57]. C'est ainsi par le corps, non pas oublié, mais surpassé à travers l'endurance de la souffrance physique, que la perfection nocturne est exprimée. Le sommeil est rangé du côté du sensoriel, de la chair à sublimer. S'en abstenir transforme alors la nuit en expérience mystique. En plus d'élever son esprit, la nuit dissipe miraculeusement sa torpeur et, au lieu de l'épuiser, la revigore. En jouant sur le contraste entre les pratiques habituelles des individus (dormir la nuit) et celles de la sainte, ce renversement est similaire à celui décrit dans la vie de Catherine de Sienne[58]. Jacques de Vitry rapporte également une activité à laquelle se consacre Marie d'Oignies durant la nuit: elle veille – dans le sens de protéger et de surveiller que revêt ce verbe – les reliques des saints de son église. En contrepartie de ses efforts nocturnes, les reliques «passaient avec elle des nuits de fête» et «lui prodiguaient un prodigieux réconfort spirituel»[59]. La nuit rend possible cette communication exceptionnelle avec le surnaturel. Au sein du récit, elle se fait moment privilégié pour accueillir les vertus de la sainte tout en révélant ses ressources intérieures. La nuit accroît le contraste entre le comportement de Marie d'Oignies, rendu d'autant plus exemplaire, et celui des autres: elle s'active pendant qu'ils dorment, ils sont absents pendant qu'elle est présente auprès des reliques[60].

Dans le récit de Jacques de Vitry, le dynamisme sans répit dont la sainte fait montre atteint son paroxysme durant son sommeil, moment d'abandon et d'inactivité par excellence. En effet, les

dulces etiam angelicorum spirituum cantus, cum quibus noctes sepe ducebat insomnes, omnem somnum ab oculis eius sine aliqua corporis molestia relegabant», *ibid.*, 79-80.

57. *Ibid.*

58. *Ibid.*

59. *Ibid.*, 70.

60. Ces comparaisons sont également mises en évidence par rapport aux femmes qui se préoccupent des vanités. Marie d'Oignies est alors décrite comme étant point par point tout le contraire de ces femmes qui seront punies après la mort, 69.

rares moments où elle dort sont mis à profit. Le Christ est le sujet exclusif de ses rêves, tandis qu'elle dort «d'un cœur aux aguets»[61]. Cette dernière expression évoque le sommeil léger que conseillait Guillaume de Saint-Thierry aux chartreux du Mont-Dieu. Elle souligne également la capacité de résistance de Marie d'Oignies aux appels du repos, ne relâchant jamais son esprit «constamment en éveil»[62], même lorsqu'elle dort. Par ailleurs, durant ces courts instants de sommeil, le Seigneur lui envoie des révélations, afin que ces moments ne «demeurent pas stériles»[63] comme le déclare Jacques de Vitry. Dormir sollicite alors l'esprit, sans lui laisser de repos. Cette activité mentale de la sainte, visitée par le Christ, est comparée aux expériences de saints masculins dans le récit. Les exemples cités la placent non seulement parmi d'illustres figures, mais l'élève de sa condition féminine vers une perfection conçue comme étant masculine dans la représentation des genres que Jacques de Vitry véhicule[64]. L'intense activité de l'esprit et du corps dont témoignent les nuits de Marie d'Oignies s'oppose à la fois à une passivité et à une paresse habituellement associées aux femmes, notamment dans la médecine des humeurs, mais est également mise en relation explicite avec la quiétude de la nuit.

Plutôt qu'un moment sombre, la nuit est synonyme d'une joie exprimée sous la forme de la fête, tandis que la gaieté était évoquée concernant Catherine de Sienne. La nuit semble ainsi lumineuse et joyeuse dans la vie de Marie d'Oignies. Isolée du monde endormi, elle est loin d'être seule et bénéficie d'une compagnie de valeur: celle des anges et des saints à travers les reliques. L'intériorité est ici mobilisée de manière active durant

61. Jacques de Vitry, *Vie de Marie d'Oignies*, 70. On reconnaît ici le verset biblique Cant. 5, 2: «Je dors mais mon cœur veille».

62. *Ibid.*, 69.

63. *Ibid.*, 71.

64. Voir à ce sujet: Bullough, «Transvestites in the Middle Ages»; Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to Woman Christ. Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature*, Philadelphie, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995; Kerstin Aspegren, *The Male Woman. A Feminine Ideal in the Early Church*, Stockholm, Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1990; Dubois, *Former la masculinité*. À propos de la vision que transmet Jacques de Vitry du mysticisme féminin, comme d'autres ecclésiastiques ayant écrit et interprété la vie de mystiques, nous renvoyons à l'article Lauwers, «Mystique», 1050.

la nuit. Ces exemples de mystiques mettent en lumière le mouvement d'intériorisation que privilégie la nuit, permettant de se rencontrer soi-même, de sonder son âme, mais également de rejoindre l'infiniment grand.

Songes prophétiques et médecine

La médecine humorale décrit également le sommeil, notamment nocturne, comme un mouvement d'intériorisation, où l'âme rentre en elle-même et les sens sont fermés au monde extérieur. Laissant une grande place aux explications médicales et naturalistes, l'encyclopédie du dominicain Vincent de Beauvais (mort en 1264) consacre un livre entier au sommeil et aux rêves. Il emprunte à la médecine gréco-arabe, en citant notamment Algazel, Avicenne ou encore Al-Farabi afin de décrire le sommeil comme une immersion à l'intérieur de soi durant laquelle les sens sont fermés. Un retrait de l'esprit de l'extérieur vers ce qui est intérieur s'opère alors, tandis que l'âme retourne vers son être profond. Pour ceux dont la conscience est pure, cette intériorisation permet un contact étroit avec le spirituel, plus ardu durant l'agitation de la journée[65].

Cette fermeture au monde extérieur rend également possible le surgissement de songes prémonitoires et de révélations divines expliqués dans le discours naturaliste. Ce dernier rejoint sur ce point les événements narrés dans la vie de Marie d'Oignies, dont les nuits sont habitées par des chants angéliques. Le *Speculum maius* de Vincent de Beauvais, comme d'autres encyclopédies du XIII[e] siècle, traite de ce sujet, mais y accorde une place particulièrement grande[66]. Leur existence et le crédit à leur accorder y

65. Vincent de Beauvais, *Speculum maius*, partie *Speculum naturale*, livre 26 dans *Speculum quadruplex sive Speculum maius*, Graz 1964-1965, 4 vol. (facsimilé de l'édition des Bénédictins de Douai de 1624). Voir à ce propos Joël Chandelier, «Le sommeil, ses causes et son origine selon les médecins arabes et leurs commentateurs latins», in Virginie Leroux et al. (dir.), *Le sommeil. Approches philosophiques et médicales de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*, Paris, Champion, 2015, 323-38.

66. Voir également les encyclopédies du XIII[e] siècle du dominicain Thomas de Cantimpré et du franciscain Barthélemy l'Anglais qui abordent

sont longuement discutés, en confrontant les théories d'Aristote à ce sujet à des auteurs chrétiens. Dans ce contexte, Vincent de Beauvais cite un auteur plus ancien, Priscien de Lydie, pour mettre en lumière le fait que ceux qui dorment sont «plus contemplatifs et plus inventifs» ou «créatifs» que ceux qui sont réveillés. Cette dernière expression «inventiores novorum» peut également s'entendre comme une aptitude à comprendre des événements futurs[67]. Il est significatif que Vincent de Beauvais remplace le mot «verorum», qu'emploie Priscien de Lydie, par «novorum», exprimant davantage ce qui est à venir. La possibilité de prédire le futur à travers les songes est en effet discutée plus loin[68]. La capacité plus grande à comprendre certaines réalités spirituelles ou à recevoir des messages divins durant la nuit est un motif récurrent dans les commentaires exégétiques du XIII^e^ siècle, dans l'hagiographie et de manière plus générale quand il est question du sommeil. L'interprétation de l'endormissement d'Adam pour lui retirer une côte comme un moment d'extase où se produit une révélation sur les mystères divins en est l'illustration[69]. L'exemple de Marie d'Oignies cité auparavant mobilise également cette représentation du sommeil.

Selon Vincent de Beauvais, la dernière phase du sommeil est particulièrement propice à l'apparition d'images annonciatrices du futur. Il s'appuie sur Avicenne afin d'affirmer cette observation[70]. Ce moment fertile pour l'activité de l'esprit est situé

également les rêves prophétiques ou prémonitoires. Thomas de Cantimpré, *Liber de natura rerum*, éd. Helmut Boese, Berlin, 1973, livre II, ch. 13, 92–94 et de Barthélemy l'Anglais, *De proprietatibus rerum*, Francfort, 1601, livre VI, ch. 24, 266–69.

67. «Spiritualia vero somniari, recordari, sine omni sensu et intelligentia phantasmatum, et dormientes quam vigilantes contemplatiores et inventiores novorum», Vincent de Beauvais, *Speculum naturale*, XXVI, 10, c. 1849; Priscien de Lydie, *Quae extant. Metaphrasis in Theophrastum et solutionum ad Chosroem liber*, éd. Ingram Bywater, Berlin, Reimer, 1886, 57.

68. «Utrum futura contingat in somnio praevidere, vel non?», Vincent de Beauvais, *Speculum naturale*, XXVI, 52, c. 1871.

69. Anne-Lydie Dubois, «Créer et recréer l'identité masculine l'identité masculine: Adam et l'idéal du 'devenir homme' au XIII^e^ siècle», in Florian Besson et al. (dir.), *Créer: créateurs, créations, créatures au Moyen Âge*, Paris, Sorbonne Université Presses, 2019, 75–92; Id., *Former la masculinité*, 103–16.

70. Vincent de Beauvais, *Speculum naturale*, XXVI, 52, c. 1871.

explicitement à la fin de la nuit, à l'approche du matin. Correspondant à la deuxième partie de la nuit, le sommeil matinal serait plus profond que celui qui suit l'endormissement et garantirait alors une plus grande véracité des songes[71]. Vincent de Beauvais fait appel à des explications physiologiques pour éclairer ce phénomène: les pensées s'arrêtent durant cette deuxième partie de la nuit et les mouvements des humeurs sont terminés. Ainsi, libéré de la lourdeur du corps et des occupations de la journée, l'esprit laisse alors se déployer la vertu imaginative, faisant apparaître des images du futur[72].

Une autre encyclopédie très diffusée au XIII^e^ siècle du franciscain Barthélemy l'Anglais, présente plusieurs chapitres dédiés au fonctionnement du sommeil et des songes. Il y explique également qu'une obstruction des sens corporels a lieu durant le sommeil, ainsi qu'un mouvement d'intériorisation[73]. Parmi ses

71. Voir à ce sujet: Yasmina Foehr-Janssens, «Songes creux et insomnies dans les récits médiévaux (Fabliaux, dits, *exempla*)», in Alain Corbellari, Jean-Yves Tilliette (éd.), *Le rêve médiéval*, Genève, Droz, 2007, 111-36; Steven Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, 99-119; Quillet, «Le songe», 82-83.

72. «Nos autem cum sanctis, et prophetis dicimus, quod somnia frequenter aliquid signant de futuris, maximeque ut dicit Avicenna quae sunt in dormitionis fine, sicut illa quae videntur in mane. Omnes enim cogitationes hac hora quiescunt, humorum motus finiti sunt, ideoque cum imaginativa non sit impedita per corpus, nec impediatur ab illis actibus animae, tunc obsequium eius quod praestata animae, melius est quam post, et ideo in talibus imaginationibus frequenter previdentur futura», Vincent de Beauvais, *Speculum* naturale, XXVI, 52, c. 1871. Cette explication exposée par Vincent de Beauvais est puisée dans la *Summa creaturis* d'Albert le Grand, voir Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*, 106.

73. «Somnus, *secundum Aristotelem*, est quies animalium virtutum cum intensione naturalium»; en faisant référence au *Liber de quantitate anima* que Barthélemy l'Anglais attribue à saint Augustin: «Somnus, inquit, est quaedam insensibilitas naturalis [...] Somnus quaedam est passio mulcebris, meatus cerebri, et vias sensuum opilans, naturalem virtutem confortans, calorem naturalem ab exterioribus ad interiora revocans. In somno enim interiora corporis caledscunt, exteriora vero frigescunt. Unde profundato calore, ligatur in somno et opilatur organum sensus communis», Barthélemy l'Anglais, *De proprietatibus rerum*, VI, 24, 266-67. Cette citation d'Aristote est également employée par Vincent de Beauvais. À propos des théories sur les rêves dans l'encyclopédie de Barthélemy l'Anglais, voir Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*, 89-92; et, plus largement, Thomas Ricklin, *Der Traum der Philosophie im 12. Jahrhundert. Traumtheorien zwischen Constantinus Africanus und*

nombreuses actions bénéfiques, le sommeil modéré augmente la chaleur naturelle du corps et renforce l'esprit. Il a aussi pour vertu d'éclairer les facultés intellectuelles (*mens clarificare*)[74]: «quand le somme est bien attempré, […] la pensée en est plus clere»[75]. Dans cet état particulier, alors, les songes produisent des 'impressions' dans l'âme du dormeur sous l'inspiration divine ou angélique[76]. Tout type de sommeil n'est toutefois pas à même d'avoir ces effets bienfaisants sur l'esprit. Comme chez Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, le sommeil modéré est ici valorisé et amplifie la faculté de compréhension de l'âme. En tant que moment permettant une longue phase de repos, la nuit potentialise le déploiement de ce sommeil léger, propice à la compréhension des mystères divins.

Conclusion

Loin d'être un moment inactif et de repos dans les sources explorées, la nuit est au contraire fortement mobilisée afin de mettre en évidence les ressources intérieures des saintes et des moines. L'activité spirituelle durant la nuit est en effet intense chez ceux dont elle révèle la valeur. Parce qu'elle demande une force de volonté hors du commun, la privation de sommeil prouve le caractère exceptionnel de celui ou celle qui la pratique. Elle montre la maîtrise de la chair comme le met en évi-

Aristoteles, Leyde, Brill, 1998; Wittmer-Butsch, *Zur Bedeutung von Schlaf und Traum im Mittelalter*.

74. «Si vero sit moderatus, […] animus confortatur, calor naturalis augetur, humores temperantur, mens clarificatur», Barthélemy l'Anglais, *De proprietatibus rerum*, VI, 24, 268.

75. Barthélemy l'Anglais, *Le grand propriétaire de toutes choses* […], trad. Jean Corbechon [1372], Paris, 1556, fol. 56r.

76. «Tales autem impressiones fiunt aliquando in animo dormientis, per divinam inspirationem, aliquando per angelicam administrationem, ut patet in Iacob», Barthélemy l'Anglais, *De proprietatibus rerum*, 272. Voir Jacques Le Goff, «Le christianisme et les rêves», in Tullio Gregory (éd.), *I sogni nel Medioevo*, 196-97; Schmitt, *Récits et images de rêves*, 553. À propos de la classification du songe de Jacob au sein de la typologie des rêves, voir Franco Morenzoni, «Rêves et visions dans le *Liber de exemplis et similitudinibus rerum* de Jean de San Gimignano», *Medieval Sermon Studies*, 59 (2015), 6-20, here 6-7.

dence le discours monastique. En contrepartie de ces efforts, les facultés de compréhension sont aiguisées et une relation privilégiée s'instaure avec Dieu. La thématique de la nuit lumineuse, joyeuse et propice aux révélations, car habitée par le divin, est récurrente dans ces représentations de nuits de veille des mystiques. Cette abstraction des sens physiques, qui laisse place aux ressources secrètes de l'esprit, est également expliquée par le discours naturaliste des encyclopédies. Celles-ci soulignent la capacité de la nuit et du sommeil à illuminer l'esprit, à activer ses facultés secrètes et la compréhension du message divin.

La privation de sommeil accroît en ce sens l'expérience individuelle de Dieu que recherchent les mystiques. La nuit permet ce moment de solitude valorisé. Elle rend possible l'*imitatio Christi* à un degré supérieur, que le jour n'autorise pas de manière aussi prononcée. Dans ce sens, la nuit revêt dans les vies des mystiques une signification particulière. Expérience personnelle de Dieu, cette représentation de la nuit rend plus évidente la conscience de soi et de son corps, à travers la souffrance endurée. Une fois cette difficulté physique dépassée, les saintes ont accès aux réalités immatérielles, par la rencontre du Christ, des saints ou des anges. Plus encore, les mystiques réveillées se 'fondent' dans le Christ dans une union mystique que la nuit rend possible par le moment hors du temps et hors du monde qu'elle offre. De manière ambivalente, alors même qu'elle se produit grâce à un détachement des sens corporels, cette expérience spirituelle est sensorielle à certains égards. Les visions nocturnes des saintes ravissent leurs sens et les rapprochent de manière physique du Christ, qu'elles le goûtent, le voient, le touchent ou qu'elles écoutent «l'harmonie suave»[77] de la voix des anges.

Cette représentation de la nuit s'inscrit dans le sens d'une dévotion privée, de la construction d'une relation intime avec Dieu[78]. Elle va de pair avec le renforcement de «la conscience de soi» dans les derniers siècles du Moyen Âge et l'encouragement pour les fidèles à explorer leur intériorité, comme incite à le faire la confession individuelle rendue obligatoire une fois par an

77. Jacques de Vitry, *Vie de Marie d'Oignies*, 69.
78. Baschet, «Âme et corps», 26-27.

en 1215[79]. Par le sens qu'elle prend dans les vies de Catherine de Sienne et de Marie d'Oignies, la nuit met en lumière, et plus encore permet de revendiquer, une relation personnelle et étroite avec le Christ[80]. Elle rend évidentes la sainteté des mystiques, la vertu des moines et les facultés intellectuelles de ceux qui font des rêves prémonitoires. Ce moment d'abstraction des sens, immersion à l'intérieur de soi et de sa conscience, est employé comme argument en faveur de la légitimité des saintes et de la véracité des rêves prophétiques. La nuit confère ainsi un pouvoir particulier à ceux qui veillent. En dehors de ces privations extrêmes, le sommeil n'est pas entièrement banni des conseils sur la vie spirituelle. Un sommeil modéré et léger, qui n'alourdit pas le corps, est également associé au caractère lumineux de la nuit, porteuse de la présence divine.

79. *Ibid.*; Jean-Claude Schmitt, «La découverte de l'individu, une fiction historiographique?», in id., *Le corps, les rites, les rêves, le temps. Essais d'anthropologie médiévale*, Paris, Gallimard, 2001, 241-62, here 253. Nous n'entrons pas ici dans le vaste débat à propos de «la découverte de l'individu» au Moyen Âge. À ce sujet, nous renvoyons à Baschet, «Âme et corps»; Caroline Bynum, «Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?», *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 31 (1980), 1-17; Barbara Rosenwein, «Y avait-il un «moi» au haut Moyen Âge?», *Revue historique*, 307 (2005), 31-52; Schmitt, «La découverte de l'individu», 241-62; Aaron Gourevitch, *La naissance de l'individu dans l'Europe médiévale*, Paris, Seuil, 1997. À propos de la confession annuelle rendue obligatoire au XIII[e] siècle, voir: Nicole Bériou, «Autour de Latran IV (1215): la naissance de la confession moderne et sa diffusion», in Groupe de la Bussière (éd.), *Pratiques de la confession. Des Pères du désert à Vatican II. Quinze études d'histoire*, Paris, Cerf, 1983, 73-92.

80. Comme les études sur la mystique médiévale l'ont mis en évidence. Voir Lauwers, «Mystique», 1050.

ABSTRACT

Anne-Lydie Dubois, *The Lights of the Medieval Night: Sleep, Dreams, and Spirituality (13th-14th Centuries)*

This article looks at night as a moment of light in medieval sources, particularly between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. Hagiographic sources recounting the lives of mystics present night as a time of intense communication with Christ, through practices of extreme ascetic vigils. In the broader hagiographic and monastic discourse, sleep deprivation is valued insofar as sleep signifies surrendering the body to the vices of the flesh and to laziness. In this sense, sleep deprivation enhances the individual experience of God that mystics seek. It makes possible the *imitatio Christi* to a greater degree than daytime would allow. The naturalist discourse of the encyclopedias also explains that this abstraction of the physical senses sharpens the secret resources of the mind. They emphasize the ability of night and sleep to enlighten the mind, activate its secret faculties, and help to understand the divine message. This representation of the night goes hand in hand with the strengthening of «self-awareness» in the last centuries of the Middle Ages, and the encouragement of the faithful to explore their inner selves, as individual confession exhorts to do.

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LIBERTIES AND SANCTITIES OF THE NIGHT

Romedio Schmitz-Esser

'EO VERO NOCTE HILTEGART…': NOCTURNAL ACTIVITIES AND THE DEAD IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Given the abundance of studies stressing the close relationship between sunlight and the agricultural activities of pre-modern European societies on the one hand, and the negative connotations of darkness in hagiography and demonology on the other, it seems obvious that no-one would like to underline a bright side to a night associated so intimately with the dead, demons, and death[1].

1. Cf. e.g. Nancy Mandeville Caciola, «'Night is conceded to the dead': Revenant Congregations in the Middle Ages», in Louise Nyholm Kallestrup and Raisa Maria Toivo (eds.), *Contesting Orthodoxy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe. Heresy, Magic and Witchcraft*, Cham, Palgrave, 2017, 17-33. Jennifer Vanessa Dobschenzki, *Von Opfern und Tätern. Gewalt im Spiegel der merowingischen Hagiographie des 7. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 2015, 79-94. Tzotcho Boiadjiev, *Die Nacht im Mittelalter*, Würzburg, Königshausen und Neumann, 2003, esp. 99-269. Deborah Youngs and Simon Harris, «Demonizing the Night in Medieval Europe: A Temporal Monstrosity?», in Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills (eds.), *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, Cardiff, University of Toronto Press, 2003, 134-54. Aline G. Hornaday, «Visitors from Another Space: The Medieval Revenant as Foreigner», in Albrecht Classen (ed.), *Meeting the Foreign in the Middle Ages*, New York/London, Routledge, 2002, 71-95. Tzotcho Boiadjiev, *Loca nocturna: Orte der Nacht*, in Jan A. Aertsen and Andreas Speer (eds.), *Raum und Raumvorstellungen im Mittelalter*, Berlin/New York, De Gruyter, 1998, 439-51, and, following Boiadjiev, Axel Rüth, *Imaginationen der Angst. Das christliche Wunderbare und das Phantastische*, Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, 2019, at 105, discussing here exempla by Caesarius of Heisterbach. Christian Livermore, *When the Dead Rise: Narratives of the Revenant, from the Middle Ages to the Present Day*, Woodbridge, Boydell & Brewer, 2021, 43. It might well be that the night only developed into a more negative time frame during late medieval discussions, as was

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This article tries to confront this view, emphasizing and outlining a more ambivalent place of the night in medieval thought and mentality[2]. There was at least one very positive nocturnal activity that must be highlighted in this discussion, although it has achieved less attention in the context of the evaluation of the night: the making, the creation, of saints. Challenged by the unanimity of research, I argue in this paper that, for medieval contemporaries, only the night offered the possibility of reorganizing the social fabric in regard to these very special dead. Consequently, my point of departure is to doubt that medieval contemporaries feared the dead in the first place. In fact, medieval European societies sought out physical closeness with their ancestors, as is obvious in many daily practices: in the establishment of churchyards in city centers[3], in the very haptic element of the cult of relics[4], and in ghost stories alike[5] – this was a soci-

shown by Frank Rexroth, *Das Milieu der Nacht. Obrigkeit und Randgruppen im spätmittelalterlichen London*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999, for London. I do thank my students, Simon Heyne, Gianni Pignone and Patrick Wintermantel, for helping me through this vast bibliography of works related to the medieval concept of night and its relation to the other world, and Aaron Vanides for his critical comments on this paper.

2. Mary W. Helms, «Before the Dawn. Monks and the Night in late Antiquity and Early Medieval Europe», *Anthropos*, 99/1 (2004), 177-92, made the point that the night played a central part in medieval monastic life, especially since it was a prime time for prayer. Nevertheless, here too the night does not seem to be an enabler or a positive, bright time of day, since Helms underlines its symbolic attachment to the dark time before Creation, thus opening yet another way of thinking about medieval perceptions of the night. Jean Verdon, *La nuit au Moyen Age*, Paris, Pluriel, 1994, already stresses some more positive sides of the night as well (esp. in his third chapter, «Dieu ou la nuit sublimée»), but mostly he underlines the negative connotations of the medieval night, too.

3. Probably the best overview on this is provided by: Michel Lauwers, *Naissance du cimetière. Lieux sacrés et terre des morts dans l'Occident médiéval*, Paris, Aubier, 2005.

4. Arnold Angenendt, *Heilige und Reliquien. Die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart*, Hamburg, C. H. Beck, 2007², 149-66. Peter Dinzelbacher, *Mentalität und Religiosität des Mittelalters*, Klagenfurt/Wien, Kitab, 2003, 124-83. On the problem of closeness, haptic qualities, and representation of relics, cf. Urte Krass, *Nah zum Leichnam. Bilder neuer Heiliger im Quattrocento*, Munich, DKV, 2012.

5. The close relationship between medieval memoria, society, and the returning dead has already been underlined by Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Les*

ety that lived with their dead. To a large extent, the returning dead are not appearances by nameless representatives of rather abstract monster categories such as zombies or vampires[6]. Mostly, these are apparitions of concrete family members, saints, and fellow Christians[7]. In this perspective, interacting with the dead at night might be an option, and you do not need to be a necromancer to do so.

«Ea vero nocte hiltegart»[8] – with these words, Gerhard of Augsburg (fl. late tenth century) opens a passage of his *Vita sancti Uodalrici*, the life of Bishop Ulrich (d. 973). The scene is set in the year 973, after the funeral procession has taken place and the bier of the saintly bishop has already been solemnly transported from the cathedral to the church of Saint Afra in Augsburg. But the funeral itself is postponed for one day, owing to the fact that the bishop of Regensburg, Wolfgang (d. 994) (himself, it is said, a man of saintly virtue), has only recently arrived and is chosen by the clergy to conduct the rites of the interment himself. But what happened during the night between the procession and the actual interment? Gerhard reports:

In this night, Hildegard, the very pious wife of the already mentioned Count Richwin [Richwin – or *riuuinus*, as the original has it – is the nephew of the deceased] arrived and brought a shirt with her, which was infused with wax. And she asked the most sublime clergymen to shroud the saintly body with care and secretly within it, so that the priestly vestments that he was dressed in should not be consumed by the earth all too quickly. She did so because he had ordered, still in his lifetime, not to bury his body in a wooden coffin, but to lay him in

revenants. Les vivants et les morts dans la société médiévale, Paris, Gallimard, 1994, e.g. in his introduction, 17-19, and in ch. VIII, 197-221.

6. On the complex medieval evidence, cf. e.g. Thomas M. Bohn, *Der Vampir. Ein europäischer Mythos*, Cologne/Weimar/Vienna, Böhlau, 2016, 31-56. Romedio Schmitz-Esser, «Leben mit dem Tod in interdisziplinärer Perspektive: Aktuelle Forschungsfelder, neue Fragen», *Beiträge zur Mittelalterarchäologie in Österreich*, 35 (2019), 13-26, here 18-20.

7. On this complex picture, cf. – other than the already-mentioned seminal book by Jean-Claude Schmitt – the ideas further outlined in: Romedio Schmitz-Esser, «The Revenge of the Dead. Feud, Law Enforcement and the Untameable», *Acta Histriae*, 25 (2017), 121-30.

8. For the full quote, see the following note.

plain earth, and to seclude him with a wooden cover. And they shrouded the saintly body with the shirt according to her wish[9].

As this was compiled during the late tenth century, Gerhard knew the saint he was writing about, and therefore the episode featuring Countess Hildegard (d. around 976) can be credited with some veracity. In the following analysis, I would like to use Gerhard's account to discuss the place of the night in medieval interactions with the dead.

There is little doubt that the night was linked by contemporaries to the dead. They do, after all, appear during the night, and this is the time when their corpses are punished or moved. Since it is none other than Pope Gregory the Great (d. 604) who tells such tales in his *Dialogi*, these ideas were common to the medieval mind[10]. Thietmar of Merseburg (d. 982) issued adamant

9. «Ea vero nocte hiltegart uxor praefati riuuini comitis quamvis nupta, tamen satis religiosa venit, camisaleque caera perfusum attulit, et sublimissimos clericos petiit, ut sacro corpori caute secreto circumdaretur, ne sacerdotalis paratura qua indutus erat cito a terra consumeretur, quia ipse adhuc vivens praecepit, ne tabulatum lignum corpori eius subposuissent, sed purae terrae imponerent, et ligneo operculo cooperirent. Qui secundum eius petitionem camisale sacro corpori circumdederunt». Gerhard von Augsburg, *Vita Sancti Uodalrici. Die älteste Lebensbeschreibung des heiligen Ulrich*, ed. by Walter Berschin and Angelika Häse, Heidelberg, 1993, 298. On this passage, cf. as well Thomas Meier, *Die Archäologie des mittelalterlichen Königsgrabes im christlichen Europa*, Stuttgart, Thorbecke Verlag, 2002, 144. Cécile Treffort, *L'église carolingienne et la mort. Christianisme, rites funéraires et pratiques commémoratives*, Lyon, Presses Universitaires Lyon, 1996, 74-75. Alwin Schultz, *Das höfische Leben zur Zeit der Minnesänger*, Leipzig, Hirzel, 1889², II, 466.

10. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, ed. by Adalbert de Vogüé and transl. by Paul Antin, Paris 1979, III, 176-84 (ch. IV, 52-56). Just to mention but one example, cf. an episode in the account of the foundation of S. Vicente monastery in Lisbon, Portugal: *Indiculum fundationis*, ed. by Sofia Seeger, in Klaus Herbers, Lenka Jiroušková and Bernhard Vogel, *Mirakelberichte des frühen und hohen Mittelalters*, Darmstadt, wbg Academics, 2005, 288-95, here 292. Cf. also Verdon, *La nuit au Moyen Âge*, 67-88 and 221-46. A nightly vision to an abbot at Florence leads to the repositioning of the Margrave Hugo of Tuscany in his grave, as Petrus Damiani tells his correspondent in a letter, written around 1060; Petrus Damiani, *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. by Kurt Reindel, Munich 1988, II, 297 (No. 68). Authors such as William of Newburgh testify that people believed that the devil helped the extremely bad to rise from their tombs during the night: «operatione, ut creditor, Sathanae, noctibus egrediebatur ex tumulo», and «Noctibus enim

warnings about the dangers of night: A priest who obstructed a liturgy held by the dead in his church at night was killed by their congregation. Thietmar concludes: «As the day belongs to the living, night is conceded to the dead»[11]. Hence, research on the medieval concept of night and the rise of the dead has noticed that nightfall was associated with a kind of disintegration of the material world, in analogy to the fading of human visual acuity in darkened environments. Thus the door to the otherworld of the dead opens; they return and their ghosts dominate the night as the living reign over the day. Such verdicts are rampant in the literature about medieval attitudes toward the night, always stressing the negative qualities of the night and their closeness to death, demons, the devil, and sin[12].

But this is not the case here with Hildegard. A great many of our medieval sources do not accentuate Thietmar's black and white picture of day and night but tend toward a decidedly ambivalent approach to the dark side of day. This is particularly the case in hagiography, underlining that the night is at least as much associated with the saints as it is with demons and the devil. According to Abbo of Fleury (d. 1004), Saint Edmund is close to his own body during day *and* night[13], and we could easily stress further examples[14]. Nightly vigils are held for the

operatione Sathanae de sepulcro egredient», William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, ed. by Hans Claude Hamilton, London 1856, II, 184 and 189 (ch. V, 23-24).

