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I.1

A Bedroom of One's Own

Laura Nissinen

This paper concentrates on some aspects of my dissertation project in progress. The main themes of my thesis are the sleeping areas and the sleeping arrangements in the ancient Roman house. I am approaching the subject from two perspectives. On the one hand, the archaeological and architectural material is used to locate the sleeping areas in the private dwellings of Herculaneum. On the other hand, through the study of the written sources I will attempt to define sleeping arrangements among the Romans and in Roman houses (*domus*, *villae*, and other types of dwellings) on a more general level. In the context of this paper I present my preliminary observations on the written evidence about the ancient Roman world, gathered from on-line databases (mainly the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* and the *Library of Latin Texts*).¹

In the field of classical studies one often hears how modern Westerners are very private people unlike the ancient Romans, who lived without either the possibility or even the desire for privacy. The idea of privacy in the ancient world is certainly different from the modern conception, but is the contrast really as sharp as we like to think? My paper is concerned with the theme of local privacy, namely how privacy is perceived in the domestic sphere of ancient private dwellings and especially in sleeping areas. Privacy, in this context,

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¹ Walter de Gruyter Berlin: *Thesaurus linguae Latinae (TLL)* Online (accessible only with license) and Brepols Publishers, Turnhout: *Library of Latin texts*, <http://clt.brepolis.net/llta>. These texts include a wide range of literature from archaic plays to late-antique legal texts, allowing an in-depth exploration of social aspects of sleeping habits among the ancient Romans.

is defined as the condition of being alone and undisturbed. The key issues are: who slept with whom and how sleeping areas were designed. The emphasis is on the relationship between different household members rather than on the dichotomy of public (outside) and private (inside).

Ecology of human sleep

Sociological and historical approaches to sleeping are among the rising research trends. The most interesting studies which have influenced my work are Simon J. Williams' *Sleep and Society: Sociological Ventures into the (Un)known...*, published in 2005, and the two collections edited by Lodewijk Brunt and Brigitte Steger: *Night-time and Sleep in Asia and the West: Exploring the Dark Side of Life* (2003) and *Worlds of Sleep* (2008). Among the very few comparative anthropological studies on human sleeping patterns I have found the article published in 2002 by Carol Worthman and Melissa Melby, *Toward a Comparative Developmental Ecology of Human Sleep*, to be very useful for my research and for this paper.

While exploring different variables on sleeping habits and privacy I have found the classification created by Worthman and Melby to be very helpful. They have established the characteristic conditions of sleeping arrangements in traditional or non-Western societies (forager, pastoralist, horticulturalist, and agriculturalist communities)² and modern Western societies through the research in sleep laboratories.³ According to Worthman and Melby, characteristics of Western sleeping patterns are solitary sleep from early infancy, excepting pair sleep, the use of mattresses and pillows, stability, distinct bed-times, scheduled daytime hours and mechanized devices for waking. Secluded housing design provides physical security and the control of light and noise. In traditional societies, social sleep and noise are more common, there is no climate control, pillows or abundant coverings are uncommon, fire can be present, and bedtimes and waking times are fluid. Sleeping is less bounded in temporal, social or physical terms (Table 1).⁴ Their categorization is certainly

² Worthman and Melby 2002, 71–2. Their material is based on various recent ethnographic studies on sleep. Societies selected in the study are: Ache, Efe, !Kung, Hiwi (foragers); Gabra (pastoralists); Swat Pathan (mixed agriculturalists); Baktaman; Gebusi; Lese (horticulturalists) and Balinese (agriculturalists).

³ Worthman and Melby 2002, 104–7.

⁴ Worthman and Melby 2002, 71–2, 104, 106–7.

limited and fairly general, but its main importance lies in providing tools for further research by defining the determinants that can be detected in different sleeping cultures.

Laboratory	Non-Western
Solitary	Social
Dark/dim	Dark/dim
Silent	Noise
Climate-controlled	No/human climate control
Mattress, pillow	No mattress, pillow
Absence of fire	Fire present
Stable	Dynamic
Physically secure	Socially secure
Bounded (temporally, physically)	Fuzzily bounded (temporally, physically)

Table 1: Comparison of contexts for sleep
(after Worthmann and Melby 2002, 106)

In our discussion here the central concern is to find out where in this categorization Roman urban dwellers belong and clarify the ways of co-sleeping as well as the surroundings and boundaries of Roman sleeping habits.

