Lone Wolves
Social withdrawal in Roman society

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Introduction

A wolf always operates within a pack-structure; whenever it chooses or happens to withdraw itself, it becomes known as a lone wolf. The same happens with human beings; the choice of individuals to no longer participate in society is therefore named after the retreat from a wolf pack.¹ The pack-like nature is also reflected in the human society as we know it today. An increasing degree of connectedness seems to be enforced by the internet, and social media in particular, and leads to much discussion (see for instance the discussion about WhatsApp’s infamous blue ticks and the resulting pressure to reply). The popularity of books about extreme degrees of connectedness, such as Dave Eggers’ The Circle and the renewed interest in Orwell’s 1984, only reflect the interest (or fear) for the way the borders between our public and private lives seem to blur. When we look back at the Romans, there is much scholarly and contemporary debate about the society and those who do not wish to take part of this. Roman elite society is (in)famous for the blurred lines between public and private life, which was visible especially in the dual function of the Roman house. These houses served and accommodated to the image its owner wished to convey to the outside world. In that sense, the villas of the elite were the Facebook or LinkedIn-pages of the Romans. Just as there is much discussion about withdrawing from the pulls of modern society, one wonders how the Romans did so. The pulls of Roman society, and in particular public life, are numerous and bring us to the main question of this thesis: why did Roman individuals in 1st century BC and AD Italy choose to withdraw themselves from society?

1.1 Debate: otium and privacy

Research in withdrawal from Roman society has increased since the fifties, started by the Annales school and the growing attention to personal history it caused. It focused mostly on two aspects: the retreat from daily life of the elite, usually termed otium, and the existence of privacy within specific spaces (e.g. the bedroom, the atrium, and imperial palaces). A brief overview of these discussions is necessary in order to clarify the niche in the debate.

Firstly, the term otium (roughly translated: leisure time²) marks the time wealthy Romans reserved to conduct other non-professional activities, such as sport, rest, reading, eating, etc. The Roman poetry writer

¹ The negative connotations with terrorists (Anders Breivik, the terrorist who massacred 77 innocent civilians on the island Utøya, was often called a ‘lone wolf’) will not feature in this thesis, merely the literal meaning will be involved.
² This accounts to one out of countless meanings: otium is also attested to mean retirement, chance, opportunity, peace, and several others definitions. See also: W.A. Laidlaw, ‘Otium’, Greece & Rome 15 (1968) 42-52; J.P.V.D. Balsdon,
Ennius playfully describes *otium* (leisure time) in contrast to *negotium* (coming from *nec-otium*, i.e. not-leisure). This, of course, also brings forth negative connotations, especially for soldiers (what Ennius was aiming at) and those who are lazy, for we should, according to Seneca, “busy ourselves with interests that are good.” *Otium* proves to be of a flexible definition: it can range from leisure to laziness, with all its negative associations, depending on the beholder. *Otium* in the sense of leisure, however, such as the retreat to the countryside (mentioned often by Pliny the Younger) and being “thoroughly idle”, also poses a few problems. It was often conducted in the company of others, and thus only certain aspects form one of the reasons why Romans withdrew themselves from society. The term *otium* entails spending time away from daily life, i.e. work and commitments, by for instance retreating to a rural villa or engaging in activities such as reading, writing, and physical exercise, not necessarily spending time alone. A broader take, and a selective inclusion of *otium*, into this phenomenon of being alone (in order to be alone, or because they had to) has not made its appearance in the literature yet.

The discussion about and interest in the phenomenon privacy in modern times is one which sparked the imagination of scholars earlier. Altman writes in his work *The Environment and Social Behaviour* that privacy is to be seen as an interpersonal boundary process, marked by a dialectic process of both a restriction and seeking interaction. Privacy is, therefore, not merely a shutting away the environment, as the traditional

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1. ‘Auctoritas, Dignitas, Otium’. *Classical Quarterly* 10 (1960) 43-50, at 47. Cicero’s famous excerpt, “cum dignitate otium” (*Pro Sestio* 98), has been the subject of much discussion considering the fluid nature of dignitas as well as *otium* (C. Wirszubski, ‘Cicero’s Cum Dignitate Otium: A Reconsideration’, *Journal of Roman Studies* 44 (1954) 1-14).
2. Ennius, *Plays (Tragedies)* in the chorus of *Iphigenia* (after 241-248). This contrast is also phrased in Pliny the Younger, *Letters* I.3.3-4.
3. Seneca the Younger, *Epistles* LXVI.9. Similar attitudes are found in the letters of Pliny the Younger (*Letters* IX.8).
4. As Jean-Marie André phrases aptly: “…showing the moral scruples of Cicero and a Catonian fear of wasted time” (J.M. André, *L’otium dans la vie morale et intellectuelle romaine: des origines à l’époque augustéenne* (Paris 1966) 535). A similar negative undertone is also discerned from the fact that “Pliny expresses concerns arising from a callous non-engagement in public life.” (E.W. Leach, ‘*Otium as Luxuria*: Economy of Status in the Younger Pliny’s Letters’, *Arethusa* 36 (2003) 147-165, at 164). It seems *otium* could only prove valuable, according to these ancient writers, when used for literary means or contributing to one’s development. Leisure, as in the modern concept of relaxing, was therefore a waste of time.
6. In Juvenal’s *Satires* (VI.390), Janus is asked the following question “do you answer people like her? You must have plenty of leisure in the sky (*magna otia caeli.*)” The contrast between “work” (i.e. answering to summons) and non being involved in labour is clearly visible here.
view has led us to believe. The dialectic process is made more complicated by the addition of advanced technological means to stay in contact with said society; the physical removal of one’s self from society thoroughly different due to the omnipresent connection to the internet. The abstaining from responding to input (influences from outside), however, is a factor that complements the feeling of physical removal throughout the ages.

The debate surrounding the existence of privacy during the Roman times is one which is still very active. Only recently has Taylor Lauritsen started the project *Doors of Pompeii and Herculaneum* in response to Wallace-Hadrill’s claim that privacy was hard to achieve for an elite Roman male. Lauritsen, amongst many others working on this topic, showed in his article that the distinction between public and private spheres, through the evidence of doors and hinges in several researched villas, was less black-and-white than the consensus had, until then, led us to believe. As Gemma Jansen aptly phrases it: “Confronted with the large number of communal toilets and communal bathing facilities, many students of ancient Rome assume the modern notion of privacy was absent then.” This supposedly absent notion of privacy or separation between public and private domestic spheres is dismissed conclusively by the overwhelming proof of active separation by doors and partitions (the use of curtains is not attested archaeologically, but do appear in Pliny

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and Tacitus\(^{17}\) in the twenty-seven villas researched by Lauritsen. Privacy was therefore, according to the researched case studies, a factor we have to consider when dealing with Roman society. But Riggsby argued that there seems to have been a norm of privacy, rather than a mandate. Instead of this, he pleads for a mandate of the complete opposite: a mandate of publicity.\(^{18}\) I disagree with this, and I will argue over the course of this thesis to show that for there was a social expectation of certain activities to be conducted alone.

### 1.2 The aim

However useful the recent findings of Lauritsen, Riggsby, and Allison, and the new opportunities this offered for the debate of privacy, the debate of privacy, like the age old debate about *otium*, limits itself to certain spaces (such as *cubicula* and *atria*). A wider view of the emic reasons why a Roman would withdraw himself from society (and the mandate of publicity, which is the opposite of privacy) is lacking from current research and this hiatus is one which needs to be considered as well when dealing with terms such as *otium* and the question whether there was a Roman sense or possibility of privacy. This focus on the emic side of the story offers us not only a broader understanding of incentives of social withdrawal, but also of the normative and judgmental function of that society. This thesis will offer just that. By looking into literary and archaeological remains, the aim is to answer the main question: why did Roman individuals in 1\(^{st}\) century BC and AD Italy choose to withdraw themselves from society?

There has much been discussion on the definition of the term ‘society’.\(^{19}\) In order to know what withdrawal means, this first has to be clarified. But how do we define a group or a society? Remmerswaal sets apart two kinds of groups: primary and secondary groups. Primary groups are groups where contact is chiefly of a personal and intimate nature, in contrast to secondary groups, where the contact remains distant, formal, informal, and at a distance.

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\(^{17}\) Pliny’s wife (Calpurnia) had to remain hidden by a curtain (*vela*) to attend her husband’s recitations (Pliny the Younger, *Letters* IV.19.3) and the same was expected of the emperor Claudius’ spouse, Agrippina (Tacitus, *Annals* XIII.5).


and impersonal. Both of these groups manoeuvre within the confines of our definition of a society: a system of collective institutions, traditions, values and norms.

1.3 The sources
The reason why the Romans in 1st century BC and AD Italy withdrew themselves from this society will be researched in two ways: in textual references and by archaeological remains. I deliberately chose the term ‘textual’ instead of ‘literary’, because I consider graffiti as text (even though it is often considered an archaeological source). These textual references will be researched according to several case studies for example private space in the house, sleeping, going to the toilet, and so forth. The time-frame (1st century BC and 1st century AD Italy) is the preferred scope of researchers in this subject (Lauritsen and Riggsby), because of the practical advantage of the archaeological remains of sites such as Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Ostia, and the complimentary literary database (one could think of Martial, Juvenal, Horace, Virgil, Lucan, Statius, and others) composed by the plurality of satires, plays, and letters. There is only one exception to this time-frame: the first century BC and AD unfortunately excludes Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*. I have chosen to incorporate this work into this thesis, for it offers rich and colourful references I consider to be very useful for this research. All translations of Latin and Greek works used in this research will generally come from the Loeb Classical Library, unless mentioned otherwise. This time-frame does mean that the styli, hermits, and the concept of asceticism mostly associated with the rise of Christianity shall not be included in this research.

A brief note on the incorporation of satire: satire is exaggerated, and the majority of the situations are adapted to serve their function in the play. It was meant to ridicule persons, societies, and happenings, and must therefore be used with caution. The reason why it can be used, in my opinion, lies exactly in the reason why satire was created: to ridicule certain aspects of that society by enlarging, modifying, or exaggerating facets in a way that it was instantly recognisable to the audience. Satire is funny because it manoeuvres within and ridicules the same social framework as the situations it portrays and the audience it entertains. In order to write jokes about a subject, there must be some collective knowledge about this subject and why it is funny or thought-provoking. The satire, its writers and its audience thus share, to a certain degree, a common

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background. In Martial’s own words: “my page smacks of humanity.”\textsuperscript{21} It is this smack we are interested in, in order to understand ideas about being alone.

1.4 Definitions
The individuals who are physically, regardless of the acting party, length, and reason, outside of this society or community, ranging from shutting a door to a more ascetic nature, will be considered as out-of-the-society and therefore anti-social.\textsuperscript{22} The physicality of being alone is thus separated from the subjective perception of being, or rather feeling alone. The latter, together with the philosophical (such as the ideal of ataraxeia (detachment) of the Epicureans and the Cynics) discussions about rejecting the norms of social life by removing oneself from this social life, will not be discussed in this research. Also, the abovementioned otium, in all its different definitions, will exclude the philosophical discussion whether otium should be a productive coming-to-terms with oneself and ideally should be consider a period of reflection and seclusion in favour of philosophy\textsuperscript{23}, and only include the actual withdrawal as long as its spent alone.