11. «Ut dies vivis, sic nox est concessa defunctis». Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon*, ed. by Robert Holtzmann, Berlin 1935, 19.

12. Cf. the quotes in n. 1.

13. «De quo constat, sicut et de aliis sanctis omnibus iam cum Christo regnantibus, quod, licet eius anima sit in caelesti gloria, non tamen per uisitationem die noctuque longe est a corporis presentia, cum quo promeruit ea quibus iam perfruitur beatae immortalitatis gaudia». Abbo of Fleury, *Life of St. Edmund from Ms Cotton Tiberius B.ii*, in *Three Lives of English Saints*, ed. by Michael Winterbottom, Toronto 1972, 65-87, here 86.

14. The choir of angels is heard during day at night close to the resting place of Saint Hubert: «Quem nos videntes et audientes ipsum lectum cum strepitu resonantem, quando circa ipsum adstantes eramus, et multi alii, qui nobis testati sunt, quando ibi oracionem facientes, tamquam in die et in nocte sancti illius chori crepitantem crebrius audierunt, et ipsi in timore et pavore conversi, non audebant diutius persistere in basilica; sed pavefacti foris egressi, dicebant: 'Numquam talia vidimus nec audivimus'». *Vita Hug-*

dead, often as early as during their transport home[15]. And, frequently, the saints interact at night. One of the eleven thousand virgins leaves her reliquary after an abbot failed to offer her the promised shrine in silver, and this happened during the night at the time of the matins prayers[16]. According to Gregory the Great, Saint Germanus (d. 576) was taken to heaven by a huge fireball, and of course this happened at night[17], and a similar

berti episcopi Traiectensis, ed. by Wilhelm Levison, MGH SS rer. Merov. 6, Hannover/Leipzig, 1913, 471-96, here 493. The intestines of Bishop Otto of Bamberg are interred in a chapel so that the monks at day and at night are reminded of his saintly lifestyle; «Et ne quid exuviis vigilantissimi pastoris devoto gregi deesset, etiam intestina eius, dum aromatibus condirentur, excisa et in urnam missa, in medio capellae Dei genitricis terrae mandata et rotundo lapide signata sunt, ut, dum fratres ad celebranda divinae servitutis munia illuc nocte dieque accurrunt, dilecti patris memoriam prae oculis habeant, et beatissimam eius animam assiduis precibus in alta coelorum sustollant». Ebbo, *Vita Ottonis episcopi Bambergensis*, ed. by Rudolf Köpke, MGH SS 12, Hannover, 1856, 822-83, here 881.

15. Here are some examples, starting with Landgrave Ludwig IV of Thuringia, who died in 1227: «Per totam autem viam reditus sui, quacumque se civitate vel oppido nocturno tempore receperunt, ossa in ecclesia collocantes, orationes ac vigilias per totam noctem a devotis et fidelibus personis fieri procuraverunt». *Cronica Reinhardsbrunnensis*, ed. by Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SS 30/1, Hannover 1896, 490-656, here 612. The monks of Souvigny hold vigils for Abbot Odilo of Cluny in 1049: «Hinc corpus eius, ut fuit lotum et aromatibus conditum ac hisdem vestibus, quibus ipse vivendo iusserat, indutum, delatum est in ecclesia et positum ante altare apostolorum Petri et Pauli, ubi maximus dolor et luctus actus est ab illis, qui excubias ante eius feretrum illa nocte peregerunt». *Epistola monachorum Silviniacensium de obitu Odilonis abbatis et notitia de electione Hugonis abbatis*, in *Iotsald von Saint-Claude: Vita des Abtes Odilo von Cluny*, ed. by Johannes Staub, MGH SS rer. Germ. 68, Hannover, 1999, 283-90, here 287-88. A similar case is provided for by the sources on the death of Archbishop Giseler of Magdeburg in the year 1004: «Delatum est corpus archiepiscopi ad sanctum Iohannem [= Kloster Berge] ibique proximam noctem dignis servatur honoribus. Postea autem die cum ad sanctum portaretur Mauritium [= Magdeburger Dom], adveniente tunc ibidem rege, ab eo omnique clero et populo suscipitur secundamque noctem diligenter custoditur». Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon*, 266.

16. Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea con le miniature dal codice Ambrosiano C 240 inf.*, ed. by Giovanni Paolo Maggioni, Florence, Sismel Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2007, II, 1210.

17. «Germani eiusdem urbis episcopi animam nocte media in globo igneo ad caelum ferri ab angelis aspexit». Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, III, 42 [ch. IV,8].

brightening of the night is accounted for Bishop Liudger of Münster (d. 809)[18]. If we trust Beda Venerabilis (d. 735), the resting place of the body of the first abbot of Wearmouth-Jarrow was disclosed by a light that miraculously illuminated the place at night[19]. In the cult of relics, too, the night is crucial, and I would like to argue that it is not only the abstract association of the night with the dead but the physical reality of night that plays a central role here. Both aspects, the realm of social associations and the reality of darkness and calm in the night, provided the framework for the medieval approach to nocturnal activities regarding the dead.

18. «In ipsa igitur exitus sui hora clementiae suae Dominus dignatus est ostendere signum. Nam Gerfridus presbiter, nepos eius et successor, cum nocte eadem una cum fratribus gratia visitandi ad illum festinus properasset, et paululum adhuc itineris remaneret, viderunt ante se lumen magnum, quasi ignem, in sublime ascendere, ac cunctas tetrae noctis illius effugasse tenebras. Et per hoc statim indicium intelligentes sancti ac venerabilis viri obitum, quod reliquum erat viae cum magna velocitate peregerunt, iamque eum defunctum invenerunt; et subtiliter requirentes, agnoverunt, quod eodem momento veri luminis assiduus speculator et amator migravit ad Dominum, quo eis fuit per lumen ostensum». Altfried, *Vita S. Liudgeri episcopi Mimigardefordensis*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS 2, Hannover, 1829, 403-19, here 414. It is not only the saints that are returning at night with fiery lights. A German chronicler recounts the appearance of a man burning like a torch on several nights of the year 1120: «Media fere nocte videbatur utriusque castelli vigilibus, non imaginarie sed vere, persona viri a muro unius progrediens, et ad alterum per totam campi interiacentis latitudinem procedens, toto corpore in modum faculae vel massae candentis exardens, quae etiam prope castellum oppositum disparuit. Haec visio non semel, sed bis vel tercio similiter apparuit». *Ekkehardi Uraugiensi chronica*, ed. by Georg Waitz, MGH SS 6, Hannover, 1844, 1-267, here 256. Cf. Christa Agnes Tuczay, «'swem er den tôt getuot, dem sûgents ûz daz warme bluot'. Wiedergänger, Blutsauger und Dracula in deutschen Texten des Mittelalters», in Julia Bertschik and Christa Agnes Tuczay (eds.), *Poetische Wiedergänger. Deutschsprachige Vampirismus-Diskurse vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, Tübingen, Francke, 2005, 61-82, here 63-64.

19. «Primus autem eiusdem monasterii abbas Petrus presbyter fuit, qui legatus Galliam missus demersus est in sinu maris, qui uocatur Amfleat, et ab incolis loci ignobili traditus sepulturae. Sed omnipotens Deus, ut qualis meriti uir fuerit demonstraret, omni nocte supra sepulchrum eius lux caelestis apparuit, donec animaduertentes uicini, qui uidebant, sanctum fuisse uirum qui ibi esset sepultus, et inuestigantes unde uel quis esset, abstulerunt corpus, et in Bononia ciuitate iuxta honorem tanto uiro congruum in ecclesia posuerunt». Beda Venerabilis, *Histoire ecclésiastique du peuple Anglais*, ed. by Michael Lapidge and transl. by Pierre Monat and Philippe Robin, Paris, Les Belles Letres, 2005, I, 260.

It is noteworthy that Gerhard characterizes Hildegard as tender and affectionate. She asks for a kind of intimacy, sorrowful for the body of the saintly bishop. There is tension here: maybe, the lay woman and her chaste uncle-in-law should not discuss such corporeal matters. In this perspective, it is with care and full intent that her actions are explicitly aimed only to preserve the garments of the saint, not his body itself. After all, she is not characterized as a saint herself, rather on the contrary: «uxor […] nupta, tamen satis religiosa» – it seems that, for our hagiographer, Hildegard is pious *although* she is married, meaning that the regular nocturnal activities associated with her marital status were definitely not positive in the eyes of our clergyman, and Gerhard cared to take such thoughts away from the reader's doubtful mind. In his view, the nocturnal request had nothing to do with dirty sex, but with intimacy in the care for the saint. And the social and physical distance to the corpse is stressed by the qualification of those who answer to her petition: «sublimissimos clericos petiit» – she asked the most sublime clergy to reply to her request. This wording underlines once more the moral distance between Hildegard, the lay woman, and the clergy of Augsburg.

Given all these layers of implication that the hagiographer tried to interlace into his textual fabric, it is astonishing that Gerhard aligned Hildegard's pious activity, aimed at the preservation of the chaste bishop, with the night. What prevented her from doing the same thing during the day? There is no need to argue for a late arrival here, since the clergy sent an envoy to the archbishop of Salzburg to perform the burial ritual for Ulrich well before the actual funeral took place, and Bishop Wolfgang (who arrived in place of the archbishop) comes late himself, leaving plenty of time for Countess Hildegard to arrive. Here, Gerhard definitely wanted to use the concept of night and all the associations it entailed. And it is not disorder or chaos that characterizes the night, as Tzotcho Boiadjiev argued. In our example, we find the place for social reconfiguration regulated by the elite, the inclusion of the dead as saints within the fabric of society[20].

20. Boiadjiev, *Die Nacht im Mittelalter*, esp. 61-66.

It is only during the night that the lay woman and the chaste bishop can become intimate with each other, since the loosening and dissolution of social barriers occurs during the night. In the Middle German tradition of the *Tagelieder*, starting in the later twelfth century, the dawn is the enemy of the lovers, still reunited in bed[21]. Represented by the rising sun and its rays, or a member of the night watch formally ending the night and heralding the start of a new day, it is exactly this quality of the night as suspender of the social order that allowed for the corporeal pleasures of the lovers. Consequently, they mourn the daybreak and wish that the night with its positive faculty of overcoming the barriers that hold society in place and the lovers apart may last much longer. In the earliest Occitan traditions, this bright side of night already appears as clear as daylight: «Dawn has broken. Oh, Mother, he comes alone! Since I walk to him, alas, night watchman, take the clarity of day as darkness», writes the poet of the *Aube bilingue* of Fleury, who might just have been a contemporary of our hagiographer, Gerhard of Augsburg[22]. The positive side of night could be celebrated, after all.

As already noted, although Hildegard and Ulrich are not lovers in the corporeal sense, their intimacy is part of Gerhard's story. After all, in a medieval tradition that culminated in the mystic accounts of corporeal reunion, embracing, or espousal with the very physical body of Christ, the bond between a believer and her savior could be viewed as a kind of love affair[23].

21. On this aspect, see the paper by Agnes Rugel in this volume.

22. Versions and translations of this short but complex text vary substantially, cf. Paul Zumthor, «Un trompe-l'oeil linguistique? Le refrain de l'aube bilingue de Fleury», *Romania*, 105 (1984), 171-92, who quotes no less than 19 versions and as many different translations, *ibid*. 182-86. I base my translation on Zumthor's versions, but there is room for interpretation on the exact meaning of the text. The basic point for our argument, though, seems to be untouched by this complex discussion: Night is somewhat positive and allowing for love, daybreak is feared by the lover.

23. «It is more than evident that the mystical love between god and the soul mirrors that between human partners, and that the relation between contemporary theological and worldly love texts is an almost exact analogy». Peter Dinzelbacher, *Structures and Origins of the Twelfth-Century 'Renaissance'*, Stuttgart, Hiersemann, 2017, 158-59. A good example is Mechthild of Magdeburg, cf. Peter Dinzelbacher, *Deutsche und niederländische Mystik des Mittelalters. Ein Studienbuch*, Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, 2012, 95-103.

But Gerhard is cautious and leaves no doubt that there is a moral distance between Hildegard and Ulrich. This is not astounding given Hildegard's gender and her being a lay person, although she is of noble birth and a direct in-law of the saint for whom she is caring. Certainly, as one of the closest female family members, special care for Ulrich's dead body was part of her role in the eyes of our writer. Nevertheless, the dead bishop is in wiser hands, so we must ask why Hildegard acts at all. Would it not have been easier to simply omit her care for her relative in the hagiographic account?

On the surface, Gerhard's account of Hildegard deviates from its author's general strategy of propagating Ulrich's sanctity. But I suggest that there are two points supporting the inclusion of the countess in the story. First, the care for the future state of the corpse is not without consequence. There is an overall ambiguity in the attitude toward the saint's body in the Middle Ages, which Gerhard mirrors here. On the one hand, he stresses the will of the deceased to have no special treatment, especially in regard to the conditions of his resting place after death. Knowing that the lack of a coffin and the placement directly in an earth pit will lead to quicker decomposition of the body, Ulrich's will underlines his humility and disregard for the body, and thus his sanctity. But then the community of the clergy of Augsburg is left with the conundrum of how to honor and preserve the body of their future saint without breaking his pious will. Breaking his will denies one of the aspects of his holiness, but a quick decay of his body does not produce another sign of sanctity, the *corpus incorruptum*, the wondrous preservation of the corpse. But medieval saints are stubborn in this regard: The seventh-century Bishop Ansbert of Rouen (d. 695) is said to have moved his head on the attempt of someone to lay a waxen shroud over his face, the corpse showing how superfluous such an attempt at protecting the dead body from decay was[24].

But what if Hildegard were to appear on the stage and ask for a mitigation of the will? She would be just the person to do so: A noblewoman, kin to Ulrich. But even then she asks only for

24. *Vita Ansberti episcopi Rotomagensis auctore qui dicitur Aigrado*, ed. by Wilhelm Levison, MGH SS rer. Merov. 5, Hannover, 1910, 613–41, here 636.

the preservation of the garments, not the body – only this curious restraint makes it possible for the clergy to accept her offer to protect the body. The same trick is used more widely by writers of the time. The above-mentioned Thietmar of Merseburg notes with some insecurity the desecration of the tomb of Charlemagne (d. 814) by Emperor Otto III (d. 1002) in Aachen. In doing so, he comments only indirectly on the state of the body of Charlemagne: Otto took a golden cross and some of the preserved garments from the tomb of his great predecessor. Thietmar chose his words carefully here: The garments were *imputribilium*, «not putrefied». Given the insecurities about the sanctity of Charlemagne in the eleventh century, Thietmar uses the same trick as Gerhard of Augsburg: Avoid saying something about the corpse; tell them about the garments instead. In this context, it might be interesting to note that the theft of vestments from the dead is among the nocturnal activities that are frequently mentioned in our sources: Burchard of Worms (d. 1025), in line with older canonical rulings, included grave robbery and especially the withdrawal of clothes amid the sacrileges he listed, and he explicitly places the scene of such thefts at nighttime[25]. When the corpse of Pope Innocent III (d. 1216) was robbed of its vestments on the bier in the cathedral of Perugia in 1216, Jacques de Vitry (d. 1240) adds that this happened during the night[26]. Although I hesitate to count this among the brightest sides of nocturnal activities, it seems that robbing the dead was very much linked to the dark hours of the day.

25. «Violasti sepulchrum, ita dico, dum aliquem videres sepelire, et in nocte infringeres sepulchrum et tolleres vestimenta eius»? Burchard von Worms, *Decretorum libri XX. Ex consiliis et orthodoxorum patrum decretis, tum etiam diversarum nationum synodis seu loci communes congesti*. Ergänzter Nachdruck der Editio princeps Köln 1548, ed. by Gérard Fransen and Theo Kölzer, Aalen, 1992, fol. 193r (ch. XIX,5).

26. «Post hoc veni in civitatem quandam que Perusium nuncupatur, in qua papam Innocentium inveni mortuum, sed nundum sepultum, quem de nocte quidam furtive vestimentis preciosis, cum quibus sci(licet speliendus) erat, spoliaverunt; corpus autem eius fere nudum et fetidum in ecclesia relinquerunt. Ego autem ecclesiam intravi et ocul(a)ta fide cognovi quam brevis sit et vana huius seculi fallax gloria». *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry (1160/70-1240), évêque de Saint-Jean-d'Acre*, ed. by Robert B. C. Huygens, Leiden, 1960, 73.

With Gerhard's account, however, a second aspect comes into play: We are looking at a text, and the text itself brings into the bright daylight what happened during the dark of night. Here, the story of Hildegard shows its full potential within the hagiographic narrative: It adds the air of directness, truthfulness, and singularity to the text, which, even in medieval times, was often seen as topical, somewhat unreliable, or at least stretching the truth. The impression given here to the reader is of the unveiling of night, the intimacy of participation in the act of burial and what it implied. In this sense, the text speaks to a clerical elite interested in the concrete act of burial. It is only indirectly addressed to laymen, as the Latin in which it is written already implies the need of an intermediary to translate it into the vernacular first.

This leads us to yet another aspect of our story: The night not only loosened social ties, it could also bind a group of agents together. The historian Knut Görich has noticed that exhumations of the saints in the course of a *translatio* – the transfer of a saint's body – were often explicitly described as being performed «clam»; that is, in secret[27]. To open a tomb, examine the bones, or inter a saint by night provided secrecy. But since it is only the texts we are taking this information from, we can see that it was a limited secrecy that – again – had more to do with intimacy and the forming of an in-group that especially cared for the body of the saint. These extraordinary dead were handled by the clergy of the church, and the night gave them the possibility to gather and to pre-visit what was left of the bones. In a twelfth-century text describing the 'elevation' of the bishops Godehard (d. 1038) and Bernward of Hildesheim (d. 1022), the reason for the nocturnal search of their tombs is explicitly stated: It is the fear of being unable to find the tombs quickly during the ceremony in front of the believers in daylight[28]. Moreover, the night

27. Cf. Knut Görich, «Otto III. öffnet das Karlsgrab in Aachen. Überlegungen zu Heiligenverehrung, Heiligsprechung und Traditionsbildung», in Gerd Althoff, Ernst Schubert (eds.), *Herrschaftsrepräsentation im ottonischen Sachsen*, Sigmaringen, Thorbecke, 1998, 381-430, esp. 389-92.

28. As to this case, see the recently published article by Esther-Luisa Schuster, «Die heimliche *inventio* der Reliquien Godehards und Bernwards von Hildesheim im 12. Jahrhundert», in Stephan Conermann, Harald Wolter

offered the opportunity to prepare the body for interment. This also included embalming, as I was able to show for several early and high medieval translations, where re-embalming is frequently mentioned. The fragrant odor and the uncorrupt state of the saints is by no means only a topical feature of hagiography but also a result of very physical and concrete measures taken in handling these corpses. The intimacy of night had the advantage that a limited group could prepare the corpse, and do so unseen by the public eye. Thus, signs of sanctity were arranged for in secrecy, and – in the case of a *translatio* – the state of the relics could be first supervised before showing the results to the public. Again, this helped in raising the correct expectations, often important to the performative side of these events. According to Donizo (d. after 1136), writing in the early eleventh century, Bishop Gottfried not only found Saint Apollonius's uncorrupt body in Brescia, but he cut its still-bleeding arm off[29]. If we are to take this account seriously, the performance of showing the extant and bleeding arm of a saint who had died eight centuries earlier seems to be the trick here. Better you made sure beforehand that such miracles were happening in front of a wider public.

This leads me to the last point, a more empathic reading of accounts of nocturnal activities. Even a little imagination suffices for this: In a medieval church, at night, only the dim, flickering light of candles illuminated the scene[30]. Opening a tomb under

von dem Knesebeck and Miriam Quiering (eds.), *Geheimnis und Verborgenes im Mittelalter. Funktion, Wirkung und Spannungsfelder*, Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, 2021, 237–53.

29. Donizone, *Vita di Matilde di Canossa*, ed. and transl. by Paolo Golinelli, Milan, Jaca Book, 2008.

30. Cf., e.g., Vera Henkelmann, *Künstliches Licht im Kontext mittelalterlicher Gebetspraxis*, in Mirko Breitenstein and Christian Schmidt (eds.), *Medialität und Praxis des Gebets*, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 2019, 431–57. Vera Henkelmann, «Künstliches Licht im mittelalterlichen Sakralraum. Eine erste Annäherung», *Liturgisches Jahrbuch*, 68/3 (2018), 173–96. Vera Henkelmann, *Spätgotische Marienleuchter. Formen, Funktionen, Bedeutungen*, Regensburg, Schnell und Steiner, 2014, and the remarks by Livermore, *When the Dead Rise*, 43. That the physical perception of the night plays a major role for its understanding has already been underlined by Helms, *Before the Dawn*. In this context, she underlines the importance of sleep deprivation as a method of monastic asceticism, *ibid*. 186–87. On this, cf. also Jerome Kroll and Bernard

these circumstances, it is not unlikely that the body under scrutiny looked fresher, livelier; that the herbs and the incense used for embalming did their trick and made the corpse smell fragrant and somewhat exotic. This disquieting light mirrored the discomfort of being in church at night, adding to the excitement and exceptionality of the scene. At the same time, the relative silence of night sharpened the senses, as medieval authors argued, and made people more susceptible to divine messages[31]. Again, it is the ambivalence that made the night work as a meeting space between the living and the dead, and once more this is not merely and straightforwardly a negative, scary occasion, nor is it only bright, light, and happy. At nighttime, intimacy, meaningfulness, and the otherworld merged into medieval daily life.

In this essay, I have underlined that the night was an ambiguous time of the day. The dead could come to life, but this was not necessarily a bad thing. Rather, it was a time when social ties loosened, allowing for a reconfiguration of order, and this could entail the making of a saint. Simultaneously, the night was a time of anxiety *and* an enabler of sanctity. Nocturnal activities could even prepare miracles, and the darkness shrouded the efforts of embalming and pre-inspecting holy bodies. At the same time, the dark of night bound together the elitist group that promoted a potential saint, and the physicality of a dimly lit church opened the possibility for a suggestive perception of events.

This said, I would like to conclude with another quotation from Gerhard of Augsburg. At the moment when Ulrich felt his life drawing to a close, he asked for a cross of ashes to be laid out on the floor of the church, allowing for him to lie himself

Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind. The Psychology of Medieval Mystics and Ascetics*, New York/London, Routledge, 2005, 75-82, and their statistical analysis of saints' lives on this behavior, *ibid.* 214-15. See also the paper by Anne-Lydie Dubois in this volume.

31. A Carthusian monk of the fifteenth century from Erfurt, Jakob von Paradies, underlined that the cessation of the disturbances of daily life at night helped in perceiving the divine messages and visions at night; Christoph Fasbender, *Von der Wiederkehr der Seelen Verstorbener. Untersuchungen zu Überlieferung und Rezeption eines Erfolgstextes Jakobs von Paradies*, Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag Winter, 2001, 58. In this, Jakob follows an old tradition, cf. Verdon, *La nuit au Moyen Âge*, 263-65.

down on it in a last gesture of humility[32]. He did so «in that very night, before dawn», and remained in this position until dawn illuminated the whole breadth of the world, as Gerhard put it[33]. Only then, when the sun had risen, did he die, thus aligning the daylight with the saint's ascension to heaven. The ambiguity of the night faded, the unambiguous bright day dawned, and the saint was created.

32. This was a widespread medieval custom, cf. Romedio Schmitz-Esser, *Der Leichnam im Mittelalter: Einbalsamierung, Verbrennung und die kulturelle Konstruktion des toten Körpers*, Ostfildern, Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2014, 596-98. The passage from Gerhard's account is an early example of the concept of the 'ascetic night,' already discussed by Craig Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire. A History of the Night in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, 75-79, for the early modern period.

33. «In illa nocte antequam aurora sextae feriae bene cognosci potuisset, asperso cinere in modum crucis, et aqua benedicta aspersa se deponi fecit, et sic iacebat usque dum aurora cunctam latitudinem orbis inluminaret». Gerhard of Augsburg, *Vita*, 290.

ABSTRACT

Romedio Schmitz-Esser, *'Eo vero nocte hiltegart…': Nocturnal Activities and the Dead in the Middle Ages*

In contrast to the traditional picture of a dark night associated to the dead, demons, and death in most medieval studies, this article argues that nighttime was more ambivalent than this. The dead themselves were not necessarily seen as negative in medieval society, and major steps in the creation of saints were directly linked to the night. Using a passage from the 10th century *Vita sancti Uodalrici* as an example, the article shows how nighttime activities helped in preparing a future saint's body for burial and (later) translation, and how gender played a part in this process. In this perspective, the night is not simply bright nor dark, but an ambiguous time of day that loosened and at the same time allowed for a reconfiguration of social ties.

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FREEDOM, FAITH, AND FORTUNE: NOCTURNALITY'S OPPORTUNITIES IN THE EARLY MODERN CARIBBEAN

Introduction

The earliest recorded sighting of the Americas by a European occurred during the late hours of the night, when Rodrigo de Triano – a sailor in the crew of Christopher Columbus – espied a glow emanating from one of the islands in the Bahamas[1]. That nocturnal moment marked the start of centuries of expansion that transformed both the Old and the New World. While recognizing the violence inherent in the colonial project, two 'positive' facets of the night can be gleaned from a historical analysis of the Caribbean, specifically in the territories governed by Britain, the Dutch Republic, and France during the long eighteenth century. The first positive component considers the lived experience of those in the region by demonstrating that the night provided space for physical and metaphorical freedom for people who existed outside the bounds of colonial norms. Enslaved Africans and African-descended people claimed freedom by nocturnal self-emancipation as they escaped from the oppression of slavery by fleeing from plantations or by starting revolts, and devotees of unsanctioned religions embraced the night as a time to practice and celebrate their faith. The second

1. Christopher Columbus, *Personal Narrative of the First Voyage of Columbus to America. From a Manuscript Recently Discovered in Spain. Translated from the Spanish*, Boston, Thomas B. Wait and Son, 1827, 32-33. Columbus retroactively claimed that he saw the island first, around 10 p.m., but de Triano's sighting at 2 a.m. was the one recognized by the rest of the crew.

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positive component is a historiographical one, as it centers the Caribbean in discussions of modern industrialization by considering the place of overnight sugar-cane refining. Round-the-clock labor on an industrial scale began with enslaved laborers on sugar plantations working throughout the night to process raw materials into salable goods, a key development of the modern capitalist economy. The facets examined here were not intrinsically connected to the night – the daytime also saw enslaved people claim their freedom, individuals practice their religion, and workers process sugarcane. I argue, however, that the night not only provided space for these activities that was unavailable during the day, but it also helped generate new expressions and identities in the colonial world.

Night studies in pre-modern European history cover a wide variety of themes, ranging from art, to labor, to policing, to religion, and to urbanity[2]. Conversely, far less attention has been paid to nocturnality in the Caribbean, despite the region's importance to the development of European power in the colonial era[3]. The system of racialized chattel slavery that undergirded the economic and social order of the early modern Caribbean transformed nightlife throughout the Atlantic World. Its clearest influence on European nocturnal sociability is apparent in the products – especially coffee and tobacco – that flourished primarily because of the labor of enslaved men, women, and children. Recognition of this relationship complicates the adulatory views of European nocturnalization that focus on opportunities granted by the expansion of the night, such as greater sociability or the creation of a public sphere, by foregrounding the ethical costs of the commodities that helped spur

2. For example, see Roger Ekirch, *At Day's Close: Night in Times Past*, New York, W. W. Norton & Co, 2005; Craig Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire: A History of the Night in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011; Darrin McMahon, «Illuminating the Enlightenment: Public Lighting Practices in the Siècle Des Lumières», *Past & Present*, 240 (2018), 119-59; Avner Wishnitzer, *As Night Falls: Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Cities after Dark*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021.

3. A notable exception is Laura Hollsten, «Night Time and Entangled Spaces on Early Modern Caribbean Sugar Plantations», *Journal of Global Slavery*, 1 (2016), 248-73.

its growth. Indeed, this realization demonstrates the interconnected nature of the early modern world by compelling scholars to consider the centrality of the colonial Caribbean in their cultural and social-historical analyses.

Freedom and Faith: Opportunities in the Night

In 1790, an advertisement written in English and French appeared for three consecutive weeks in a newspaper on the island of Grenada, the southernmost Leeward Island in the eastern Caribbean. The notice promised a reward for an enslaved man and woman who had recently fled from captivity 'dans la nuit', a detail mentioned only in the French text. Described as a couple, the «Mulatto Man, named La Pierre» and the «Negro Wench named Magdelaine» reportedly stole a large canoe in an attempt to lure other slaves to join them and set out into the Caribbean Sea[4]. Contemporary readers would know that potential freedom lay 120 kilometers to the north, where they could join the Black Caribs on Saint Vincent, or 160 kilometers to the south, where the Spanish at Trinidad and Tobago would provide asylum[5]. As their journey began in darkness, the two would have used the stars to navigate, hoping that they might reach safety before they were recaptured or they perished from lack of sustenance or exposure to the elements. Examination of early modern Caribbean newspapers and other sources reveal that such cases of nocturnal self-emancipation were common throughout the region.

La Pierre and Magdelaine's nighttime quest for freedom undermined the system of slavery, robbed the plantation of valu-

4. *St. George's Chronicle, and New Grenada Gazette* (St. George's, Grenada), September 24, October 1, October 8, 1790. *Readex: Caribbean Newspapers*, www.readex.com/products/caribbean-newspapers-series-1-1718-1876-american-antiquarian-society.

5. Julie Chun Kim, «The Caribs of St. Vincent and Indigenous Resistance during the Age of Revolutions», *Early American Studies*, 11/1, *Special Issue: Forming Nations, Reforming Empires: Atlantic Polities in the Long Eighteenth Century* (2013), 117-32; Kit Candlin, «The Connections Between Grenada and Trinidad in the Age of Fedon, 1783-1797», *Journal of Caribbean History*, 56/1 (2022), 1-23.

able labor and property, and upset the social order – all these would have been viewed as negative aspects and thus as the 'dark side of night' by authorities and slaveholders. However, this transgression against the law provided liberty for these enslaved individuals and for them served as a 'bright side of night.' This type of resistance by African-descended people against slavery, collectively referred to by scholars as 'marronage,' provides one of the greatest positive aspects of nocturnality in the early modern Caribbean. The most common way enslaved people engaged in marronage, or self-emancipation, was by running away from captivity (known as *petite marronage*). Sometimes these individuals joined Maroon communities (via *grand marronage*), which were made up of former slaves, those born in freedom, and local Indigenous peoples, and these enclaves existed wherever racialized chattel slavery predominated[6]. Owing to the fact that the demands of labor generally lessened at night (albeit with the exception of processing sugarcane), enslaved people usually had more 'free time' during these hours to pursue their own desires. Most of this time would be spent doing activities such as eating, socializing, tending to gardens, and resting. But some individuals used this modicum of nocturnal autonomy to plan and execute strategies for escape. And because darkness gave them cover from the watchful eyes of drivers and slaveholders, nocturnality afforded them a greater chance to claim freedom.

As a source base, newspapers provide a useful, if incomplete, idea of the importance of nocturnal marronage in the Caribbean. The fact that many advertisements appeared for months on end demonstrates that freedom was a real and lasting possibility, although rewards posted years after self-emancipation indicate that this remained tenuous. Yet in the 17,000 advertisements for runaway slaves in *Les Affiches Américaines* from Saint-Domingue between 1765 and 1795, only 2% (about 300) specifically refer to their escape at night[7]. However, the vast majority of these neg-

6. For an overview on marronage in the Americas see Manolo Florentino and Márcia Amantino, «Runaways and *Quilombolas* in the Americas», in David Eltis and Stanley Engerman (eds.), *AD 1420-AD 1804*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011 (Cambridge World History of Slavery, 3), 708-40.