Co-sleeping (pair sleeping) vs. solitary sleep

Modern sleep research defines co-sleeping as the sleep of two individuals with a common bed or even bedding, and close contact (mainly the parent-infant interaction). In some cases the term pair sleep is used in order to specify the relationship between sleepers. In some societies group sleeping among adults is also known to exist.⁵ However in the context of my study I have chosen to use the term co-sleeping to cover all the instances where two or more adults share a sleeping area. The problematic issue of children's sleeping arrangements falls outside of the scope of this study.⁶

Co-sleeping with a spouse or lover was very common in Roman times and the examples in Latin literature are numerous, starting with Plautus (*Amph.*

⁵ On terminology, see Kloesch and Dittami (2008, 93).

⁶ Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 52; 1994, 10, 113; Riggsby 1997, 42; Nissinen 2009, 93.

808; *Mostell.* 696).⁷ One special feature of the Roman literature is that it refers to bed and bedroom – both *cubiculum* and *thalamus* (in poetry) – as symbols of marriage.⁸ Even though spouses seem to have slept together, there must have been exceptions to this practice. Andrew Riggsby, for example, supposes that many elite couples slept separately.⁹ Special circumstances when spouses might have slept separately were for example the illness of either of the spouses or possibly the wife’s pregnancy.¹⁰ The Latin verb *secubo*, which means lying apart, is mainly used relatively, to emphasize the absence of someone rather than just with the meaning of sleeping alone. It often appears in religious contexts, when purity is guaranteed by sleeping alone and by abstinence from sexual activity.¹¹

Marriage, *matrimonium*, was achievable only for certain Romans. Instead of marriage, other types of permanent relationships were possible. Latin words which define these relationships have a close connection to lying together or sharing a sleeping area, such as *concupinatus*, the permanent union between a man and an unmarried woman, or *contubernium*, the union of slaves.¹² *Contubernium* refers to cohabitation and thus seems to imply that slave couples might have been able to share a sleeping area, though there is no evidence in literature to corroborate this idea. Otherwise *contubernium* is especially well known in a military context, meaning the soldiers were occupying the same tent or sharing a bedroom in a camp with seven other men (how the beds were actually arranged in the camps is otherwise unclear). *Contubernium*

⁷ See also Plaut. *Asin.* 787; Cic. *Verr.* 4.79; Val. Max. 3.2.15, 4.3.3, and 6.7.2; Sen. *Controv.* 1.4.11 and 7.5.4; Sen. *Ep.* 47.7 and 95.24; Sen. *Ben.* 7.9.5; Tac. *Ann.* 4.22, 11.37, and 15.63; Petron. *Sat.* 26; Quint. *Declamationes minores* 335p.319.3–5, and 306 p.203.19; Ps. Quint. *Declamationes maiores* 1 (*is noctu, dum in cubiculo cum uxore iaceret*) and 1.9 (*cum in eodem lectulo fueris, cum amplexa sis forsitan illum*); Suet. *Iul.* 81 and *Aug.* 69; Apul. *Met. saepe*; Auson. *Cent. nupt.* 7–8; August. *De civ. D.* 6.9; Arn. *Adv. nat.* 4.7; *Cod. Iust.* 35.1.15 (*cubiculum mariti*), 29.5.3.2, and 32.33pr. See also Riggsby (1997, 46).

⁸ E.g. Catull. 61.207–11, 66.15–20, and 68.101–15; Verg. *Aen.* 4.18, 4.547–52, 6.91–4, and 7.92–101; Mart. 10.38.

⁹ Riggsby 1997, 46.

¹⁰ Quint. *Declamationes minores* 277 (*aliqua hoc tempore, quo salvo pudore a marito secubaret, cum adultero volutata est?*); Sor. *Gyn.* 1.14.46 and 1.16.56. See also Plin. *Ep.* 3.16.

¹¹ Tib. 1.3.25–6. Cf. Ov. *Am.* 3.9.34 and 3.10.1–4(–16). See also Livy 39.10.