1.5 Outline
The framework of this thesis will be as following: first, in chapter two, we have to discern what is considered as ‘alone’ in this thesis. At the end of this chapter, a categorisation will be presented in shape of a table in order to classify different kinds of and incentives for social withdrawal. After this, in the third chapter, we will turn to the textual sources, and ask: What can the textual references within our time-frame tell us about occasions and incentives of being alone? In the fourth chapter, the focus will be on how the Romans actually achieved social withdrawal, by looking at the archaeological remains. The final chapter will serve as an analysis of the two datasets (textual and archaeological) and according to whether they overlap or contradict each other, we will conclude what this means for the debate of privacy.

\textsuperscript{21} Martial, Epigrams X.4.
\textsuperscript{22} This term sometimes carries a judgmental value due to modern conceptions of antisocial behaviour as disturbing the environment, whether the individual intends to or not, by rude behaviour, etc. None of these modern notions is meant, unless it is specifically intended. The mere literal meaning – as being outside of society – applies.
\textsuperscript{23} See also Gibson and Morell, Reading the Letters, 169-199 and footnote 4.
2 Being alone?

2.1 Participation and withdrawal

The term ‘alone’ is flexible and offers different implications which vary with each of the possible interpretations. For instance, alone can range in meaning from total seclusion to rather being ‘more alone’ than before, with a select group of people, for example in a more private environment. ‘Alone’ thus functions as a theoretical variable between ‘participation’ on the one end and ‘withdrawal’ on the other end (see Figure 1). Therefore, to be able to place several activities on this participation-withdrawal axis and judge whether an individual withdraws itself from society, we must ask ourselves the key question of this chapter: how should we categorise and measure alone? The method used in this thesis is displayed in these two figures. The first part of the chapter will categorise ‘alone’ by explaining the tiers (Figure 2: Levels of alone) and inclusion or exclusion of these tiers when looking at ‘alone’. The second part (Categorisation) will serve to construct a model of categorising different incentives of social withdrawal, which will be used as a model to analyse the sources with throughout the course of this thesis.

Figure 1: Participation axis

Figure 2: Levels of alone

Tier 1: Solitude

Unsurprisingly, being entirely by yourself counts as total withdrawal – regardless the distance, motivation or effects – from the society, and will be, from now on, named solitude (tier 1 in Table 2). However, solitude bears a subjective undertone, namely: the loneliness as a result of solitude. The emotional, subjective side of
feeling alone will be excluded from this research, only the practical, physical side of being alone and its effects will be monitored. The second tier requires more elaboration because it concerns the role of servants.

**Tier 2: Slaves and prostitutes**

The social position of slaves and its implications is essential to the question of incorporating the category ‘alone in presence of a slave’ in this research. For instance, when a Roman wished to retreat from the public life, by going into another room of his house only accompanied by a slave, does this count as alone? The dichotomy of the slave as a person or the slave as a mere “talking tool” as Hopkins\(^\text{24}\), with Varro\(^\text{25}\) in mind, states is one which deserves more attention.

Slaves had different functions within a society. Each function accounted for a different social standing and this meant a different (a slave doctor was considered more respectable than a simple domestic servant) relationship between owner and owned. Whilst being aware of this spectrum of servile functions and standings, it is impossible to include every sort of slavery and all its implications upon the Roman society into this inquiry. Keith Hopkins, quite rightly, distinguishes the servile ambiguous conflict, stating that the high social status some slaves could achieve conflicted with their legal status.\(^\text{26}\) We have to stress that the majority of the slaves, in the terms of the research in a domestic and private setting, were those of a domestic nature, and thus less likely to be of a high social status. It is therefore reasonable to assume that their relation with the *patronus* was of a different, more unequal standing than the slaves in high functions (i.e. doctors, secretaries, business agents, etc.). Also, these domestic slaves were to a bigger degree active within the *domus* than in the daily life outside of this house.

The connection between the master and servant was a complex one: there was no debate on legal distance between the two, but the fear of a disturbance in the everyday relation between the two parties echoes in ancient literature.\(^\text{27}\) Seneca, for instance, warns the possessors of slaves of the primeval free nature of humanity, saying that “only the [slave’s] body [my cursive] is at the mercy and disposition of a master; but the mind is its own

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\(^{25}\) This must be considered in an agricultural context. Varro sets apart three categories of tools: articulate, i.e. slaves; inarticulate, i.e. cattle; and mute, i.e. the vehicles (*On Agriculture* I.17.1-2).


\(^{27}\) An extreme example is visible in Pliny the Younger, where he speaks of Larcius Macedo. Larcius was killed by his own slaves as a vengeance on account for his cruelty (*Letters* III.14).
master, and is so free and unshackled.”²⁸ The domestic slave, however low in rank and standing he may be, knew his owner thoroughly.²⁹ The owner knew this and thus a reciprocal shared fear and hate could often be the reality between a servant and his master. It was this fear that put and kept in place the expectation of a slave to keep his mouth shut and serve. The writings of Dio Chrysostom³⁰, Cato³¹, Varro³², and Columella³³ all argue the importance of a slave’s wellbeing (albeit from an economical and practical viewpoint³⁴) through adequate living accommodations, because an unhappy slave can prove to be a risk, of which the elite had to be constantly reminded.

I believe that the slave was seen as an extension of the master when it comes to the complex relationship between the two. After all, the slave remained property. The dichotomy of a slave as a separate entity or as an included in the unit of the owner proves valuable in debating whether to incorporate this second tier into this research.

A simple argument in favour of regarding the slave as an extension of the owner is the argument that if the master was in doubt of the slave’s integrity, he would have refrained from servile presence in the first place. Stretching this argument a little further, one could stress that if the owner wanted the presence of a slave, he displayed an amount of trust in the slave-master relationship between that particular (supposedly devoted) slave and himself, resulting in a ‘safe’ environment. However, the prime argument remains that the slave was, regardless of trust and closeness to its owner, per definition of an unequal standing to his master and inferior within the Roman social framework. The slave’s function was to assist his master, and, in doing so, any loss of face of his master, due to actions of the slave, could have disastrous consequences for the slave. Considering the slave on the same social level, and thus as more than its social standing would lead us to believe, would be in conflict with the notion of the social gap between the two parties. Because of this unequal standing and

²⁸ Seneca the Younger, On Benefits III.20.1.
³⁰ ‘The wise master will give orders to slaves that benefit slaves as well as masters.’ (Dio Chrysostom, Discourses 14: On Slavery and Freedom 1.10-11).
³¹ ‘He [the owner] must see that the servants are well provided for, and that they do not suffer from cold or hunger.’ (Cato, On Agriculture V.1-2).
³² ‘They are made to take more interest in their work by being treated more liberally in respect either of food, or of more clothing, or of exemption from work […] if some unusually heavy task is imposed, or punishment inflicted on them in some way, their loyalty and kindly feeling to the master may be restored by the consolation derived from such measures.’ (Varro, On Agriculture I.17.6-7).
³³ Columella, On Agriculture I.8.16-18.
supposed integrity as a result of the complex connection between the two, the presence of one slave is considered as a mere extension of the master and is therefore incorporated in this research as such.

As an immediate result hereof, the question arises: where does ‘alone’ begin or stop in the presence of slaves? If we follow the reasoning mentioned above to the letter, one could argue that five slaves would technically still serve as only an extension of the master. The resulting problem is that it bears many resemblances to the third tier (company). A group of slaves have the same effect on being alone as does a small group of intimates, regardless of the difference in social standing. For this reason, the practical consideration has to be made that only the presence of a single slave serving as an extension to the master can be included in this research.

Another problem dealing with social standing emerges with this arbitrary research boundary of the company of one slave, namely: prostitutes. Prostitutes were mostly, with a few notable exceptions35, of a servile nature, and additionally also seen as infamis (those who earn a living using their body for entertainment purposes were considered dishonourable and were legally inferior to regular citizens). The previous consideration that a domestic slave served as an extension of the master, does not apply to a non-domestic prostitute. The prostitute was mostly in service of someone else, i.e. a pimp or a wealthy owner, and this brings a difference in terminology. The dominus who owned a household slave could utilize this own slave for sexual purposes. In doing so, he changes nothing in the relationship between himself and the servant. As soon as the dominus would commit these same acts with a prostitute or another man’s slave, the owners’ status changes from an owner using his own resources into a client or paying customer using another one’s resources, be it a prostitute or the slave of a friend. Because of the difference of ownership between this prostitute and the servant used for sexual exploits and the implications for the shift in status and connection of the owner, external prostitutes will not be included in this research.

**Tier 3: Company**

The limitation set to the inclusion of ‘a single domestic slave’ also automatically excludes the term ‘intimate’ from the spectrum of being alone. Intimacy as a term can be closely connected in ancient sources to sexual

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35 See Tacitus, *Annals* II.85 and Suetonius, *Tiberius* XXXV.2 for apparent legislation against the prostitution of equestrian ranked women (*eques Romanus fuisset*).
acts (‘intercourse in intimacy’ coined by Cicero\textsuperscript{36}) and therefore needs further elaboration. Intimacy is, during the course of this thesis, associated with the onion-like nature of the elite domus. A closer affiliation of the guest to the paterfamilias will result in the need of a relatively higher level of intimacy, meaning: retreating deeper into the private layers of the house, normally restricted to lower-ranked guests.\textsuperscript{37}

The host and his guest(s) are consciously withdrawing themselves, because they use their environment as a way of retreating from the public eye. Intimacy is thus associated with the receiving of guests and offering them the spatial respect, associated with their status, through distancing from the public eye. Domestic slaves were not guests in this manner. Because of the presence of such symbolic capital, accounted for by the sign of respect through being invited into the deeper and therefore more exclusive parts of the domus, the guests are considered to be on a different, more equal standing than a domestic slave. This means that guests, friends and family were not an extension of the patron and the term intimacy consequently cannot be considered in terms of social withdrawal.

To briefly summarize: only a single domestic slave in the presence of its master shall have no influence in the latter’s range of being alone. As soon as the individual turns to other parties and moves up our tiers of alone\textsuperscript{38}, this situation will no longer be considered alone in respect to the participation-axis.

\textbf{2.2 Categorisation}

Generally speaking, there are three overarching motives as to why a person is alone.\textsuperscript{39} The first: because the individual has a personal wish to be alone, for a multitude of reasons, which will be discussed thoroughly later on. Secondly: because the society, of which this individual is a part of, forces this solitude upon the person, be it for positive or negative reasons. Lastly, to put it quite rigid: what remains, caused not by society or one self, but by the irregular aspect of daily life: one can be alone as a result of circumstance. This tripartite structure will form the foundation upon which this research is based: three major columns – personal, societal, and

\begin{flushleft}\textsuperscript{36} Cicero, \textit{Oraisons: On Behalf of King Deiotarus} 39.\textsuperscript{37}
\textsuperscript{37} This would be classified by Altman as ‘limited and protected communication’ (Altman, \textit{Environment}, 19-20).\textsuperscript{38}
\textsuperscript{38} Westin excludes the tier of servants, so the patron is thus moving from Westin’s first tier of privacy, solitude ("individual is separated from the group and freed from the observation of other persons"), towards the second tier: intimacy ("the individual is acting as part of a small unit"). See Westin, \textit{Privacy}, 31.\textsuperscript{39}
\textsuperscript{39} Pastalan (L.A. Pastalan, ‘Privacy as a Behavioral Concept’, \textit{Social Forces} 45 (1970) 93-97) also describes events leading up to an individual’s wish for privacy. Even though these events show some overlap to the categories established (such as personal and environmental factors) here, I chose not to adhere to Pastalan’s model for its vagueness and different aims for utilization.\end{flushleft}
circumstantial – representing the motives resulting in a person’s withdrawal from a society. These vertical columns can be cut through horizontally into trickier yet no less important divisions: duration and positive or negative connotations, as is visible in Table 1: Categorisation at the end of this chapter.