7. «Le Marronage Dans Le Monde Atlantique: Sources Et Trajectoires de Vie», www.marronage.info/fr/corpus.php.

lected to mention any time whatsoever, and the information included was often sparing, at best. Here it takes deep reading and contextualization to examine the importance of including a mention of 'the night' as part of a runaway ad. Authorities, slaveholders, and elites feared slave revolts, and to prevent them every colony instituted night patrols to quash potential uprisings. Law codes provided justification for greater nocturnal violence, as colonists were legally allowed to kill runaways or assailants at night[8]. Boat owners were required to lock up their vessels and oars at night to help prevent escape to another island[9]. People of color – both enslaved and free – were required to carry lanterns and papers that justified their presence outside after dark[10]. By design, the structure of chattel slavery attempted to prevent self-emancipation by instituting systems of control and using dehu-

8. For example of differentiation, consider this text from Barbados: «But if any poor small Free-holder or other Person kill a Negro or other Slave by Night, out of the Road or Common Path, and stealing, or attempting to steal his Provision, Swine, or other Goods, he shall not be accountable for it». *The Laws of Barbados, Collected in One Volume, by William Rawlin, of the Middle-Temple, London, Esquire. And Now Clerk of the Assembly of the Said Island*, London, William Rawlin, 1699, 164.

9. The fear of enslaved people using boats can be seen in this letter from Matthias Beck to the Dutch West India Company board of directors from 1657: «Every evening we have to secure our boat and other small vessels with a chain, no matter how poor their condition, in order to prevent Negroes or whites from being able to make off with them». *Curaçao Papers, 1640-1665*, trans. and ed. by Charles Gehring, New York, New Netherland Research Center and the New Netherland Institute, 2011, 103. Also consider the following regulation from British Montserrat: «All Owners of Boats, or other small Vessels, shall chain them up every Night to a Tree or Post, or bring them under Guard, and take away their Oars, Sails, and Rudders, and secure them, on Penalty of 2000 *lb*. of Sugar. Whoever shall be convicted of Stealing any Boat, or other Vessel, or be aiding to the same, shall be guilty of Felony». *Acts of Assembly: Passed in the Island of Montserrat; from 1668, to 1740, inclusive*, London, John Baskett, 1740, 126.

10. A law from the island of Tortola (in the modern British Virgin Islands) exemplifies this trend: «No Owner or Possessor of Negroes or other Slaves shall permit them or either of them to go out of their respective Plantations or Homes (except such as they appoint to attend their Persons, without a Ticket signed by the Owner, Possessor, Manager, or Overseer, or some other White Person dwelling on the Estate, specifying the Time of Absence allowed the Slave or Slaves», *Copies of Several Acts for the Regulation of Slaves, Passed in the West India Islands*, S.I: s.n., 1789, 69.

manizing tactics. Despite the existence of such legislation and its enforcement by authorities, enslaved people continued to engage in marronage, and nighttime repeatedly provided them with opportune moments for escape.

Several newspaper accounts indicate that enslaved people emancipated themselves at night in small groups, sometimes with children, which demonstrates that this was both an individual and a communal activity. A 1773 advertisement from Saint-Domingue warned of seven Africans – four men and three women – who escaped the plantation of a «Mrs. Bensse» in February of 1773. Identified as Joseph, Belair, l'Africain, Théodore, Catherine, Collette, and Léonore, all were physically branded with the name of their mistress and originated from the African «nation Arada»[11]. The text reported that the group all carried billhooks and axes, cutting tools which would be used by field hands to harvest sugarcane. These implements could easily serve as weapons, which made such a group appear dangerous to anyone they encountered. On a night in May of the same year, a still larger group of Africans – ten unnamed men and one woman, all described as «new» – escaped from another plantation on Saint-Domingue. Reportedly from the Congo, they all bore country marks (a type of ritual scarification) on their «body and face», along with the brands of the slaveholder couple, Mr. and Mrs. Gestas. The advertisement stated that it was «suspected that they were hidden by other Maroons»[12]. These two examples of nocturnal marronage demonstrate that self-emancipation could be communal rather than singular, and that while not necessarily violent, such groups were perceived as a threat to travelers and

11. *Supplement Aux Affiches Américaines* (Au Cap, Saint-Domingue), March 6, 1773, 108, *Digital Library of the Caribbean*, https://dloc.com/AA00000449/00009. Philip Curtin describes the term «Arada» as «terminological imprecision», and further states that «by the late eighteenth century, the term had already extended to mean almost anyone shipped from the Bight of Benin ports». His census shows that in the 1770s there were only 17 enslaved people on Saint-Domingue described as being from Arada. Philip Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1969, 186, 193.

12. *Supplement Aux Affiches Américaines* (Au Cap, Saint-Domingue), May 19, 1773, 236, *Digital Library of the Caribbean*, «soupçonne qu'ils sont retirés par d'autres Negres marons».

the social order. Moreover, it serves to represent the practice of Maroon communities that exploited the nighttime to conceal the enslaved people who claimed their freedom – the fact that the writer of the advertisement mentioned the suspicions shows that this possibility was viewed as a real threat. Given that newspapers could contain several pages of descriptions of escaped slaves, it seems clear that enslaved people frequently and successfully engaged in marronage.

Slave revolts – the most feared type of self-emancipation – were intimately tied to the night in the minds of slaveholders, and it is true that African-descended people capitalized upon temporary hours of rest and independence to permanently claim their freedom[13]. Because of the numerical disparity between the white ruling class and the enslaved Black population, the system of chattel slavery used constant nocturnal patrols by soldiers and militia, as well as techniques of dehumanization such as racially-driven abuse and torture, to prevent uprisings. Two brief examples taken from British Barbados as well as Dutch Essequebo and Demerary (modern Guyana) demonstrate the way that nocturnality provided opportunity for self-emancipation and also informed colonial perspectives on revolts.

A letter from 1683 by an unnamed British official on Barbados (probably the governor, Richard Dutton), recounted a conspiracy that lasted a single night. He wrote that «about two a Clock in the morning [a messenger] made great knocking at my door and told me all the Leeward parts of the Island were in Armes upon an alarme which he thought was occasioned by some Negroes being nigh Rebellion». Seemingly unconcerned, the official stayed at home after sending officers to handle the issue[14]. After all, a nocturnal patrol had been put into effect to prevent «the disorderly meeting of Negroes» only six months earlier, so the

13. Other types of self-emancipation, such as the previously discussed physical escape, include purchasing one's own freedom and suicide. For more, see Graham Nessler, «'They Always Knew Her to Be Free': Emancipation and Re-Enslavement in French Santo-Domingo, 1804-1809», *Slavery and Abolition*, 33/1 (2012), 87-103; Terri Snyder, *The Power to Die: Slavery and Suicide in British North America*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2015.

14. *Extract of a Letter from Barbados, Dated 18th December 1683, Barbados*, National Archives, CO 1/53, No. 265.

island should have been safe[15]. Indeed, the following day the revolt appeared to be an entirely unremarkable event, and life returned to normal for the majority of the residents. As punishment for fomenting an unsuccessful revolt, four or five enslaved people were publicly whipped, and «an old Negro man» was burned alive – not for rebellion, but for being «insolent» to a white woman. The letter quoted a note that the rebels purportedly circulated throughout the island, and its contents showcased nocturnality's potential for freedom:

> Brothers
> Our design is discovered but not be dishartned, lett us begin the nexts Sunday about Midnight, do not lett us mind the Patroll or Companies for I understand some Brothers are in hold and if wee do not begin wee shall all be brought in trouble, and withall lose Our lives, if not then sometime next week, for wee will have it, for wee have done for our Brothers here, methinks long the time, for wee have most of all Countries of Our side, therefore bee not afraid[16].

Clearly, a Sunday night was seen as an advantageous time for revolt by enslaved people and slavers, hence the presence of armed troops. Plantations were supposed to be dormant on a Sunday, so the enslaved people would be more rested. Darkness would hide the movement and gathering of a mass of rebels, and by beginning «about Midnight» their efforts could theoretically coordinate across the island's 430 square kilometers. Despite a lack of successful self-emancipation resulting from this conspiracy, nocturnal revolts became a well-established pattern in the Caribbean.

Located in modern Guyana along the South American coast of the Caribbean, the connected colonies of Essequebo and Demerary contained large sugar plantations and, as two Dutch

15. Richard Dutton, *Instructions from Sir Richard Dutton to John Witham*, May 1, 1683, National Archives, CO 1/51, No. 104.

16. *Extract of a Letter from Barbados*. The official denied that an African-descended person wrote this text because «negroes are not able to read». But Michael Craton, a noted historian of slave resistance, argued that this note demonstrated that enslaved people used spoken and written English as a lingua franca. Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1982, 110-11.

writers put it, «the Colonies could not exist without Negroes or Slaves»[17]. One revolt in 1789 began on the rural Uitvlugt Plantation in Demerary, and the role of nocturnality can be seen in a description by Petrus Gerardus Duker, an *Advocaat Fiscaal* (a government tax lawyer or prosecutor) in Stabroek (modern Georgetown)[18]. Duker heard of the uprising and joined a group of 30 militiamen who traveled from the city to quell the revolt. At the plantation, they heard the story of a brutal assault on the main house that had happened the night before, when 30 to 40 rebels had attacked the white servants, overseer, and owner. With greater firepower, the latter two had managed to survive until the militia arrived, although the rest of the white servants perished. The militia proceeded to barricade themselves in the house, and they «feared the upcoming night». After two nights, when Duker and the other men «heard the howling of the runaways and imagined they would move on us, but they did not dare», the colonists gathered sufficient numbers to slowly put down the rebellion in the surrounding countryside by killing or capturing all the men and women involved[19].

Unlike the hardly noticeable conspiracy in Barbados, the Demerary revolt resulted in a significant threat to the colonial order, and Duker recorded a public and brutal response. Five women and one man were whipped or enchained. Twelve men were hanged, 20 were broken on the wheel, and all the executed men were beheaded, all in front of an audience of «thousands of negros on all sides»[20]. The authorities installed a regime that emphasized nocturnal control, one that compelled white colonists to continually monitor the actions of enslaved people.

17. All translations mine unless otherwise noted. *Brieven over het Bestuur der Colonien Esequebo en Demerary, Gewisseld Tusschen de Heeren Aristodemus en Sincerus*, I, Amsterdam, W. Holtrop, 1785, 5.

18. «Petrus Gerardus Duker: Profile & Legacies Summary, 1746-1837», *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, University College London, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/9432.

19. Petrus Duker, *Duplicaat-Missive van P.G. Duker te Stabroek aan de Kamer Amsterdam Betreffende een Opstand der Negerslaven in Demerary*, Inventaris van de Collectie Verspreide West-Indische Stukken, 1614-1875, Nationaal Archieef, 1.05.06.

20. *Ibid*.

For example, when Henry Bolingbroke traveled to Demerary in 1798, he told that «Negroes guilty of improper conduct in the streets, or of being out after eight o'clock of the night without a passport, are committed to the jail, where they remain until liberated by their owners, when they receive such a punishment as their fault deserves». Bolingbroke also recounted how the fear of rebellion compelled the Stabroek *militia* – which Petrus Duker had joined a decade earlier – to guard the city continuously, especially during the hours of darkness. Unfortunately for them, these soldiers succumbed to «the unhealthy night airs» (a common complaint by European writers traveling in the early modern Caribbean), and the majority of them fell ill and were unable to fulfill their duties. This forced the Dutch governor to recruit and force British residents to «patrole the streets during the night», and these men also fell ill from the effects of their «nocturnal 'burgher waght [watch]'»[21]. Such evidence indicates that the threat of nocturnal revolt directly or indirectly transformed the daily – and nightly – lives of every person in the colonies.

These examples of nocturnal self-emancipation by rebellion demonstrate that African-descended people challenged the social order and upset the rhythms of daily life in the colonial Caribbean. Although it may seem counterintuitive to connect the turmoil of early modern freedom with modern conceptions of 'positive', the evidence seen here indicates that law-breaking and violence functioned as necessary components of this «bright side of night». Nevertheless, with few exceptions (most notably the Haitian Revolution), revolts rarely led to permanent freedom for the majority of the participants[22]. Life under the regime of

21. Henry Bolingbroke, *A Voyage to the Demerary, Containing a Statistical Account of the Settlements There, and of those on the Essequebo, the Berbice, and other Contiguous Rivers of Guyana*, London, Richard Phillips, 1807, 58, 280-82. For discussion on 'unhealthy night airs' and the shift in the modern era to view them as healthy, see Peter Baldwin, «How Night Air Became Good Air, 1776-1930», *Environmental History*, 8/3 (2003), 412-29.

22. The so-called «Bois Caïman ceremony», a Vodou ritual performed on the night of 14 August 1791, was often portrayed as the beginning of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), but beginning in the 1990s historians have questioned the date, location, and authenticity of the eyewitness accounts of the event. For more see David Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2002, 81-92.

chattel slavery was certainly dark, but nocturnal self-emancipation provided an unusual bright spot for enslaved people.

Another component of freedom related to Caribbean nocturnality can be seen by considering religion, specifically in the lives of marginalized ethnic and religious groups. As with marronage, the night provided time and space for freer practice of an individual's faith and culture. Unlike in Europe or North America, historians of the Caribbean often relegate state-sponsored Christianity to the margins, particularly in the colonies held by the Protestant powers of Britain and the Dutch Republic. As Kristen Block states, «[t]he Caribbean during the age of European expansion has often been characterized as especially irreligious, a blanket assumption of scorn for Christian principles»[23]. This historiographical perspective is often overblown, and emphasis is primarily placed on economics, imperialism, or slavery, while the effects of religious practice are ignored. Yet the evidence demonstrates that African-descended people used the night to create new spiritualities that drew upon both their African heritage and their situation in the Americas. Similarly, although Catholic and Protestant contemporaries bemoaned a lack of piety among the colonial leadership and residents, some European colonists exploited this more nonchalant approach and traveled to the region to gain religious freedom or to make converts.

Scholars of the Caribbean debate how much religion and culture Africans held on to after their journey through the Middle Passage. For example, the sociologist Orlando Patterson argued that enslaved people experienced 'social death,' a process that alienated them from their birthplace and its society, and this can be interpreted to mean that they were forcibly cut off from any religious heritage[24]. Nevertheless, European colonists often

23. Kristen Block, *Ordinary Lives in the Early Caribbean: Religion, Colonial Competition, and the Politics of Profit*, Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2012, 3.

24. See Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1982, esp. 5-6. The effect of social death on enslaved Muslims in the Caribbean is particularly noticeable, especially with restrictions on its practice such as forced consumption of unclean food and drink, requirements to work on holy days, inability to pray at regular times, lack of access to the Qur'an, and a complete absence

expressed fear of African spirituality, and it seemed especially frightening at night. Consider this brief account from Hendrik van Dam, an officer of the Dutch West India Company on the island of St. Eustatius that occurred around 1702. He related that one night he was awakened from sleep by strange noises outside his house. Armed with a pistol, he rushed out to shoot any intruder. Once there, he said that he saw a «Negro making the most dangerous gestures, to cause sickness and death; then, raising his voice again, he called forth the Devils of Hell. It was all terrible to hear». The officer fired, but his overloaded pistol misfired, and the Black man escaped[25]. This episode is one of several that illustrate how Europeans supposed that Africans communed with evil spirits at night, a belief which persisted well into the latter years of the Enlightenment and decades after the end of most witch trials in Europe. Much of this perspective lacked concrete evidence, given that most colonists could not speak African languages.

Despite the ways in which Africans were cut off from their homeland, their descendants developed new spiritual traditions in the Americas, and these were intimately connected with nocturnal rituals. Obeah appeared in British territory and Vodou (sometimes referred to as Vodun or Voodoo) in French-speaking lands. Although distinct from each other, both spiritualities contained practices that were similar to those found in non-Islamic regions of Africa. Generally, these new practices were not formalized religions or ideologies with established deities or written texts. Instead, they functioned as malleable expressions that allowed practitioners to take part in the rituals of other religions,

of mosques. Additionally, the high literacy rate among Muslims was perceived as a threat of rebellion. See Sylviane Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas*, New York, University Press, 1998.

25. «makende aldaar door den Neger het vervaarlijkste gebaar, even of 'er Kranken in doods nood, en Geesten die opgestaan waren: dan weder zijn stem verhessende, of 'er Duyvels uyt de Hel voor zijn vengster stonden; alle't welke schrikkelijk om te hooren was». Hendrik van Dam, *Deductie, gedaan maken by ofte van wegen Hendrik van Dam, fiscaal van de eylanden St. Eustatius ende Zaba en habitanten van de voorsz eylanden aan de bewindhebberen van de West-Indische Compagnie* (1703), 8.

especially Christianity and Islam[26]. Their primary concerns were with protection from evil and loss of property, and as darkness hid various spiritual and physical terrors, many Africans performed their rituals during the night, just as in the instance described by the Dutchman van Dam.

Colonists viewed Obeah and Vodou as harmful superstitions that merited suppression for religious and humanitarian reasons. A report from Jamaica in 1789 described Obeah men as «pretended wizards» who deceived African-descended people of «a distempered Imagination and Credulity». The account further emphasized the hidden and nocturnal nature of Obeah, saying, «A Veil of Mystery is studiously thrown over their Incantations, to which the Midnight Hours are allotted, and every Precaution is taken to conceal them from the Knowledge and Discovery of the White People»[27]. Similarly, in his eighteenth-century history of Saint-Domingue, Moreau de Saint-Méry described Vodou as something covert, for it «never takes place except secretly, when the night casts a shadow, in a closed place and sheltered from all profane eyes». He further told of another Vodou menace of the night – the zombie – which could be used to manipulate the emotions and passions of impressionable young women[28]. European descriptions of Obeah and Vodou often sensationalized or

26. An example of this can be seen in the Spiritual Baptists, whose adherents are sometimes called «Shouters», a religious expression that originated in the late eighteenth century and despite its name combines Methodism and African religion, with many of its pastors serving as Obeah men. See Nathaniel Murrell, *Afro-Caribbean Religions: An Introduction to Their Historical, Cultural, and Sacred Traditions*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2010, 225, 238; «Spiritual Baptists», in *The Encyclopedia of Caribbean Religions*, 975-993.

27. «Jamaica», in *Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council Appointed for the Consideration of All Matters Relating to Trade and Foreign Plantations; Submitting to His Majesty's Consideration the Evidence and Information They Have Collected in Consequence of His Majesty's order in Council, Dated the 11th of February 1788, Concerning the Present State of the Trade to Africa, and Particularly the Trade in Slaves*, London, 1789.

28. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description Topographique, Physique, Civile, Politique et Historique de la Partie Française de l'Isle Saint-Domingue, Avec des Observations générales sur sa Population, sur le Caractère & les Moeurs de ses divers Habitans; sur son Climat, sa Culture, ses Productions, son Administration, &c. &c.*, Philadelphia, Chez l'Auteur, 1797, 46-47, 52.

sexualized their subjects, and they correlated the darkness of night with the race of the religious practitioners[29].

It is true that Black Jamaican oral traditions contained specific elements of nocturnality, such as warning that nighttime hoots of an owl or a howl of a dog were omens of death. A special source of fear was the «duppy», or evil spirit, which often appeared as a maimed animal. One example included the «three-footed horse», which wandered under the light of a moon and «if it meet[s] any person it blows upon him and kills him». Travelers were further warned to avoid lunar rays and remain in darkness to avoid calamity[30]. It is possible that this perspective stemmed from the fact that the light of a full moon was viewed as an obstacle to marronage and rebellion, and there are several examples of enslaved people coordinating their rebellions around the darkness of a new moon[31]. Because British authorities connected Obeah beliefs and practices to the poisoning of slaveholders, laws spread throughout the region that made its practice punishable by death[32]. Despite the dangers, Obeah and its nocturnal rituals held real benefits for African-descended people, and thus serve as an example of the 'bright side of night'. Obeah men successfully reunited people with their stolen belongings, even if its power lay in social pressure rather than transformation of the metaphysical. Perhaps more importantly, Obeah provided its practitioners with community, one that they were willing to die to maintain.

Notwithstanding crackdowns by authorities in the Caribbean that continued into the twenty-first century, Obeah and Vodou persisted and continue to be followed in the modern era. Briefly,

29. For more on the Enlightenment's racialization of the zombie (such as in Denis Diderot's *Encyclopédie*), see Sarah Lauro, *The Transatlantic Zombie: Slavery, Rebellion, and Living Death*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2015, 36.

30. «Folklore of the Negroes of Jamaica», *Folklore*, 15/1 (1904), 89-91.

31. For an example of enslaved people planning a rebellion around the phases of the moon, see Brett Rushforth, «The Gauolet Uprising of 1710: Maroons, Rebels, and the Informal Exchange Economy of a Caribbean Sugar Island», *William and Mary Quarterly*, 76/1 (2019), 83-84, 88, 100-3.

32. See Diana Paton, «Witchcraft, Poison, Law, and Atlantic Slavery», *William and Mary Quarterly*, 69/2 (2012), 235-38.

there are three ways that these largely nocturnal practices by African-descended people reveal the 'bright side of night'. First, they were a means of generating and maintaining community in an environment meant to dehumanize people of color, and practitioners capitalized on the freedom and secrecy of the night to facilitate their place in the region. Common faith and identity have often served to unite people, and, when unable to openly embrace their religion, these marginalized groups in the Caribbean turned to the night. Second, they were a means of resistance, both ideologically and practically. African-descended people maintained a sense of uniqueness that was not defined by their slave status and gave them a sense of purpose. This resistance was especially effective as the proliferation of Obeah and Vodou defied colonial authority and enslaved people managed to kill some slaveholders through the imagined and real threat of poison. Finally, they created new cultural and religious symbols, ones that remain into the present and continue to spur conversation about the importance and relevance of this history. This demonstrates that, despite the terrors of the system of chattel slavery, a generative and creative culture developed; one that did not merely attempt to maintain the traditions of the past but succeeded in establishing new expressions for the future.

Further room offered by the night for religious expression can be seen in the small Protestant sects that flourished in the Caribbean, especially from the end of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century. Unlike the state-sponsored Dutch Calvinism or Anglicanism, many of these groups were open to the involvement of lower-class whites and people of color – including the enslaved. Yet discrimination against other faiths remained, as when the Quaker preacher Joan Vokins (c. 1630-1690) arrived on Nevis one rainy night in 1680 and found to her dismay that most of the lodging houses were owned by «Irish Papists»[33]. Baptists, Methodists, Moravians, and Quakers relied upon nocturnal proselytization, as these were the hours

33. Joan Vokins, *God's Mighty Power Magnified: As Manifested and Revealed in His Faithful Handmaid JOAN VOKINS, who Departed this Life the 22d of the 5th Month, 1690, Having finished her Course, and kept the Faith*, London, Thomas Northcott, 1691, 39-41.

when missionaries could interact with enslaved people on plantations owing to the reduced demands of labor. Indeed, when a Moravian missionary couple on Tobago tried to hold a Sunday-morning service, one of their letters told that the enslaved people «did not come, but went to work because they work for themselves on Sundays». This forced the missionaries to shift their services to nighttime hours, and on one such occasion they reportedly had more than 200 people in attendance[34].

Both white and Black itinerant preachers would speak to large nighttime gatherings, often against the wishes of slaveholders. For example, George Liele (c. 1750-1820) moved to Jamaica after gaining freedom from slavery in Georgia and served as the only Baptist minister on the island. His sermons were given to a majority-Black congregation of several hundred people, twice on Sunday and twice on a weekday evening after the day's work[35]. A key benefit gained from this proselytization by African-descended people was literacy. Missionaries intended this training in reading and writing to help enslaved people learn the Bible, but the students took advantage of education to explore ways of self-advocacy, navigation of society, and even the organization of rebellion. It also gave enslaved people a chance to interact with each other socially away from the watchful eyes of masters and drivers.

One final example of religious freedom offered by nocturnality can be seen in the experience of Sephardic Jews in the Caribbean. The night plays an important role in Jewish tradition, and some of their most prominent religious holidays revolve around nocturnal rites, such as Hanukkah and Passover. Officially banned in French colonies by the *Code Noir* of 1685, Jews were some of the first European colonists in British and Dutch territory[36]. Writing about synagogues in the Anglophone world, the

34. «Account of a Visit of Br. & Sr. Montgomery on the Island of Tobago in the West Indies in Febr. March & April 1787», West Indies Papers no. 178.5, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

35. John Rippon, *The Baptist Annual Register for 1790, 1791, and Part of 1793. Including Sketches of the State of Religion Among Different Denominations of Good Men at Home and Abroad*, London, Messrs. Dilly, Button, and Thomas, 1793, 333-37.

36. The first article states, «[W]e charge all our officers to evict from our Islands all the Jews who have established their residence there, to whom, as

seventeenth-century poet Daniel Levi de Barrios spoke of «six sacred lights of Israel» – four of which were in the Caribbean[37]. Other figurative and literal illumination of the night can be seen in the city of Jodensavanne in Dutch Suriname. Celebrating Purim, the town's nightlife has been described by the scholar Aviva Ben-Ur as a «carnival-like» atmosphere that involved the entire community, including Gentiles and enslaved people, and the festival was illuminated by candles, lamps, and tapers[38]. Similarly, during the town's centennial celebration in October 1785, the synagogue sponsored a feast with hundreds of different dishes served on tables lit by more than 1,000 lanterns. More than 1,600 people came, including Dutch leaders, and they partied with dancing that began at midnight and continued into the morning[39]. Given the logistics and costs of such an event, this gathering appears similar to the nocturnal parties and lighting displays typically associated with early modern nobility and royalty, and it also demonstrates that Jews were able to be a vibrant part of Caribbean society by their sponsorship of this nightlife[40]. Further

to the declared enemies of the Christian name, we order to have left within three months from the day of the publication of these present [edicts], or face confiscation of body and property». *Le Code Noir ou recueil des reglements rendus jusqu'a present*, Paris, Prault, 1767, transl. by John Garrigus, https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/1205/2016/02/code-noir.pdf.

37. Translation by Barry Stiefel, «Experimenting with Acceptance, Caribbean-Style: Jews as Aliens in the Anglophone World», in L. H. Roper (ed.), *The Torrid Zone: Caribbean Colonization and Cultural Interaction in the Long Seventeenth Century*, Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 2018, 172. The other locations mentioned were London, England, and Madras Patân on the Indian subcontinent.

38. Aviva Ben-Ur, *Purim in the Public Eye: Leisure, Violence, and Cultural Convergence in the Dutch Atlantic*, «Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society», 20/1 (2013), 38.

39. Fred Oudschans Dentz, «Wat Er Overbleef van Het Kerkhof En de Synagoge van de Joden-Savanne in Suriname», *De West-Indische Gids*, 29 (1948), 214. Rachel Frankel adds the detail about the ball and its time, something not included in the article by Dentz. Rachel Frankel, «Antecedents and Remnants of Joensavanne: The Synagogues and Cemeteries of the First Permanent Plantation Settlement of New World Jews», in Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering (eds.), *The Jews and the Expansion of the West, 1450 to 1800*, New York, Berghahn Books, 2001, 394.

40. For more on the role of nocturnal celebrations in early modern European court life see «Princes of Darkness: the Night at Court, 1600-1750» in Koslofsky, *Evening's empire*, 91-127.

to the north in Suriname, the Jewish population in the city of Paramaribo stood out for their patronage of a flourishing social scene that valued the arts. This is evidenced by their enjoyment of concerts, by the growth of acting groups in the community, and by their building the second theater in the entirety of the Dutch Caribbean[41]. Although these activities were often segregated from their Christian neighbors, the fact that they could openly enjoy such nightlife marked the uniqueness of this space in the region. And when we consider the relative freedom of religion that was available to Jews in conjunction with examples of Obeah, Vodou, and Protestant sects, the positive aspects of nocturnality for minority populations in the Caribbean are clear.

Sugar Production: Transforming Labor's Darkness

The final component of the 'bright side of night' in the Caribbean takes a bit of a dark turn by considering the production of sugar. The plantation economy of the Caribbean grew goods for European consumers including coffee, indigo, and tobacco, but sugar drove the entire system and created the greatest profits[42]. Enslaved people planted, cultivated, harvested, and began the process of refining sugarcane in the colonies, one that was completed in European factories that were located in cities such as Amsterdam, Bristol, and Liverpool. Sugar plantations were viewed as being so valuable that the Dutch Republic believed it won the 'trade' with England during the Third Anglo-

41. There are several advertisements in the city's newspaper for concerts at the Jewish theater in the late 1780s. See, *De Surinaamsche nieuwsvertelder* (Paramaribo, Surinam), June 19, 26; September 25; October 23, November 13, 20, 1788; February 19, March 5, 1789, *Caribbean Newspapers*. The theater was probably built in the late 1770s or early 1780s, fairly soon after the *Hollandsche schouwburg,* an establishment which banned Jews and people of color from attending. See Julien Wolbers, *Geschiedenis van Suriname*, H. de Hoogh, 1861, 316–17.

42. For more on sugar's importance in the early modern economy as well as its relation to slavery, see Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*, Penguin, New York, 1985; David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2000, especially chap. 8, 193–223.

Dutch War, which saw them gain Suriname at the expense of New Amsterdam[43]. Saint-Domingue became known as France's «Pearl of the Antilles», and the wealth generated by its sugar helped keep the French war machine afloat despite its being stretched across multiple fronts[44]. In the colonies sugar sometimes functioned as currency, with transactions and government fines based upon various weights of sugar[45]. Because of the centrality of sugar to the Caribbean story, it is necessary to discuss its place in the night.

Thanks in part to the regular climate, harvesting sugarcane could occur throughout the year – although it was usually limited to about six months at a time – and planters figured out how to maintain a fairly constant crop rotation to ensure that profits and production were regular and not confined to a short growing season. For a study of the night, it is significant that time pressure shaped the harvest process: once the sugarcane was cut, the sweet juice inside would turn rancid in a few hours, especially in the hot and humid conditions that were necessary for its growth. To stop this process there were several steps. First, the juice needed to be isolated from the woody stalks. This was done via the use of roller mills powered by animals, people, or water that crushed the cane for maximal extraction. Second, the raw product needed to be placed in large boiling cauldrons, a process which ended the rotting process and allowed the resultant syrup to be cooled and then placed in large barrels to be shipped to Europe for further refining[46].

Because of the time pressure created by the deterioration process, workers were forced to labor throughout the night to

43. L. H. Roper, «The Fall of New Netherland and Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Imperial Formation, 1654-1676», *The New England Quarterly*, 87/4 (2014), 672.

44. An overview of the French sugar industry centered in Saint-Domingue can be seen in Robert Stein, *The French Sugar Business in the Eighteenth Century*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1988.

45. For example, in Montserrat the unwarranted firing of a gun «after Eight of the Clock at Night» was legally punishable by a fine of 20, 30, or even 300 pounds of sugar, depending upon one's authority. *Montserrat Code of Laws: From 1668, to 1788*, London, Printed by Robert Hindmarsh for J. Anderson, 1790, 25-26, 95.

46. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 47-50.

keep the entire crop from being lost, and sources regularly describe how the boiler fires were maintained day and night[47]. This was dangerous, hot, and grueling work. Additionally, the enslaved people who performed this work usually did so after a full day of labor, which further fatigued them and made them susceptible to job-related injuries. William Dickson, an English abolitionist of the late eighteenth century, wrote of enslaved laborers during harvesttime that «they have but four hours sleep out of the twenty-four. They work in the field all day, then boil sugar at night»[48]. Building upon this, the French priest Jean-Baptiste Labat described how enslaved women in the early eighteenth century worked the roller mills in Martinique, saying that «[e]xhausted with the day's work and sleepiness, they fall asleep while pushing the canes, and leaning over the workbench while still holding the canes, they involuntarily follow them and are crushed before they can be rescued»[49]. According to contempo-

47. The eighteenth-century writer Thomas Tryon described the process of sugar refining as well as the length of the harvest season, saying, «the Labour [is] so constant, that Servants night and day stand in great Boyling Houses, where there are Six or Seven large Coppers or Furnaces kept perpetually Boyling; and from which with heavy Ladles and Scummers, they Skim off the excrementitious parts of the Canes, till it comes to its perfection and cleanness while others, as Stoakers, Broil as it were alive, in manageing the Fires; and one part is constantly at the Mill, to supply it with Canes, night and day, during the whole Season of making Sugar, which is about Six Months in the year». Thomas Tryon, *Tryon's Letters, Domestick and Foreign, to Several Persons of Quality, Occasionally Distributed in Subjects, Viz. Philosophical, Theological, and Moral*, London, Printed for George Conyers and Elizabeth Harris, 1700, 201-2.

48. William Dickson, *Letters on Slavery, by William Dickson, Formerly Private Secretary to the Late Hon. Edward Hay, Governor of Barbadoes. To Which are Added, Addresses to the Whites, and to the Free Negroes of Barbadoes; and Accounts of Some Negroes Eminent for their Virtues and Abilities*, London, J. Phillips, 1789.

49. «quand accablées du travail de la journée & du sommeil, ells s'endorment en poussant les Cannes, & se penchant sur l'établi elle suivent involontairement les Cannes qu'elles tiennent en leurs mains, ells se trouvent prises & écrasées avant qu'on puisse les secourir». Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Nouveau voyage aux isles de l'Amérique, contenant l'histoire naturelle de ces pays, l'origine, les moeurs, la religion & le gouvernement des habitans anciens & modernes. Les guerres & les événemens singuliers qui y sont arrivez pendant le long séjour que l'auteur y a fait*, III, Paris, Chez Pierre-François Giffart, 1722, 205-6.

raries, the only way to save such victims from being crushed to death was by amputating the affected limb, and sometimes would-be rescuers would be also dragged to their demise[50]. Defenders of slavery such as Hector Macneill argued that such work was no more difficult than that seen in Europe, and tried to argue that «every person takes his *spell* or watch in the boiling house or mill one night in three», and confusingly continued that «no Negro is compelled to labour after it is dark», despite going on to describe the music that accompanied such nocturnal work[51]. Little evidence of such amelioration exists, and it is clear that plantation owners took few safety precautions for the welfare of these workers. The fact that harvesttime lasted for months at a time indicates that perpetual exhaustion from diurnal and nocturnal labor, as well as the injuries that resulted from this work, would have been normal for the men and women who processed the sugarcane.

Providing light for the refining process by means of artificial illumination, that is, literally making sugar production 'bright', lagged behind the needs of the workers. Many boiling houses, especially in early iterations where the boiler fires were inside the building, were filled with the «smoaky sugars boil» that made it difficult to see[52]. Some of this was due to the fuel used to power the lamps, such as from the «Oil-Nut Tree» (referred to today as castor oil), which was derived from a pounding, boiling, and skimming process[53]. The infamous Jamaican chronicler

50. Bernard Moitt, *Women and Slavery in the French Antilles, 1635-1848*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2001, 50-51.

51. Hector Macneill, *Observations on the Treatment of the Negroes, in the Island of Jamaica, Including Some Account of their Temper and Character, with Remarks on the Importation of Slaves from the Coast of Africa*, London, Printed for G. G. J. and J. Robinson, 1788, 5-6. Regarding the music he says, «During the whole night, labour is accompanied by song. The young girls, in particular, sing in parts, and as a good ear and an African are inseparable; to the lover of music and humanity, their music is a double feast. Often have I enjoyed it at the expence of rest; and often has it smooth my pillow, and lulled me into slumbers».

52. *Jamaica, a Poem in Three Parts. Written in that Island, in the Year MDCCLXXVI. To Which is Annexed, A Poetical Epistle from the Author in that Island to a Friend in England*, London, Printed for William Nicholl, 1776, 32.

53. Patrick Browne, *The Civil and Natural History of Jamaica. In Three Parts*, London, Printed by T. Osborne and J. Shipton, 1756, 350.

Edward Long referred to at least three different plants on the island that were processed by locals as lamp fuel, in addition to lamp oil imported from North America and Europe[54]. In comparison with older technology, the invention of the Argand lamp in the 1780s and its rapid proliferation in the Americas helped to provide more illumination inside mills and boiler houses. Nevertheless, based upon an early-nineteenth-century text from Thomas Roughley, a Jamaican planter, the lamps that were hung inside production facilities before 1800 were dim, with many of them only providing a single flame to illuminate the entire space, and he proposed using newer and brighter lights hung high in the center of the boiling house[55]. Jeremy Zallen demonstrates that these lamps were fueled largely by spermaceti or whale oil imported from the North Atlantic, for the Caribbean served as New England's largest customer base. He argues that «the boiling-house lamps of the West Indies were ruling-class instruments of power and death», and the evidence seen above of their use in sugar production bears this out, for the lamps helped facilitate the continuous production of wealth for sugar plantation owners and also served to weakly light the mills where enslaved people died as they worked[56]. Despite technological improvements there still existed a significant lack of light in mills and boiling houses, and they remained dangerous places for laborers.

This grim example of nocturnal sugar production makes it difficult to see the 'bright side of night' until we place it within a broader historiographical perspective, one that puts the Caribbean in a place of central importance, just as it was in the

54. Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica, or, General Survey of the Antient and Modern State of the Island: With Reflections On Its Situation, Settlements, Inhabitants, Climate, Products, Commerce, Laws, and Government*, vol. 1-3, London, T. Lownudes, 1774. He refers to Gum-Tree *Sapium* (168, 728), Nhandiroba (also called *acaricobo, ambuyaembo*, and *caapeba*) (419), Lamp Oil (541, 551), and *Fevillea* (718).

55. Thomas Roughley, *The Jamaica Planter's Guide; or, A System for Planting and Managing a Sugar Estate, or Other Plantations in that island, and throughout the British West Indies in General. Illustrated with Interesting Anecdotes*, London, Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1823, 199-200.

56. Jeremy Zallen, *American Lucifers: The Dark History of Artificial Light, 1750-1865*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2019, 18, 28.

early modern economy. Eric Williams, the twentieth-century Trinidadian historian, postulated that the plantation system of the early modern Caribbean financed the Industrial Revolution that took over western Europe in the nineteenth century, and that it may also have served as a model for its successor[57]. If we focus just on the use of nocturnal labor, this influence seems plausible. Factory owners in Europe realized that their main capital investments – the buildings and the machinery – could work both day and night. Thus, hiring (rather than owning) a nocturnal work force that kept production going continuously would optimize their profits. Indeed, Karl Marx argued that «[t]o appropriate labour during all the 24 hours of the day is, therefore, the inherent tendency of capitalist production», and he decried what he called the «vampire thirst for the living blood of labor»[58]. If we consider the consistent application of nocturnal labor as necessary for industry and capitalism, then the example of the Caribbean sugar industry should be at the forefront of our conversations on the development of capitalism and the Industrial Revolution. This helps move us from a historiographical conversation that is primarily Eurocentric and modern and pushes us to consider the history of capitalism in a global and pre-modern context[59]. Additionally, this shift offers considerable opportunities for historians to explore the intersections between colonialism and the night.

57. See Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1994, especially ix, 169-77, 190-91. Williams further argues that one of the primary motivations for the abolition of slavery was the realization that it was more profitable to hire cheap labor – which did not need to be clothed, fed, or housed – than to own slaves.

58. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique Analysis of Capitalist Production*, I, trans. Samuel Moore, Edward Aveling and Swan Sonnenschein, London, Lowrey, & Co., 1887, 241.

59. For more conversation on this topic, see Jean Batou, «From Plantation to Plant: Slavery, the Slave Trade, and the Industrial Revolution», in Peter Reill and Balázs Szelényi (eds.), *Cores, Peripheries, and Globalization: Essays in Honor of Ivan T. Berend*, New York, Central European Press, 2011, 43-62; and Hilary Beckles, «Capitalism and Slavery: The Debate over Eric Williams», *Social and Economic Studies*, 33/4 (1984), 171-89.

Conclusion

These two sections on nocturnal freedom and sugar production have provided a brief glimpse into the rich subject matter available when studying the role of the night in the early modern Caribbean. And as the existence of the conference that prompted this chapter indicates, there is a growth of exciting scholarship on this subject that is not constrained by an era or a place. There is much more that could be discussed regarding the positives of nightlife in the Caribbean, ranging from nocturnal smuggling between islands and the coastlines of the Americas, to the benefits of nighttime travel in and out of ports in the Lesser Antilles, to the opportunities for social equality offered by attending the theater in Martinique and Saint-Domingue. However, given the role of colonialism and race-based chattel slavery in the region, it is impossible to avoid conversations about freedom and order, and the reality of the way they were often in conflict. Yet, as we look for the positives, we can see that the night provided people on the margins with unique opportunities often not afforded during the day: time to develop relationships with small and large communities, occasions for learning and self-emancipation, and space to foster the creation of new cultures and expressions. Put into dialogue with each other and with the historiography, they allow us to see the 'bright side of night'.

ABSTRACT

Adrian van der Velde, *Freedom, Faith, and Fortune: Nocturnality's Opportunities in the Early Modern Caribbean*

Via a focus on nocturnality, this article considers the opportunities afforded to marginalized populations of the long-eighteenth century in the Caribbean territories of Britain, the Dutch Republic, and France. While acknowledging the violence inherent to colonialism, this analysis uncovers two positive aspects of the night in the Caribbean. First, it reveals how the night became a realm of physical and metaphorical freedom, especially for enslaved people and ethnic and religious minorities. It shows how enslaved Africans and their descendants liberated themselves via nocturnal self-emancipation. It also considers the possibilities of nighttime religious expression for Jews, Christian sects, and enslaved people. Second, it centers the colonial Caribbean in historiographical conversations about the Industrial Revolution and capitalism by examining nocturnal sugar production. Sugar processing necessitated 24-hour labor, and this not only led to great wealth for the metropole, but it also provided a model for around-the-clock work that could be exploited by factory owners. Using print sources such as newspapers and popular books, as well as archival sources, this article demonstrates the interconnected nature of the early modern world.

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LIGHTING UP THE DARK

Maria Weber

BEFORE THE BRIGHT NIGHT? METHODS AND MATERIALITIES OF LIGHTING IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

In July 1784, as the British House of Lords heatedly discussed the imposition of duties on tallow candles, Earl Ferrers rose from his seat, took the floor and brought into consideration the fact that «[c]andles were one of the necessaries of life», and according to this «lower classes must therefore have them as well as those of opulence»[1]; Sir William Pulteney – member of the House of Commons – agreed and vigorously objected to the calculations presented by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pointing out that the «number of candles used in a poor man's family» must be very high, «as many of them worked half their time by candle-light, and from the nature of their business used great quantities»[2]. Thus, he and several other deputies insisted that an increase in taxes on candles should «affect the poor as little as possible»[3].

With these brief but telling statements, eighteenth-century politicians prefigured predominantly two things: First, the debate indicates that levying duties on goods of 'mass consumption'[4], such as tallow candles, to increase public finance, particularly after the American War of Independence, had already become «a [common and, M.W.] major pillar of the state»[5] during the early

1. Whitehall Evening Post, Nr. 5739, 3.

2. Chelmsford Chronicle, No. 295, 2, reporting the sessions in the House of Commons.

3. *Ibid.*

4. William Ashworth, *Customs and Excise. Trade, Production, and Consumption in England, 1640-1845*, Oxford, University Press Oxford 2003, 332.

5. Marjolein t'Hart, Pepijn Brandon and Rafael Torres Sánchez, «Introduction: Maximizing Revenues, Minimizing political Costs – Challenges in

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modern period. The privilege of collecting taxes was fundamental to early modern state-building processes as it served as a symbol of authority and ensured that government could «meet domestic challenges»[6]. Raising the amount of fiscal revenue relied on a complex infrastructure, political contexts, administrative strategies, constant management, and a growing ambivalence between 'the state' and 'the private' – a framework that sparked debates and thus had to be carefully designed and coordinated[7]. In particular, the reinvigorated discussions on a just and socially balanced taxation following and accompanying the candle tax debate indicate once again that the eighteenth-century fiscal state had to consider arguments for and against taxation against the backdrop of changing social realities, consumption practices, and fiscal requirements[8].

Second, the statements quoted shed light on the enormous importance assigned to artificial lighting materials in pre-modern societies. Candles were essential and «basic commodit[ies]» of everyday pre-modern life in order to conduct business and illuminate dark rooms, streets, people, and buildings – whether one was a noble member of the House of Lords or a servant in the countryside[9].

The following section aims to disentangle a history of dark nights, focusing particularly on private methods and materialities

the History of Public Finance of the Early Modern Period», *Financial History Review*, 25/1 (2018), 1-18, 6.

6. Patrick K. O'Brien/Philip A. Hunt, *England, 1485-1815*, in Richard Bonney, *The Rise of the Fiscal State in Europe, c. 1200-1815*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999, 53-100, 100.

7. D'Maris Coffman, *Excise Taxation and the Origins of Public Debt*, Basingstoke/New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

8. Henry Yeomans, «Taxation, State Formation, and Governmentality: The Historical Development of Alcohol Excise Duties in England and Wales», *Social Science History*, 42 (2018), 269-93, here 272-78.

9. Avner Wishnitzer, *As Night Falls. Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Cities after Dark*, Cambridge, 2021, 145; this statement contradicts John Crowley's view, which, according to the empirical evidence, evaluates the usage of artificial illumination in poorer households as «optional rather than a crucial part of people's daily lives», in John Crowley, *The Invention of Comfort. Sensibilities and Design in Early Modern Britain and Early America*, Baltimore/London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, 115.

of lighting in eighteenth-century Europe among poorer households. Analyzing the line of argumentation in the parliamentary debates (House of Commons and House of Lords) and newspaper reports documenting the discussions on whether to increase duties on candles in 1784 not only provides insights into a late-eighteenth-century discourse on candle consumption, but enables us to identify socially embedded patterns of lighting practices. This allows us to pinpoint the key elements associated with private, meaning domestic, lighting practices and materialities. By examining these practices, the article attempts to offer a more nuanced view of «a nearly infinitive» but historically largely neglected «variety of fuel sources and appliances for lighting»[10] in the eighteenth century.

Lighting – An Obscure History in Night Studies?

Even though early modern nights have attracted considerable attention in recent decades, private lighting practices largely remain unexplored[11]. This is even more surprising as Craig Koslofsky in particular has demonstrated that the more people expanded daytime activities into the dark hours of the night, the higher grew the dependency on lamps and candles. Associated with this process, and focusing mainly on the late seventeenth and eighteenth century, Koslofsky coined this formation of a night society «nocturnalization, defined as the ongoing expansion of the legitimate social and symbolic uses of the night»[12]. Increased nighttime activity before the advent of gas lighting required other forms of artificial illumination: theaters, coffee houses, courtly evening events, and streets had to be illuminated by wax-, oil-, or tallow-fueled candles, lanterns, sconces, or torches, creating special sensory experiences and atmospheres oscillating between bright and dark.

10. *Ibid.*, 111.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Craig Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire. A History of the Night in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2011, 2.

Building on and expanding the concept of nocturnalization, Darrin McMahon describes a «new regime of light»[13]. He emphasizes that the increased need of light was inextricably bound to enlightened ideas of the eighteenth century not only in symbolic or metaphoric terms, with light characterized as a source of truth and guiding philosophical principle. Light, McMahon summarizes, became an «object of intense scientific scrutiny» to explore its physical characteristics, describe its capacities in mathematic-theoretical formulas, and make observations of how to «accumulate lights» to practically use it for different daily purposes such as streetlighting or for lighthouses[14]. McMahon succinctly encapsulates both strands, the metaphoric and the technical, as follows: «For surely illumination was the exemplary social practice of the age [...]. In Enlightenment practices of illumination, medium and message were one»[15].

In view of this and the fact that the introduction of streetlighting has been documented by pre-modern authorities and bureaucracy in sufficient density (as opposed to private lighting practices), a vast number of studies have explored the technical developments and uses of lights for public purposes, particularly focusing on streetlighting[16]. Beginning with Wolfgang Schivelbusch in 1987, who characterized urban lighting methods as «symbols of the new state»[17], and continuing with recent literature, most studies address the eighteenth-century introduction and implementation of streetlighting – albeit from different angles and perspectives – as a certain means of power, an opportunity of reflecting courtly representation, and a way of preventing crime[18]. The ongoing advancements in lighting technologies,

13. Darrin McMahon, «Illuminating the Enlightenment: Public Lighting Practices in the Siècles des Lumières», *Past&Present*, 240 (2018), 119-59, 123.

14. *Ibid.*, 120.

15. *Ibid.*, 122.

16. Donald W. Lindebaugh, *The Springfield Gas Machine: Illuminating Industry and Leisure, 1860s-1920s*, Knoxvill, University of Tennessee Press, 2011, 1-30; focusing on Shakespearean theatre, see for example Pascale Aebischer, *Shakespeare, Spectatorship and the Technologies of Performance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020, 33-49.

17. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, «The Policing of Street Lighting», *Yale French Studies*, 73 (1987), 61-75, 62.

18. Sophie Reculin, *'Le règne de la nuit désormais va finir'. L'invention et la*

as Donald Lindebaugh described in broad outline, gradually improved lighting qualities, lowered prices, and ultimately transferred the individual's responsibility to the state: implementing permanent lighting infrastructures in the nineteenth century went hand in glove with tendencies toward greater centralization and «the loss of control over energy production» – citizens, Lindebaugh concludes, finally became consumers[19]. However, the 'conquest of the night' and illumination of the dark were by no means accepted without criticism. Turning night into day was at odds with traditional rhythms of the day[20]. Consequently, until the eighteenth century, nocturnal activities, depending on context, situation, and participants involved or observing and reporting, were considered as both, as enabler and as 'immoral.'

Yet it is precisely within this field of tension, of indecisiveness, and ambiguity displayed by primary sources that night must be approached as a historical phenomenon. Exploring night from a socio-economic point of view, and turning to artificial lighting material such as wax, oil, and tallow, it becomes obvious that essentially the dark times of night, which required artificial illumination, were the starting point of multifaceted economic relations leading to the intensification of trading networks, and facilitating processes of economization, as economic and medieval historians particularly have noted. According to them, wax and oil took the role of 'a currency'[21]. Moreover, providing lights for sacred spaces and burning candles inside churches for spiritual desires, for instance, «was a constant concern in all west European societies throughout the early Middle Ages» and beyond[22].

diffusion de l'éclairage publique dans le royaume de France (1697-1789), Diss. 2017, online: https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01915183; Roger Ekirch, *At Day's Close: Night in Times Past*, New York, Norton, 2005; Craig Koslofsky, «Court Culture and Street Lighting in Seventeenth-Century Europe», *Journal of Urban History*, 28 (2002), 743-68; Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Disenchanted Night: The industrialization of Light in the Nineteenth Century*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988.

19. Lindebaugh, *The Springfield Gas Machine*, 2.

20. Koslofsky, «Court Culture», 745-46.

21. Eva Cane, *The World History of Beekeeping and Honey Hunting*, New York, Routledge 1999, 498.

22. Paul Fouracre, «Lights, Power and the Moral Economy of Early Medieval Europe», *Early Medieval* Europe, 28 (2020), 367-87, 369.

As accounting books bear witness, the levy of wax and oil was an unquestionable part of tax collection, which – in this respect – constituted the power relationship between secular subjects and (sacral) authorities, but was not limited to this. Wax and oil, as evidenced by royal grants or (noble) wills, were donated to satisfy the desire for salvation[23]. Ian Wood characterized this form of exchange as an 'ecclesiastical economy'[24] and Paul Fouracre recently pointed out that the Carolingians utilized grants for light and access to lighting material as political measures to demonstrate authority over new possessions and to exercise power[25].

Yet this straightforward narrative of modernization and centralization requires more precise reflection and reconstruction. Existing work on energy transitions or changes in energy practices, as considered here, state that these processes were temporally and spatially varied, and, furthermore, inextricably tailored to prevailing social, economic, and environmental conditions[26]. By acknowledging these prerequisites, it is possible to approach and zoom in on pre-modern practices of lighting beyond street-lighting.

Although these few examples mentioned above are far apart in time and context, ranging from early medieval wax donations to eighteenth-century tax debates, they suggest that a 'regime of light' was not only shaped by courts and a bourgeois elite. Lighting practices affected pre-modern people to varying degrees and thus influenced nocturnal activities in different ways. In addition to this, and similar to the late-eighteenth-century observations mentioned above, both empirical evidence from the Middle Ages

23. Maria DePrano, «*Lux Aeterna*: Commemoration of Women with Candles in the Santa Maria Novella Book of Wax in Fifteenth-Century Florence», *Early Modern Women*, 6 (2011), 165-72.

24. Ian Wood, «Creating a Temple Society in the Early Medieval West», in Ian Wood (ed.), *The Transformation of the Roman West*, Leeds, ARC Humanities Press, 2018, 110-11.

25. Fouracre, «Lights, Power and the Moral Economy of Early Medieval Europe».

26. Wouter Ryckbosch and Wout Saelens, «Fueling the Urban Economy: A Comparative Study of Energy in the Low Countries, 1600-1850», *The Economic History Review*, 76 (2022), 1-36.

onward and the latest results of research in the context of an 'Anthropology of Luminosity' indicate that access to and usage of light served as a marker of socio-economic differences. «Using light», to sum up, is and was «an active component of social life»[27].

The availability of and access to light – it seems appropriate to summarize – appears to have been a distinguishing feature over the centuries. This distinction becomes even clearer in the light of material culture studies. Analyzing probate inventories, Wout Saelens showed in detail that the distribution of lighting objects such as candlesticks, candle pans, tallow lamps, and mirrors (to improve the light's intensity) was largely confined to well-off households. Between 1680 and 1780, however, the ownership of lighting equipment among poor households seems to have gradually increased[28]. Whether this transformation in material culture had a noticeable impact on the consumption of candles, however, can only be assumed. Drawing on a long-term evaluation of fuel costs and lighting consumption between 1300 and 2000 in the United Kingdom, and despite some empirical and methodological reservations due to early modern tax evasion (particularly regarding tallow candles, as will be discussed in more detail below), Roger Fouquet and Peter J. G. Pearson pointed out that even though the population grew, candle consumption seems to have increased only slightly in the eighteenth century[29]. A closer look at the collected data rather suggests «another kind 'of dark age'», which Fouquet and Pearson concluded was a consequence of taxation.

27. Mikkel Bille Sørensen and Tim Flohr, «An Anthropology of Luminosity. The Agency of Light», *Journal of Material Culture*, 12/3 (2007), 263-84, 273.

28. Wout Saelens, «Comforts of Difference. Social Inequality and the Material Culture of Energy in Eighteenth-Century Ghent», in Bruno Blondé, et al. (ed.), *Inequality and the City in the Low Countries (1200-2020)*, Turnhout, Brepols 2020, 309-28, 314; Rembrandt Duits (ed.), *The Art of the Poor. The Aesthetic Material Culture of the Lower Classes in Europe, 1300-1600*, London/New York/Oxford/New Delhi/Sydney, Bloomsbury Academic, 2020.

29. Roger Fouquet and Peter J. G. Pearson, «Seven Centuries of Energy Services: The Price and Use of Light in the United Kingdom (1300-2000)», *The Energy Journal*, 27/1 (2006), 139-77.

Does this argument present itself as a criterion for describing this stagnation in or moderate growth of candle consumption in the eighteenth century? The practices of artificial lighting referred to in the tax debate offer the prospect of further explanations.

How to Illuminate?

In the aftermath of the American War of Independence, William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806), Chancellor and First Lord of the Treasury, proposed «a long catalogue of taxation»[30] to «pay the interest of the loan, and the interest of the remaining unfunded debt»[31], which was amounting to more than 900,000 pounds, annually. Despite levying duties on textile luxuries such as hats, ribbons, and printed or dyed linens, his proposal also expanded the scope of goods to be taxed to include paper, hackney coaches, bricks and tiles, qualifications of shooters, horses, coal, and – of the utmost importance for the topic under consideration here – candles. As they were characterized as «a necessary of life, and a necessary as indispensable with the poorest as with the richest families in the kingdom»[32], William Pitt's suggestion unfolded a lively and controversial debate among the members of the House of Commons. Within that, a number of Members of Parliament came up and explained their views.

The discussion suggested that the practical use of candles did indeed vary according to socio-economic class. Poorer households, it was argued, 'obviously' used candles weighing between 16 and 24 to the pound, whereas wealthier families either bought candles weighing between six and eight to the pound, molded candles, or candles made of wax[33]. Given the fact that a 'cottager' would consume only a 'small number of pounds' in a year, the additional duty would not affect poor families in their gen-

30. *Parliamentary Papers*, 30 June 1784, Debates, 281.
31. *Ibid.*, 279.
32. *Ibid.*, 284.
33. That there existed a variety of different forms and kinds of candle can be gleaned from the following statement: Sir James Johnsone referring to «Mould Candles,» to «Candles of a superior sort and size», and to «farthing Candles», *Morning Chronicle*, 13 July 1784, 2.

eral supply of candles. Even more precisely, William Pitt quantified the consumption of candles by the lower classes: He was informed that poorer families would not buy more than 10 pounds of candles in a year. If the proposed tax increase of half a penny is taken as a basis for the calculation, he continued, the additional annual cost would amount only to five pence.

However, since the opposition could not be convinced by those well-calculated figures either, alternatives were considered, discussed, and – ultimately – rejected. The line of argument presented during the debates, both for and against raising taxes on candles, basically revolved around three main aspects: First, the issue at stake concerned the available options for taxing consumer goods without denying the lower classes access to candles. There remained, second, the question of fair and just taxation and possible strategies for reducing national debt. Third, the arguments provide us with insights not only into a complex and multifaceted process of decision-making in the British Parliament of the eighteenth century, but also into the social context in which candles were used. Despite explicit references to supposedly tangible and objective consumption data, empirical knowledge about private lighting practices was of paramount importance for the discussion. Social differentiation can thus not only be derived from figures on the consumption of candles itself. Exploring pre-industrial Ottoman illumination, Avner Wishnitzer recently requested that these prerequisites be taken more seriously in order to enhance our understanding of pre-industrial lighting as both a multifaceted, complex, 'basic commodity,' and, simultaneously, as 'a shiny index of power'[34]. He stressed that the wider framework of how raw materials were used and processed and candles manufactured also contributed to the manifestation of socio-economic differences and, in turn, established different lighting practices in society. Lighting practices, quality, and experience before industrialization, which largely 'standardized and homogenized' illumination at least across Europe and North America, were closely linked to the employed raw materials and thus to environmental preconditions[35].

34. Wishnitzer, *As Night Falls*, 145.
35. *Ibid.*, 145.

Artificial Illumination – A Sensuous Experience

Similarly to Avner Wishnitzer's findings, candles in premodern Europe were predominantly made of tallow, wax, and, since the first half of the eighteenth century, increasingly of spermaceti-wax (whale oil)[36]. Vegetable oils made of fruits, flowers, or seeds such as olive-, palm-, or castor oil have been used since early times[37]. In colonial Mexico, for example, the oil supplied for public streetlighting consisted of a broad range of vegetable oils including sesame or peanut-oil, while in Europe, according to climatic and soil conditions, primarily rapeseed was cultivated, harvested, and processed into oil[38]. Nonetheless, whereas public streetlighting depended on large quantities of rapeseed oil, private lighting practices usually relied on animal fat: Before whale oil conquered the market, private rooms were usually lit by tallow candles[39]. Wax candles played only a minor role in private lighting methods, and were used generally in the households of the rich and the 'middling line of life,' according to the Excise statistics for 1783: the taxed number of candles made from tallow was substantially higher than the number of wax candles. The *Account of the Quantity of all Articles charged with a Duty of Excise* elucidates that tallow candles brought in more than 200,000 pounds, with a total amount of 48,447,165 ½ pounds. The revenue from candles made of wax was considerably less (approximately 5,000 pounds) – which was one of the core arguments why the consumption of wax candles was characterized as «too small to make it an object»[40] of general taxation.

36. Felix Schürmann, *Der graue Unterstrom. Walfänger und Küstengesellschaften an den tiefen Stränden Afrikas (1770-1920)*, Frankfurt/New York, Campus Verlag, 2017.

37. Reculin, *Le régne*, 25-26.

38. *The Northampton Mercury*, LVI, No. 6, 1 informs that an increase in the price of rapeseed in 1775 might be strongly connected to the fact that «in the Metropolis alone, the Value of Oil consumed, as a Substitute for Tallow» had increased substantially.

39. *The London Magazine*, IV, London 1785, 328 indicates that the tallow candle was «commonly used in families».

40. *Ibid*.

In general, tallow candles, usually consisting of pig or mutton tallow – depending on the surrounding farmland context – dominated the nights of the lower classes, even though candles of this sort emitted «noxious and putrescent vapours»[41]. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, for example, mentions that especially «hog's tallow makes the candle gutter, and always gives an offensive smell with a thick black smoke»[42]. It is thus not surprising that the burning and lighting quality of candles was discussed frequently during the pre-modern period, and innovations envisaged[43]. To produce rushlights that provided the best level of light, the naturalist Gilbert White (1720-1793), for example, advised that rushes should be collected in autumn rather than in summer, and must be prepared carefully[44].

Although the production and sale of tallow candles had been in the custody of the tallow chandlers since the fourteenth century, and the guild repeatedly claimed their privilege of making tallow candles or overseeing the monitoring of tallow, candle, oil, and vinegar qualities, the recipes or encyclopedia entries that were also in circulation prove that the knowledge and informal practice of manufacturing lights, particularly for domestic use, were widespread and in common use.

In his *Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* (1789), based on a «compelling 'historical memory' of ecological engagement [...] that hinges on his absorption with timescales, rhythms, habits of daily living»[45], Gilbert White described a procedure for making simple, but effective, burning rushlights, «the labourer's alternative to candles»[46]. Based on his local observations, White

41. *The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politicks, and Literature, for the Year 1765*, London 1766, 58.

42. *Encyclopaedia Britannica, or a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Miscellaneous Literature*..., VI, Edinburgh 1797, 93.

43. See for example *The London Magazine*, IV, London 1785, 327-31.

44. Gilbert White, *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*, London 1789.

45. Williams Rhian, «Gilbert White's Eighteenth-Century Nature Journals as 'Everyday' Ecology», *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 24/3 (2017), 432-56, 434.

46. Ted Dadswell, *The Selborne Pioneer. Gilbert White as Naturalist and Scientist: a Re-Examination*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003, 18.

neatly explained in a comprehensive instruction the fundamental aspects of manufacturing rushlights by transferring local knowledge and everyday practices into a systematized, overarching pattern. Approaching natural history from this angle, he linked «sensuous lived experience»[47], environmental prerequisites, and local needs to depict «habituated knowledge»[48]. By so doing he referred to the potential of common practices for a balanced household economy. The manufacturing of rushlights was – alongside numerous other aspects he specified – part of this knowledge. Most importantly for our purpose, and systematically differentiated into 1) material requirements, 2) personal experience, and 3) objective numerical data, White meticulously described how to create a cheap and long-burning «good clear light»[49].