¹² Paulus *Sent.* 2.19.6. Roby 1902, 168–9.

can also be used to refer to intimate friendship and living under the same roof.¹³

Passages from Cicero (especially *Planc.* 27) or Tacitus emphasize the intimacy of *contubernium* in the military context and how sharing the sleeping area was an honor granted to dignified persons or family members. On the other hand, the closeness of the *contubernales* often resulted in intimate and lifelong friendships.¹⁴ Other than in the military context sharing a bedroom during travels is common in literary texts, especially in Petronius' *Satyrice* and Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*,¹⁵ and sharing a bed is the salient point in Martial's poem 3.91: *Hoc steriles sensere uiri: qua parte cubaret / quaerunt. Sed tacitos sensit et ille dolos: / mentitur, credunt. Somni post uina petuntur: / continuo ferrum noxia turba rapit / exciduntque senem spondae qui parte iacebat; / namque puer pluteo uindice tutus erat.*

Servants

The literary material pays less attention to sleeping arrangements among servants, but it seems to have been more common for household slaves on duty to sleep outside the master's bedroom rather than inside, but nonetheless they would be within earshot.¹⁶ This is especially evident in Apuleius (*Met.* 2.15), Pseudo-Quintilian (*Declamationes maiores* 1.3) and Silius Italicus (*Pun.*

¹³ Sen. *Dial.* 6.24.1; Tac. *Dial.* 5.

¹⁴ Cic. *Planc.* 27: *hic est enim qui adolescentulus cum A. Torquato profectus in Africam sic ab illo gravissimo et sanctissimo atque omni laude et honore dignissimo viro dilectus est ut et contuberni necessitudo et adolescentis modestissimi pudor postulabat, quod, si adesset, non minus ille declararet quam hic illius frater patruelis et socer, T. Torquatus, omni illi et virtute et laude par, qui est quidem cum illo maximis vinclis et propinquitatis et adfinitatis coniunctus, sed ita magnis amoris ut illae necessitudinis causae leves esse videantur* (cf. *Planc.* 101). Tac. *Agr.* 5: *Prima castrorum rudimenta in Britannia Suetonio Paulino, diligenti ac moderato duci, adprobavit, electus quem contubernio aestimare.* See also Cic. *Lig.* 21; Livy 42.11; SHA *Hadr.* 8.1 (*Optimos quosque de senatu in contubernium imperatoriae maiestatis adscivit*). Cf. opposite: Frontin. *Str.* 4.1.12.

¹⁵ Apul. *Met.* 1.6–15.

¹⁶ George 1997, 15–24 on slaves in the archaeological contexts.

1.66).¹⁷ Some passages are less clear, but it seems that for example in a passage from a letter of Pliny the Younger (6.16.13) or in the *Codex Iustinianus* (29.5.3.2) slaves are in reach of their masters, but do not sleep in the same bedroom.

Otherwise the evidence on *cellae*, that is, separate sleeping areas for slaves, is scarce, but based on some examples from Cato and Columella, who write instructions for the construction of farms, it can be inferred that Romans carefully planned the sleeping arrangements of all members of the *familia*: for example Columella (*Rust.* 1.6) gives instructions on building different types of *cellae* for slaves according to their status: *Optime solutis servis cellae meridiem aequinoctialem spectantes fient; vinctis quam saluberrimum subterraneum ergastulum, plurimis idque angustis illustratum fenestris, atque a terra sic editis, ne manu contingi possint [...] Villico iuxta ianuam fiat habitatio, ut intrantium exeuntiumque conspectum habeat. Procuratori supra ianuam ob easdem causas: et is tamen villicum observet ex vicino.*¹⁸

To further investigate this difficult subject I turn to the *Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana*, a late-antique collection of bilingual texts used mainly as school books. Using these texts as a source for Roman life is in many ways debatable: their date, area of origin and authorship are unclear and the extant texts seem to conflate different sources resulting in contradictory passages.¹⁹ Nevertheless, they are too intriguing to be overlooked. In the different redactions of the *colloquia* (*Colloquia Monacensia*, *Colloquium Montepessulanum*, and *Colloquium Celtis*) and from their dramatized scenes from everyday life we can get a glimpse of the bedtime routines in ancient households.

¹⁷ Sil. *Pun.* 1.66: *saepe etiam famuli turbato ad limina somno / expauere truce[m] per uasta silentia uocem / ac largo sudore uirum inuenere futuras / miscentem pugnas et inania bella gerentem.* Ps.Quint. *Declamationes maiores* 1.3: *Dicitur caecus [...] per excubantes servulos errasse [...] cubiculum deinde patris ingressum.* Apul. *Met.* 2.15: *Nam et pueris extra limen, credo ut arbitrio nocturni gannitus ablegarentur, humi quam procul distratum fuerat.* See also Tac. *Ann.* 14.44; Suet. *Galb.* 10.3; *Ner.* 47.3.