**Duration**
First of all, a horizontal division of the duration of one’s lone role – either temporal or permanent – is self-evident. This however is, again, quite static and black-white, for the expectation whether an individual will remain in solitude for a longer or shorter period remains subjective. Another question that arises in this matter is how to define a “short” period of time. Some may consider a few days more on the permanent side, and a short while as something lasting within the time-frame of a single day. The distinction between the two requires a more in depth research than this thesis may permit, since, for example, a hermit can exclude himself from society, but still “returns” to society every now and then for groceries, obligations, health care, etc. The aforementioned hermit will spend the majority, with the exceptions of short intervals, of his time voluntarily living outside the pulls of society. It is therefore that they will be classified under the permanent-personal range of the three main categories. As a result, whenever someone has the perspective or expectation of returning back into society within considerate time, and thus the time alone is a short interval from the majority of time spent within the society, it will be considered as only a temporal period.

**Positive or negative**
The second vertical division (apart from time) will consist of the two ways the society’s, or more specific, the author’s normative function will judge over the causes of withdrawal from that society: either positive or negative. For the purpose of this thesis, elaboration of these terms is necessary. The difference in labels attached by a society onto an individual is visible in the following hypothetical situation: person A chooses to withdraw himself in a room to handle some sales administration. The environment can either interpret this in a positive way: “person A needs some me-time or privacy.” The opposite reaction to that same action will result in an entirely different perspective and motive of person A, as if saying “person A needs to be alone because he has something to hide/a secret, etc.” From this example, we can learn that a single act may be judged in a variety of ways. Because the motivation of the retreating party may be unknown to the rest of society, it is the interpretation that is given to this retreat which forms the judgement of the person.
A judgment can, apart from telling us something about the judged, also offer us insight into the eyes and world of the beholder. What causes the beholder, or society, to see and judge as such? Connecting the opinion to the context of the opinion giver proves valuable, if not essential, in understanding said society. The norms and values which led to the responses to and from the society are visible in this (quite paradoxical) relationship between solitary and the socially. The range of judgements upon social withdrawal can thus be crystallised into a twofold of reactions: the need for privacy and the need for secrecy. Because of the close relationship and potential overlap between those two terms, I will briefly explain in what way the judgement of privacy differs from that of secrecy.

Privacy in the eyes of the beholder is similar to what modern concepts about privacy contain, namely: the need for personal space out of a desire to not always be involved with people. Barrington Moore quite aptly states that every human activity, from working through praying or playing, has been carried out somewhere in the company of other human beings. Nevertheless human beings do not always want to do things that way. […] Such a person seeks at least temporary escape or surcease from contact and conversation with other human beings because their presence has become overly demanding, oppressive, or simply boring.40

And adds that …the need for privacy appears as one segment of the range of human “fight or flight” responses to stress and danger. We may posit its most probable occurrence as a response to a painful but socially approved obligation where the individual feels unable to carry out the obligation. Thus the character of a society’s obligations will determine its needs and opportunities for privacy. In turn these obligations derive from the nature of the social and physical environment, the state of technology, the division of labor, and system of authority.41

40 Moore, Privacy, 71-72.
41 Moore, Privacy, 12.
Westin discerns more functions of privacy: personal autonomy, emotional release from a role (as mentioned above by Moore), self-evaluation (a key aspect of *otium*), and limited and protected communication (also classified as intimacy above). There are several ways, termed “privacy mechanisms” by Altman, such as verbal, non-verbal (body language), and environmental (clothing, the use of obstacles) means to influence the desired level of contact. There is a slight difference in how the environment views this constant interplay of desired level of input, and its reaction (output). The wish for privacy, as mentioned before, stems from the same motivation (limited and protected communication amongst others), but can end up labelled in three entirely different ways: intimacy (as mentioned before, this term is not used in this thesis), solitude and secrecy. Secrecy as a term refers to a more negative aspect of this withdrawal, namely: the need to withdraw oneself to hide something from people. Balsdon, concerning *otium*, also makes a distinction in outcomes, namely: the difference in creditable/*honestum* and discreditable/*inhonestum* leisure time. These two terms will also be utilized in this thesis and, despite their overlap, serve to underline the creditable (privacy as a harmless withdrawal from society) from the discreditable (withdrawal in order to keep something secret from society) and thus categorise incentives and opinions about this.

The abovementioned plethora of reasons can be visualised as shown in table 1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motive</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Positive/negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Societal</td>
<td>Temporal</td>
<td>Positive (creditable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>Negative (discreditable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circumstantial</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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44 Balsdon, ‘Auctoritas’, 47.
3 Textual sources

This chapter will serve as an exposé of the textual references to instances of Romans who withdraw themselves from Roman society. Because of the diffuse nature of these instances, this chapter will be divided into six case studies: toilets, sleeping, walking, sexuality, magic, and suicide. These case studies are picked because of the practical nature of available primary source material. We will start deep in the confines of the Roman house, namely with the toilets, and then gradually work our way out towards the more public areas of the house (bedroom and other spaces), and end up outside. This chapter will thus form, together with the fourth chapter concerning the archaeological evidence, the thematic and emic side of this thesis. By doing so, we hope to answer the following question: what can the textual references within our time-frame tell us about occasions and incentives of being alone?

Toilets

Due to the very scant appearances of literary mentions of toilet locations and toilet utilizations in the works of the great satirists and writers, we must remain wary of dangerous overinterpretation. The mentions that do remain will nevertheless be laid out and analysed in this subchapter. A majority of the material is to be found in the satirical works of Martial and Petronius. An explanation for this might be that the nature of satire lends itself more to the appearance of such lavatorial references than seriously intended works such as annals, histories, and the exchange of letters between orators and friends. Another explanation might be the apparent normality of toilets. Because it was such a natural part of daily life, it needed no further elaboration or mentioning in the literary works. Regardless of the few mentions, the few references that do remain can be utilized to offer us a view into the Roman mentality towards toilets, when to use them, and where.

Let us start with the satirical works where the mentions of the location and utilization are somewhat more outspoken, but remain susceptible to various interpretations. The Satyricon, written by Petronius, is one of the highlights and, alongside Apuleius’ Metamorphoses, one the few instances of a Latin satirical novel. It encompasses the story of Ecolpius (as narrator), Ascylos and Giton as they visit a South Italian town and are invited to join Trimalchio for dinner. Trimalchio, a wealthy freedman, goes to any lengths in order for his company to be wooed by his grandeur. By offering an extravagant and over-the-top banquet, alongside quips and jests, Trimalchio hopes to secure his place within the elite and their pattern of conspicuous spending.
Before the men go to dinner, they head to the baths. They encounter a group playing some ball game and the scene, worth quoting in its entirety, is described as following:

Two eunuchs were standing at different points in the group. One held a silver jordan [a chamber pot], one counted the balls, not as they flew from hand to hand in the rigour of the game, but when they dropped to the ground. We were amazed at such a display, and then Menelaus ran up and said, “This is the man at whose table you rest your elbow: indeed, what you see is the overture to his dinner.” Menelaus had just finished when Trimalchio cracked his fingers. One eunuch came up at this signal and held the jordan for him as he played. He relieved his bladder and called for a basin to wash his hands and wiped them on a boy’s head… (Petronius, *Satyricon* 27).

This fragment in itself is interesting to see how the freedman Trimalchio demonstrates his superiority towards his inferiors, but more relevant is the eunuch holding a chamber pot which is then utilized by Trimalchio in front of everyone. This first encounter immediately sets the tone as an introduction of the character Trimalchio, and a rather negative tone it is. The reason why this fragment, even though Trimalchio is not alone, is discussed is due to the difference noticeable in a later fragment of the Satyricon. The vulgarity of relieving himself in public and the act of using a boy’s head as a drying towel form a huge contrast to the compliments given by Menelaus just a brief moment before.

As the banquet commences and several courses are presented, Trimalchio’s behaviour continues to consist of bragger, opulence, and persistent plays of unnecessary shows, according to his guests, of superiority. Then comes the scene which is important in contrast to the abovementioned excerpt.

After this course Trimalchio rose to go to the pot. With the tyrant away we had our freedom, and we proceeded to draw the conversation of our neighbours (Petronius, *Satyricon* 41).

In this scene, Trimalchio decides to leave the guests at the table and make for another room to answer to nature’s call. Why this different attitude towards the same action and the same audience? Two possible reasons can account for this difference. The first reason, is that Trimalchio may feel that is ill-mannered to repeat his
action within the context of a banquet. He sees no harm in relieving himself during the course of a ball game, but deems it inappropriate to do so during dinner. The second reason is more of a practical literary use. By removing the character Trimalchio from the dinner scene, Petronius offers the guests the space within the novel to engage in another dialogue. It is not until after six verses (in verse 47) that Trimalchio makes his appearance again.

The moment where Petronius decides to enter Trimalchio back into the story follows the remarkable phrase of one of the guests: “Yes, education is a treasure, and culture never dies.” Immediately after this argument in favour of culture and education, Trimalchio breaks this sophisticated conversation with the third reference to the calls of nature in the Satyricon. He asks his guests for their excuse, saying that he had difficulty going to the toilet for several days and that

The doctors forbid retention. But if the matter is serious, everything is ready outside: water, pots, and all the other little comforts (Petronius, Satyricon 47).

I believe that the function of this fragment, as it was with the other fragments, is contrast between the well-mannered guests and their rather vulgar host. A second reference to the location of ‘the pot’ outside of the banquet hall, again, does not offer us insights into the multiple interpretations of ‘outside’. Does this mean outside of the confines of the room, the house, a special room reserved for a toilet perhaps? What these fragments of Trimalchio’s behaviour can teach us, due to the negative undertone of the first fragment (during the ball game), is that Petronius deliberately let the character Trimalchio relieve himself in front of a public, in order to serve as an introduction of the dichotomy between well-mannered and ill-mannered behaviour. If we follow this reasoning, the audience reading this would immediately recognize this action as rude and uncalled for. If this was not the case, Petronius’ aim to portray the character Trimalchio in a negative light in his introductory fragment would have needed a different example. The other two examples, where Trimalchio uses (verse 41) and mentions (verse 47) the location of a toilet away from the banquet, teaches us very little about using or mentioning a toilet in this way was seen as creditable or not. In none of these fragments there

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45 Petronius, Satyricon 46.
seems to be a possibility to discern between a societal expectation or a personal need for using a lavatory away from the scene. One can argue in favour of both the motives, and perhaps it is too hard to distinguish the incentives when motives can also overlap.