Starting with material requirements, White outlined how rushlights – in contrast to tallow candles – usually consist of Juncus Conglomeratus, the «common soft rush [...] found in most moist pastures» and which grow all over Great Britain[50]. Furthermore, grease that «the careful wife of an industrious Hampshire labourer obtains [...] for nothing» by saving the «scummings of her bacon-pot» was used as fuel, but in districts «where hogs are not much in use, and especially by the sea-side, the coarser animal-oils will come very cheap»[51]. To improve the consistency, obtain a clearer quality of light, and prolong burning capacity, hog grease could be mixed with beeswax and/or mutton tallow[52]. Blending tallow and wax seems to have been common practice, favored not only because the consistency of the candle produced was more refined, but also because it improved the smell.

As in the debates in the House of Commons, White, though, did not confine himself to this concise and condensed description of the manufacturing process or lighting practices; translated into numerical data and thus summarized in abstract terms.

47. Rhian, «Gilbert White's Eighteenth-Century Nature Journals», 437.
48. *Ibid.*, 438.
49. White, *The Natural History*, 195.
50. *Ibid.*, 194; the wick of tallow-candles usually consisted of spun and twisted cotton, see *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 93.
51. White, *The Natural History*, 195.
52. *Ibid.*, 195.

Instead, he clearly illustrated the exceptional burning time of rushlights and thus amply demonstrated that locally bound knowledge as well as the practiced (informal) production of candles were highly economical and advantageous. White concluded: «A poor family will enjoy 5½ hours of comfortable light for a farthing»[53]. Yet if rushlights were prepared this way, one pound of rushes, containing a total of approximately 1,600 individual blades each burning for half an hour, would produce light for 800 hours or 33 days[54]. In any case, rushes and dipped candles in various weights[55] and forms represented the simplest and the cheapest type of artificial lighting methods in eighteenth-century Europe.

In addition to dipped candles, molded candles played an important role in pre-modern lighting practice, even though these kinds of candle were more expensive and used only by well-to-do individuals and families before the advent of industrial mass production[56]. A brief glimpse of a few newspaper advertisements unfolds the variety of (more or less expensive) illuminants offered for sale in 1784/85. In his advertisement, Barret, «Wax-Chandler to their Majesties», informs «the Nobility, Gentry, and Publick in general» about his assortment of illuminants by specifying an entire catalogue, which included:

> Flambeaux, Spermaceti Candles, White Wax, and refined Spermaceti […]; Wafers of various sorts and colours; a variety of Wax Night Lights, in cases for travelling; neat Spermaceti Oil, and remarkable fine perfumed Chamber Oil for bedchambers, with lamps on new constructions; lamp wick and cotton, &c. travelling illuminators and torch lights;

53. *Ibid.*, 196. It is said that these rushlights were exempted from candle duties, see Richard Burn, *The Justice of the Peace and Parish Officer*, II, London 1785, 51.

54. White, *The Natural History*, 196.

55. *The New London Magazine, enlarged and improved*, IV, January to June 1785, London 1785 recorded that the «candle called a middling six, weighing upon an average the sixth part of a pound avoirdupois, is 10 ½ inches long, and 2 inches, and 8/10 in circumstances» was «most commonly used», 328.

56. *Chelmsford Chronicle*, No. 295, 2: «for certainly those who used mould candles could better afford to pay, than those that used those of 16 to the pound»; for manufacturing mould candles, see: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 93.

philosophical wax matches, and spring-candlesticks, so constructed as to prevent any danger of fire[57].

This advertisement featured a remarkable variety of purchasable illuminants of diverse kinds, suitable for bourgeois or aristocratic expectations, such as «Wax Night Lights for travelling» or «perfumed Chamber Oil». Quite unlike Gilbert White's intention of providing the simplest possible instructions on how to manufacture candles cheaply and independently of wax or tallow chandlers, the newspaper advertisements portrayed a totally different practice and world. There are three important aspects to emphasize. The first relates to the broad range of illuminants. Whereas poorer households relied almost exclusively on cheap, small, and short-lived tallow candles or rushlights, wealthier families enjoyed a broad scope of candles to choose from. In addition to (more or less) simple candles and torches, the texts praised white, virgin candles or colorful wax plates or highlighted developments in lighting technologies.

Examining the advertising closely, the texts alluded to the fact that socio-economic distinction was not reflected only through quantity and variety but, primarily, through quality – the second aspect to bring to the fore here. Wax candles and candles made of spermaceti, as mentioned above, burned for longer, and gave «transparent and beautiful» light, «to admiration without guttering, or snuffing», as another advertisement noted[58]. In conjunction with this, and especially emphasized by «perfumed Chamber Oil», social differentiation is particularly reflected in a certain olfactory atmosphere. Customers purchased «Perfumed Chamber Oil» specifically to create an olfactory atmosphere in elegant rooms that corresponded to social norms and expectations and to mark themselves as «persons of fashion» by fragrance[59].

Thirdly, and most importantly, however, much of the evidence in the newspaper advertisements substantiates the fact that both the dark hours of the night and the constant technological development of lighting practices transformed nocturnal human

57. *The Morning Chronicle*, 16 February 1785.
58. *The Morning Herald*, 26 January 1785.
59. *The Morning Chronicle*, 15 March 1784.

activity. As we can observe from the empirical evidence, light was needed not only to illuminate domestic spaces; constant technical developments and inventions as mentioned in the advertisement facilitated nighttime travel, for example, and this suggests that *nocturnalization* manifested itself not only in courtly festivities or streetlighting but in everyday lighting practices, whether among the bourgeois elite or in the countryside, shaping human behavior and establishing new social logics[60]. Although access to better materials and a wider range of products remained exclusively limited to higher socio-economic strata, candle fashions were imitated and copied. Advertisements repeatedly warned and informed the «Nobility» that «a Combination of Tallow Chandlers are now making and vending Candles, which they call Wax, but have only a strong infusion of deers fuet in their body, and a wax skin to cover their deception»[61]. Lighting, as well as the night itself, was a contested space[62].

Lighting – A Bundle of Activities Rooted in Social Norms?

Examining the methods and materialities of private lighting as well as considering the fact that the production of artificial illuminants was officially regulated, but could easily be circumvented[63], already illustrates that one falls short if merely gauging the importance of candles by analyzing tax revenues or con-

60. Wishnitzer, *As Night Falls*; Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire*.
61. *The Morning Herald*, 23 March 1784.
62. Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire*, 162.
63. At this point, the tax debate in 1784 provides a pertinent example, because the Members of Parliament discussed not only how to tax candles but also how to prevent tax evasion (The Morning Herald epitomized this ambiguity by stating that candles were «a considerable branch of revenue, and subject to great frauds». *The Morning Herald*, 29 January 1784). In attempting to make candle consumption an efficient means of funding the reduction of the national debt, Members of Parliament thought of ways and means of preventing widespread illegal and illicit candle production. The result of this debate was a bill that subjected the production of candles to strict control. This bill went as far as to allow officers to enter houses at night where it was believed that candles were being made without permission or license.

sumption data. In order to enhance our understanding of premodern nocturnal activities and to reconstruct everyday practices defined as bundles of activities, such as artificial lighting, it is necessary for further research to take into account the wider social framework, the used material as well as the infrastructural, institutional, and time-dependent environment under scrutiny. Avner Wishnitzer has already pointed out that «[w]hen thinking about access to light we must consider not only how much light one could afford, but also what kind of light»[64]. Lighting did not just depend on access to lighting material but, moreover, distinguished social groups and individuals and was inevitably linked to status and social belonging. What is vital in this regard is that light and lighting practices were – through processes of negotiation and adaptation – «inhabited, manipulated, and used»[65].

Given the results presented, it becomes evident that eighteenth-century private lighting practices are key aspects of nocturnal activities. They provided the possibility of transcending nocturnal boundaries. Thus, to highlight the multilayered complexity of night, I have endeavored to shift the perspective from a court-dominated 'regime of light' toward lighting methods characterized as a «culturally mediated system of knowledge»[66], of practices, as well as of sayings and doings. Approaching night and lighting practices as an assemblage that encompasses «spatial, material, institutional, political, and cultural dimensions»[67] can enhance our understanding of and sharpen our view of night as an enabler.

64. Wishnitzer, *As Night Falls*, 146.

65. Bille/Sørensen, «An Anthropology of Luminosity», 266.

66. Michael Lewis, «And All was Light? – Science and Environmental History», in Andrew C. Isenberg (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 2014, 208-26, here 208.

67. Bert De Munck and Romano Antonella, «Knowledge and the Early Modern City: An Introduction», in *Ibid.* (ed.), *Knowledge and the Early Modern City: A History of Entanglements*, London/New York, Routledge, 2020, 1-30, here 7.

ABSTRACT

Maria Weber, *Before the Bright Night? Methods and Materialities of Lighting in Early Modern Europe*

It was not just the court, the princes, and the authorities who conquered the pre-modern night. In fact, light was a fundamental part of everyday life that enabled nocturnal activities. Light and access to artificial lighting sources can thus be interpreted as a means of social distinction. This article examines how the middle and lower classes developed methods of coping with the scarce resources of artificial light and rising taxes on candles. It also looks at how knowledge of common lighting methods and techniques was preserved and passed on. The aim is to analyze lighting methods as an intertwined system of knowledge and cultural practices with multiple economic and social dimensions.

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L'ÉVOLUTION DES PRATIQUES NOCTURNES DANS LA VILLE MODERNE, AU PRISME DE L'ÉCLAIRAGE PUBLIC

L'histoire de l'éclairage public préindustriel en France est intimement liée au développement de l'État moderne. Son premier historien, militaire de carrière, Auguste-Philippe Herlaut (1877-1965) s'est intéressé à l'organisation de l'illumination urbaine parisienne aux XVII^e^ et XVIII^e^ siècles, dans le cadre de ses recherches sur les services publics, tandis qu'il combattait dans les tranchées de l'Argonne[1]. Au début des années 2000, les thèses de Catherine Denys et de Jean-Luc Laffont abordent le sujet au prisme des institutions policières du siècle des Lumières dans les villes de la frontière franco-belge et à Toulouse[2]. Imposée par l'État louis-quatorzien par l'édit de juin 1697 aux principales villes de province[3], l'installation de lanternes publiques a pour

1. Richard Charles Cobb, «Nécrologie. Le général Herlaut (mort en 1965)», *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 182 (1965), 502-5; Auguste-Philippe Herlaut, «L'éclairage des rues à Paris à la fin du XVII^e^ et au XVIII^e^ siècles», in *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Île de France*, 43 (1916), 129-265; Auguste-Philippe Herlaut, *L'éclairage de Paris à l'époque révolutionnaire*, Paris, Mellottée, 1932.

2. Catherine Denys, *Police et sécurité au XVIII^e^ siècle dans les villes de la frontière franco-belge*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2002; Jean-Luc Laffont, *Policer la ville. Toulouse, capitale provinciale au siècle des Lumières*, thèse de doctorat en histoire sous la direction de René Souriac, université de Toulouse II Le Mirail, 1997.

3. Les villes choisies pour installer des lanternes publiques sont Aix, Amiens, Angers, Bayonne, Besançon, Bordeaux, Brest, Caen, Clermont, Dijon, Grenoble, La Rochelle, Lille, Lyon, Le Mans, Marseille, Metz, Montpellier, Moulins, Nantes, Nîmes, Orléans, Reims, Rennes, Rouen, Saint-Malo, Toulon, Tournai, Tours, et Valenciennes.

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objectif de renforcer la sécurité des rues pour mieux contrôler les circulations nocturnes[4].

Ce papier propose de s'intéresser aux différentes formes d'implantations de l'éclairage public dans des lieux spécifiques: les places royales, ses sites d'expérimentation, les promenades, les abords et l'intérieur des théâtres, et à l'évolution de ses usages. La floraison d'une nouvelle source documentaire durant le dernier tiers du XVIII[e] siècle à l'échelle nationale, les requêtes et pétitions d'habitants pour installer des lanternes à réverbères, permet d'entendre la voix des travailleurs de nuit. Cette soudaine prise de parole des habitants fait prendre la mesure de l'écart qui existe entre le discours monarchique de la fin du XVII[e] siècle et l'évolution des désirs et des pratiques des populations urbaines au cours du XVIII[e] siècle. Dans cette perspective, il convient d'interroger le concept d'«Ancien régime nocturne» forgé par Simone Delattre dans lequel une 'nuit archaïque' au clair de lanterne à chandelle et à huile aurait précédé la nuit 'moderne' de l'ère industrielle éclairée au gaz puis à l'électricité[5].

Scénographier la ville

L'illumination de la statue du souverain sur les places royales dès les années 1680 et l'expérimentation publique des lanternes à réverbères qui remplacent les lanternes à chandelle durant le dernier tiers du XVIII[e] siècle proposent une nouvelle scénographie de la ville moderne décidée par les autorités urbaines qui n'entre pas en contradiction avec le principe du couvre-feu.

L'illumination des places royales

Comme l'illumination publique, l'invention des places royales qu'Hendrik Ziegler définit comme une «formule de majesté urbanistique, sous l'aspect d'une place régulière accueillant la

4. AN, AD + 581, *Édit du roi pour l'établissement des lanternes dans les principales villes du royaume*, juin 1697, 8.

5. Simone Delattre, *Les Douze heures noires. La nuit à Paris au XIX[e] siècle*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2002, 121–22.

statue d'un souverain en vue de lui rendre hommage», est étroitement associée au règne des Bourbon et atteint sa forme la plus achevée sous le règne de Louis XIV. Après les premières créations parisiennes, le Secrétaire d'État à la guerre et Surintendant des Bâtiments du roi, Louvois, en collaboration avec le duc de La Feuillade, aurait rédigé à destination des intendants en 1684-1684 des instructions pour la construction de places royales dans les villes de province[6]. Plusieurs de ces places furent dotées de lanternes implantées autour de la statue du monarque. Est-à-dire que l'illumination du monument fait partie intégrante du projet urbanistique?

La première place royale, celle des Victoires à Paris, commandée par le maréchal de la Feuillade, mais financée par la cour et conçue par l'architecte Jules Hardouin-Mansart, constitue en France le premier exemple d'illumination permanente d'une place royale. Inaugurée en 1686, cette place quasi circulaire enserre l'imposante statue pédestre en bronze doré à la feuille de douze mètres de haut de Louis XIV, piédestal compris, foulant au pied un cerbère, symbole de la Triple Alliance. Malgré l'existence d'un éclairage public dans la capitale, quatre fanaux de marine monumentaux dessinés par Jean Bérain sont dressés aux quatre coins de la place et sont surmontés de la couronne fermée des rois de France. Ils reposent chacun sur trois colonnes doriques rouge où sont suspendus des médaillons relatant les hauts faits du roi. Ces fanaux ont été conçus pour que leurs lumières se réverbèrent toute la nuit et en toute saison sur la statue dorée du roi-soleil. Ils font partie intégrante de cet ambitieux programme urbanistique et architectural destiné à la glorification du monarque[7]. Dans le contrat ayant trait à la construction de la Place des Victoires, il est stipulé qu'une personne aura la charge d'allumer et d'entretenir les fanaux toute l'année.

En 1688, dans son *Traité des statues*, François Lemée, ami de La Feuillade et fermier général, raconte que les Romains illumi-

6. Hendrik Ziegler, «L'invention des places royales», in Thierry Sarmant, Luce Gaume (eds.), *La place Vendôme. Art, pouvoir et fortune*, Paris, Action Artistique de la ville de Paris, 2002, 32-41.

7. Les dimensions des luminaires ne sont pas connues. Isabelle Dubois, Alexandre Gady, Hendrik Ziegler (eds.), *Place des Victoires: histoire, architecture, société*, Paris, Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 2004.

naient déjà les statues des empereurs au moyen d'un brasier ardent. Ce moyen permet de pouvoir «contempler en tout temps & dans toutes les saisons de l'année, le plus aimable Prince qui fut jamais»[8]. En définitive, l'illumination des places royales réactiverait une pratique plus ancienne.

Comme le signale Leonhard Christoph Sturm à l'occasion de son voyage à Paris à la fin du XVII[e] siècle, ce dispositif «conduisit un bel esprit à se moquer du fait qu'Apollon – ou le soleil – qui représente le roi, doive être éclairé par des lanternes»[9]. Après la mort du duc de La Feuillade, en 1691, le montant de la donation ne suffit plus à assurer le financement de l'entretien et de l'éclairage des fanaux. Le monarque lui-même fut peut-être embarrassé par ce dispositif de propagande confinant à l'idolâtrie, la place des Victoires s'apparentant à une chapelle à ciel ouvert du culte royal. En tout état de cause, le 20 avril 1699, le Conseil du roi met fin à cette illumination très dispendieuse, même si d'autres arguments sont énoncés dans l'arrêt[10]:

> Le motif de ce changement est fondé sur l'incommodité que reçoivent ceux qui habitent les maisons de cette Place, de l'attroupement des faineans & vagabonds que causent les feux de ces fanaux, particulierement pendant l'été, & que d'ailleurs cette lumiere ne sert point au Public, ladite Place étant suffisament éclairée par les lanternes qui y sont allumées, ainsi que dans les autres places & rue de la ville de Paris[11].

Cette décision soulève à la fois la question du seuil de tolérance à la lumière des habitants et des représentations que se font les élites de l'investissement de l'espace-temps nocturne par d'autres catégories sociales. En 1718, les quatre luminaires sont retirés de la place des Victoires.

La place royale de Nancy intègre également dans son programme des lanternes, mais qui n'éclairent pas directement la

8. Lemée, *Traité des statues*, 1688, 247-48.

9. Billet de Cyril Pasquier, «La sculpture à Paris et en province (1): effigies royales», 22/10/2021, https://architrave.hypotheses.org/1957, consulté le 26/08/2022.

10. L'illumination et l'entretien coûtaient d'après Strum 333 thalers par an.

11. Jean-Aimar Piganiol de La Force, *Description de Paris, de Versailles, de Marly, de S. Cloud, de Fontainebleau et de toutes les belles maisons et châteaux des environs de Paris*, Paris, éd. Charles-Nicolas Poirion, 1742, II, 505.

statue du monarque. Réalisée à la demande du duc de Lorraine Stanislas Leszczynski à la gloire de son gendre, Louis XV, par l'architecte Emmanuel Héré, la statue royale de 4,66 mètres de haut est inaugurée en 1755, sur le modèle des places royales françaises. L'objectif est double. Il s'agit de relier les parties médiévale et moderne de la ville séparées par un goulot d'étranglement et de promouvoir le futur rattachement du duché de Lorraine au royaume de France (1766). Louis XV y est représenté en pieds, regardant vers l'ouest, brandissant un bâton de commandement. Les lanternes conçues comme des pièces d'orfèvrerie par le serrurier et ferronnier Jean Lamour sont suspendues à des potences aux grilles réhaussées d'or qui bordent la place. Une illumination ordinaire vient compléter ce dispositif puisque la ville s'éclaire depuis 1715. En 1723, Jean Lamour est responsable de l'entretien des 250 lanternes publiques de Nancy[12].

Dans plusieurs villes de province françaises, l'inauguration des statues royales précède l'installation d'une illumination spécifique qui n'a laissé aucune trace dans l'iconographie. À Rennes, la statue équestre de Louis XIV d'Antoine Coysevox est inaugurée en 1726 sur la nouvelle place du Palais redessinée par l'architecte parisien Jacques Gabriel après le grand incendie de 1720. Il est décidé dans les années 1760, près de quarante ans plus tard, de l'éclairer par deux grandes lanternes[13]. Les comptes de la ville mentionnent au même moment l'entretien des deux gros luminaires pour la statue pédestre de Louis XV érigée dans la niche qui sépare l'hôtel de ville du présidial sur la nouvelle place royale[14]. Cependant, la documentation disponible (états des lanternes) ne donne aucune information sur le type de suspension (potences fixées au mur de l'hôtel de ville ou mâts) et le calendrier de l'allumage.

À Lyon, la statue équestre de Louis XIV qui donne son nom à la place (Louis Le Grand) est érigée en 1713 à la demande du

12. Charles Cournault, *Jean Lamour*, Paris, Librairie d'art, 1866, 4; Durival l'Aîné, *Description de la Lorraine et du Barrois*, Nancy, 1778, I, 109.

13. AD Ille-et-Vilaine, C 348, Copie de l'état de l'entretien des lanternes de la ville et faubourgs, 1765-1766, sans pagination.

14. AD Ille-et-Vilaine, C 348, Copie de l'état présenté au mois de mai 1765 et 1766 à MM les échevins de l'entretien des lanternes de la ville et faubourgs, sans pagination.

consulat, mais les premières mentions d'illumination datent des années 1780. La place royale est alors dotée dans sa partie méridionale de quatre lanternes à quatre réverbères qui fonctionnent jusqu'à une heure du matin toute l'année, y compris en période de lune, au contraire des lanternes publiques ordinaires[15]. La statue n'est donc pas directement éclairée. Contrairement aux dispositifs rennais, cette installation est peut-être davantage destinée à mettre en avant une innovation technique adoptée en 1782, la lanterne à réverbères, et à embellir un lieu de prestige. L'éloignement des lanternes du monument royal entre en résonnance avec des formes d'exaltation du monarque moins prononcées. Sur la place royale de Reims, Jean-Baptiste Pigalle a sculpté aux pieds de la statue du roi inaugurée en 1765, un citoyen méditant sur les vertus du commerce apportant prospérité et bonheur. Louis XV et Louis XVI ne sont plus représentés en cavaliers va-en-guerre, mais en souverains pacifiques.

Le réverbère, une innovation technique majeure

À partir des années 1760, lorsque les lanternes à chandelle sont remplacées par les lanternes à réverbères plus puissantes, sur les places royales, le regard des passants se déporte vers les nouveaux luminaires qui incarnent la modernité. On admire désormais autant l'objet qui éclaire que l'objet éclairé. Cette transformation qui incarne une forme de désenchantement du paysage nocturne est perceptible dans le glissement sémantique qui s'opère à l'orée de la Révolution: dans la documentation, 'l'éclairage' remplace 'l'illumination'. L'éclairage doit permettre au regard de la police et des passants de balayer l'espace, de le quadriller, à la différence de l'illumination publique, qui brille de façon discontinue, portant avec elle l'héritage des fêtes princières.

Le premier modèle de lanterne à réverbères déposé par l'ingénieur mécanicien Bourgeois de Chateaublanc en 1744, ne connaît pourtant pas un succès immédiat[16]. Le nouveau lumi-

15. AM Lyon, FF 0757, État des lampes à réverbères que Jean-Baptiste Frequant a entretenu en 1788 et 1789, sans pagination.

16. Jean-Gaffin Gallon, «Lanterne à réverbère inventée par M. Bourgeois de Chateaublanc», *Machines et inventions approuvées par l'Académie royale des*

naire doit sa renommée au concours organisé par l'Académie des Sciences sur «la meilleure manière d'éclairer les rues d'une grande ville» (1763-1766) à la demande du lieutenant général de police, Antoine de Sartine, dans un contexte d'incitation de l'État monarchique au progrès technique[17]. Les inventions proposées par les candidats ne sont pas seulement expérimentées dans l'espace public, elles le mettent aussi en scène, sous le regard des passants. Sur le Pont-Neuf, les lumières se reflètent dans la Seine et se projettent sur la statue en bronze d'Henri IV; tandis que les luminaires installés dans les rues Dauphine, Neuve des Petits Champs, Neuve-Saint-Augustin, Saint-Anne, Du Roule, et rue de Richelieu forment une grille qui relie les places royales de Vendôme à l'ouest et des Victoires à l'est, les Champs-Élysées au nord et la rue Saint-Honoré[18]. Des démonstrations sont aussi organisées rue Saint-Louis, à proximité de la manufacture de réverbères de Bourgeois de Chateaublanc. Publiciser les expérimentations, permet désormais de convoquer l'expertise de l'opinion publique. Malgré les réticences de plusieurs candidats – l'entrepreneur Le Roy, l'architecte Pierre Patte, le marchand faïencier Bailly et le jeune chimiste Lavoisier – qui craignent l'éblouissement des passants et des chevaux, le réverbère parvient à s'imposer dans la capitale. En 1769, Bourgeois de Chateaublanc crée une compagnie d'illumination publique qui obtient, grâce au soutien du lieutenant général de police, un contrat de vingt ans pour l'éclairage de Paris et réussit l'exploit de s'implanter à l'échelle nationale[19].

Sciences depuis son établissement jusqu'à présent; avec leur description, éd. Antoine Boudet, VII, Paris, 1777, 273-74.

17. AAS, Manuscrits Prix, (1763-1766). Prix Sartine éclairage des villes; Robert Ellissen, *Le concours Sartine 1763-1766*, Congrès de 1922, Paris, Société technique de l'industrie du gaz en France, 1922, 23-31.

18. N 96 Résumé des pièces du premier tour, Archives du Musée des Arts et Métiers, Réserves de Saint Denis. Benjamin Bothereau, *À la lanterne! Mode d'existence d'un objet banal, entre imaginaire technique et politique. Invention, économie urbaine, publics et circulations du «réverbère», Paris, Barcelone, XVIII^e siècle*, thèse de doctorat en histoire moderne sous la direction de Liliane Hilaire-Pérez et Antoni Roca-Rosell, EHESS, 2018, 51.

19. AN, AD + 984, Soumission de M. de Sartine pour l'illumination de Paris pendant vingt années, 8 juin 1769, 8.

Influencées par le modèle parisien, les villes de province organisent à leur tour des expérimentations publiques, avant d'adopter l'éclairage au réverbère. À Lille, Le Roy qui compte parmi les lauréats du prix académique, propose au magistrat de réaliser dès 1767, une démonstration avec deux lanternes à réverbères à quatre becs, dans des lieux symboliques, parmi les plus fréquentés de la ville. La première sera suspendue dans la rue du Palais qui conduit à l'hôtel de ville, la seconde, au carrefour de la rue Française et de la rue Royale, à proximité de la Grand Place et de la nouvelle salle des spectacles. L'expérience s'étant avérée concluante, les luminaires présentés sont rapidement adoptés[20].

À Montpellier, la ville achète ses premières lanternes à réverbères dès 1768, par l'intermédiaire d'un autre lauréat du concours académique, le sieur Bailly[21]. Lorsqu'elle accueille en 1777 le comte de Provence, le futur Louis XVIII, l'intendant ayant imposé l'organisation d'une fête qui ne soit pas trop dispendieuse pour les finances de la ville, les édiles font le choix d'un spectacle où se mêlent tradition et modernité, visible des deux côtés du canal[22]. Les réverbères constituent déjà un objet technique maîtrisé qui offre la possibilité d'orienter la lumière, à l'instar de petits projecteurs. Le fleuve est de nouveau mis en scène. Un arc de triomphe éphémère est dressé sur le pont Juvénal, composé de 64 lanternes à réverbères. Deux allumeurs sont chargés des manipulations. Il s'agit de faire glisser le long des deux colonnes latérales composées de 59 luminaires à un réflecteur, les 5 lanternes à deux réflecteurs qui couronnent l'édifice. À l'issue de la soirée, les échevins se félicitent d'être parvenus à capter toute l'attention du prince, en transformant l'arc de triomphe «en château de feu», sans avoir eu besoin d'avoir recours aux traditionnels feux d'artifice qui étaient au cœur des

20. AM Lille, Affaires générales, carton 1257, dossier 4, Lettre de Le Roy aux magistrats de Lille, Paris, 19 avril 1767; AM Lille, Affaires générales, carton 1257, dossier 9, *Mémoire de Tourtille Sangrain sur l'illumination de Lille*, Paris, 1er septembre 1779, sans pagination.

21. AM Montpellier, DD 352, *Lettre de Bailly aux consuls de Montpellier*, 31 mai 1771, sans pagination.

22. AM Montpellier, DD 310 bis, Lettres de Monsieur Grangent au maire de Montpellier, les 15, 17, 18, 19 et 28 juin 1777, sans pagination.

manifestations cérémonielles du pouvoir depuis le XVI[e] siècle[23]. L'éclairage au réverbère constitue ici une nouvelle forme de spectacle moderne et économique.

Mettre en scène et sécuriser les lieux de loisir

Il serait pourtant réducteur de considérer les populations urbaines comme de simples spectateurs de la sacralité monarchique et du progrès scientifique. Le développement de l'éclairage urbain permet de prolonger les plaisirs diurnes comme la promenade, ou le développement de loisirs vespéraux, comme le théâtre, que la police préfère réguler plutôt qu'empêcher.

L'éclairage des promenades

La promenade reste une activité difficile à appréhender, en raison de son caractère évanescent, puisqu'elle peut être spontanée ou volontaire et de la porosité entre temps de travail et de loisir durant l'Ancien Régime, comme le rappelle Olivier Dautresme dans le cadre d'une étude consacrée au Palais-Royal[24]. Daniel Rabreau la définit comme l'«activité de loisir d'une communauté dont les mœurs se veulent policées», qui serait donc davantage élitaire[25].

À Paris, le cours de la Reine, ouvert par Marie de Médicis, est l'une des premières promenades dotées en lanternes publiques dès la première moitié du XVIII[e] siècle. Le plan Turgot de 1734 les représente. Promenade de civilité autorisée aux carrosses,

23. Marie-Claude Canova-Green, «Fireworks and bonfires in Paris and La Rochelle», in James R. Mulryne (dir.), *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in early Modern Europe*, London, Aldershot, Ashgate, MHRA, 2004, vol. 2, 145-53, ici 145.

24. Olivier Dautresme, «La promenade, un loisir urbain universel? L'exemple du Palais-Royal à Paris à la fin du XVIII[e] siècle», *Histoire urbaine*, 3 (2001/1), 83-102.

25. Daniel Rabreau, «La promenade urbaine en France aux XVII[e] et XVIII[e] siècles: entre planification et imaginaire», in Monique Mosser, Georges Teyssot (eds.), *Histoire des jardins de la Renaissance à nos jours*, Paris, Flammarion, 1991, 301-12.

entourée de fossés et fermée par des grilles gardées par des portiers, c'est l'un des hauts lieux de sociabilité mondaine de l'aristocratie parisienne[26]. Peu après avoir été replanté (1724), le cours est doté en 1729 de soixante lanternes jusqu'à la barrière de la Conférence, à la demande du lieutenant général de police, René Hérault. Ce ne sont pas des luminaires à chandelle ordinaires, à seau (plus larges dans la partie inférieure que dans la partie supérieure), comme ceux qui éclairent la capitale depuis 1667, mais à cul-de-lampe (fermés à égale distance dans la partie supérieure et inférieure) réverbérant mieux la lumière sur le sol[27]. Si l'illumination publique de la promenade a pour objectif de sécuriser les usagers, elle offre aussi une meilleure visibilité sociale à celles et ceux qui s'y montrent, comme Craig Koslofsky l'a suggéré dans sa communication au colloque *The Bright Side of Night* à Genève en 2022. Est-ce à dire que l'élite est la seule à bénéficier de l'illumination des promenades?

La très populaire promenade des Champs Élysées dessinée par André Le Nôtre, suit une évolution comparable, mais plus tardive. Des années 1770 aux années 1790, le garde suisse Ferdinand de Federici, préposé à la sûreté des lieux, où il n'est pas rare de croiser des dames après minuit[28], s'inquiète dans ses rapports de police de l'accroissement des attroupements nocturnes qu'il a l'ordre de disperser après dix heures en hiver et minuit en été:

> Si ce goût de la nuit prenait, quoiqu'innocent par lui-même, cela pourrait attirer une foule de gens mal intentionnés qui commettront infailliblement des désordres et la garde ordinaire ne saurait suffire pour les prévenir[29].