¹⁸ See also Cato, *Agr.* 13: [...] *lectum stratum ubi duo custodes liberi cubent [...] tertius servus una cum factoribus uti cubet* and 14.2: *Villam aedificandam si locabis novam ab solo, faber haec faciat oportet [...] cellas familiae.*

¹⁹ On these problems see Dionisotti's discussion (1982, 90–1, 94, 123). Based on the linguistic and cultural features she dates the surviving redactions of the *Hermeneumata* from the late third to fourth century and locates their origins in the West.

Preparing for bedtime is illustrated in the *Colloquia Monacensia* as follows (12): *[P]uer, veni, collige haec, omnia suis locis repone. Diligenter sterne lectum. Stravimus. Et ideo durum est? Excussimus et pulvinum commolluimus. Quoniam autem pigriter fecistis quae necessaria sunt, nemo foris pernoctet aut inep-tiat. Si alicuius vocem audio, non ei parco. Recipite vos, dormite, et in galli cantu excitare me, ut excurram.* Well-behaved slaves may stay inside, but disturbing the peace will be punished. In the *Montepessulanum* version a slave is instructed to furnish the bedroom with a basin and a chamber pot and call forth a footman or a woman before leaving the room (20): *Quot horae sunt noctis? Iam tres. Pone pelvem et matellam (et urceum). Puerum mihi clama ad pedes, aut magis de mulieribus unam clama. Tolle lucernam, dormire volo, ut mane vigilem.* In the *Celtis* colloquium we find an illustration of morning routines including waking up and putting on one's clothes and waking the slave, who must have been either in the same room or very close by outside (6): *Tunc ergo excitavi meum puerum, dixi illi: Surge, puer, vide si iam lucet: aperi ostium et fenestram. at ille ita fecit [...]. Deinde descendo de lecto.* On the other hand, in the evening servants are dismissed for the night (69): *Claudite, pueri, ostia et fenestras, imponite seras, adponite necessarium. Ite, pausate.* These passages do not explicitly say whether servants slept with their masters or elsewhere, but rather they display the different ways in which the sleeping arrangements of different household members were organized according to the wishes of the master.

Unsurprisingly, the possibility to choose where to sleep as well as the hope of undisturbed sleep seemed to have been scarce for some household slaves.²⁰ However, the state of sleep itself can be considered as ultimate privacy: a sphere where no outsiders can enter. This idea was already present in Greek philosophy. According to Heraclitus, people who are wide awake share the common world, while sleepers withdraw to a private world of their own. Possibly Roman slaves shared their attitude with their later Jamaican counterparts, according to whom “Sleep hab no Massa.”²¹

²⁰ For an illustration of carefree slaves, see Pseudo-Quint. *Declamationes maiores* 2.19: *illam servilis negligentiae quietem, illos sine curis, sine adfectibus somnos, illos qui non statim promo timore prosiliunt, fragor noctis agitavit.*

²¹ Heraclitus, fragment 89; Ekirch 2005, 286–7. On the economic function of sleep see Cox (2008, 58).

As observed by Worthman and Melby, sleep in traditional societies is seldom solitary, but some variation in the degree of co-sleeping can be attested, from common sleeping spots to separate locations in shared areas to separate spaces with little hope of peace and quiet.²² On the one hand, in the Roman context co-sleeping was reserved mainly for couples enjoying an emotional connection and / or a sexual relationship. On the other hand, there is evidence of sharing a bedroom for example in the military or during travels. However, even in those circumstances people were inclined to carefully choose the person with whom to share the sleeping area, if that was possible.

Inside private houses, different sleeping arrangements existed. The assignment to a certain sleeping area seemed to have depended on the status of the inhabitant and sleeping was arranged according to the wish of the master. By preferring peace and quiet and choosing bed(room) companions carefully, upper class Romans reflect the characteristics of “modern Western sleep” in the classification of Worthman and Melby. Servants might have slept outside the master’s bedroom (*excubiae*) or when needed, inside the room (*ad pedes*). One might expect servants to have less influence on where they slept and with whom. As seen in the passage from Columella (*Rust.* 1.6) sleeping conditions for slaves varied, and were sometimes quite harsh, especially for those in the most difficult position (*vincti*).