In the fourteen books of Martial’s *Epigrams*, only two references to toilets can be found. Unfortunately, one of them is without a doubt aimed at a public lavatory and the other one *could* take place in a public establishment, but this is not certain. What links the two fragments is that both of them show an occasion where the utiliser of the toilet is being disturbed or, more specifically, suffers a lack of privacy. The first fragment is a complaint towards Ligurinus, a slightly overambitious poet who seeks an audience in unfit places. Nobody wants to have Ligurinus as company, says Martial, for

…who would want to endure such trials?

You read to me as I stand, you read to me as I sit.

You read to me as I run, you read to me as I shit (Martial, *Epigrams* III.44).

As mentioned before, it is not clear whether this would take place at a public or a private lavatory. The key point is however that this story is one about irritation. Martial tries to convey to the reader the sheer severity of Ligurinus’ poetical perseverance and uses the visit to the toilet as one of the examples. Once again, by using this example, Martial brings forward a similar aim as Petronius by taking something recognizable (in this case the apparent wish for privacy whilst on the toilet) to portray the character Ligurinus –or in Petronius’ case: Trimalchio– negatively. The same notion is implied by Martial in a similar complaint.

Vacerra spends hours in all the privies, sitting all day long.

Vacerra doesn’t want a shit, he wants a dinner (Martial, *Epigrams* XI.77).

Vacerra does not match the expected behaviour within the context of the privies. Instead, he spends the entire day there socialising and trying to enforce a dinner invitation from wealthy citizens. Again, same argument: the example has to be recognisable in order to communicate the problem and for the reader to understand the irritation. A connection between a visit to a toilet (not per se a private toilet) and a wish for privacy can thus
be established. Both the fragments do not specifically mention the duration, but can definitely be seen as examples of deviant behaviour, which contrast with normal toilet etiquette. First: Vacerra spending all day at the privies and second: both Vacerra and Ligurinus clearly do not understand the rules of privacy. This counter-reasoning can thus be used to argue that, according to these fragments, it was considered customary on a societal as well as a personal level for a toilet visit to be brief and private.

This connection between privacy and a public toilet is clearly visible in a fragment of Seneca the Younger’s *Epistles*. A German *bestiarius* (wild-beast gladiator) wants to commit suicide and

he withdrew in order to relieve himself, the only thing which he was allowed to do in secret and without the presence of a guard. While so engaged, he seized the stick of wood, tipped with a sponge, which was devoted to the vilest uses, and stuffed it, just as it was, down his throat; thus he blocked up his windpipe, and choked the breath from his body (Seneca the Younger, *Epistles* LXX.19-20).

According to this fragment, the *bestiarius* knew that he was guaranteed some privacy whilst going to the toilet and, rather grimly, personally seized the opportunity to take his own life.

These five excerpts show that there is a connection between certain behaviour towards and the use of a toilet. Petronius demonstrated us that relieving yourself *en plein public* was ill-mannered and, additionally and perhaps more interesting, shows us that Trimalchio consciously retreated to another room during the course of the banquet. We do not know whether this was mandatory due to dinner etiquette or that it merely serves a practical purpose to the story (the continuing widening of the moral gap between host and guests). The visible irritation of Martial towards the disturbances at the lavatories and the break this forms with normal behaviour, alongside the guaranteed tranquillity required for a suicide attempt, argue strongly in favour for a connection between social withdrawal and the proceeding behaviour when using a public or private toilet.

**Sleeping**

As Riggsby quite rightly mentions in his article,[46] there were multiple functions attested to the *cubiculum* within a domus, of which sleeping was one. When we turn to the textual sources, we see that there certainly is

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evidence for these various functions, but also for a connection between withdrawal or being alone and the *cubiculum*. Let us briefly consider the evidence (for an elaborated exposition of these instances, see Riggsby) to remind ourselves of the function of the *cubiculum* as a resting place. Publius Scipio’s wife, for instance, in the absence of her husband retreated in her own room [in cubiculo] and bed, when she was lying alone in the absence of her husband and had fallen asleep (Gellius, *Attic Nights* 6.1.3).47

In Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, the protagonist Lucius says: “I went back to my room [cubiculum] and surrendered to the sleep that I yearned for.”48 However, this does not account for the question whether sleeping was something the Romans did alone. A few aspects of these textual mentions have to be taken into account. This is illustrated by a fragment from Plautus’ *Amphytrion*. Amphytrion, a general in the Theban army, is engaged in a foreign war. Jupiter falls in love with Amphytrion’s wife: Alcumena. By pretending to be Amphytrion, Jupiter tricks her into sleeping with him, thus impregnating her. The real Amphytrion, back from war, finds this out by the following scene:

> Alcumena: You said you were feeling sleepy. The table was removed; we went away from there to sleep.
> Amphytrion: Where did you sleep?
> Alcumena: Together with you, in the same bed, in the same bedroom (Plautus, *Amphytrion* 801-803).

First of all, married couples often slept in the same bed (see also the fragment of Gellius) and this automatically excludes said examples from the research. The second aspect is that not only married couples slept together: adultery is something that is also frequently attested to the *cubiculum*. The fact that Alcumena refers to them (Jupiter in disguise and herself) as being “in the same bed, in the same bedroom” implies that adultery was a

common feature in the bedroom. Adultery brings us to the second problem dealing with literary sources about sleeping in the bedroom, namely: sleeping is often used as a euphemism for fornicating. The language Alcumena uses to describe her impregnation by Jupiter is not uncommon in classic literary works. Rather than describing the act of love, she leaves her audience with an ambiguous phrasing: “sleeping together”. It is common knowledge that merely dormitare or concubitum does not result in another pregnancy. Therefore, we must proceed with caution and try to separate sexual euphemisms from their literal meaning. The third issue concerns the nature of the persons sleeping together. Alcumena is introduced as a married woman of a Theban general, so it is likely that she carries the status of a citizen. Most of the time, the answer to the question “what is his/her social standing?” is much vaguer and leads to the unclear nature of those utilizing the cubiculum. This brings us to the final problem which is rather straightforward, but is crucial to understanding the difficulties. In the majority of the literary references to either cubicula or an individual sleeping, it is not stated explicitly whether he or she slept alone. The question whether slaves, spouses, or other parties were also present in the bedroom frequently remains unanswered because of this.

Now that we’ve established the difficulties when dealing with literary sources, we turn to the scant literary mentions that might imply the withdrawal of an individual. The abovementioned quote of Apuleius leaves upon the question whether Lucius went to sleep indeed by himself or not. The tone and use of first person, without the mentioning of the presence of another person in that same location, may imply that he retreated to his room on his own. There seems to be no clear additive to the narrative as to why Lucius returned to his room alone, as is the case with Trimalchio and the negative implications by the symbolical connection between his crude manners and the fragments concerning with toilets.

Pliny the Younger, in a fragment about his uncle Pliny the Elder, tells us that

49 Martial wrote an epigram from the viewpoint of a lamp, located in the cubiculum, stating that “Whatever you wish to do is permitted; I, the lamp, accomplice of the sweet bed will be silent.” (Martial, Epigrams XIV.39. Transl. by D.R. Shackleton Bailey, Loeb Classical Library).
50 E.g. Seneca the Elder, Controversiae VII.6.15; Lucianus, The Dialogues of the Courtesans 314; The Dialogues of the Gods 212; Macrobius, Saturnalia I.10.13; Apuleius, Metamorphoses I.7.
…he [Pliny the Elder] went to rest and certainly slept, for as he was a stout man his breathing was rather loud and heavy and could be heard by people coming and going outside his door (Pliny the Younger, Letters VI.16.13).

This fragment also does not signify whether Pliny was sleeping alone in this room. His breathing, however, could be heard by people outside his door (which was presumably closed). Again, no mention of another person alongside Pliny the Elder. The next fragment, found in verse 15, says “He was wakened” (Excitatus procedit) and then joined Pomponianus and the rest of the household… There is no elaboration by whom he was awakened, but the following fragment clearly states that, upon waking up, he joined the rest of the household.

There are some factors in favour of the notion that Pliny slept alone, according to this letter by his nephew. Most important to remember is that there is no specific mention of others in the same space, only the mention of people located outside of his door. The same phenomenon recurs another time in a letter written by Pliny, namely in a story about the supernatural.

When day dawned he [one of Pliny’s freedmen] found this place [his head] shorn and the hair lying on the floor. A short time elapsed and then another similar occurrence confirmed the earlier one. A slave boy was sleeping with several others in the young slaves’ quarters. His story was that two men clad in white came in through the window, cut his hair as he lay in bed, and departed the way they came in (Pliny the Younger, Letters VII.27.12-13).

Pliny the Younger explicitly mentions the presence of a slave boy and several others in the young slaves’ quarters. Where these quarters were located in relation to the freedman’s bedroom is not clear. The location of the slaves in this fragment is vital for the course of the narrative. Option one: the slaves were near Pliny’s freedman (perhaps in the slave quarters of his room) and that’s why the slave boy could explain what had happened. This would mean the slave did not or could not take action in order to protect his master, or, perhaps, the slave did it himself. More likely is the second option: the slave quarters were indeed outside of this fictive house and thus the narrative of the supernatural had more weight, since there could be no other presence in the room than the freedman himself.
However fictive the story of Pliny may be, the notion of keeping the slaves outside, yet near the bedroom is well attested in ancient literature.

And with that I [Lucius] left and headed for my room [*cubiculum meum*]. There I discovered quite elegant arrangements for a banquet. A place had been laid out for the slaves on the ground outside the door, as far away as possible, to dispatch them out of hearing-range of our nocturnal chatter, I suppose (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses II*.15).

Often too the servants who slept at his [Hannibal’s] door were roused and terrified by a fierce cry that broke the desolate silence… (Silius Italicus, *Punica I*.66).

These two quotes give two separate reasons for the distance between the master’s bed rest and the slaves beds. First of all, to prevent the eyes and ears of the slaves to pick up certain things, be it “nocturnal chatter” or other deeds, the master did not want them to know. The second case is one of security reasons, namely: the protection of important people by stationing guards (in many cases domestic servants) in front or in the vicinity of the door. One reason does not automatically exclude the other; even though the slaves could be stationed outside of the door, for reasons we would now call privacy, they still were close to the master in order to keep an eye out. This was obviously the case when

Alarmed by the horrible sight [of his “bad angel”] and the fearful name, he [Cassius of Parma] called his servants and enquired whether they had seen anyone of that appearance entering or leaving the bedroom. They answered that nobody had come that way (Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings I*.7.7).

The first people Cassius of Parma turns to after this incident are his servants, for they were likely to be near him and therefore have the highest odds of encountering Cassius’ bad angel. Whether it was for a safety reason,

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a privacy reason, or perhaps it was just considered normal, there is certainly evidence for the exclusion of slaves from the cubiculum. The evidence for sleeping alone is unfortunately of a less certain nature. There are simply too few references of people sleeping alone and those that we do have merely imply with loads of interpretation an occasion, not a pattern, of an individual who is sleeping alone. The disappointing evidence does not discredit the fact that there certainly is a link between the cubiculum as a room, the activities that took place there and the wish to occasionally prevent or to control what happened inside from leaking to the outside. Pliny’s so-called villa letters leave little to the imagination when he described his villa into great detail, and this includes a cubiculum with extreme attention given to the hole-and-corner nature of this room:

Next to it is a bedroom for use at night which neither the voices of my young slaves, the sea’s murmur, nor the noise of a storm can penetrate, any more than the lightning’s flash and light of day unless the shutters are open (Pliny the Younger, Letters II.17.22).