Federici témoigne ici de la méfiance des autorités à l'encontre des catégories populaires désœuvrées qui pourraient représenter

26. Laurent Turcot, «Entre promenades et jardins publics: les loisirs parisiens et londoniens au XVIII[e] siècle», *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 87-3-4 (2009), 645-63.

27. Dessin des Lanternes établies au Cours, 1729, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie, RESERVE, HA-18, (7), FOL.

28. Arlette Farge (ed.), *Flagrants délits sur les Champs-Élysées. Les dossiers de police du gardien Federici (1777-1791)*, Paris, Mercure de France, 2008, 70.

29. *Ibid.*, 178.

une menace pour l'ordre public nocturne. Cette inquiétude avait déjà été formulée par le pouvoir central qui avait finalement décidé de retirer les lanternes autour de la statue équestre de la place des Victoires près d'un siècle plus tôt.

Pour le garde suisse, l'installation d'un éclairage public permettrait aux forces de police d'encadrer le développement irrépressible des activités vespérales. C'est pourquoi, il relaie, à la suite d'une requête du vicomte de Ségur pour l'installation de deux réverbères dans la rue de Marigny, la demande du public qui «désirerait bien que par intervalle la grande route fût éclairée de même»[30]. À cette date, la capitale s'éclaire au réverbère depuis plus de dix ans.

Paris ne constitue pas une exception. Plusieurs villes de province dotent également dès la fin du XVII[e] siècle leurs lieux de flânerie de lanternes publiques. À Rennes, la promenade de la Motte plantée de deux rangées d'arbres de forme elliptique, fréquentée par les parlementaires, est éclairée dès 1697[31]. Plus populaire, l'esplanade de Lille, accolée à la citadelle, possède aussi une illumination publique à la même période[32], mais la ville a commencé à s'éclairer trente ans plus tôt. Dans un poème en prose daté du XVIII[e] siècle, Jacques de Cotigny, fils d'un marchand mercier, y décrit la foule qui peuple les lieux à la nuit tombée:

L'on voit des troupeaux d'amoureux, d'amoureuses,
On rencontre de tout, même des raccrocheuses;
C'est ici que l'on trompe, une mère, un parent
Qui pendant que sa fille est avec son amant,
La croyant dans le lit sans craindre qu'on l'éveille,
Sachant les verrous faits, tranquillement sommeille.
Une adroite servante en étant de concert,
A tromper ses parents, fidelement la sert[33].

30. *Ibid.*, 190.

31. AM Rennes, DD 222, Commission au garde magasin et distributeur de chandelles, 12 octobre 1697, sans pagination.

32. AM Lille, 1256 D3, Lanternes des maîtres des places, 16 mars 1698, sans pagination.

33. Artistote Crapet, *La vie à Lille, de 1667 à 1789, d'après les cours de M. de Saint-Léger*, «Revue du Nord», 6/23 (1920), 198-231, ici 224.

À Montpellier et à Bordeaux, l'éclairage des promenades est concomitant au développement architectural et urbanistique de la ville et au rétablissement de l'éclairage public après une longue période de suspension du service. L'Esplanade de Montpellier, vaste terrain libre entre la citadelle et la ville, aménagé en promenade plantée de cinq allées d'ormeaux en 1723, sur le modèle du Cours de la Reine, est éclairée à partir du milieu du XVIII[e] siècle[34]. En mars 1769, un interrogatoire de police pour bris de lanterne nous renseigne sur les pratiques vespérales d'une poignée de citadins: les jeunes hommes mis en cause relatent s'être querellés dans le café où ils ont soupé, qu'ils ont quitté vers les dix heures, avant d'aller se promener sur l'esplanade[35]. Bordeaux rétablit son éclairage en 1759, sous l'impulsion du monde du négoce et à l'initiative de l'intendant. Il est alors décidé d'équiper le Jardin royal de la ville[36], l'un des premiers jardins provinciaux, dessiné par Jacques Ange Gabriel, dans les années 1740. Fermé d'une grille ornementale, près de 700 ormeaux et tilleuls importés de Hollande l'encadrent de toute part. C'est une promenade fréquentée par l'élite négociante, qui accueille également des expériences scientifiques en plein air. En 1768, les allées de Tourny (aménagées entre 1743 et 1757), plantées de trois rangées d'arbres, se couvrent de nouveaux luminaires importés d'Angleterre à la demande des négociants qui financent leur installation, leur entretien et l'allumage[37]. Victor Louis, l'architecte du Grand Théâtre qui se situe à proximité des allées, les compare à une 'Bourse du soir' où se réunit la bonne société[38].

Les villes d'Aix et de Marseille s'éclairent plus tardivement. Comme à Bordeaux, les premières lanternes publiques sont installées à la demande des négociants. Dans la cité phocéenne, en

34. AM Montpellier, DD 307, Registre concernant les dénonces des dommages causés aux lanternes, 1754-1756, sans pagination.

35. AM Montpellier, DD 342, Interrogatoire du 2 mars 1769, sans pagination.

36. AM Bordeaux, II 18, Résumés des délibérations portant sur les lanternes pour éclairer la ville, 9 janvier 1758, sans pagination.

37. AM Bordeaux, II 18, Délibération du 21 décembre 1768, sans pagination.

38. Stéphanie Whitlock, «La culture du commerce: la promenade et le Jardin royal de Bordeaux au XVIII[e] siècle», *Annales du Midi*, 118/254 (2006), 203-32.

1785, la promenade très fréquentée de la Canebière, plantée d'une rangée de mûriers de chaque côté, qui se prolonge désormais jusqu'au port et où se tient le marché, est équipée de 25 réverbères. L'axe nord-sud du Grand Cours, plus huppé, fait aussi partie des quartiers les plus éclairés de la ville[39]. À Aix, un état des lieux des luminaires de 1786 indique que sept lanternes à réverbères à quatre becs illuminent le milieu du cours[40]. Le développement de la consommation sur les lieux de promenade investis par les cafés et concerts en plein air aux fermetures plus tardives[41], rend d'autant plus «nécessaire» – d'après les pétitions des habitants – l'installation d'un éclairage public[42].

L'éclairage autour et à l'intérieur des théâtres

Aller au théâtre est le loisir le plus répandu de la seconde moitié du XVIII^e^ siècle, avec la promenade. La proximité des lieux de balade et des édifices de spectacle offre de surcroît la possibilité de se délasser avant ou après une représentation – qui a lieu le plus souvent en soirée – à moins d'être bloqué dans les embouteillages. Au moment où la police urbaine réfléchit aux moyens de réguler la circulation aux abords des théâtres-temple, en réglementant les stationnements, en aménageant des trottoirs et en installant un éclairage public extraordinaire, architectes et savants repensent l'intérieur des salles de spectacle et leur mise en lumière[43].

39. AM Marseille, DD 314, Rapport de Mrs les commissaires du conseil, sur l'éclairage de la ville et des faubourgs 4 mai 1785; décembre 1785, sans pagination.

40. AM Aix, DD75, État des lanternes et réverbères en exercice dans la ville d'Aix le 10 octobre 1786, sans pagination.

41. Alain Cabantous, *Histoire de la nuit (XVII^e^-XVIII^e^ siècle)*, Paris, Fayard, 2009, 278-79.

42. Le terme est couramment employé dans les pétitions d'habitants réclamant un éclairage public au réverbère durant les dernières décennies du XVIII^e^ siècle. Voir *supra*.

43. Christophe Loir, «Circulation et théâtromanie au temps des embellissements. La question de la mobilité dans les projets des salles de spectacles à Bruxelles (1785-1792)», *Histoire urbaine*, 38 spécial «Aller au théâtre» (2013), 111-31.

L'éclairage public au réverbère devient un outil privilégié du contrôle policier aux abords des théâtres durant le dernier quart du XVIII[e] siècle. Dans le rapport dressé par les commissaires pour l'établissement de l'éclairage public à Marseille, il est prévu d'installer huit réverbères sur la Place de la Comédie et les deux rues attenantes, Corneille et Molière: quatre lanternes à trois mèches (douze lumières) et quatre lanternes à quatre mèches (seize lumières), soit 28 lumières[44]. À Metz, sur les 92 lanternes établies dans la ville, vingt lanternes à réverbères sont installées sur la place de la Comédie et cinq sous le péristyle de l'opéra-théâtre érigé d'après les plans de Jacques Oger[45]. À Lyon et à Bordeaux, les luminaires publics établis sur la place de la Comédie ne sont pas seulement plus nombreux. Si la cité rhodanienne compte 84 becs dans les années 1780[46] – sur les 452 lanternes de la ville[47] – leur durée d'éclairement est aussi plus longue, puisqu'ils sont allumés toute l'année. Dans la cité girondine, la galerie et la place de la salle de spectacle accueillent 22 becs de lumière qui fonctionnent toute l'année[48]. Jusqu'au dernier quart du XVIII[e] siècle, à Paris et dans les villes de province, l'allumage était suspendu durant les nuits de pleine lune, le printemps et l'été. Les nouveaux luminaires sont également accrochés sous les péristyles ou les galeries des salles de spectacle comme à Metz, à Bordeaux ou à Lille qui constituent des espaces interstitiels jugés menaçants où stationnent les spectateurs avant d'acheter leurs tickets. L'éclairage des portiques remplit ici une double fonction de surveillance policière et d'embellissement architectural.

Deux candidats au concours académique de 1763-1766, un artiste et un savant, cherchent à transposer leur réflexion sur l'espace public, pour en adapter les procédés aux lieux de spectacle.

44. AM Marseille, Rapport de Mrs les commissaires, du conseil, sur l'éclairage de la ville et de ses fauxbourgs, 4 mai 1785, sans pagination.

45. AM Metz, DD 53, Cahier des quartiers des allumeurs de réverbères et de petites lanternes, 1[er] septembre 1788, sans pagination.

46. AM Lyon, FF 0757, État de l'huile nécessaire pour 410 réverbères, 1781, sans pagination.

47. AM Lyon, FF 0757, Bail d'adjudication des lanternes, 14 septembre 1782, sans pagination.

48. AM Bordeaux, DD 10, État des frais de l'entrepreneur de réverbères, 2 octobre 1782, sans pagination.

Au début des années 1780, à la suite de la destruction de l'Opéra de Paris dans un incendie, l'architecte Pierre Patte et le chimiste Lavoisier réfléchissent aux moyens d'améliorer l'éclairage des salles de spectacle. Dans son *Essai sur l'architecture théâtrale* (1782), Pierre Patte défend l'idée pour lutter contre les risques d'incendie, causés par la trop grande proximité des sources de lumière et des décors, d'utiliser des réverbères qui «ont le double avantage d'augmenter le volume de lumière & de pouvoir la diriger au loin à volonté». Ils permettent de réaliser des jeux de clair-obscur, au contraire de l'éclairage froid et monotone traditionnellement employé. Leur adoption permettrait par la même occasion de supprimer les lampions installés sur la scène dont la fumée crée un épais brouillard dans la salle et un éclairage de bas en haut très artificiel[49]. Il propose enfin de supprimer les lustres à chandelle de la salle pour les remplacer par une grande lanterne à réverbères au centre du plafond. Lavoisier, dans son mémoire sur *La manière d'éclairer les salles de spectacle* (1781)[50] adressé à l'Académie des Sciences émet des propositions similaires. Il soumet l'idée d'installer un éclairage indirect au plafond de la salle prodigué par des réverbères, contrastant avec la scène. Au niveau de la rampe, il suggère de conserver les lampions, mais d'installer sur la scène des réverbères mobiles latéraux que l'on puisse diriger sur le visage des acteurs pour améliorer la mise en scène. Pour les deux auteurs, l'éclairage joue un rôle capital pour révéler les émotions des acteurs et émouvoir les spectateurs[51].

Améliorer les techniques d'éclairage à l'intérieur de la salle de spectacle peut aussi avoir pour objectif la disciplinarisation des comportements du public du parterre, réputé turbulent, presque essentiellement composé d'hommes de toutes les conditions[52]. Dans les archives de la Lieutenance générale de police étudiés

49. Pierre Patte, *Essai sur l'architecture théâtrale ou De l'ordonnance la plus avantageuse à une Salle de Spectacles, relativement aux principes de l'Optique & de l'Acoustique. Avec un examen des principaux théâtres de l'Europe*, Paris, Moutard, 1782, 192-96.

50. Antoine Laurent de Lavoisier, *Mémoire sur la manière d'éclairer les salles de spectacle*, in *Mémoire de l'Académie des sciences*, année 1781, cnrs.fr.

51. Bernard Thaon, *L'éclairage au théâtre*, «Histoire de l'art», 17/18 (1992), 31-43.

52. Une journée de gage, 20 sous en moyenne.

par Jeffrey S. Ravel, les arrestations et emprisonnements de spectateurs dissipés où accusés de vol sont monnaie courante dans les théâtres publics parisiens[53]. Diderot dépeint dans une lettre adressée à la comédienne et romancière Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni l'atmosphère des théâtres: «Les têtes les plus froides s'échauffaient en y entrant, et les hommes censés y partageaient plus ou moins le transport des fous. […] On s'agitait, on se remuait, on se poussait, l'âme était mise hors d'elle-même»[54].

De la résistance à la revendication d'un éclairage public

L'éclairage n'offre pas seulement la possibilité d'accéder aux loisirs plus tardivement, il permet aussi de continuer à travailler après le coucher du soleil, comme le rappelle l'exceptionnelle source des requêtes et pétitions de citoyens adressées aux municipalités durant le dernier tiers du XVIII[e] siècle. Un siècle plus tôt, l'établissement des lanternes publiques était pourtant reçu comme une mesure inutile et contraire au principe du couvre-feu.

Des résistances contre la mise en place de lanternes publiques

Dès l'été 1697, les édiles concernés par l'édit imposant des lanternes publiques dans les principales villes du royaume adressent des suppliques au conseil du roi pour réclamer son abrogation. Son application serait trop coûteuse à mettre en œuvre, puisqu'il s'agit d'un emprunt déguisé destiné à financer la guerre de la Ligue d'Augsbourg (1688-1697). En outre, comme le rappelle la municipalité rennaise:

> Cet etablissement sera peu utile dans vostre ville de rennes ou le parlement estant seant, ou monsieur de nointel reside ordinairement et ou est le siege d'un presidial qui font observer une exacte police, ainsy on

53. Jeffrey S. Ravel, «Le théâtre et ses publics: pratiques et représentations du parterre à Paris au XVIII[e] siècle», *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 49/3 (2002), 89-118.

54. Denis Diderot, Réponse à la lettre de Mme Riccoboni, cité dans Marie-Hélène Huet, *Rehearsing the Revolution: The Staging of Marat's Death*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1982, 31-32.

ne voit jamais arriver d'accidents pendant la nuit, et vostre maiesté ayant incorporé à la communauté les charges de capitaines et officiers que vous aviez créés, elle les à distribuez à de bons habitans qui chascun dans leur quartier tiennent la main à cequ'il ne se fasse aucun desordre et tous les soirs les portes de la ville estants fermées avec exactitude aux dix heures, elles iouit d'une profonde tranquillité[55].

Si les archives ne mentionnent pas de soulèvement pour des raisons fiscales, à l'exception de Besançon, une partie des habitants se montrent peu collaboratifs voire franchement hostiles. Dans les villes où les riverains ont la charge d'allumer leur rue à tour de rôle, les personnes désignées refusent le service sous les prétextes les plus divers. Quand des professionnels sont rémunérés par la municipalité, les résidents chargés de leur faciliter la tâche en descendant la lanterne suspendue à leur fenêtre s'absentent volontairement à l'heure de l'allumage. L'installation de boîtes pour y enfermer les cordes n'empêche pas les agressions physiques et verbales contre les allumeurs, accusés de mal exécuter leur tâche et de rogner le suif des chandelles. Les commis représentent aussi un obstacle à la circulation au moment de l'allumage. D'autres marques d'hostilité visent directement l'objet technique. Les coureurs de nuit (étudiants, apprentis, militaires et domestiques) prennent pour cible les lanternes publiques. Néanmoins, il reste difficile d'interpréter le bris de lanterne, car les coupables parviennent le plus souvent à s'échapper. Ce peut être la conséquence d'un accident, d'un affrontement entre bandes rivales, pour des raisons ludiques ou une démonstration de force contre un symbole de l'ordre public. Souvent commis denuit, le bris, en replongeant la rue dans l'obscurité, ouvre la voie à une réappropriation de l'espace[56].

55. AM Rennes, DD 222, Supplique de la ville de Rennes, s.d. (1697), sans pagination.

56. Sur l'hostilité des habitants à l'éclairage public, cf. Sophie Reculin, *'Le règne de la nuit désormais va finir'. L'invention et la diffusion de l'éclairage public dans le royaume de France (1697-1789)*, thèse de doctorat en histoire moderne, Université de Lille 3, 2017, 250-305, URL: https://theses.hal.science/tel-01915183.

Une floraison de pétitions en faveur d'un éclairage public

La prise de parole quasi spontanée mais concertée des citoyens, pour réclamer un éclairage public aux municipalités à partir de la deuxième moitié du XVIII[e] siècle, avec une très nette accélération dans les années 1780, témoigne de l'émergence d'une révolution culturelle. Le corpus étudié comprend 54 requêtes ou pétitions[57] conservées à Aix, Bordeaux, Lyon, Marseille, Metz, Montpellier, Nantes, Rennes et Tours, malgré une pratique pétitionnaire moins ancrée en France qu'en Angleterre au XVIII[e] siècle. Contrairement aux suppliques envoyées au pouvoir royal contre l'établissement des lanternes en 1697, les demandes des citoyens pour réclamer de l'éclairage sont moins empreintes d'humilité, se rapprochant de la 'pétition moderne', révolutionnaire et politisée scrutée par Sophie Wahnich[58]. De nombreux pétitionnaires soulignent que leur contribution aux impôts de la cité leur donne droit, en tant que 'citoyens' à l'installation de réverbères.

Les demandes sont formulées par des collectifs de 'riverains'[59], propriétaires et/ou locataires d'une ou de plusieurs rues adjacentes, d'une place, ou les praticiens d'un établissement. Elles recueillent en moyenne entre une dizaine et une soixantaine de signatures. Pour donner plus de poids à la pétition, certains requérants indiquent leur profession et/ou leur titre. On compte parmi les notables signataires: des maîtres tanneurs et manufacturiers, un directeur de fabrique, un notaire, des officiers de santé, un recteur d'hôpital, un procureur de la sénéchaussée, un avocat général, un président de la cour des comptes, des lieutenants des maréchaux de France et un premier président de parlement.

57. La pétition se définit comme une demande écrite adressée à une autorité pour obtenir la réparation d'une injustice.

58. Sophie Wahnich, «La pétition: une politisation de la plainte, 1789-1792», *Annales de l'Est*, 2 (2007), 71-87, cité dans Agnès Benoît, «Le 'Pétitionnaire universel': les normes de la pétition en France et au Royaume-Uni pendant la première moitié du XIX[e] siècle», *Revue d'histoire moderne & contemporaine*, 58/4 (2011), 45-70.

59. Le terme apparaît dans la pétition de Tours. AM Tours, DD 26, Supplique des habitants et propriétaires de ladite ville à Messieurs les maires, lieutenant, échevins & officiers municipaux de la ville de Tours, 1788.

Seules trois requêtes individuelles sont directement formulées par des femmes issues d'un milieu social supérieur: la mère supérieure d'un couvent, une entrepreneuse de voitures de roulage et une maîtresse de pension noble. Ces trois demandes ont en commun de ne pas avoir comme objectif la satisfaction d'un besoin personnel, mais celle d'individus sous la protection de la requérante: des moniales, des cochers, un fils et des locataires. À Nantes, la maîtresse de pension qui habite à proximité d'un péristyle, supplie les officiers municipaux de paver devant sa maison située sur la place d'Armes et «d'ordonner qu'on place sous la voûte de ce passage un réverbère qui donnera à ses locataires plus de sureté par un passage qu'ils redoutent»[60]. Rares sont les pétitions qui revendiquent ouvertement un droit à la lumière pour les femmes. Au contraire, lorsque ces dernières sont mentionnées, c'est pour dénoncer des conduites féminines jugées scandaleuses, en premier lieu le libertinage ou la prostitution. La pétition des Habitants et propriétaires de Tours constitue une exception. Parmi les arguments invoqués par les requérants figurent les insultes faites aux «femmes honnêtes», la possibilité de prolonger le travail des «ouvrières occupées aux manufactures et a une multitude d'autres ouvrages» et «de se rendre à leur domicile avec sûreté»[61]. L'inégalité des genres dans l'occupation de l'espace public nocturne se lit également dans les témoignages laissés par plusieurs femmes interrogées à Metz à l'occasion d'une enquête concernant un vol de chandelles. Parmi ces dernières, une femme de chambre âgée de dix-sept ans déclare qu'elle a signalé à sa maîtresse «qu'il serait dangereux pour elle, d'aller la rechercher les soirs, si cela continuait, que le quartier étoit un coupe-gorge»[62].

En offrant la possibilité aux femmes de circuler plus tardivement dans la rue, l'illumination publique constitue un nouvel

60. AM Nantes, DD 272, Supplique de la veuve Montaudouin de la Clartière à Messieurs les maires, échevins et procureur du roi sindic de la ville et communauté de Nantes, 25 janvier 1785, sans pagination.

61. AM Tours, DD 26, Supplique des habitants et propriétaires de ladite ville à Messieurs les maires, lieutenant, échevins & officiers municipaux de la ville de Tours, 1788, sans pagination.

62. AM Metz, FF 210, Instruction criminelle à l'encontre de Henry Gerard, 25 novembre 1783, sans pagination.

outil de justice sociale. D'autres catégories d'habitants y trouvent aussi un bénéfice. Ceux qui résident dans les faubourgs, qui ont longtemps été exclus du service public – à l'exception notable de Rennes et de Bordeaux – réclament aussi l'installation de lanternes, par mesure d'égalité avec la cité intra-muros. Ils sont entendus, puisque à la veille de la Révolution, l'éclairage franchit la barrière des murailles dans de nombreuses villes, et se répand même au-delà. En 1777, la route très fréquentée entre Versailles et Paris est dotée de 172 réverbères à la demande du pouvoir central[63].

Des requérants issus d'un large éventail de milieux professionnels

Les requérants appartiennent à un large éventail de milieux professionnels: la pêche, l'industrie, les travaux publics, le commerce, les transports et les professions du soin.

Dans les grands ports de commerce maritime en pleine expansion démographique et transformation urbanistique, les négociants sont à l'initiative des premières souscriptions publiques pour le renouvellement du parc de luminaires ou le rétablissement de l'éclairage urbain. À Bordeaux, dès 1745, les négociants en vin du faubourg des Chartrons obtiennent l'autorisation de l'intendant Tourny (1743-1757) de rétablir l'illumination publique dans leur quartier. Alors que Paris et la majeure partie des grandes villes continuent de s'éclairer à la lanterne à chandelle, les Bordelais cherchent à innover en adoptant le modèle hollandais: des lanternes fixées à des mâts, aux parois de verre d'un seul tenant, fonctionnant à l'huile[64]. Le projet prend de l'ampleur pour finalement s'étendre aux quartiers des Clarons[65], de la

63. Nicolas Lyon-Caen, Raphaël Morera, *À vos poubelles citoyens! Environnement urbain, salubrité publique et investissement civique (Paris, XVI^e^-XVIII^e^ siècle)*, Ceyzérieu, Champ Vallon, 2020, 21; Vincent Milliot, *Un policier des Lumières. Suivi des Mémoires de J. C. P. Lenoir, ancien lieutenant général de police de Paris, écrits en pays étrangers dans les années 1790 et suivantes*, Seyssel, Champ Vallon, 2011, 580-81.

64. AD Gironde, C 1077, État de cinquante lanternes, leurs fers et assortiments que le S. Decourt a fait venir de Rotterdam, 1750, sans pagination.

65. AD Gironde, C 1077, Souscription publique des habitants et négociants des Clarons, 1745, sans pagination.

Palu[66], au cours du Chapeau Rouge, à la place royale[67], et à l'ensemble de la ville en 1758[68]. En 1787, un requérant de marque, le comte de Montmorin, secrétaire d'État à la marine demande aux jurats, invoquant «le Service du Roi et le Bien Public», d'équiper le nouveau chantier naval royal de Bacalan, de lanternes à réverbères, où «il sera employé un très grand nombre d'ouvriers qui le soir quitteront les travaux à l'heure ou il est d'usage de les cesser pour les reprendre le lendemain»[69]. Dans la cité girondine, le mouvement de diffusion de l'éclairage prend une tournure originale, puisqu'il se propage de la périphérie vers le centre.

Aix et Marseille commencent aussi à s'éclairer dans les années 1780, grâce aux souscriptions publiques lancées par les négociants. Dans la cité phocéenne, 21 habitants se cotisent en 1784 pour financer l'éclairage public du port[70]. L'année suivante, la demande s'élargit aux professionnels de la mer qui réclament dans le quartier de la Tourette l'installation de plusieurs réverbères tout au long de la place du même nom, qui bénéficieraient aux capitaines de navire et «seroit d'un grand secours aux navigateurs, et aux pauvres pêcheurs, qui trop souvent passent de tristes nuits à la mer, faute de reconnaitre l'entrée du Port». La pétition recueille une trentaine de signatures, parmi lesquelles celles de six capitaines de vaisseau, de navire marchand, «dans l'art de la marine» et d'un pilote[71].

Les milieux du commerce et de l'artisanat se montrent particulièrement soucieux de disposer d'un éclairage public dans leur

66. AD Gironde, C 1077, Ordonnance de l'intendant pour l'installation de lanternes dans le quartier de la Palu, 29 decembre 1746, sans pagination.

67. AD Gironde, C 1077, État de ce qui est dû pour les lanternes fournies et posées dans le quartier de la rue du Chapeau-Rouge et de la place Royale», 10 mars 1750, sans pagination.

68. AM Bordeaux, DD 10, Note sur les recettes des droits du roi entrant dans le port pour payer les dépenses de l'entretien des lanternes, 1759, sans pagination.

69. AM Bordeaux, DD 10, Lettre de Najac à MM les jurats, 17 septembre 1787, sans pagination.

70. Achat par 21 habitants de lanternes à réverbères. La seule profession indiquée est celle de libraire: AM Marseille, DD 314, Note des habitants qui se font éclairer par cotisation, 2 septembre 1784, sans pagination.

71. AM Marseille, DD 314, Supplique des propriétaires et locataires des maisons situées au quartier de la Tourette à l'honorable conseil de la ville de Marseille, 1785, sans pagination.

quartier pour faciliter la circulation des passants, des transports à cheval ou en voiture, qu'il s'agisse de sortir ou de rentrer chez soi. À Nantes, huit marchands maîtres tanneurs et manufacturiers du quartier du Bourgneuf déclarent ne plus pouvoir sortir de chez eux après six heures, car leur rue plongée dans l'obscurité sert «d'azile à un très grand nombre d'étrangers tous inconnus, la plus part vendent du vin en guinguet ou autrement»[72]. Si à Rennes, le capitaine de la fabrique de chapeaux de la rue Hue, sur la route de Paris, demande l'installation d'un réverbère, sans justifier sa requête[73]; les habitants du Bas des Lices et de la rue Nantoise réclament des lanternes publiques pour le passage des «voyageurs qui arrivent de Nantes, de Vannes [et] Lorient»[74]. Une entrepreneuse de voitures de roulage de la rue des Champs Élysées, lassée d'assister aux accidents quotidiens de voitures et de chevaux dans sa rue, fait le lien entre l'état de la voirie dépourvue de pavés et l'absence d'illumination[75]. En 1788, les habitants et propriétaires de Tours se disent «fort surpris» de l'absence d'éclairage de la ville, alors qu'elle constitue «l'un des plus grands passages du royaume, ou affluent tous les jours une quantité considérable d'étrangers et de voiture de toute espèces»[76].

Les riverains souhaiteraient en outre que l'éclairage s'adapte aux pratiques de circulation. À Nantes, une pétition critique l'illumination circonscrite aux extrémités de la place de Bretagne, alors que:

> tous les habitants de la ville qui vont et viennent de la fosse au marché, prennent la Diagonal, et parcourent 60 toises sans être éclairés; et courent le risque d'être écrasés par les voitures, comme il est arrivé dernierement au sieur Picard habitant, revenant de la Comedie[77].

72. AM Nantes, DD 375, Supplique des propriétaires et locataires de la rue du Petit Bourgneuf, 20 août 1788, sans pagination.

73. AM Rennes, BB 676, Délibération du 28 septembre 1782, sans pagination.

74. AM Rennes, BB 625, Délibération du 3 décembre 1739, sans pagination.

75. AM Rennes, FF 396, Plainte de la veuve Grégoire, 8 janvier 1782, sans pagination.

76. AM Tours, DD 26, Supplique des habitants et propriétaires de ladite ville à Messieurs les maires, lieutenant, échevins & officiers municipaux de la ville de Tours, 1788, sans pagination.

77. AM Nantes, DD 375, Procès-verbal de Mathurin Crucy pour le réverbère à placer à la place de Bretagne, 3 novembre 1787, sans pagination.

Après les artisans et les commerçants, les signataires des pétitions appartiennent aux professions du soin: aux milieux ecclésiastiques et hospitaliers, qui nécessitent des déplacements nocturnes. À Aix, les religieux de Picpus, parmi lesquels le gardien, soutenus par les habitants du quartier – la pétition comprend douze signatures – souhaiteraient pouvoir se rendre de leur maison à leur église (Notre-Dame de Beauvezet) pour le transport des vases sacrés, en toute sécurité, après la nuit close[78]. Dans la capitale bretonne, les requêtes apparaissent dans les registres de délibération de la ville. Dès 1741, en pleine période de reconstruction, à la suite du grand incendie de 1720, les sieurs recteurs et prêtres de Saint-Étienne, obligés d'administrer de nuit les sacrements aux malades, obtiennent l'autorisation d'installer quatre lanternes[79]; la municipalité accorde en 1753, au «sieur recteur de Saint-Hélier» et aux «plus notables habitants» du quartier, le droit d'établir trois lanternes[80]. Néanmoins, les raisons pour lesquelles un groupe d'habitants obtient ou non satisfaction de la part de la municipalité n'est jamais explicité, comme lorsqu'en 1788, les prêtres de l'hôpital se voient refuser la mise en place d'un réverbère dans la cour[81].

Les hôpitaux et leur voisinage ont aussi besoin d'être éclairés durant la nuit, comme le rappelle le commissaire des guerres chargé de la police de l'établissement militaire de Metz, qui adresse aux édiles une pétition au nom des officiers de santé. Ces derniers réclament l'installation d'un réverbère sur le pont qui mène à l'hôpital, afin «d'éviter les accidents qui arrivent lorsqu'on apporte à cet hopital les hommes de la garnison qui tombent malades»[82]. À Montpellier, les riverains de la promenade

78. AM Aix, DD 75, Pétition des propriétaires et habitants des maisons situées rues du St Esprit, de l'Hôpital et de la Pureté à Messieurs les Maires, consuls et assesseurs de cette ville d'Aix, n.d., sans pagination.