The surroundings of sleep

As seen in the example from the *Colloquia Monacensia* (12), peace and quiet in the bedroom were essential and disturbance was a punishable offense. Several others texts also reveal that silence was required and sought after in bedrooms. Varro often connects *cubicula* with notions of peace and quiet. For instance in a passage from the Menippean satires he contrasts the noisy banquets to the silence of *cubicula* (337): *silentium vero non in convivio set in cubiculo esse debet*. In the same way, the *cubiculum noctis et somni* in Pliny’s Laurentine villa is specially designed to create a peaceful environment. It excluded the noises made by servants, the nearby sea, and the sounds and sights of a tempest, unless the windows were kept open. The room was separated from the garden by a passageway, which added to the tranquility. It is no wonder that this part of the villa became Pliny’s personal favorite (2.17.22–4).

²²Worthman and Melby 2002, 78.

Less affluent people, who lived in rented apartments, could not afford the luxury of peace. One very revealing passage comes from Juvenal (3.232–9). City dwellers perished for lack of sleep in their noisy and humble dwellings and sleeping in cities was possible only for the well-to-do residents: *Plurimus hic aeger moritur vigilando [...] nam quae meritoria somnum / admittunt? Magnis opibus dormitur in urbe. / Inde caput morbi. Raedarum transitus arto / vicorum in flexu et stantis convicia mandrae / eripient somnum Druso vitulisque marinis.*²³ The disturbing nocturnal soundscape in Rome, which among other things included rattling carts, can also be detected in the *Lex Julia municipalis*, also known as the *Lex tabulae Heracleensis* (64): *quae plostra noctu in urbem inducta erunt.* According to the same *Lex Julia municipalis* (52), driving carts was forbidden in areas of dense housing between sunrise and the tenth hour of the day: *quae uiae in u(rbem) R(omam) sunt erunt intra ea loca, ubi continenti hab<i>tab<i>tur, ne quis in ieis uieis post k(alendas) Ianuar(ias) / primas plostrum inte<r>diu post solem ortum neue ante horam decimam diei ducito agito.*²⁴

Beds and bedding

Roman beds and bedding were elaborate. The range is from the humble bunk bed (*grabatus*) to the most luxurious settings both for reclining during dinner and for sleeping.²⁵

The *grabatus* is quite common in Martial, Petronius, and Apuleius, and in the latter two it appears in the context of traveling or in inn houses. Beds and bedding were among the possessions of men of modest means, as revealed by Juvenal or Martial, or used in the servants' quarters as is known from Suetonius' story of Vitellius who hides in a janitors' lodge and uses a bed and a mattress to secure the door. The *grabatus* of Martial and Apuleius might have been humble, but it did have legs and a frame and was thus not so portable as

²³ Cf. Mart. 12.57: *nec quiescendi / in urbe locus est pauperi [...] nos transeuntis nisus excitat turbae, / et ad cubile est Roma.*

²⁴ On whether this law was applicable outside Rome see Crawford (1996, 1:360).

²⁵ E.g. Varro *Ling.* 5.35 and 8.16; Isid. *Etym.* 20.11.

the biblical *grabatus* in John 5.8 (*Dicit ei Jesus: tolle grabatum tuum et ambula*).²⁶

In addition, Celsus introduces detailed ideas in his writings on the use of bedding in healing: *Si vero febris ardens extorret [...] Eo conclavi tenendus, quo multum et purum aerem trahere possit; neque multis vestimentis strangulandus, sed admodum levibus tantum velandus est. [...] Ubi utrumlibet factum est, multa veste operiendus est, et collocandus ut dormiat; fereque post longam sitim et vigiliam, post multam satietatem, post infractum calorem plenus somnus venit* (*Med.* 3.7.2).

Physical boundaries of sleeping

Besides silent *cubicula* and a wide range of different kinds of beds, wealthy Romans could enjoy the physical privacy of bedrooms. The physical boundaries of sleeping in private dwellings were well established: the degree of internal partitioning in the Roman houses is high and the houses were designed to provide secure physical surroundings for sleepers.