Sexuality
The subject of the sex(uality) of the ancients is one which sparks the interest of many scholars since it is a very recognisable part of human existence. Recently, the article by Riggsby has shed light on the purpose of the bedroom (cubiculum) in the sexual exploits of Romans, in contrast to themes such as homosexuality and the law which used to dominate the debate. In this article, he mentions specifically that there was indeed a connection between the societal value of containing sexual activities within a private environment. In proving so, Riggsby understandably focused on the cubiculum and incorporated all sorts of activities (sex, murder, sleep, suicide, etc.) with several parties (slaves, friends, spouses). The problem we immediately encounter is the exclusion of sex between socially equal individuals, such as spouses, and the exclusion of sex with an external party, such as prostitutes. This chapter will therefore serve to investigate what the literary fragments can teach us about solo-sex, i.e. masturbation, and sex with a slave.

53 Riggsby, ‘Cubiculum’, 46.
There are numerous fragments implying that certain sexual acts, most notoriously with prostitutes or dealing with sodomy, should be hidden from the public eye, by means of a curtain or a door. To briefly summarise the Roman values surrounding sexuality, we need to turn to the role of sex in the life of a man. An aristocratic man had to be serene, to be able to control himself (being oversexed or led by his sexual desires was deemed unmanly), keep his hands off of Roman citizens (not per se monogamous), and always be the penetrating party. Infidelity was not considered a bad thing for a freeborn man, as he was free to do whatever he pleased, as long as he followed the virtuous manly values that society demanded of him. The place of masturbation within this construct of values and expected behaviour can be considered disgraceful. One could argue that it does not fit into the image of self-constraint and, additionally, there is no penetration involved either.

A quick scan through the ancient textual references reveals only a few instances within our time frame where masturbation is mentioned. Martial complains about the everlasting chastity (and the resulting bad sex) of his wife. He writes an epigram with several historical references and mentions Phrygian slaves masturbating behind the door whenever Hector’s wife “sat on her horse.” At first sight, this looks useful, but unfortunately, this merely means that the slaves were locked out, yet aroused by the intimate moment between the spouses. The following references are also all due to Martial. He admits to doing it himself, reprimands a certain Ponticus for wasting time and effort by using “his left hand as a mistress,” and recommends the “mega-raunchy booklets of Musaeus” in order to “become a husband without a woman”. There are also several graffiti found in Pompeii referring to masturbation in a light-hearted or sometimes ridiculing way.

54 Martial, *Epigrams* I.34; VII.62; XI.45; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* IX.5. A very explicit graffito (*CIL* IV.2400 = Varone, *Erotica*, 82) found in Pompeii (insula IX.1.22-29) reminds Satyrus that he should not “lick cunts outside the door, but within.”


60 Martial, *Epigrams* IX.41.


Unfortunately, none of these fragments elaborates on the location where masturbation would or perhaps would not be accepted. I believe that the cause lies in two reasons: the first being the function of masturbation within literature as an addition to a comical or ridiculing situation (most often seen in the satire of Martial) has no reason to elaborate on locations. The sheer fact that the act is mentioned was enough to get the intended message across. The second reason is that it is often presented as a normal act, and it could therefore be argued that there was indeed a certain moral compass with which it was known collectively how to act when one felt the need.

We have to conclude from several sources\(^{63}\) that it was deemed normal to have sexual relationship with a slave, regardless whether it was a male or female. It fitted both into the Roman system of slavery (the slave was considered your property, the owner could do with it as he pleased) as well as the expected sexual norms of a free male citizen (other freeborn citizens were out of the questions, slaves were not). There are two fragments dealing with sexual intentions between a slave and his master where there is a mention of a specific location. The similarity between these mentions is that in both of them the slave stars in an allegation of adultery. In the first fragment, penned down by Seneca the Elder, the slave is used as a pawn in the court case.

The case was like this: a man attested that he had caught an attractive youth, a slave of his, with his wife in her bedroom, and on this pretext divorced his wife. The slave was therefore prosecuted for adultery (Seneca the Elder, *Controversiae* II.1.24-26).

Even though this fragment is interesting for the sometimes skewed Roman concept of adultery, its mention of a wife retreating to her bedroom, whatever her plans there, proves to be more relevant to our research. This fragment suggests that the wife consciously took her slave back to her bedroom. The sexual context of this withdrawal remains implicit, but I guess it is fair to say that they were not there merely for *dormitare*. The second fragment knows many parallels with the fragment above, but there is one key difference: the slave is not the main character, but merely an excuse.

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Calidius of Bononia was caught at night in a married man’s bedroom [in cubiculo mariti] and brought up on a charge of adultery. […] he said he had been led there because of a passion for a boy slave (Valerius Maximus, Memorable Doings and Sayings VIII.1.12).

Even though this fragment cannot be used according the definition of alone (married man and Calidius), the connection between sexual activity (in this case: in secrecy) and the bedroom is evident. Both of them (Calidius and his lover, and the married wife and her slave) retreated to the bedroom in order to keep certain acts private (be it adultery or the mere sex). There could not be a more striking difference than the difference between the secrecy needed in the case concerning adultery, and the outspoken references of masturbation and sex with a slave, which paint a picture of a widespread phenomenon. We must not jump to conclusions, and see this as a sign that everybody was having sex with slaves all the time, but apparently sexual relations between the two parties did not need to be as classified.

**Suicide**

Suicide quite literally refers to the killing of *sui* (Latin for ‘of oneself) and is therefore frequently named the most private act imaginable. However, this does not mean that the act of suicide is an act which has to be carried out in solitude. The best and most notorious example is that of Seneca the Younger, who, after Nero discovered Seneca’s role in a complot against him, was forced (in the presence of slaves and presumably also soldiers) to take his own life. The ancient historian Anton van Hooff has contributed massively towards the research in suicide in the classical world, and has recorded 960 mentions of suicide in Greek and Roman literature. This database, established by Van Hooff, will be utilized in order to research the role of withdrawal in Roman suicide.

Before we dive into the sources, there are a few important factors to be taken into account when it comes to suicide and its place within Roman society. First of all, there was a certain ambiguity concerning the act of suicide and the outcome for one’s remembrance. Suicide played a significant part in the narrative concerning the life (and death) of an individual and how this person must be remembered. Valerie Hope, in

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64 This is not a word known to the Romans.
65 Tacitus, Annals XV.61-64. Further ‘public suicides’ can be seen for example in the death of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, Brutus, and the so called ‘collective suicides’ of Masada and Gamala.
her extensive work on death and dying in the Roman world, phrases this as a good or a bad death. Killing
yourself could be an act of true bravery or rather differently, a way out for the weak.\textsuperscript{67} Especially in aristocratic
circles, it could serve the noble ideal of preserving one’s honour. The theme of aristocratic cases and the motive
of losing face is well reflected in the majority of the cases within our time-frame.\textsuperscript{68} The ambiguity leads us to
the second, and more important factor for this research, namely: the literary purposes of recorded deaths. A
bad death was (often, not always) the inevitable outcome of a bad life. This is visible in the death of Messalina
–the-Empress-turned-prostitute– by not dying with \textit{dignitas}.\textsuperscript{69} It could also serve as a reflection for the troubled
times, as is opted by Hope\textsuperscript{70}, in the case of Cicero or Pompey the Great. In short: we must remain wary of the
purpose of the death in the work’s context and to be aware of the fact that it might be altered in order to march
the good/bad life with the resulting ending.

After scanning through the majority of the 444 recordings\textsuperscript{71} of Roman suicide, we encounter eleven
explicit references to people withdrawing themselves from the society to a more private setting in order to take
t heir own lives. This means that a staggering number of the suicides, at least according to the literary mentions,
was conceded in front of others. The reason for this probably lies in the function of the suicide within a
narrative. For the largest part, the literary evidence concerns the nobility or war heroes. They are all people
manoeuvring within the confines of a society that placed paramount interest in building up a legacy or name
to be remembered. A mention in the literary works was one of the ways this could be achieved. To write about
a good or bad death was to add a portion to a narrative, be it as a writer or as a character. The incredible amount
of evidence gathered by Van Hooff sees it peak during the Late Republic and Early Empire, because of the
increasing aristocratic needs for such a narrative.\textsuperscript{72}

We will now turn to some of the excerpts where it is obvious that the character retreated to a more
private place. Our first example can be found in Julius Caeser’s \textit{The African War}, where Scipio Africanus

\textsuperscript{67} V.M. Hope, \textit{Roman Death} (London 2009) 57-58.
\textsuperscript{68} Van Hooff, \textit{Suicide}, 14-15, 28.
\textsuperscript{69} Tacitus (\textit{Annals} XI.37-38) mentions her wailing and crying, and even not having the perseverance to take her own life.
\textsuperscript{70} Hope, \textit{Death}, 63.
\textsuperscript{71} Van Hooff, \textit{Suicide}, 198-234.
\textsuperscript{72} Van Hooff, \textit{Suicide}, 10-14.
retired to bed without arousing any suspicions, there being nothing unusual either about the way he looked or the way he talked; and then, having secretly smuggled a dagger into his bedroom [in cubiculum], he accordingly stabbed himself (Julius Caesar, The African War 88.4).

Here we can clearly see the example of a good death. Scipio Africanus remained calm and took his own life by a soldierly death in domestic setting. Hanging yourself with the aid of the ‘rope of hideous death’ was looked down upon by the elite, for it violated the integrity of the body. Nonetheless it was probably still the primary method of suicide. The bad connotations are clearly visible when we encounter the death of Quintus Fulvius Flaccus, who had been a censor and was a pontifex at the time of his death. There were rumours spreading that during his censorship, “he was not wholly himself” and when slaves entered his bedroom in the morning they “found him hanging in a noose.”

Above there are examples of a good (weapon) and a bad (hanging) death. They have in common that both suicides retreated to their room (cubiculum) only to be found by others later on. There are several other instances where the person in question commits suicide while consciously withdrawing elsewhere. I believe the following instances are specifically intended to adhere to a narrative. The slave Philokrates takes up the role of his master Panapio, retreats to his master’s chamber [in cubiculum] and commits suicide as Panapio, letting his master escape. Rather dramatically, Catulus, Labienus, and Statius all find their death in a scene in which they lock themselves in their house, freed of other people, and then set fire to it. The function of their solitude can represent a wish for solitude, although I think it serves as a way to utilize a noble death. All three protagonists evacuate their houses calmly; some even urge their slaves to carry what away what they pleased. After they ensured there would be no other victims of their suicide attempt, only then would they end their lives in a rather scenical way. This way of dying, even though highly uncommon and eccentric, reflects a calm and resolute attempt.