79. AM Rennes, BB 628, Délibération du 19 octobre 1741, sans pagination.

80. AM Rennes, BB 640, Délibération du 18 octobre 1753, sans pagination.

81. AM Rennes, BB 648, Délibération du 31 janvier 1788, sans pagination.

82. AM Metz, DD 53, Lettre adressée à MM les officiers de l'hôtel de ville de la ville de Metz, 23 janvier 1788, sans pagination.

basse du Peyrou apportent leur soutien aux officiers de l'hôpital militaire qui se plaignent de l'insuffisance de l'illumination par une seule lanterne située devant la porte de l'établissement, parce que «les médecins, les chirurgiens sont obligés d'aller & de venir a toute heure […] suivant les besoins de cette maison»[83]. À Marseille, le recteur de l'hôpital des insensés participe à la pétition qu'une trentaine d'habitants du faubourg de Saint-Lazare sur la route d'Aix pour l'installation de plusieurs réverbères. Au vu des difficiles conditions de détention des malades dans cet établissement surpeuplé, les douze recteurs de l'établissement devaient probablement s'inquiéter des possibilités d'évasion des personnes détenues[84]. Les besoins diffèrent selon les structures hospitalières. Ici, l'éclairage permet de mieux contrôler les sorties.

Conclusion

Le prisme de l'éclairage public donne à voir un paysage urbain nocturne en mouvement, où le principe du couvre-feu tombe lentement en désuétude. Si les populations urbaines cherchent à résister dans un premier temps à l'application d'une mesure qu'elles jugent inutile, imposée par la monarchie louis-quatorzienne, à l'orée de la Révolution, l'éclairage public est revendiqué par l'ensemble des citadins comme un critère d'urbanité. Comment expliquer ce basculement ? Durant le dernier tiers du XVIII^{e} siècle, émerge une demande de lumière qui constitue une opportunité pour la diffusion l'éclairage au réverbère qui marque le passage d'une nuit illuminée rythmée par le couvre-feu, où la lumière reste l'apanage des élites, à une nuit éclairée plus populaire et plus active. Dans la nuit illuminée, les lanternes scintillent, servent de points de repère ou de mise en scène, elles n'ont pas vocation à favoriser le développement des activités

83. AM Montpellier, DD 354, Pétition en demande d'un réverbère à placer sous la promenade basse du midi présentée par les propriétaires voisins de l'hôpital militaire, septembre 1788, sans pagination.

84. Jean-Louis Blanc, «L'asile des aliénés de Marseille», Association des Amis du Patrimoine de Marseille, n.d., URL: https://patrimoine-medical.univ-amu.fr/articles/article_asiles-des-alienes.pdf.

nocturnes. Dans la nuit éclairée, les lanternes à réverbères mettent la science et la modernité plutôt que la monarchie en spectacle. Elles quadrillent l'espace au profit de l'ensemble des citadins qui peuvent ainsi prolonger leurs activités. La nuit éclairée résulte d'un long processus d'appropriation des habitants qui conduit au désenchantement du paysage nocturne, dont le rythme varie selon les espaces étudiés. L'innovation technique ne constitue pas un critère suffisant pour la définir. Les ténèbres s'éclairent parce que la culture de la nuit a changé. La police fait le choix d'accompagner ce changement, en équipant les promenades et les abords très fréquentés des salles de spectacle en éclairage public. À l'intérieur du théâtre, l'installation de réverbères a notamment pour but d'améliorer la mise en scène. Pour autant, quand les citoyens, plus que les citoyennes dont la parole commence tout juste à émerger, adressent aux édiles des pétitions pour obtenir des réverbères durant le dernier tiers du XVIII^{e} siècle, les loisirs sont rarement mentionnés. Les autorités urbaines semblent accorder une plus grande légitimité aux demandes qui reposent sur la notion de contrainte: le droit de rentrer chez soi en toute sécurité ou de poursuivre son activité dans les milieux du commerce, les professions ecclésiastiques et hospitalières. Ce sont les habitants des faubourgs qui sont longtemps restés plongés dans l'obscurité qui se mobilisent le plus pour obtenir de l'éclairage. En décloisonnant l'espace public, la nuit éclairée laisse ainsi éclore un puissant désir de mobilité à l'initiative des élites qui profite à l'ensemble des citadins.

ABSTRACT

Sophie Reculin, *The Evolution of Nocturnal Practices in the Early Modern City, Through the Prism of Street Lighting*

This paper seeks to elucidate an initial paradox: despite the existence of a curfew, the prism of street lighting that developed in eighteenth-century France suggests the existence of changing urban nocturnal practices. Inhabitants parked, strolled at a slow pace, or moved more quickly through the city during the dark hours. The aim is to examine the evolution of these practices, focusing on specific places that were occasionally visited: places of prestige (royal squares), of exhibition (experiments with streetlamps), and of leisure (promenades, the surroundings and interiors of theaters). Another category of spaces, less well defined by their great diversity, shows that the residents are not limited to the role of passers-by or spectators. The growing number of requests and petitions for streetlighting on the eve of the French Revolution, in which women began to take the floor, reveal a phenomenon of appropriation of space, which pushed back the practice of curfew, through the daily use of buildings or neighborhoods for professional reasons.

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MATERIALITY OF SLEEP

Ilaria Hoppe

THE AGENCY OF BEDS: EARLY MODERN VISIONS OF A 'BRIGHT' FURNITURE

Beds Are Not Only Used at Nighttime

There seems to be a natural connection between the night and the need for sleep and thus for a bed. If we leave our Eurocentric view, however, it becomes clear that this function is not mandatory: in many cultures, people sleep on the floor, on a mat or a carpet[1]. In this respect, the question arises of the special nature of European beds, which in the early modern period partly turned into luxury items with important representative functions, as I will show in the following. To facilitate an understanding of these alternative purposes, it is helpful to look at the different historical conceptions of the terms 'private' and 'public'. Even before the recent pandemic, these spheres were no longer as clearly separated owing to the possibilities of working on mobile devices: beds had become a working space[2]. In general, nonetheless, the bed as a concept remains tied to an everyday understanding of intimacy and privacy – a development that gained prominence only in the nineteenth century. Prior to that, it had been a more polyvalent sphere serving a variety of functions, not only during nighttime. The bed became a key item for social distinction and dynastic representation, as well as an object

1. Carol Worthmann, Melissa K. Melby, «Toward a Comparative Developmental Ecology of Human Sleep», in Mary A. Carskadon (ed.), *Adolescent Sleep Patterns: Biological, Social, and Psychological Influences*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, 69-117.

2. Beatriz Colomina, Andreas Rumpfhuber, August Ruhs (eds.), *The Century of the Bed*, Wien, Verlag für moderne Kunst, 2014.

The Bright Side of Night. Nocturnal Activities in Medieval and Early Modern Times. Edited by V. Huber, R. Schmitz-Esser and M. Weber, Firenze, SISMEL - Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2024, pp. 181-197.
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with which magical and spiritual ideas were associated. Thus, especially for the upper social classes, it belonged definitively to the "bright side of the night". As the following material shows, the bed was seen as precious and important, a place for resting and healing, and for sensual pleasure, as well as a sacred sphere allowing visions and ecstasies.

Sources

Access to this multilayered sphere is possible only to a limited extent because many of the beds from this period have not survived, which is attributed either to their above-average size or to poor materials[3]. The sources offered by the history of art are mostly pictorial representations, each of which must be situated in its own historical, social, and media-specific context. Until the sixteenth century, depictions of beds in Italy, for example, are very often in daylight, whereas in northern art we have night scenes as early as the fifteenth century. Only when *chiaroscuro* became established as one of the most attractive ways of painting did the representation of night scenes increase. For religious subjects especially, the sacred luminous light became a sign of spiritual experience and transcendence[4]. Another media-specific aspect is that beds became per se a site for the production of decorative and representative images. This realization results above all from the evaluation of inventories, which also sheds light on the material properties of beds[5]. In some cases, court chronicles allow further clarification of their different functions. As my example from the Florentine Villa Poggio Imperiale will show, however, these sources rarely allow a direct approach to nighttime activities in beds. Therefore, an analysis necessitates a

3. Katja Kwastek, *Camera. Gemalter und realer Raum der italienischen Frührenaissance*, Weimar, VDG, 2011, 222; for the material culture of beds, see the contribution in this volume by Sasha Handley.

4. Wolfgang Schöne, *Über das Licht in der Malerei*, Berlin, Gebr. Mann, 1954; Markus Zink, *Theologische Bildhermeneutik. Ein kritischer Entwurf zu Gegenwartskunst und Kirche*, Münster, LIT, 2003, 384-85.

5. Peter Thornten, *Interni del Rinascimento italiano, 1400-1600*, Milan, Leonardo, 1992, 111-67.

combined examination of pictorial representation, material tradition, and textual specification. Additional support for this approach comes from a methodological framing that incorporates both spatial and object-based theories for a historical reconstruction of the agency of beds.

Method

Most of the following material results from my studies on women's apartments at the Florentine court of the Medici[6]. The analysis was guided by an interest in the relationship between gender and space against the backdrop of spatial turn-theories and was conducted on several layers, i.e., architectural, functional, visual, and social. This method allowed for both a structural investigation of gender relations beyond biographical models and a specific historical contextualization of relevant art works and furniture. The focus on the bed was then a next step inspired by the research of Irene Nierhaus, who turned her attention from spaces to objects. For this purpose, the bed and its representation are considered as a matrix or blueprint referring to the body and its practices as well as to social and normative discourses[7].

To further enhance our historical understanding of the bed, the currently much discussed approaches of New Materialism – by Jane Bennett, among others – have shown to be effective as

6. Ilaria Hoppe, «A Duchess' Place at Court: The Quartiere di Eleonora in the Palazzo della Signoria in Florence», in Konrad Eisenbichler (ed.), *The Cultural World of Eleonora di Toledo*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004, 98-118; Ilaria Hoppe, *Die Räume der Regentin. Die Villa Poggio Imperiale zu Florenz*, Berlin, Reimer, 2012; Ilaria Hoppe, «Engendering Pietas Austriaca: The Villa Poggio Imperiale in Florence under Maria Maddalena of Austria», in Herbert Karner, Ingrid Ciulisová, Bernardo García García (eds.), *The Habsburgs and their Courts in Europe, 1400-1700: Between Cosmopolitism and Regionalism*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, KU Leuven, 2014 (PALATIUM e-Publications, 1), http://www.courtresidences.eu/index.php/publications/e-Publications/.

7. Irene Nierhaus, Kathrin Heinz, *Matratze / Matrize. Möblierung von Subjekt und Gesellschaft, Konzepte in Kunst und Architektur*, Bielefeld, transcript, 2016, see, in particular, my contribution: Ilaria Hoppe, «Das Bett in der Frühen Neuzeit: Praktiken der Vergesellschaftung am Beispiel Florenz», 389-410.

well. Like the *spatial turn* before, they try to shift the anthropocentric subject-object boundaries and their inherent power structures; primarily because they do not set the focus on human activity, but on an object, in our case the bed. At the same time, however, the object is not viewed in isolation, but always in relation to other human and non-human bodies. According to Bennett's idea of 'thing-power,' these objects have an agency of their own, but always within a structure or assemblage[8]. Therefore, the bed will be observed as the principal subject within a constellation of bodies, be it in pictorial representations or textual descriptions of events, for instance at court. Although Bennett draws on other examples for her theory, what can be observed in the evolution of the bed in the early modern period is comparable to her view of how an object can develop a life of its own that «obeys an emergent, rather than a linear, causality»[9]. Accordingly, both hegemonies and the not yet so clearly distinguished social spheres can be revealed. Moreover, Bennett's concept of an 'enchanted materialism'[10] – based on visibility and corporeal presence – is particularly useful for my case study since it is central to understanding early modern concepts of the bed as a nearly magical object or a sacred sphere, a medium of transcendental and transtemporal power.

The Private as a Modern Category

A modern understanding of privacy developed concurrently with the formation of historiography as an academic discipline in the nineteenth century. Both spheres were characterized by white, masculine, bourgeois norms that led to numerous exclusions[11]. It

8. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter. A Political Ecology of Things*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2010, 23-24; Katharina Hoppe, Thomas Lemke, *Neue Materialismen zur Einführung*, Hamburg, Junius, 2021, 43.

9. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 41.

10. Hoppe, Lemke, *Neue Materialismen zur Einführung*, 52.

11. Joan W. Scott, «Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis», *American Historical Review*, 91 (5) (1986), 1953-75; Claudia Opitz, *Um-Ordnung der Geschlechter. Einführung in die Geschlechtergeschichte*, Tübingen, edition diskord, 2005, 25-28, 60-66.

was not until the second half of the twentieth century that research turned toward the everyday or private life as a relevant subject, as can be seen by the seminal publication campaigns of Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby[12]. In my view, it is only this changed perspective that made it possible to fully understand the manifold functions of the early modern dwelling house, its fittings, and decoration. The use of the term 'bed,' for example, was not always tied to a piece of furniture but referred for lower social classes only to a sack filled with straw, used both on the floor or on a wooden board supported by stools, usually to be found in communal spaces like the kitchen[13]. This socialization is probably the most significant difference from everyday life in the modern era: one was never actually alone and there was no privacy, not even when sleeping. Among the upper classes and at court, the separation of the sexes had been common since antiquity, but each slept with a servant or serving woman[14]. When traveling, it was quite common until the eighteenth century to share a bed with strangers, often unclothed. Only gradually did the isolation and alienation of bodies occur, indicating a profound change in interpersonal relations, as explored by Norbert Elias: «And we recognize how far from self-evident it is that bed and body should form such psychological danger zones as they do in the most recent phase of civilization»[15]. For an historical understanding of the bed, I would like to stress, we must overcome our notion of privacy.

12. Georges Duby, Philippe Ariès, *Histoire de la vie privée*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1985-1987, 5 volumes; for this article, the German version was used: Philippe Ariès, Georges Duby, *Die Geschichte des privaten Lebens*, Frankfurt, S. Fischer, 1989-1993, 5 volumes.

13. Thornten, *Interni del Rinascimento italiano*, 111, fig. 111.

14. Leon Battista Alberti, *L'architettura. De re aedificatoria*, ed. and trans. Giovanni Orlandi, intro. and notes Paolo Porthoghesi, Milan, Edizioni Il Polifilo, 1966, 343. A survey for Europe is given by Jan Hirschbiegel, Werner Paravicini, *Das Frauenzimmer. Die Frau bei Hofe in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit*. 6. Symposium der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen (Dresden, 26-29 September 1998), Stuttgart, Thorbecke, 2000, and for Italy esp. in my article Hoppe, «A Duchess' Place at Court», 104-6.

15. Norbert Elias, *The civilizing process. Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott, rev. ed., Oxford, Blackwell, 2000, 142.

Early Renaissance in Florence

Indeed, the bed for the upper classes was not a thing to be hidden but had become a prestigious item and grew to nearly disproportional sizes[16]. In Florence, the processes of change in living and sleeping habits during the early modern period can be traced particularly well. We have here a rich stock of sources as well as a dynamic development of art and architecture in the service of an initially bourgeois-mercantile upper class, which was oriented toward courtly models. In the famous frescoes by Domenico Ghirlandaio in the Tornabuoni Chapel in Santa Maria Novella, for example, the *Nativity of Mary* is transposed to a fifteenth-century interior (fig. 14). The depiction, which is certainly idealized, nevertheless provides information about a living space. The woman in childbed receives her female guests there as a matter of course. Her sleeping place is elevated and surrounded by chests (*cassone*), as they had probably been common since the fourteenth century[17]. The back wall is part of a precious paneling with a figurative frieze and *all'antica* inlays. The bed serves to elevate St. Anne as well as to separate her from the profane space, since all the sacred actions such as cuddling and washing the holy child take place at or in front of the voluminous furniture. The scene of the visit, again, reflects a contemporary custom of the Florentine upper class in which women visited each other in childbed and brought gifts[18]. The bedchamber was thus not a private space in the modern sense but opened for social occasions to a partial public of female networks. The *camera* was furnished in a representative manner precisely because it was a social place; and in it, the bed was the most important object of distinction. If one could afford it, one invested in a

16. Attilio Schiaparelli, *La casa fiorentina e i suoi arredi nei secoli XIV e XV*, I, Florence, Sansoni 1908, 233; Kwastek, *Camera*, 222.

17. Giuseppe Cantelli, «L'arredo: la dimensione privata dell'abitare. Mobilia e suppelletilli nelle dimore di patrizi, contadini e borghesi», in Amerigo Restucci (ed.), *L'architettura civile in Toscana. Il Medioevo*, Cinisello Balsamo, Monte dei Paschi di Siena, 1995, 443-93, here 472-79.

18. Sharon T. Strocchia, *Death and Ritual in Renaissance Florence*, Baltimore/London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992, 172.

large bed in which several people could sleep[19]. The Florentine statutes of the carpenters' guild regulated manufacture very precisely and demanded a luxury tax for oversize versions[20]. It offered a space for a great variety of activities: sleeping, of course, but also working, conversing, receiving guests, playing, or praying[21]. The surrounding chests were used to store bedding and clothing as well as important documents and valuables, and this might be the reason why they were also called *forzieri*, meaning strongbox or safe. Especially in Florence they were turned into highly valuable objects with lavish and figurative decorations[22]. Within the mercantile upper class, they played an important role during wedding ceremonies, accompanying the bride to her new home[23]. Because of their ties to weddings, they were long thought of only as a female asset, but research has shown that the most decorated and furnished rooms in the Florentine palazzi served above all the representation of the male part of the family, making them the very center of the house[24].

At that time, these spaces were called *camera* or *anticamera*, in contrast to the hall (i.e., *salone*), which was larger and where strangers could enter. Graduations were also made through the furnishings. Thus, there were *camere* which featured a so-called *lettuccio*, a kind of sofa or daybed. Like the room in which they were placed, they took on several functions at once, such as rest-

19. Charles-Marie Bourel de La Roncière, «Gesellschaftliche Eliten an der Schwelle zur Renaissance. Das Beispiel Toskana», in Philippe Ariès, Georges Duby (eds.), *Die Geschichte des privaten Lebens*, II: *Vom Feudalzeitalter zur Renaissance*, Frankfurt, S. Fischer, 1990, 161-298, here 183; Philippe Contamine, «Bäuerlicher Herd und päpstlicher Palast: 14. und 15. Jahrhundert», *ibid*., 399-470, here 455-64.

20. Schiaparelli, *La casa fiorentina*, 233.

21. La Roncière, «Gesellschaftliche Eliten», 188.

22. Cristelle Baskins, *The Triumph of Marriage: Painted Cassoni of the Renaissance*, Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2008.

23. Bettina Uppenkamp, «Griselda – Ein Märchen von der Zivilisierenden Macht weiblicher Demut. Die Hundertste Novelle des Decamerone in Hochzeitsbildern des Quattrocento», in Anne-Marie Bonnet, Barbara Schellewald (eds.), *Frauen in der Frühen Neuzeit. Lebensentwürfe in Kunst und Literatur*, Köln/Weimar/Wien, Böhlau, 2004, 165-88, esp. 178-88.

24. Susanne Kress, «Frauenzimmer der Florentiner Renaissance und ihre Ausstattung: Eine erste 'Spurensuche'», in Hirschbiegel, Paravicini, *Das Frauenzimmer*, 91-113.

ing, needlework, reading, or receiving guests. They could also take on a throne-like connotation. In Botticelli's detail of the Annunciation, the daybed is elevated by a pedestal and highlighted as a special place with a veil (fig. 15)[25]. The distinction from the bedchamber behind is clear, but it stands open without a door, indicating a uniform domestic sphere that did not yet know a stringent separation of functions.

Beds, *lettucci*, and *cassone* were long thought of as furniture for private zones in a modern sense, which also led to misinterpretations of the related imagery. Indeed, it was their specific shape that set the conditions for profane painting of the early Renaissance as transverse rectangular images, for which the representation of the human body was particularly suitable. The first nudes seem to have been created for the inside lid of *cassone*[26], and the most famous paintings by Sandro Botticelli were decorations for *camere*. As the inventory of the Palazzo Medici shows, his *Primavera* – the icon of early Renaissance painting – hung above a *lettuccio* in the *camera terrena* of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, and others were part of wall decorations or beds. But this does not mean that their imagery was only dedicated to brides and weddings; on the contrary, it pursued highly political agendas in the service of the then ruling family[27].

French Courts

Another variant of the bed as a most important piece of furniture and, simultaneously, sacred sphere is known as the *lit de justice*, literally the bed of justice in French court ceremonial (fig. 16). This was a session of Parliament characterized by the presence of the king. His body was emphasized by a canopy with

25. Thornton, *Interni del Rinascimento italiano*, 147.

26. See, for example, the famous cassone by Giovanni di Ser Giovanni (Lo Scheggia) with the story of Hersilia in the front, c. 1460, Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst.

27. For a summary of the famous discussion in art-historical scholarship, see Cristina Acidini, «Für ein blühendes Florenz. Botticellis mythologische Allegorien», in Andreas Schuhmacher (ed.), *Botticelli. Bildnis. Mythos. Andacht*, ex. cat. Städelmuseum Frankfurt/Ostfildern, 2009, 73-96.

cushions, on a fabric-covered, bed-like platform[28]. The origin of this unusual form of meeting is attributed to various sources: One suspects a connection with the laying of decrees by the holy king Louis in front of his bedstead[29]; panegyric texts trace it back to a divine union between the allegories of secular rule with divine law in a bed[30]. In both cases, we see the ruler's body perceived as holy and its connection to the furniture that becomes thus – to echo Jane Bennett – an 'enchanted material' and an agent for a mythical bond. Even though the custom of using an oversized bed for this kind of ceremonial was abandoned in the sixteenth century, the name *lit de justice* remained until the end of the Ancien Régime.

The interaction between a bed and the ruler's body remained extremely important through the centuries in French ceremonial. As numerous miniatures from the famous books of hours illustrate, the reception in the *Grande Chambre*, furnished with a state bed, was already common at the Burgundian court around 1400 (fig. 17)[31]. In the illustration, the sovereign's body and the state bed behind him, which is characterized by a lavish canopy – as one would see over a throne – overlap strikingly. However, state beds at that time were apparently not used for sleeping, but primarily for acts of dynastic representation, such as weddings or the presentation of newborn princes and princesses[32]. They furnished smaller rooms that were located on the axis between the hall and the actual bedroom during the ever further differentiating ceremonial and were often used for audiences among a smaller circle, as shown in the illustration.

28. Elizabeth A. R. Brown, Richard C. Famiglietti, *The lit de justice: Semantics, Ceremonial, and the Parlament of Paris, 1300-1600*, Sigmaringen, Thorbecke, 1994.

29. *Ibid.*, 21.

30. *Ibid.*, 28.

31. Krista De Jonge, «Ceremonial 'Grey Areas': On the Placing and Decoration of Semi-Public and Semi-Private Spaces in Burgundian-Habsburg Court Residences in the Low Countries (1450-1550)», in Stephan Hoppe, Krista de Jonge, Stefan Breitling (eds.), *The Interior as an Embodiment of Power. The Image of the Princely Patron and its Spatial Setting (1400-1700)*, Heidelberg, arthistoricum.net, 2018, 31-55.

32. *Ibid.*, 41.

Erotic Beds

During the sixteenth century, the sleeping accommodation of the upper class solidified into an architectural enclosure connected by four fixed supports and a canopy[33]. Preliminary forms of alcoves, which had hygienic and climatic uses, had been known since the Middle Ages. From this, the bed developed into a luxury item as an independent piece of furniture. Its equipment included at least three mattresses: The lowest was a sack filled with straw, on top of which came the actual mattress filled with wool or inferior feathers. In Italy, the last layer was called *coltrice*, a cover padded with high-quality feathers, whose Italian etymology covers a very wide spectrum: from its materiality as a cushion or bedding to a reference to its function during marriage and sexuality[34]. The beds themselves became increasingly elaborate in their design. The fresco by Sodoma, in the Villa Farnesina in Rome, shows such a sumptuous four-poster bed, the elements of which are decorated with antique ornamental forms (fig. 18). This fresco is only one of many examples of bed scenes from the first half of the sixteenth century that are expressions of a rather permissive eroticism in Italy before the Catholic reform. Such depictions show the bed as a place of pleasure and not just as a frame for normative functionality or a sign of divine rulership. At the same time, the image reproduces the dominant gender discourse, in which the female body is assigned to the mattress as passive-receptive material. The prominent fresco commissioned by the powerful banker Agostino Chigi for his *camera* also shows the social permeability of bedrooms, as the scene is populated by maids, slaves, and putti. Thus, even in art, the bed was not necessarily imagined as a place of intimate togetherness. In Marc Antonio Raimondi's illustration – allegedly executed after sketches by Giulio Romano – of Pietro Aretino's *Modi*, we can even observe a voyeur (fig. 19). This pornographic work

33. Michael H. Sprenger, «Das höfische Bett. Überlegungen zu einem bedeutenden Möbel in der fürstlichen Repräsentation der Frühen Neuzeit», *Barockberichte*, 48/49 (2007), 162–75.

34. Thornten, *Interni del Rinascimento italiano*, 165.

from 1524 was censored immediately after its appearance, sending the engraver to prison and Aretino into exile[35]. I chose this illustration because here the bed actually 'acts', as the mattress protrudes like a tongue, and the female body too is not passive, but takes an athletic posture. It is quite clear that the illustration as well as the bold, pornographic accompanying text were addressed to a male audience; however, from a materialistic perspective, the dichotomy between active-passive and male-female dissolves. Rather, the bodies and the furniture interact with each other.

The connection between the bed, the erotic, and the night remained tied especially to the iconography of *Cupid and Psyche*. Such erotic subjects were seen less at the beginning of the Catholic reform, but re-emerged after 1600, mainly as paintings for collectors. The story by Apuleius allowed the rendering of naked bodies and the then so successful *chiaroscuro* painting. The version by Jacopo Zucchi furthermore shows a canopy bed. Such beds later became known as *lits à la romaine* and were considered as the erotic bed par excellence, possibly used by elite prostitutes (fig. 20)[36]. In fact, the bed occupies the entire pictorial space and additionally shows a miniature of Michelangelo's sculpture *Night* in the background. Despite the strong appeal of the naked female allegory, the corresponding *Rime* by Michelangelo interpret sleep as a lack of pain and shame:

Caro m'è' l sonno, e più l'esser di sasso,
mentre che' l danno e la vergogna dura;
non veder, non sentir m'è gran ventura;
però non mi destar, deh, parla basso[37].

My sleep is dear to me, and more dear this being of stone,
as long as the agony and shame last.
Not to see, not to hear [or feel] is for me the best fortune.
So do not wake me! Speak softly[38].

35. James G. Turner, *Marcantonio Raimondi's Lost Modi and their Copies*, «Print Quarterly», 21/4 (2004), 363-84.

36. Thornton, *Interni del Rinascimento italiano*, 156.

37. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Rime*, con la introduzione di G. Testori e a cura di E. Barelli, Milano, Fabbri, 2001, 261.

38. Kenneth Gross, *Dream of the Moving Statue*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006, 94.

The last denotation perfectly suits the story of the ancient lovers, as Psyche was forbidden to wake up Cupid. Unable to resist, she had to endure many difficulties before she could embrace her loved one again and give birth to a daughter called Voluptas, the goddess of sensual pleasures[39].

The Catholic Bed

At the same time, we see the development of increasingly complex spatial structures in princely residences, culminating in Versailles in the mid-seventeenth century. In the sense of Jürgen Habermas's historic notion of representation, the dominant concept of power was based on the idea of a divine right by God's grace embodied by the ruler[40]. The legitimation of such power therefore sought to highlight and demarcate these bodies from their surrounding – and as we have seen – omnipresent society through ceremonial, architecture, and furniture like the famous state beds used for the *Lever et Coucher* of the French rulers. The often comical scenes in cloak-and-dagger movies portraying this custom tell us a lot about the aforementioned modern estrangement from the proximity of beds and bodies in the centuries before. On the other hand, it was long assumed that the Spanish court ceremonial of the Habsburgs did not know this use. However, the research of Magdalena Sánchez and my case study on the Villa Poggio Imperiale in Florence have provided evidence to the contrary[41].

The latter had been lavishly modernized and furnished as a residence by order of Archduchess Maria Magdalena of Austria during her regency at the beginning of the seventeenth century. For the purposes of this study, the function and decoration of her bedchamber is of particular interest. The chronicle kept by

39. Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 6,24 sgg.

40. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, transl. by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence, Cambridge, Politi, 1989.

41. Magdalena S. Sánchez, *The Empress, the Queen, and the Nun. Women and Power at the Court of Philip III of Spain*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998; Hoppe, «Das Bett in der Frühen Neuzeit», 402-6.

Cesare Tinghi of the Florentine court of that period, plus the inventory of the villa from 1625, make it possible to reconstruct the relative functions[42]. It turned out that the regent did receive visitors in her state bed, but only when she was ill – and this seems to be the decisive difference from the French court. For example, the chronicle describes in detail a bloodletting. Afterwards the archduchess remained in bed and her children came to visit her there, as did her guest at that time, the Duke of Mantua. On this occasion, the co-regent Grand Duchess Christina of Lorraine presented her with a valuable gift, a black and gold lacquered cabinet. After lunch, which she probably also consumed in bed, the court musician Francesca Caccini came and played music together with the princes and princesses[43].

Magdalena Sánchez's research on the Spanish court under Queen Margaret of Austria, a sister of the Florentine regent, has shown how illness was used quite deliberately as a strategy to avoid ceremonial duties or to attract the attention of the ruler[44]. Sickness was thus not concealed at the court of Catholic queens, but on the contrary exposed and instrumentalized. Accordingly, the fresco program in the regent's bedchamber in Florence thematized the suffering of Christian virgin martyrs (fig. 21). The model for this decoration originates from a publication dedicated to her, in which the *vite* are presented as *vigilie*, i.e., as sacred readings for the night[45]. In the case of a female regency, the absence of a male authority put the reign in crisis. This becomes particularly evident in a bedchamber, with its strong reference to dynastic succession. In Poggio Imperiale, the selected

42. Florence, Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Miscellanea Medicea 11; Guardaroba Mediceo 479.

43. Florence, Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Miscellanea Medicea 11, ff. 41v–42r.

44. Sánchez, *The Empress, the Queen, and the Nun*, 156–71.

45. Niccolò Lorini del Monte, *Elogii delle piv principali S. donne del sacro calendario, e martirologio romano, vergini, martiri, et altre. Messi insieme con molte vigilie. Dal M.R.P.M. e Predicatore Generale F. Niccolò Lorini del Monte; dell'Ordine de' Predicatori, Patrizio Fiorentino, e Predicatore del Seriss. G. DVCA di Toscana D. COSIMO II. Dedicati alla Serenissima Arciduchessa Maria Maddalena d'Austria, Gran Duchessa, e Consorte del predetto Signore. A' quali si è aggiunto vn Raggionamento in lode de' Santi Martiri di Mugello, S. Cresci, e Compagni*, Florence, 1617.

virgin martyrs were able to fill this void, since they offered themselves as desexualized models of sanctity and femininity for the regent-dowager, who in turn was to be worshipped lying in her bed like the latter. The illustration of the life and death of Margaret of Austria, Queen of Spain, accompanying the lavish *exequies* in Florence from 1612, exactly depicts the concept of a female Catholic ruler lying in bed like a saint, as well as the typical design of a state bed as mentioned in the inventory of Poggio Imperiale (fig. 22).