In literature this is revealed in the descriptions of movement inside and out of one's *cubiculum*, which include besides the neutral words such as *venio* or *intro*, expressions that contain hints to people coming in invited by, led in by, or even carried in by another person (such as *deduco*, *admitto* or *immitto*). Besides these there is also a third group of verbs depicting movement inside a *cubiculum*. This group is composed of violent terms such as *irrumpto* and *prorumpo*, which tell us that in some cases it was necessary to use force to gain entrance into a *cubiculum*.²⁷ This is confirmed by the descriptions of the phys-

²⁶ Sen. *Ep.* 18.7.55; Mart. 1.92 (*sed si nec focus est nudi nec sponda grabati*), 4.53, 6.39, and 12.32 (*ibat tripes grabatus et bipes mensa*); Petron. *Sat.* 92; Juv. 3.195–8 / 203–5 (*vilicus et, veteris rimae cum texit hiatum, / securos pendente iubet dormire ruina. / Vivendum est illic, ubi nulla incendia, nulli / nocte metus. [...] Lectus erat Cordo Procula minor, urceoli sex / ornamentum abaci*); Suet. *Vit.* 16 (*in cellulam ianitoris, religato pro foribus cane lectoque et culcita obiectis*); Vulg. *Ioh.* 5.8.

²⁷ Notions of movement include e.g. *venio* (Livy *Per.* 7), *intro* (Curt. 6.10.21; Quint. *Inst.* 4.2.72; Ps. Quint. *Declamationes maiores* 1.7; Ps. Quint. *Declamationes maiores* 2 introduction and 2.21; Plin. *Ep.* 1.12.7; Petron. *Sat.* 129–30; Tac. *Dial.* 3), *deduco* (Livy 1.58.1; Curt. 8.6.13), *admitto* (Cic. *Phil.* 8.29), *immitto* (SHA *Heliogab.* 25.1), *irrumpto* (Sen. *Controv.* 1.4.11; Ps. Quint. *Declamationes maiores* 8.22; Plin. *Ep.* 6.20.4; Suet. *Claud.* 37

ical aspects of the *cubicula* as well: it was typical that this space could be closed, and references to doors and the closing of doors are pervasive in Latin literature.²⁸

Was sleeping confined to permanent bedrooms or was it customary to change one's sleeping place often? This question is fairly difficult to answer. The view that in written sources there is no indication of inhabitants of a *domus* having their own rooms has been generally accepted in current research.²⁹ In my opinion, there seems to be room for a different interpretation: firstly, some passages in Latin literature corroborate the idea that the *cubiculum* was a private personal space.³⁰ Secondly, we have to take into consideration the cross-cultural elements of sleeping arrangements. According to Brigitte Steger, universal elements which facilitate the security of the sleeper include the stability of the place, the permanence of the surroundings, the presence of trusted people, repeated rituals, and social acceptance of a certain sleeping behavior.³¹ People tend to seek seclusion and permanence in their sleeping arrangements even in circumstances where housing conditions are modest and in societies where sleeping in public is commonplace. Even those who sleep rough tend to have regular sleeping spots whenever possible.³² Roman houses had stable settings for sleeping with numerous small rooms with closable doors. In the Roman context trusted people were chosen as co-sleepers where possible. Also placing guardian deities such as the *Lares cubiculi* in bedrooms could be interpreted as a ritual to safeguard the bedroom.³³

and *Otho* 11.1; Apul. *Met.* 9.2; auctor ignotus *De vir.ill.* 9.3; SHA *Pert.* 11.3), *prorumpo* (Tac. *Ann.* 13.44).

²⁸ Closing, *fores* (Cic. *Tusc.* 5.59; Val. Max. 9.13; Curt. 8.6.18, 8.6.22; Ps.Quint. *Declamationes maiores* 1.9; Tac. *Ann.* 3.5; Tac. *Ann.* 14.8; Tac. *Ann.* 14.44; Suet. *Iul.* 81; Suet. *Aug.* 82.1; Gell. *NA* 2.2.2; Apul. *Met.* 2.30), *ostium* (Apul. *Met.* 3.21), and *valvae* (Plin. *Ep.* 2.17).

²⁹ See e.g. Nevett 1997, 297.

³⁰ Ps.Quint. *Declamationes maiores* 1.7, 2 introduction, 2.20; Quint. *Declamationes minores* 328 introduction; SHA *Sev.* 23.5. See also Tac. *Ann.* 11.11; Petron. *Sat.* 86.5–6.

³¹ Steger 2004, 415.

³² Ekirch 2005, 278; Schweder et al. 1995, 30; Rensen 2003, 100; Brunt 2008, 168–9.

³³ E.g. Suet. *Aug.* 7 and *Dom.* 17.5. See also Plin. *HN* 15.38. On supernatural threats in bedrooms: ghosts (Val. Max. 1.7.7), ominous dreams (Suet. *Iul.* 81), nightmares (Plin. *HN* 27.87). See also August. *De civ. D.* 15.23 and Isid. *Etym.* 8.11.103–4, which might refer to a phenomenon known as sleep paralysis. See also Sessa 2007, 188–9. On *Lares cubiculi* in the archaeological context: Gagetti (2006, 481–90).