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73 Virgil, Aeneid XII.603.
74 Van Hooft, Suicide, 77-78.
75 Van Hooft, Suicide, 69.
76 Livy, Roman History XLII.28.12.
77 Valerius Maximus, Memorable Doings and Sayings VI.8.3.
79 Seneca the Elder, Controversiae X.7.
80 Appian, Roman History: Civil Wars IV.4.25.
In both Catulus’ and Statius’ suicides, there was a clear message involved. Catulus’ death was ordered by Marius as one of the proscriptions. This highly unusual death, even though it took place in a private sphere, can therefore be considered a public act. Statius’ death is also ordered by means of a proscription (probably during the same proscriptions as Catulus\textsuperscript{81}). Labienus’ suicide is part of a bigger story concerning the act of remembrance and death. Seneca summarises it eloquently in a fragment before Labienus’ story, saying:

Go ahead, look for fresh ways to perish – yourselves: and as for anything that nature has removed from all suffering – genius, and the memory of a name… (Seneca the Elder, \textit{Controversiae} X.6-7).

However spectacular the abovementioned deaths are, they are clearly instigated as an end or part of a story. Of the following excerpt this is not so clear, and therefore it might present us with an interesting contrast. There are five remaining examples of which the following one seems to be the odd one out. Labeo (who is of unclear profession, but renowned for his learning) digs his own hole outside of his tent, makes sure all domestic affairs were settled, and retreated back to his tent, where he

handed him [his most faithful slave] a sword as he turned, and presented his throat. And so his tent became his tomb (Appian, \textit{Roman History: Civil Wars} IV.17.135).

The only clear difference between this fragment and the other four is the fact that the rest of the excerpts take place within a \textit{domus}, instead of a tent. Three fragments clearly mention the withdrawal to a bedroom (\textit{cubiculum}) where the two protagonists shut themselves in.\textsuperscript{82} The remaining one merely mentions the home of Otho, where he, after again making sure all is well, ends his life by sword. After this Plotius Firmus, Praefect of the Praetorian Guard, storms in, but the damage was already done.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{81} Appian (\textit{Civil Wars} IV.4.25) mentions other proscribed joining Sextus Pompeius at Sicily. Perhaps during the Sicilian revolt of 34 BC?

\textsuperscript{82} Seneca the Younger, \textit{De Consulatione ad Marciam} 22.6 (this is unfortunately not an instant where the main character seems to be alone, but the conscious retreat to his \textit{cubiculum} proves interesting) and Tacitus, \textit{Annals} XV.69.3; III.15.6.

\textsuperscript{83} Tacitus, \textit{Histories} II.49.
These past five examples all have one thing in common: the main characters consciously withdraw themselves in order to commit suicide. This remains quite remarkable for the simple fact that a vast majority of the suicides is committed (ranging from huge number of people to a small group of intimates) in public. Can we conclude from this that suicide was something one would rather commit in the presence of others?

I think it would be a fallacy to consider a preferred public method of suicide because of the mere fact that there is an overwhelming amount of literary evidence claiming so. Let us not deny the fact that suicide in a private (in the earlier established sense of the word) environment seems to be an exception, due to scant mentions. The most private act one could imagine thus seems not so private at first sight. Unfortunately, I can say, this is due to the place suicide takes within the *mores* of the Roman elite. The literary sources featured in Van Hooff’s extensive research were probably in large part written by, about, and for members of the Roman elite. In doing so, these values (suicide as a final judgment of a person’s character and life) became ingrained in Roman literature and hard to avoid. The fact remains, however, that out of nine examples with a clear example of social withdrawal, only Livy’s excerpt⁴⁴ (Quintus Fulvius Flaccus was found hanging in a noose by a slave the next morning) has negative connotations. This in itself is not remarkable due to mentions of Flaccus’ unstable conditions in the same paragraph. We can conclude therefore that the literary fragments assessed in this subchapter did not have a negative stance towards the withdrawal when it came to suicide. The one fragment that *did* displays a discreditable nature is a fragment where the noose (a vulgar way of dying, according to Van Hooff⁵⁵) also plays a pivotal role.

**Magic**

The Romans valued their interaction with the divine immensely, but this interaction happened in different ways. On the one end of the spectrum stands religion, which was a way of requesting something of the gods through for example prayers, sacrifices, and rituals. The other way is magic, which contrasts with religion in the way that it *enforces* rather than asks, through for example cursing tablets (*defixiones*) and the use of magic potions. Once again, magic can serve to underline a character’s evil spirit or helplessness, therefore we must see the fragments in their bigger context within the work. Nevertheless, was magic something that required withdrawal from society?

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There are very few excerpts where solitude and magic are connected as thoroughly as the following fragment. In Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, Lucius stays at the house of a family friend, Milo. His wife Pamphile turns out to be a witch and it is through their slave, Photis, that he wishes to witness her magical endeavours.

“How I wish,” she [Photis] replied, “that I could get you what you desire, Lucius. But, besides her nasty disposition, she always performs secret acts of this sort in seclusion and divorced from all company” (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* III.20).

The smoke screen of mystery attached to this secrecy clears a few lines later (III.21) when Lucius is able to see for himself, through a crack in the wood, what Pamphile does in supposed seclusion. The reason for this wish for solitude is as follows. The town is awash with rumours concerning Pamphile and her witchcraft, but Pamphile supposedly needs the secrecy in order to transform into a bird and fly to her lover. It is debateable whether it is the magic or the love affair that Pamphile wants to keep a secret.

Later on, Apuleius (Metamorphoses IX.29) mentions an adulterous baker’s wife who wishes to reconcile with her husband after he finds out about her escapades. She first uses a love potion and decides to finish him with the use of a cursing tablet. Gager says that “It has been assumed […] that the process [of commissioning a *defixio*] was entirely private, secret, and hidden from the public eye.”

Gager disagrees with this assumption, for there remain quite a few literary mentions of the use of curse tablets. Not one of them mentions the need for withdrawal in order to curse someone. Only one fragment forbids the commissioning of curse tablets during the night. Julius Paulus, a Roman jurist under Alexander Severus (222 AD – 235 AD), writes in his *Sentences* about “unlawful nocturnal rites, in order to cast a spell, to curse or to bind someone […].” This reference to magical activities happening during the night can serve to imply its association with things shady and secret. Nevertheless, to assume this means that these magical affairs only happened while hidden from the public eye is, as Gager quite rightly says, if anything, making a rule out of an exception.

87 Ibidem, 248-264.
88 Ibidem, 259.
Walking
When it comes to walking, there is only a certain amount of literary fragments dealing with people who walk alone. This does not mean, as expected, that no Roman ever walked alone. I think it must be important to keep in mind the fact that walking was an everyday activity, hence the reason it is attested so scantily in ancient literature. The two fragments we do have to our disposal have one thing in common: they all serve to sketch a negative or associate with a negative aspect of Roman daily life. For example, Juvenal writes of the dangers of the Roman nights by describing the risk one takes when strolling through Rome without a will, for the risk of having roof tiles or pots landing on your head. Another example is a rather lengthy excerpt of the encounter with a drunken thug for whom it “takes a brawl to make him sleep.89 Juvenal described how he is considered an easy target for the because

…he [the thug] keeps clear of the man with the warning signs of scarlet cloak and long retinue of attendants plus plenty of torches and bronze lamps. But me he despises, as I go home escorted usually by the moon or by the short-lived light of a candle… (Juvenal, Satires III.282-285).

Unfortunately, this excerpt does not do much for this thesis. Yes, it mentions an occasion where, much like the students and people going out for a drink nowadays do, someone heads home in the night by himself. This fragment is not so much about the fact that the man was walking alone, but must be considered in its wider placement and function within the text. It serves as an example in a list of examples proving why caution must be used when the Roman sun already had set.

The second fragment, also found in Juvenal’s Satires, is about the wife of emperor Claudius. Being a part of a series of examples where women degraded themselves by spending time with infames (actors90 and gladiators91), Messalina92 (Claudius’ wife) degrades herself on a different level.

89 Juvenal, Satires III.281.
90 Juvenal, Satires VI.73
91 Juvenal, Satires VI.82-84, 104-105.
92 History was not kind to Messalina. She is portrayed incredibly negative by several authors. See: Tacitus, Annals XI.12, 26, 31, 37-38; XII.1; XIII.11; Cassius Dio, Roman History LX.8.5, 13, 14, 15.3, 22, 28.2-3; LXI.31; Pliny the Elder, Natural History X.83.
When his wife [Messalina] realised her husband [emperor Claudius] was asleep, she would leave, with no more than a single maid as her escort. Preferring a mat to her bedroom in the Palace, she had the nerve to put on a night time hood, the whore-empress. Like that, with a blonde wig hiding her black hair, she went inside a brothel reeking of ancient blankets to an empty cubicle—her very own (Juvenal, Satires VI.116-125).

This fragment specifically mentions the departure of the Empress and her slave to her own cubicle in a brothel. Perhaps the reason why Juvenal chose to portray Messalina this way is that it forms a big contrast with the normal way—presumably by litter—with which the high-class women got to where they needed to be. The contrast between elite women behaving like the lowest tier of Roman society (the infames), is further highlighted by the actions of the Empress following her travel to the brothel. She then goes on to behave like a prostitute, in her cubicle, “naked and for sale”93—the worst thing a respectable member of the Roman society could do. This fragment and the following fragment thus display three reasons why Messalina’s behaviour is inappropriate. First of all, she leaves the Emperor’s bed to walk accompanied by a slave on foot. Second of all, she manoeuvres during the night time, a time when “Bacchus is ruling the revels” and “when the brow is crowned with the rose and the hair drips perfume. This is your hour, when the puritans’ frown can relax with a smile for my verses.”94 Thirdly, and most importantly, she goes on to degrade herself by behaving like an infamis. All these reasons are meant to put Messalina in a bad light, and the walk towards the brothel is a part of this story. One could argue that because of this fact, the walking on her own of Messalina was considered uncouth and unfit behaviour for a well-off Roman female, let alone the Empress.

The few examples we do have, can serve to show us two things: there are very few sources (only two, that I know of) specifically mentioning individuals walking by themselves, probably due to its normality. Second of all, the sources we do have all serve as a way to enrich a negative narrative (Empress with loose morals and the dangers of Roman nightlife). However, it remains complicated to conclude, from so few fragments, when the Romans walked alone and why. Probably, the answer lies in the same reason why there are very few instances when walking alone is mentioned. It was considered normal and, in a world without a

93 Juvenal, Satires VI.122-123.
94 Martial, Epigrams X.19.
more practical way of moving within an urban environment, a frequent if not the only way to travel short
distances.

4 Archaeological remains
This chapter will focus on the archaeological remains in order to contrast or perhaps complement the literary
evidence of the previous chapter. The same case studies (moving from inside to outside) will be maintained,
but answer a rather different question than in the previous chapter. What can the archaeological remains within
our time-frame tell us about the possibilities architecture can offer to withdraw from the public life?