Unfortunately, the bed itself has not been preserved. The inventory describes it as a richly decorated canopy bed, as we already know it from the *cinquecento*[46]. In addition to the usual mattresses and blankets, it had a *carriuola*, a movable bedstead for a servant that could disappear under the four-poster. On the other hand, a kneeler, and an ebony cabinet, probably a gift from Christina of Lorraine, could be clearly identified and retraced in the Florentine collections[47]. In addition, the inventory mentions numerous paintings with religious subjects. A special feature of the villa's collection were the many depictions of Saint Mary Magdalene, which refer to the regent's self-image as a holy princess. She even had herself portrayed by Justus Sustermans in a night scene as a penitent Saint Mary Magdalene[48]. Thus this theme found its way into her bedchamber in a large rectangular painting that shows the ecstasy of the saint (fig. 23)[49]. The motif of the reclining body is connected to a transcendent experience between life and death in a suggestive night scene. While devotional paintings had long been common in bedchambers, this tradition was clearly reinforced in Poggio Imperiale. The entire room was designed as a sanctuary, and the bed, as usual, formed the center of the action, turning itself into a 'reliquary' for the princely body[50]. As in other countries of the *old regime* and unlike in France, the bed was not part of the state ceremonial

46. Guardaroba Mediceo 479, c. 4v-5v; Hoppe, *Die Räume der Regentin*, 293.

47. Annamaria Giusti, *Opificio delle Pietre Dure di Firenze. Guida al Museo*, Venice, Marsilio, 1995, 40 sg.

48. Hoppe, *Die Räume der Regentin*, 67.

49. *Ibid.*, 60; A. E. Sanger, *Art, Gender, and Religious Devotion in Grand Ducal Tuscany*, Farnham, Ashgate, 124.

50. Sprenger, *Das höfische Bett*, 168.

but of an everyday ritual, as is also evident from the court chronicle by Cesare Tinghi. Nevertheless, the similarity to the throne remained; like the throne, the bed referred to the body of the prince or princess, even if they were absent[51]. In this sense, the furnishings and use of the bedchamber in Poggio Imperiale could assume a legitimizing function. The regent in bed, however, no longer embodied the role of a wife or mother, but rather a martyr-like saint who sacrificed herself for the public good, i.e., her dynasty and thus the symbolic order.

Closing Remarks

As the analysis of pictorial and written sources has shown, the bed in the early modern period acted as a medium of social distinction. Therefore, it was particularly large and ostentatious, serving not only as a venue for sleep or sexual intercourse but also as a space for communication and representation. In European courtly society, it symbolized proximity to the ruling body and thus to power itself. Therefore, it could assume throne-like connotations as well as qualities of a sacred sphere. It further follows that it could not be private at all in a modern sense, but on the contrary was exhibited publicly. The bed became an agent for both male potency and female fertility and sexuality; it referred to dynastic succession and embodied the divine grace. In this sense, the bed can be compared to a contact relic, which could thus become a place of salvation: in religious representations as well as in courtly ceremonial. The pictorial sources in particular strongly emphasize the connection between body and furniture and therefore, in my opinion, redeem the notion of 'enchanted materialism,' according to Bennett.

This assembly can also be observed in a final example. The ravishing sculpture of the living saint Ludovica Albertoni by Bernini in San Francesco a Ripa in Rome shows again that the bed was most definitely not something to be hidden but a sacred

51. *Ibid.*, 170 sg.

object suitable for a chapel (fig. 24)[52]. The sumptuous drapery of the curtain at the front, the wafer-thin folded sheets, and the saint's garment form a close bond for her body, emphasizing the dramaturgy of her ecstasy. Characteristically, her physiological processes and perceptions seem to be completely suspended and transferred into a death-like state. Such conditions either occurred spontaneously or were brought about by a purposeful routine, such as asceticism, prayer, or self-harm; and these rituals were preferably performed at night. To express such a rarefied state of mind, artists during the seventeenth century developed an iconography that relied on the tender relationship between the blessed and the divine. Here, the posture of the saint reflects complete mystical devotion to the heavenly beloved. Only through the visual association with the overwhelming feeling of erotic pleasure does the exceptional situation of ecstasy become comprehensible for the average viewer, who has no experience of it[53]. Undoubtedly, it is beyond imagination that such a display, where sensual pleasure seems to merge into a holy vision, would be executed in a contemporary Catholic church. But it is again a telling example of the agency of beds in the early modern period as a space for public occasions and communication, luxury and refinement, eroticism and sexuality, healing and transcendence. Commissioned by Pope Clement X's adopted nephew Cardinal Albertoni-Altieri, the sculpture clearly shows that, for the upper social classes of that time, the bed belonged to the "bright side of the night".

52. Shelly Karen Perlove, *Bernini and the Idealization of Death: The Blessed Ludovica Albertoni and the Altieri Chapel*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990; Gudrun Inboden, *Vorhangfall und poetische Ekstase: Gian Lorenzo Berninis Cappella Paluzzi-Albertoni, Rom, San Francesco a Ripa*, Berlin/München, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2021.

53. Ulrich Pfisterer, «Divine Rapture: Iconography of Religious Ecstasy», in U. Gross et al. (eds.), *Ecstasy in Art, Music, and Dance,* ex. cat., Kunstmuseum Stuttgart/Zentrum Paul Klee Bern, München/London/New York, Prestel, 2018, 69-71.

ABSTRACT

Ilaria Hoppe, *The Agency of Beds: Early Modern Visions of a 'Bright' Furniture*

During the early modern period beds became luxury items with important representative functions for the upper social classes in Europe. This is due to a completely different relationship between public and private than we are familiar with, and the bed is a key example to highlight this alternative practice. Drawing on different sources, like pictorial representations, inventories, and court chronicles the article thus shows a today mostly private item as a polyvalent sphere serving a variety of functions like resting and healing, sensual pleasure, or as a place for receiving guests, moreover as a sacred sphere allowing visions and ecstasies. The bed became a central piece for social distinction and dynastic representation, as an object with which magical and spiritual ideas were associated. This kind of perception led me to think of the bed as an entity with its own agency. Therefore, I also used a neo-materialist approach to emphasize the extraordinary importance of it for the pre-modern society, for which it belonged definitively to the «bright side of the night».

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THE BRIGHT SIDE OF NIGHT: SLEEPING WELL IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

Sound sleep was one of the most treasured nocturnal activities in the early modern world, and yet its history has been obscured by scholarly preoccupation with sleep loss and sleep disorders of varying levels of severity, and by attempts to locate the historical roots of the 'sleep crisis' in which many industrialized nations now find themselves. Our project, *Sleeping well in the early modern world: an environmental approach to the history of sleep care**, asks what it meant to sleep well in the years 1500-1750 and to explain how early modern communities in Britain, Scotland, Ireland, and early America tried to achieve this cherished state of being.

In common with our fellow participants in *The Bright Side of Night* conference, held in 2022 in Geneva, our research seeks to shed light on a cherished and sought-after nocturnal activity, namely the pursuit of restful slumber. Our project is rooted in the so-called 'positive turn' within the humanities – a phrase that was coined by Darrin McMahon in a history of emotions context, but which has been usefully adopted and adapted by medical humanities researchers such as Hannah Newton, who wish to uncover the positive agency and activities of a wide spectrum of healthcare practitioners in the past[1]. This 'positive turn' has encouraged us to shift focus away from the dominance of sleep

* This research project is funded by The Wellcome Trust, Grant Number: 219834/Z/19/A, 2021-25.

1. Darrin McMahon, «Finding Joy in the History of Emotions», in Susan Matt and Peter Stearns (eds.), *Doing Emotions History*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 2014, 104-19; Hannah Newton, *Misery to Mirth: Recovery from Illness in Early Modern England*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019.

The Bright Side of Night. Nocturnal Activities in Medieval and Early Modern Times. Edited by V. Huber, R. Schmitz-Esser and M. Weber, Firenze, SISMEL - Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2024, pp. 199-204.
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disorders and endemic sleep loss among scholars of sleep from a variety of disciplines. These are topics that continue to direct our field's starting points for research questions and sustained efforts to identify apparent 'watershed moments' such as industrialization or the digital world in transforming human sleep fortunes – usually for the worse.

One of the consequences of this approach to the history of sleep has been a tendency to idealize and homogenize 'premodern' or 'pre-industrial' experiences of sleep – to speak, sometimes nostalgically, of 'sleep we have lost'[2], and to obscure the active efforts of diverse early modern communities to *sleep well*, in a period that underwent its own wide-ranging environmental changes, from the so-called 'Little Ice Age' to transformations in land use, large-scale drainage of agricultural lands and processes of enclosure that curtailed people's opportunities to forage on common lands[3].

In thinking about how these developments relate to sleep, we might start with ground moss. Ground moss was prized as insulation material for bedding and as mattress stuffing owing to its absorbency, and it was also commonly used in medical recipes to procure sleep. Given the varied applications of ground moss in relation to sleep, we must consider the impact of protracted processes of land reform that wiped out over 2.75 million hectares of waste and common land in England alone. Similarly, we might also ask what the impact was of forms of agrarian specialization such as convertible husbandry and the four-crop rotation system on regional and national food cultures linked to sleep. Such shifts are associated with increased and more varied food production and with an increase in dairying, which most likely impacted on dietary practices linked to healthy sleep. The shift from pasture to arable land cultivation introduced new systems of crop rotation, and controversial land conversion and reclamation projects.

2. Roger Ekirch, «Sleep We Have Lost: Pre-industrial Slumber in the British Isles», *The American Historical Review*, 106 (2001), 343-86; Id., «The Modernization of Western Sleep: Or, Does Insomnia have a History?», *Past & Present*, 226 (2015), 149-92.

3. Gunhild Eriksdotter, «Did the Little Ice Age Affect Indoor Climate and Comfort? Re-theorizing Climate History and Architecture from the Early Modern Period», *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 13 (2013), 24-42.

Protests against the drainage of the English fens were partly driven by an appreciation of the ecological changes that would ensue, altering the customary range of foodstuffs and medicinal ingredients that people gathered to sustain and restore health. Similar projects in Cheshire and Lancashire also led to the depletion of mosslands, which provided fuel, insulation, and unique species of flora and fauna. Since drainage projects were accompanied by the widespread enclosure of common land, our project assesses the consequences of these changes for sleep management. Equally important is an assessment of increasing urbanization, and of the ecological and lifestyle challenges facing settlers in the English colonies of Virginia and Newfoundland. The way in which travelers and settlers adapted to the ecological profile of new habitats and attempted to adjust those environments to their own sleep requirements by transporting and growing 'Old World' crops and plants is a key concern, since it may uncover lively exchanges of medical expertise with indigenous communities[4].

Our project, featuring Dr. Holly Fletcher, Dr. Leah Astbury, PhD student Lucy Elliott, and myself, seeks to offer a more nuanced explanation of what it meant for communities in early modern England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and early America to sleep well. It will be the first project to define and analyze sleep habits as historically situated environmental practices, and our chosen locations allow us to compare sleep-care practices across a range of early modern ecologies – from the boggy wetlands of Ireland and East Anglia, and the mountains of Wales and Virginia, to the temperate marine climates of coastal England, Scotland, and Newfoundland, all of which shaped their inhabitants' motivations and opportunities for sleeping well.

Over the next four years, we aim to uncover an environmentally informed culture of 'sleep care', its conceptual underpinnings, and its manifestation in a range of everyday practices, from the selection of particular window coverings, bedding materials and heating devices to control temperature and light, to the sourcing of soporific foodstuffs, the cultivation of ingredients for

4. Pablo F. Gomez, *The Experiential Caribbean: Creating Knowledge and Healing in the Early Modern Atlantic*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

sleep tonics, and foraging for materials to cleanse and scent pillows and mattresses. Investigating sleep-care practices thus opens an important pathway to understanding the geo-specific nature and dependence of these essential healthcare practices and we hope it will reveal that 'sleeping well' involved much more than simply avoiding sleep disorders or coping with sleep loss. It should also uncover the deep well of sleep-related environmental knowledge that communities, and especially women, developed to offset the potentially damaging effects of local ecologies, seasonal changes, and environmental change, and expand the range of actors that have populated the history of sleep in the early modern world to date. The aim then is to shift the tone of conversation from 'crisis' to 'care'.

Communities in Britain and Ireland and settlers in England's colonies of Virginia and Newfoundland c.1500–1750 offer the ideal testing grounds for our study. They shared an immersive knowledge of the natural world that was underpinned by concepts of embodiment and subjectivity that were acutely environmental in nature. Influenced by ancient medical works that were adapted, translated, and circulated in European vernacular languages from the late fifteenth century, early modern Europeans understood themselves as products of God and the natural world that He created. These works insisted that human bodies were highly sensitive to their physical surroundings, with which they shared a common elemental make-up. These elements in turn corresponded to astral influences and to the four essential qualities of heat, cold, dryness, and moisture, whose mixture determined the balance of bodily humors that was central to health, and to an individual's 'complexion'.

Ecological profiles of different places were critical components of this geo-humoral health paradigm in which bodies were assumed to become accustomed to particular locales over time. One practical implication of this paradigm was the geo-specific nature of healthcare knowledge and practices, which was reflected in the influential healthcare rules of the 'six non-natural things' that underpinned most early modern health regimens and which encouraged people to adapt to, or counteract, detrimental environmental influences, partly by understanding proximate

species of flora and fauna as beneficial resources for health preservation and restoration. The importance of place within pre-modern healthcare has been studied in a general sense, in relation to the medical framework of the six non-naturals and linked to urban centers and air quality[5]. The effect that different ecological profiles had on sleep-care practices nonetheless remains obscure.

By identifying the array of sleep-care practices that different sets of environmental relations fostered between c.1500 and 1750, our project expands the range of environmental changes that have been linked to the transformation of human sleep fortunes. We will assess the importance of early modern processes of environmental change on sleep habits and the ways in which people actively managed those habits. By its close, we hope to be able to offer a more complex and more positive analysis of the sleep-environment nexus than currently exists.

5. Sandra Cavallo, Tessa Storey (eds.), *Conserving Health in Early Modern Culture: Bodies and Environments in Italy and England,* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2017; William Cavert, *The Smoke of London: Energy and the Environment in the Early Modern City*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016; Carole Rawcliffe, Claire Weeda (eds.), *Policing the Urban Environment in Premodern Europe*, Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam Press, 2019.

ABSTRACT

Sasha Handley, *The Bright Side of Night: Sleeping Well in the Early Modern World*

The following piece presents an overview of the new four-year research project 'Sleeping Well in the Early Modern World: An Environmental Approach to the History of Sleep Care', which is an Investigator Award funded by The Wellcome Trust [Grant number: 219834/Z/19/Z]. The project aims to uncover the myriad ways in which early modern communities in distinct locales within the early modern world (England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, coastal America) engaged with their physical surroundings to support healthy sleeping practices. We draw on herbals, recipe books, travel accounts, letters, diaries, archaeological remains and artefacts to understand how early modern knowledge about the material and botanical world shaped sleep practices, and how longer-term processes of environmental change from c. 1500–1750 influenced people's strategies for managing their sleep.

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AFTERWORD: WAYPOINTS IN THE NIGHT

Taken together, the studies in this collection exemplify and broaden the concept of the 'rhythms of the night' with which Jean-Claude Schmitt opens the book[1]. The book's editors and contributors show that focussing on the bright side of the night makes us «aware of the difference between the heart of the night – which is not necessarily its darkest moment – the fall of night or twilight, or on the contrary the appearance of the first light of dawn»[2]. These studies show how the rhythms of the night emerge from specific waypoints in the night, moments when the night enabled ways of thinking and acting that were socially desirable. We can understand these nocturnal waypoints like those used to navigate by land or sea: as a familiar sequence of reference points, each leading to the next. In the night these waypoints, such as curfew, midnight, matins, or the 'first light of dawn' were understood through their connections to one another, like links in a chain. They arose more from the experience of the night than from any precise measurement of it.

We can access this experience of the night because the contributors to this volume have identified groups, individuals, and ways of thinking that truly 'inhabited' the night. Whether they were spiritual authorities or social outcasts, these inhabitants of the night knew its contours, its depths, and its waypoints. When religious or political authorities viewed the night from the outside – as a dark and dangerous time to be contained, exploited, or policed – they engaged as little as possible with the experi-

1. See Schmitt's contribution to this volume.
2. *Ibid.*, 22.

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ence of time *within* the night. But those who *did* see the night as an opportune time – freedom seekers, mystics, ascetics, and city councils or citizens seeking more or better streetlighting – experienced the night in its divisions and parts, using the hours from dusk until dawn to enable a range of spiritual and secular activities. Although the moments in the night examined here differ in many ways, they were all defined in relation to one another, which invites us to collect the insights of this book by charting a sequence of waypoints from daylight and evening to midnight, matins, and on to dawn.

Daytime

We can start during the day because, as Ilaria Hoppe's contribution shows, objects associated with the night and sleep, such as beds, also had important diurnal roles in the pre-modern era. After referencing the royal *lever* (typically occurring sometime after daybreak), she examines the social role of the bed throughout the daytime for women rulers, and for bourgeois Florentine women, who after the birth of a child would receive guests and gifts by day while in bed. Given the bed's social, spiritual, and political uses, any time could be 'bedtime' in pre-modern Europe, where female saints and rulers were depicted as lying in bed. Surveillance and law enforcement could also extend the night into the day. As Schmitt notes, in medieval Venice the Lords of the Night (*Domini de nocte*), responsible for policing after dark, played such an important role in the governance of the city that the ruling council soon extended their authority into daytime policing, so that the Lords of the Night became the lords of the day as well.

The night was also a spiritual waypoint during the day whenever spiritual guides cited sleep as a metaphor for spiritual sloth, in which the sinner remains asleep to God, night and day. As Agnes Rugel shows, sermons for laypeople preached during the day might reference sleep, a fundamental aspect of the night, and extend it metaphorically into the pastoral/moral vocabulary of the day through parallel semantic oppositions such as 'darkness-

light', 'asleep-awake' and 'sin-guilt'[3]. The purpose was to figuratively «wake idle people to the dawn», as a draft sermon from the thirteenth or fourteenth century exhorted[4]. The protean night could extend its material culture, policing, and association with beds and sleep into the day.

Evening

The hours immediately after sunset were the busiest time of the night. As the contributions from Sophie Reculin and Maria Weber show, by the end of the eighteenth century western Europeans were filling the period between sunset and sleep with every kind of labor and leisure. Members of the British Parliament agreed that candles were «one of the necessaries of life» for both the «lower classes [...] as well as those of opulence». This 1784 Parliamentary discussion, cited by Weber, established that many of the poor «worked half their time by candle-light», primarily in the evening after dark, but also when rising before dawn to labor[5]. In France, the 1780s saw a wave of petitions and plans to establish or improve public lighting. Reculin shows that these initiatives were intended to adapt public lighting to a wide range of evening activities, including dockyard work, worship, movement between a city and its suburbs, and visiting promenades, cafés, and theaters. This part of the pre-modern night has the most rich and dynamic history – a history made especially vivid because this collection places evidence about uses of the evening in Caribbean slave societies studied by Adrian van der Velde alongside the European foci of Weber and Reculin.

In the medieval period examined by Jean-Claude Schmitt, city authorities and trade guilds tried to prevent the artisanal or manufacturing work of the day from extending into the evening. Working hours were limited, and in some towns the end of the legal workday was signaled by the sound of a specific bell. But, like the curfew, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the

3. Rugel, 55.
4. *Ibid.*, 58, n. 82.
5. Weber, 135.

limitations on evening activity receded in the largest cities, as the public streetlighting of the late seventeenth century reflected and promoted the nocturnalization of urban daily life. Weber discusses the corresponding expansion of domestic lighting: in the period before 1680, lighting implements such as glass windows, candlesticks, candle pans, tallow lamps, and mirrors were luxury items. After 1680, though, these lighting instruments appear more often in poor households. The wide range of domestic lighting options – from simple to luxurious – that made the evening more available for labor and leisure are the focus of Weber's contribution.

The impact of the small group of courtiers, officials, and wealthy urbanites who led the nocturnalization of the late seventeenth century must be described with care: for the vast majority of the people of Europe and the Caribbean, whose lives were rural, nocturnalization was felt only at a distance. As Reculin's work demonstrates, the most significant shift in the history of the evening came in the second half of the eighteenth century, as the residents of small cities who resisted the first wave of streetlighting in the late seventeenth century embraced it a century later. Her chapter examines French evidence, but the same pattern appears in the German-speaking lands[6]. She shows how after about 1760 French master craftsmen, port authorities, clergy, hospital officials, and groups who designated themselves as 'local residents', citizens, or taxpayers all petitioned for new or improved streetlighting, invoking a sort of right to get home safely from honest activities in the evening.

In the slave societies created by the French, English, and Dutch in the Caribbean, the history of the evening unfolded very differently. Strict curfews and patrols intended to limit the movement of the enslaved remained in effect throughout the era of slavery. Generally, enslaved persons out after eight o'clock in the evening (about two hours after sunset) without a pass would be jailed until claimed by their masters the next day. These curfews, patrols, and militias reflected a well-founded fear: as van

6. Craig Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire: A History of the Night in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, 153-55.

der Velde explains, "the threat of nocturnal revolt directly or indirectly transformed the daily – and nightly – lives of every person in the colonies"[7]. For this reason, nocturnalization developed very differently in the region. In contrast with London, Amsterdam, or Paris, there was no public streetlighting in colonial cities like Kingston, Willemstad, or Cap-Français. Evening and night activities were sharply divided between the social life of the white minority, which came to include coffee houses, theater, and balls, and the brutal nocturnal labor of the enslaved in the sugar mills and boiling houses of the plantations.

Midnight

We know from the work of Schmitt how important midnight was to the weekly cycle of the canonical hours. Midnight, however, was as much a symbol as an actual point in time. Anxious slaveowners in the Caribbean imagined it as the time when the enslaved would rise up, but it could also serve as an extension of the sociability of the evening. Van der Velde reports on the celebration of the centennial of the plantation town of Jodensavanne in Dutch Suriname in October 1785. The town's synagogue provided a lavish feast illuminated by more than a thousand lanterns. The 1,600 guests included Dutch colonial officials, and dancing began at midnight[8]. This time of night was open for sociability in western Europe as well, as Reculin has noted: «From the 1770s to the 1790s, the Swiss guard Ferdinand de Federeci, in charge of the security of the very popular Champs-Élysées promenade in Paris (where it was not unusual to meet ladies after midnight), worried in his police reports about the increase of nightly gatherings that he was ordered to disperse after ten o'clock in winter and midnight in summer»[9]. For elites in cities like Paris and London, nocturnalization had reached midnight itself.

7. Van der Velde, 116.
8. *Ibid.*, 123.
9. Reculin, 162.

The Heart of the Night

Those active after midnight entered a liminal time or state: this was 'the heart of the night' – and, like the heart, this waypoint in the night was both hidden and vital. Defined in relation to other parts of the night, it was hidden between the latest typical bedtime and the earliest time to rise. It was vital in the sense that, for the vast majority of any population, it was the central time for the refreshment of sleep.

Social categories could be obscured or transformed at any time of the night, but the hidden, liminal period deep in the night was especially suited for this function. Examples range from the sacred to the secular. According to the medieval hagiographies examined by Romedio Schmitz-Esser, the bodies of the holy dead often crossed key thresholds at night: opening a tomb, examining bones, or interring a saint in the course of a *translatio* – all were often explicitly described as being performed in the secrecy provided by the night. In her contribution, Anne-Lydie Dubois explains how mystics such as Catherine of Siena found in their nightly vigils «a very secret cell» where they could withdraw from the world and approach the Divine. Catherine herself noted explicitly that in her nightly vigils she remained awake in the hours *before* matins, while the friars in her religious community slept. And in similar terms reports of the nocturnal vigils of Marie d'Oignies emphasize that she remained awake with the relics of the saints of her church at night at a time when all others – including the clergy – were sleeping. During this hidden time, the saints whose relics she venerated crossed the threshold into this world and appeared to Marie: «they 'spent nights in celebration with her' and 'gave her prodigious spiritual comfort'»[10]. This same secrecy, which was at its height after all were asleep and before dawn, also served the earthly pleasures of illicit lovers, as described in the Middle German poetry of the *Tagelieder*, which originated in the late twelfth century.

Expressions of faith entirely forbidden by the religious and political authorities, such as the Afro-Caribbean traditions of

10. Dubois, 79.

Obeah and Vodou, were almost entirely nocturnal. Van der Velde quotes a Jamaican report from 1789 that describes Obeah as superstitious practices performed under a «Veil of Mystery [...] to which the Midnight Hours are allotted, and every Precaution is taken to conceal them from the Knowledge and Discovery of the White People»[11]. And even in relatively well-lit European cities in the long eighteenth century, the street lanterns went out during these midnight hours: the public streetlighting of the Old Regime was not intended to provide light from dusk until dawn. Public lighting kept lit until one o'clock in the morning was considered exceptional in Lyon in the 1780s[12].

These hours in the middle of the night were vital for restorative sleep. The scholarship collected here shows three contrasting disruptions to this part of the night: the monastic practice of rising for matins, individual forms of voluntary sleep deprivation by ascetics such as Catherine of Siena, and the forced nocturnal labor of enslaved Africans in Caribbean sugar production. To these we might add the literary trope of illicit lovers awake until dawn.

Matins occurred sometime within the heart of the night – on average about two o'clock in the morning[13]. The importance of this waypoint in the night to monastic liturgical life cannot be overestimated, as shown in the contributions by Schmitt, Dubois, and Schmitz-Esser. Schmitt very effectively cites the *Ménagier de Paris*, a fifteenth-century treatise on household management, to show how matins divided the night, and separated lay time from monastic time. The bourgeois husband explains to his young

11. Van der Velde, 119.

12. Reculin, 157-58.

13. Rising for matins 'in the middle of the night' also evokes the arguments about biphasic sleep made by Roger Ekirch in several influential publications. The work of Sasha Handley has begun to define and analyze pre-modern European sleep habits more precisely and locally as historically situated environmental practices. She sees a need to challenge «a tendency to idealize and homogenize 'pre-modern' or 'pre-industrial' experiences of sleep» (Handley, 200). See also Sasha Handley, *Sleep in Early Modern England*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2016. On the Ekirch thesis see most recently an attempt to challenge it by Gerrit Verhoeven, «(Pre)Modern Sleep. New Evidence from the Antwerp Criminal Court (1715-1795)», *Journal of Sleep Research*, 30, no. 1 (2020), 1-7; and responses by Ekirch in the same issue of the *Journal of Sleep Research*.

wife that when she «hears the bell of the neighboring monastery ringing for matins in the middle of the night, she should not get up, but should simply recite an oration before going back to sleep. Later, at sunrise, she will say to the Lord and to Our Lady two prayers *suitable for awakening or rising*»[14]. Ascetic rising in the dark of the night was not generally considered appropriate for married women, but Hoppe shows how the Archduchess Maria Magdalena of Austria, during her regency at the Villa Poggio Imperiale in the early seventeenth century, surrounded herself with various expressions of nocturnal piety and «even had herself portrayed by Justus Sustermans in a night scene as the penitent Saint Mary Magdalene»[15]. Catherine of Siena, on the other hand, made sleep deprivation part of her daily life, and her vigils were cited as evidence of her sanctity. She explained that no other act of self-discipline had cost her as much as the struggle against sleep (*bellum somni*)[16]. As noted above, she herself referred to the extension of her nightly vigils until the time of matins, suggesting that she exceeded the 'standard' asceticism of monastic life by staying awake when even the monks slept.

The material conditions of the production of sugar, the Caribbean commodity that enriched Europe more than any other, demanded 'round-the-clock labor' at harvest time. As van der Velde describes, as soon as the ripe canes were harvested, they had to be crushed to extract the sweet juice before it could ferment and turn sour. And this cane juice had then to be quickly boiled down and concentrated to prevent spoilage before refinement into molasses or sugar. This time pressure meant overnight work for the enslaved, who had already worked a full day harvesting the cane. Darkness, sleep deprivation, and exhaustion increased the number of accidents in the mills, where workers were crushed by rollers and burned by boiling syrup. Plantation owners and abolitionists alike agreed that nocturnal labor was essential during the harvest and sugaring periods, which totaled several months each year. This was true from the first years of sugar production across the region. As chattel slavery

14. Schmitt, 36.
15. Hoppe, 194.
16. Dubois, 73.

denied the humanity of the enslaved, it left very few sources on their experience of this nocturnal labor.

Pre-Dawn

The time just before dawn spoke to pre-modern people in several ways. With the spirit refreshed and the humors of the body at their calmest, it was considered the most fertile time for vivid, meaningful dreams. Others explained that the sleeping body is furthest from the carnal or physical and closest to God at this hour. For those who were still awake or already awake just before dawn, it was also a time of revelation and transition. In his discussion of Gerhard of Augsburg's *Vita sancti Uodalrici*, the life of Bishop Ulrich, Schmitz-Esser notes that near dawn, when the saintly Ulrich felt his life waning, he asked for a cross to be marked out with ashes on the ground. He laid upon it, was sprinkled with holy water, and died once the dawn had «illuminated the whole breadth of the world». Schmitz-Esser astutely explains this as a clear transition from the ambiguity and liminality of the night to the clear light of day. And it heralded the making of a saint[17]. In courts and cities, announcing the coming of dawn would be the last duty of the night for the watchman[18]. But for illicit lovers, the cry of the watchman, the light of the morning star, or the song of the lark made it clear that their secret time together was about to end. In the Middle German *Tagelieder*, the dawn ends the lovers' shared time. As discussed above, the spiritual poetry of the dawn existed alongside these secular, romantic, or erotic dawn songs. And beyond the literal dawn of the romantic dawn songs and the figurative dawn of the call for sleepers to awaken from sin, there was the dawn of labor, greeted by milkmaids, domestic servants, the working poor, and certain craftsmen such as bakers who were already awake and working as the sun came up.

17. Schmitz-Esser, 105.
18. Rugel, 40-41.

The contributors to this volume share a rich awareness of specific and recurring moments in the night, and it is this awareness that gives the collection both a powerful method and a coherent theme. By focussing on what the night enabled, the collection reveals myriad nocturnal activities that were neither diabolical nor dishonorable. Instead, we see the opportunities provided by the night as it reordered the hierarchy of the senses and of society, recasting epistemological, spiritual, and political authority. Thanks to these essays we can move with more confidence through the pre-modern night, from daylight through darkness to the dawn, and see how pre-modern men and women used each waypoint to reach beyond what could be thought, said, or done during the day.

ABSTRACT

Craig Koslofsky, *Afterword: Waypoints in the Night*

The studies in this collection show how the premodern night was structured by specific waypoints, marked by recurring moments such as curfew, midnight, matins, or the «first light of dawn». These waypoints arose more from the experience of the night than from any precise measurement of it. By focusing on «the bright side of the night» the book's editors and contributors have identified groups, individuals, and ways of thinking which truly «inhabited» the night. Whether they were spiritual authorities or social outcasts, these inhabitants of the night knew deeply its contours, its depths, and its waypoints. Spiritual or political authorities who viewed the night from the outside – as a dark and dangerous site to be contained, avoided, or policed – engaged less with the experience of time *within* the night. But those who *did* see the night as an opportune time – enslaved laborers, freedom seekers, mystics, clandestine lovers, and citizens seeking better street lighting – experienced the night more richly as they made their way from dusk until dawn. The divisions of the night revealed by this collection were all defined in relation to one another, which allows this Afterword to collect the insights of this book by charting a sequence of waypoints from daylight and evening to midnight, matins, and dawn.

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Fig. 3. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex 2445, f. 1r, Digital image courtesy of the ÖNB
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Fig. 6. Tours, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. 947, f. 57, Photo: BM Tours, Arca – IRHT-CNRS, Public Domain
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