However, some degree of flexibility in choosing the sleeping area can be seen in seasonal changes in the use of space: *cubicula* were located in different places in summer and winter.³⁴ Changing the bedroom according to the season might seem to contradict the idea of permanent settings for sleeping areas, but there is evidence from other societies that these two practices can coexist.³⁵

Physical boundaries of sleeping can be detected also in archaeological material, as discussed by Taylor Lauritsen in this volume. According to him the entrances to most of the Campanian *cubicula* were furnished with doors to provide privacy. In addition, in the houses of the Campanian area there are numerous small closed rooms suitable for sleeping.³⁶ Activities associated with the use of a bed (apart from sleeping also dining, resting, sexual intercourse, as well as literary activities such as writing, reading, and reciting) evidently took place on upper floors.³⁷ The wooden beds which have been found in Herculaneum support the idea of fixed bedrooms, since they are all fairly large and were not very easy to be moved around the house.³⁸ This must be the case

³⁴ Cic. *Qfr.* 3.1.2; Columella *Rust.* 1.6.1; Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.

³⁵ Sammallahti and Lehto 2006, 13–4, 76–8, 187–8, 190; Nissinen 2009, 93.

³⁶ See Wallace-Hadrill (1994, 81) where a table on the quartile classification of houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum presents the average number of rooms per house. In quartiles three and four the numbers are 8.4 and 16.4 respectively (this calculation excludes large circulation areas and cramped rooms, such as storage rooms and latrines as well as upper floors).

³⁷ This can be best observed in Herculaneum, where beds were found in upper floor rooms, e.g. in the Casa Sannitica V 1-2 (*GSE* 10.5.1928), in the Taberna del Priapo IV.17-18 (*GSE* 13.2. and 12.3.1932), in the Casa del Sacello di Legno V 31 (*GSE* 23.12.1932, 13.4.1934 and September 1934) and in House V 22, upper floor room d (*GSE* 23.8., 1.–6.9., 1.10. and 3.11.1937 as well as April 1938). It must also be noted that not all the rooms which have been identified in earlier studies as *cubicula* were used as bedrooms, e.g. room 3 in the Casa del Mobilio Carbonizzato V 5 has a recess suitable for a bed, but it was clearly used as a storage room in the last phase of the house (*GSE* April 1933: *Descrizione della Casa*. “L’ambiente prima era un cubicolo e poi fu trasformato in ripostiglio tanto vero che aderente alle pareti Nord ed Est vi erano delle scansie di legno e sopra ad esse vi poggiavano molti oggetti di terracotta che a suo tempo furono raccolti”).

³⁸ Mols 1999, 146–69: the length of surviving examples varies from 204 to 222 cm and in width from 106 to 125 cm. This consideration excludes other possible sleeping arrangements apart from beds. Such arrangements must have been in use especially for servants, and have left no trace in the archeological material.

especially when the bed is wider than the door opening and requires more than one person to carry it.³⁹

Temporal boundaries

As Pliny's letters 3.1 and 9.36 reveal, Romans regulated their diurnal time use; nighttime on the other hand was controlled especially in the army or when safeguarding the city of Rome (*vigiliae*).⁴⁰ Daytime naps were habitual for the Romans, as one might expect in a biphasic (siesta) culture.⁴¹ Napping in public was possible, maybe even common, but somewhat ridiculed. People falling asleep in public might face such adversities as Aponius Saturninus, who lost a fortune by unconsciously nodding during an auction, as mentioned in Suetonius (*Calig.* 38.4).⁴²

Sleeping in the dining room also seems to have been common but condemnable, at least if it resulted from heavy drinking.⁴³ However, there is a clear distinction between *cubicula* and *triclinia*, for the dining room was not an accustomed place to sleep (cf. Petronius *Sat.* 85: *forte cum in triclinio iaceremus, quia dies sollemnis ludum artaverat pigritiamque recedendi imposuerat hilaritas longior*, or SHA *Verus* 4.9: *trahens cenas in noctem et in toro conviviali condormiens, ita ut levatus cum stromatibus in cubiculum perferretur*).