Toilets
As a stark contrast to the scant literary mentions concerning toilets, there is a staggering amount of
archaeological remains in the Campanian ruins alone. The tourists usually flock towards the lush marble
decorated multi-seaters found in Ostia and it is these foricae (term associated with these multi-seaters) that
have long dominated the scholarly debate. Discussion concerning the more practical aspects of Roman toilet
use, for example the infamous gutter in the Ostian forica and its supposed function as a sponge-cleaning
facility, has long sparkled the imaginations of tourists, guides, and historians alike. It is only recent, with the
work of the ancient historians Gemma Jansen and Ann-Olga Koloski-Ostrow, that toilets in private dwellings
have come into the light. According to Koloski-Ostrow, there are remains of 305 house toilets (termed latrinae)
in Pompeii and 62 in Herculaneum.95 Jansen adds that there are another 70 (second century AD) found in
Ostia.96 The archaeological remains of these toilets shall not be used for their role in sanitation, hygiene97, or
aesthetics, as is usually the case, but for a rather different question, namely: what can their positioning within
a domus tell us about the nature of private toilets? Were they tucked away, and if so, how and why?

In answering these questions, there are several major reasons as to why toilets were tucked away or
separated from living quarters. First of all, practicality, such as its location near a cesspit or sewer, or the
efficient use of smaller spaces within the structure of a house, i.e. at the end of a hallway or underneath a

95 Koloski-Ostrow, Archaeology, 32-33.
97 For a very long time, the toilets played a pivotal part in the Roman dystopia versus utopia-debate. The toilets were seen
as peak of public facilities as well as the proof of, rather anachronistically, the low hygiene standards that were common
ed., Roman Toilets. Their Archaeological and Cultural History (Leuven 2011) 157-162; R. Laurence, ‘Writing the Roman
Metropolis’ in: H.M. Parker ed., Roman Urbanism. Beyond the Consumer City (London 1997) 1-20; A. Scobie, ‘Slums,
staircase. The second reason, the separation of different spaces and functions within a house, as is being argued in the case of the Pompeian bakery (insula VII.1), where the presence of a door is attested by a hole in the threshold, effectively separating the toilet from the bakery. This bakery can be used to prove that the Romans did have a sense of ‘hygiene’, and subsequently chose to consciously separate those two spaces with a door. I disagree with this, since it implies the expectation of shares when it comes hygiene between the Roman society (without knowledge of Pasteur and Koch’s research into the role of micro-organisms in diseases) and our society. The Romans did not think about hygiene in this way, and it is an anachronism to think so.

However stern this may sound, it does not exclude a society-driven expectation of separating lavatories from professional, public or domestic zones. An interesting piece of evidence for this expectation is clearly visible in the entrance of Pompeii’s forum foricae where there used to be a staggered door separating the public from the lavatories. The Romans thus did except some sense of seclusion when going into these facilities, but once they were through the doors, there was no desire for barriers in between toilet holes. This seclusion from public places was probably mainly due to the very practical reason of avoiding the stench and sight.

Hobson lists the following established locations of private toilets in Pompeii and the reasons behind their location. Hobson notes that in the larger houses status is one of the incentives for the location of toilets near servile areas (see Table 2: Pompeian private toilets). He explains these facilities were meant for the servants, and states that the patronus’ guests would instead use chamber pots.

Table 2: Pompeian private toilets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Near kitchen (22 examples(^{102}))</td>
<td>Practical (disposal and smell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near entrances (45 examples(^{103}))</td>
<td>Practical (disposal and smell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near servile areas (VI.13, 12, 19 and IX.5, 13, 14, 15)</td>
<td>Status (well-to-do guests would not use this facility; chamber pots or ‘better’ toilet?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near garden (II.8, 1 and I.11, 10, 11, 12)</td>
<td>Practical (well away from other buildings or near other latrine)(^{104})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The idea that guests used chamber pots in *triclinia* is attested by a graffito found in the House of the Centenary (Pompeii IX.8, 3, 6a), where a slave named Martha wrote the following message on a latrine wall: “This is Martha’s *triclinium*: in fact, she poops in the *triclinium*.”\(^{105}\) This graffito shows the differences in status and the corresponding lavatorial facility. It clearly connects the *triclinium* as a location where non-slaves could defecate. It makes sense to assume, through lack of a lavatorial facility in this dinner room, that the guests did this by utilizing chamber pots (as we have seen Trimalchio do as well). Martha, as a slave, had her own facility, affectionately calling the slave’s latrine her own *triclinium*.

The dichotomy between servants utilizing latrines and guests chamber pots does not hold for the smaller properties. The amount of garden, kitchen, and near-entrance toilets is interesting in contrast to other houses where there was a limitation in space. Hobson states that

[w]hen it comes to domestic toilets […] there appears to have been a considerable probability that the small rooms would have offered a great deal of privacy, especially if they had had doors or partitions. As a result of lack of preservation of wood in Pompeii, no doors have been found. However, a large percentage of latrine rooms have threshold stones which have grooves into which door posts were set (example: House of the Flowers, VI.5.9.19).\(^{106}\)

\(^{102}\) See footnote 52 in: Jansen, Koloski-Ostrow and Moormann, *Toilets*, 130.
\(^{103}\) See footnote 53 in: Jansen, Koloski-Ostrow and Moormann, *Toilets*, 130.
\(^{105}\) Hobson, ‘Location’, 126.
\(^{106}\) Hobson, *Latrinae*, 6. Jansen (G.C.M. Jansen, ‘Private Toilets in Pompeii,’ in: S.E. Bon and R. Jones ed., *Sequence and Space in Pompeii* (Oxford 1997) 121-134, 126) remains sceptical about the presence of doors, saying that “One was not completely hidden from view, however, because in most cases there was no door. Of all the thresholds found at entrances to toilets, only two suggest the presence of a door.”
The owners of the properties that did not have the space or perhaps the need for a separate latrine room, did put effort into shielding the toilet from unwanted spectators. Jansen mentions the remnants of small brick walls and even wooden screens (which is odd considering the lack of preserved wood in Pompeii) specifically to ensure some privacy whilst on the privy.\textsuperscript{107}

The fact that Pompeians in smaller houses made sure that there was a clear separation between toilet and living space, is important for this research for several reasons. First of all, these partitions in no way battled the smell, only the sight, of the toilet, nor did they help with the disposal of the waste. This brings us to the question of status: it is hard to discern whether slaves as well as freeborn/guests used these toilets. There are no visible remains, in the form of graffiti, leftovers or literary mentions of the use of chamber pots in non-elite households. Must we therefore conclude that these toilets were used by masters as well as slaves, or did the slaves have to go elsewhere? I do not know. The fact remains that, regardless of status, the toilets were screened off, often either by doors or other partitions. This poses an interesting question, namely: was this a matter of personal demand (the need for privacy) or societal expectation (the wish not to see this)? Or was it reciprocal?

This is where the public toilets found in Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Ostia come into play. A door separated the public space (i.e. a market, bathing facility or the forum) from activities that should be private (in the sense that it does not fit into behaviour deemed fit for the public eye) and this seeped through into the domestic spheres. Even at home, the Romans wished to separate these two worlds and thus enforced a withdrawal from society by locating these toilets in fringes within their house, or by putting up visual barriers. I do not believe this enforcement stems from a need for privacy, for the simple parallel with the same public toilets: once the users were \textit{inside} and through the door, they felt no further need for partitions between toilet holes. Koloski-Ostrow reminds us of the fact “that the folds of their clothing (togas in winter, lighter tunics in summer) would have afforded them some privacy for their business in public toilets.”\textsuperscript{108} Because the small domestic toilets were mostly one-seaters already, there was no need for further action in ensuring the privacy of those using these facilities. However, the fact remains that there appears to have been a societal expectation

\begin{footnotesize}
108 Koloski-Ostrow, \textit{Archaeology}, 84.
\end{footnotesize}
of withdrawing for the toilet, because this activity was deemed ill fitted for the public eye, regardless of the size of that ‘public eye’.

**Sleeping**

When we deal with sleeping and bedrooms, we cannot ignore Riggsby’s extensive research on the functions of *cubicula*. However: one important element is missing that can prove valuable for this thesis: the location of bedrooms within the lay-out of a house, grand or modest. In other words: how did the *cubiculum* (where most of the sleep-related activities took place) accommodate to individuals withdrawing there?

The houses of Pompeii and Herculaneum form a terrific way to investigate privacy, for several reasons. First of all, the sheer scale and diffuse nature of the archaeology takes us from grand private mansions of the wealthy all the way down the social ladder to the modest dwellings of the lesser off. Second of all, there are old-fashioned houses as well as houses following the latest trends when it comes to the internal lay out. The gradual shift from the *atrium*-centred houses (for example the House of Octavius Quartio in figure 3) towards those that are centred around the peristyle (for example the House of the Stags/Deer in figure 4) is interesting concerning a possible decrease of distance between public spaces such as the peristyle, *atrium* and *tablinum* on the one side, and the relatively more private rooms such as the master bedroom. The third and final reason is rather obvious, but remains important to stress: the well-preserved state of a lot of the archaeology has allowed scholars to discover the remains of doors, door jambs, partitions, and locks, which are of paramount importance for the abovementioned question.
First of all, let us consider the location of the bedrooms within the spatial lay-out of an urban dwelling. Inspired by Grahame’s access analysis\textsuperscript{109}, I have performed a similar yet simplified analysis. For this I looked into Region I (insula 4–15) in Pompeii and Insulae 3 to 6 in Herculaneum and tallied how many thresholds in the house one had to cross to enter the cubiculum (see: Appendix I: Locations of cubicula). The Pompeian Region I shows us grand houses such as the House of Menander alongside with commercial/private dwellings, such as the shop-meets-house of Thermopolium of Vetutius Placidus and the House of Venus in a Bikini. This poses a few problems: first of all, not all cubicula are labelled as such\textsuperscript{110}. The immense property of the House of


\textsuperscript{110} The House of the Neptune Mosaic in Herculaneum knows no cubiculum even though a bed was found in the upper (presumably more private) quarters of the house.
Menander, for example, officially only has two bedrooms, in contrast to the much more modest House of the Cabinet Maker, which boasts three cubicula. Second of all, this mostly incorporates ground floors, as there is no clear upper-floor lay out available. The representation of the lower classes and income quarters (e.g. rental apartments, slave’s quarters, etc.) is thus somewhat skewed. Finally, it is generally not clearly stated what makes the space count as a bedroom instead of for example a storage room. Nevertheless, it proves worthwhile to see where the cubicula that are attested are located and what this means for the option of withdrawal within these premises.

What is instantly noticeable is that the majority of the bedrooms investigated are located near the atrium, i.e. in the front of the house and 3 thresholds away from the outside of the house. This means that the rooms designated for sleeping were not far away in proximity from the so-called public area of the house (atrium and peristyle). In theory, this would result in very few options of withdrawing somewhere more privately. This has long been the view of scholars dealing with spatial lay out of Roman villas, and is attested quite sternly by Andrew Wallace-Hadrill in his monumental work about Pompeian and Herculanean houses, stating that “it must have been astonishingly difficult for an upper-class Roman to achieve real privacy.”

The scholarly consensus which considered spatial layout as a static premise was only recently challenged by research conducted by Lauritsen, Riggsby, and others. Riggsby’s research on cubicula proved that the bedrooms should still be considered somewhat private, due to the fact that they were set off from the traditional atrium-tablinum-peristylium axis. In other words: even though they were located near areas often used for public activities (the so-called ‘areas of high control’ rather than public areas), the bedrooms were still located in the margins of the Roman house.