Regarding these physical and temporal boundaries of sleeping patterns in ancient Rome and comparing them with the classification of Worthman and Melby it is fairly safe to say that the sleeping habits among (elite) Roman city dwellers resemble more the modern Western settings, which are temporally

³⁹ E.g. Casa del Tramezzo di Legno, room 4 where the bed is 121.8 cm and the door is 117 cm wide.

⁴⁰ Plin. *Ep.* 3.1 and 9.36; Cic. *Inv. rhet.* 39 (*consideratur autem tempus et anni et mensis et diei et noctis et vigiliae et horae et in aliqua parte alicuius horum*); Plin. *HN* 7.212–5; Jer. *Ep.* 140.8 (*nox in quattuor vigiliis dividitur, quae singulae trium horarum spatio supputantur*). For regulation of waking time, see *Hermeneumata, Colloquia Monacensia* 12.

⁴¹ Cic. *Div.* 2.142.2; *Off.* 1.103; Plin. *HN* 18.14; Plin. *Ep.* 9.40. An alternative interpretation is suggested by Wiedemann (2003, 131). See also Ekirch's (2005, 300–1) theory on sleep intervals.

⁴² Quint. *Inst.* 4.1.73 and Suet. *Claud.* 8.

⁴³ Ov. *Am.* 2.5.13; Quint. *Inst.* 4.2.123–4; Petron. *Sat.* 22; Mart. 3.82.

and physically bounded, than those of societies where sleep schedules are not set, bedtimes are not especially distinct, and sleep is socially rather than physically secure.

Summary

When comparing the contexts for sleep, the features of sleeping among upper class Romans seem to correspond largely to the typical characteristics of “modern Western sleep” presented in Worthman and Melby’s classification: sleeping was solitary rather than social; co-sleeping in the strictest sense was reserved mainly for couples enjoying an emotional connection and / or a sexual relationship. Otherwise, sharing a bedroom was possible in particular circumstances, such as in the army or when traveling. Nonetheless, people tended wherever possible to choose their companions and bedfellows carefully even in these circumstances. Some degree of permanence in choosing one’s sleeping area can be seen both in literature and in archaeological findings, but to the contrary seasonal change of bedrooms was also typical.

Attention was paid to the sleeping arrangements and to beds. Proper beds and bedding, not merely pallets or mats, seem to have been common even for the poorest. There must also have been some fluctuation in the boundaries of sleep and waking: time use was controlled, but drowsing in public was not out of the ordinary.

Sleeping was physically secure and the segmented organization of space in urban Roman houses guaranteed seclusion and tranquility when needed or wanted for those who could afford it. In the wealthiest houses there must have been enough rooms for each (elite) family member to sleep alone if he or she wished. In Herculaneum many beds were situated in rooms on the upper floor, which must have been relatively private. Even though some of the bedrooms appear to have been multifunctional, apparently only certain rooms in the house were used for sleeping.

It is very likely that sleeping patterns varied from household to household, so at best, only tendencies concerning preferred sleeping arrangements can be detected. As is often the case in other contexts of Roman history, it is easier to find out the sleeping arrangements of the members in the highest stratum of city dwellers than those of marginal groups such as servants and children.

Comparison of the idea of privacy

I would like, in conclusion, to return to the comparison between Romans and the modern world and think again about our views on the privacy of sleeping. Even though in the modern Western world many adults might find it difficult to sleep in the same room with non-family members (unless the context is sexual),⁴⁴ there are several exceptions to this rule, as can easily be detected by observation of everyday (or more precisely every-night) life. Modern Westerners can waive their right for privacy if they feel that the benefits gained through doing so are worth it. Sometimes the right to sleeping in privacy is reduced even in wealthy Western societies: for example in the army or in hospitals. In addition, sharing a bedroom is more common than one might think at first glance: for example, during travels, in youth hostels, etc. I suppose most of us would also confess to snoozing in lectures or in a bus or plane.

The degree of privacy varies both in antiquity and in the modern day. Privacy is not a static concept but a personal experience and an ever-varying relationship between people in different circumstances. Privacy is gained through negotiation, which is in turn influenced by personal tastes and the opportunities given by status, class or wealth. The foremost difference between antiquity and the modern Western world is that today privacy is considered a fundamental and universal human right regardless of one's background or status, and the idea of privacy has been well established by philosophers and social historians. But one must bear in mind that although a certain society might not have conceptualized the right to privacy, it does not mean that people in the society in question were not inclined to seek privacy.

⁴⁴ Brunt and Steger 2008, 21–2.