Additional to their location in the margins, Lauritsen has shown that, of the 27 houses investigated, 14 houses showed conclusive evidence for the possibility of full isolation of the atrium. This means that all the rooms adjoining the atrium had either doors or some other partition, with which they could close off said space from the areas of high control (such as the atrium, tablinum, and peristyle). As we can see in Appendix 1, the

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111 See footnote 12.
112 Riggsby, ‘Cubiculum,’ 40.
114 Lauritsen, ‘Boundaries’, 112.
overwhelming majority of the *cubicula* were located adjoining these same areas meant for public activities. For example, the House of Casca Longus (Pompeii, *insula* VI.1.11) has two series of two *cubicula*, all situated around the *atrium*, that could be closed off by a door. Furthermore, Lauritsen concludes that the amount of *cubicula* with options for full isolation comes down to a whopping 90%.

This would mean that the rooms where the majority of sleeping hours were probably spent also ranked the highest of all rooms in terms of attested boundaries. We must be careful, however, to refrain from over-applying all this data to all other houses.

Not all *cubicula* are located near an *atrium*, see for example the three exceptions (Appendix I: House of the Ephebus, House I.7.19 (Unnamed), and the House of the Orchard) where the *cubiculum* was located deeper in the house. There could be many reasons for this. Are these examples of more private bedrooms for the master perhaps? Or was it more functional space-wise to place these rooms deeper into the confines of the house? This remains unclear, but it is valuable to see that apparently the Romans felt a desire to be able to seclude these rooms from the public eye in such a way that the *cubicula* could serve the need for withdrawal beautifully. It also paints a striking contrast with Andrew Wallace-Hadrill’s notion that the relative privacy within a house was intrinsically linked with the deeper confines of a room. In other words: a room deeper into the house equals a higher degree of privacy. The fact that the rooms could indeed be closed off from the *atrium* at the front of the house – and, by doing so, could thereby influence their openness – proves that deeper confines in a Roman house were not automatically the most private.

**Sexuality**

As Riggsby and Carucci rightly mention, the function of the *cubiculum* is often explained with the modern term bedroom, with all its anachronistic consequences. The *cubiculum* was a room with a whole array of activities for which a more intimate (this means retreating deeper with the confines of the house in order to have more privacy) environment was required. That being said, we will now consider how this *cubiculum* could accommodate to individuals coming there for sexual activities.

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115 Lauritsen, ‘Boundaries’, 105. We need to bear in mind that Lauritsen’s definition of a *cubiculum* is “a small room with a narrow doorway.”


Pliny the Younger, when describing his favourite rooms in his villa in Laurentum, explains how at the far end of the terrace (presumably the peristyle) he has a series of rooms dedicated to securing peace and quiet for him to write and sleep.\textsuperscript{118}

Next to it is a bedroom for use at night which neither the voices of my young slaves, the sea’s murmur, nor the noise of a storm can penetrate, any more than the lightning’s flash and light of day unless the shutters are open (Pliny the Younger, \textit{Letters II.17.22}).

These rooms Pliny mentions are also attested archaeologically (Appendix I: House of the Ephebus, House I.7.19 (Unnamed), and the House of the Orchard). However, for the houses surveyed in this thesis, they seem exceptions to the rule: these secluded \textit{cubicula} form only a tiny segment in comparison to the other \textit{cubicula}. Another interesting viewpoint would be to look into the decoration of these rooms. One could argue that the mosaics and frescoes depicting intimate scenes enhanced the sexual character of the secluded rooms. Unfortunately, this would neglect the normality and frequency of sexually tinted art in Roman society. Yes, frescoes of lovemaking couples are on display in both the walls of the \textit{cubicula} in the Villa of the Farnesina\textsuperscript{119} as well as the infamous Pompeian brothel. We encounter many more sexually explicit images in the Roman world: from the gay couple having intercourse on the Warren Cup to the countless phalli one would encounter roaming the Pompeian streets.

\textsuperscript{119} See Clarke, \textit{Lovemaking}, 93-107 for an elaborate description of the Farnesina Paintings.
In Clarke’s work on erotic domestic art, he investigates the cubiculum of the House of the Beautiful Impluvium and its rare Third Style erotic centrepiece fresco. He asks himself the same important question, saying “what does it mean when a cubiculum receives a central picture that details aspects of lovemaking?” His answer is somewhat unsatisfactory, stating that, because of the proximity of the cubiculum (see Figure 5: Plan of the House of the Beautiful Impluvium) to the atrium, the cubiculum “hardly is a retreat for lovemaking.”120 Unfortunately, this house was not incorporated into Lauritsen’s research, so we do not know to what degree the rooms surrounding the atrium could be closed off.

Clarke does not comment on the abovementioned question, because the remaining frescoes (in the room and vicinity) in the House of the Beautiful Impluvium are not complete enough in order to consider them in their complete context. He does answer the same question for another erotic fresco in the House of Caecilius Iucundus (see Figure 6: plan of the House of L. Caecilius Iucundus). When we consider this fresco according to its position (bordering the triclinium, labelled ‘i’ in Figure 6), its function was probably as an eye catcher.

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120 Clarke, Lovemaking, 149.
The proud owner could then, Clarke reckons, explain to his guests the background story or mythical connotations.\(^{121}\) Regardless of the reason why the lushly decorated sexual artworks frequented walls aplenty, we must let go of the Christian set of morals imbedded in our collective minds. These Christian morals encompass a set of ideas about sexuality and the depiction of sexual acts that were absent or radically different in Roman times. The erotic artworks were primarily commissioned for their aesthetic value and as a clear example of conspicuous consumption (matching the taste of the wealthy). They cannot be used as a way to enhance the sexual nature of the *cubiculum* for erotic art was omnipresent in daily life. The sexual nature of the *cubiculum* was mostly due to its options for privacy, not because there were beds (unfortunately there are only a few bedframes left over\(^{122}\) or sexual imagery. We must also consider the fluent nature of the Roman house(hold). As Mary Beard quite aptly points out, sometimes we simply do not know where the Romans would have slept, or had sex.\(^{123}\) The locations for either could range from a makeshift bed on any floor to a bed in a formal room. The fact remains, however, that the *cubicula* could accommodate well, as was mentioned before, to a wish for withdrawal, as quite a few of them (the evidence is conclusive for the houses surveyed so far) could be closed off completely.

**Suicide**

After considering the possibilities of toilets, sleeping and sexual acts within the Roman house, we now turn to the ‘most private act.’ How could the Romans withdraw themselves to commit suicide? What options did they have? There are a few problems. First of all, we only have eleven textual references, out of 443 Roman references in total. Effectively, we are researching a minor part of the total evidence. One must therefore not consider this a blueprint for all other suicides. We merely take the abovementioned textual references and see whether the houses and environments of Roman life could cater these wishes.

Let us keep in line with the set-up of this chapter and start, once again, with the houses. The façades of houses were designed in such a way that the classical *atrium*-house looked and sometimes could serve as a fortress. Impenetrable when closed, the grand entrances kept the hustle and bustle of the outside separated from the daily life on the inside. Practically speaking, the houses of the elite Romans (who possessed a private

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122 Thirteen in Herculaneum and one in Boscoreale, unfortunately without no elaboration on where in the house they were found. S.A.M. Mols, *Wooden Furniture in Herculaneum: Form, Technique and Function* (Amsterdam 1999) 35, 38.
entrance, normally not shared with other dwellings) offered great possibilities for the (fictional?) suicides of Labienus, Catulus, and Statius, who locked themselves in their houses, after which they set fire to the place.\footnote{124}{See footnotes 78, 79, and 80.}

The only way in from the outside, was to go through the front door, as it were, or through one of the windows (often barred and nearly always located quite high) or through the impluvium. Helg comprises it beautifully by saying the facades appeared as “a solid and compact, altogether most monolithic, volume”.\footnote{125}{R. Helg, ‘Transformation of the Domestic Space in the Vesuvian Cities: From the Development of the Upper Floors and Facades to a New Dimension of Intimacy’ in: A. Anguissola ed., Privata Luxuria. Towards an Archaeology of Intimacy: Pompeii and Beyond (Munich 2012) 143-161, 146.}

The remaining six excerpts where there are clear mentions of retreating to a place of more privacy are distributed as such: five retreats to the bedroom (cubiculum)\footnote{126}{Julius Caesar, African War 88.4; Livy, Roman History XLII.28.12; Valerius Maximus, Memorable Sayings and Doings VI.8.3; Tacitus, Annals III.15.6; XV.69.3.}, and one to a tent\footnote{127}{Appian, Roman History: Civil Wars IV.17.135.}. The previous three subchapters have already discussed the possibilities offered by the cubicula of a house. It is no wonder therefore that these spaces comprise the majority of the suicide attempts where there is a mention or wish of withdrawal.

**Magic**

The very few textual references to magic make it difficult to discern whether magic was a phenomenon expected or wished to be conducted in private. The need for withdrawal is also hard to attest archaeologically.

The one fragment specifically concerned with magic being conducted in absolute seclusion mentions the married witch Pamphile in her attempt to shapeshift herself into a bird, in order to reach her lover in secret.

We have looked into the lay out of the Roman houses and we have evidence that the houses could most certainly accommodate to certain wishes for withdrawal. The remains of doors and even a complete partition are all still there for the modern eye to behold. Even the option of curtains – not archaeologically proven, but with frequent mentions in the literature\footnote{128}{Cicero, De Provinciis Consularibus VI; Seneca the Elder, Suasoriae VI.18; Seneca the Younger, Epistles LXXX.1; Martial, Epigrams I.34; Hyperides, Fragments 32.} – is one that must be kept in mind. Above all of this, we do know from archaeological remains that the Romans also knew how to make locks. One could thus not only close a door, but also lock a door, effectively reinforcing the boundary between inside and out. All in all, as was said before, it is very hard to look for any leftover traces connecting an individual withdrawing and acts of magic.
Walking

As one might expect, the same problem as with the case study ‘magic’, also applies to the case study ‘walking’. How do you prove that the Romans walked alone? Without modern technologies such as mobile phones with built-in GPS or streets lined with CCTV’s, I think it is fair to say: next to impossible. This does not mean that the Romans were all extremely social people and that walking alone was a taboo. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Big cities with no modern infrastructure cause people to move on foot. We could then think of carrying biers, but ultimately have to dismiss it on grounds of our definition of alone (solitude or with a single slave). The chances for traces of a carrying bier carried by a single slave are nihil and also very unrealistic. We therefore have to conclude that although there is little archaeological evidence, this does not mean people did not transport themselves without the presence of others. Even in our society, excluded GPS tracking devices and CCTV’s, I cannot think of a way to prove that we do not only manoeuvre in groups, but also individually.
5 Analysis
After we have lined up the textual evidence in chapter 3 and the archaeological evidence in chapter 4, this chapter will serve as a visualisation and analysis of those findings. Every case study will go through three steps: first of all, a table per case study will organise (see Appendix 2 for the classification per case study) and tally the references into the three categories from Table 1 (duration, positive/negative, and motive); secondly, the tables will be set against the archaeological finds to look for similarities or contrasts; lastly, every case study will be concluded with a remark about its part within the broader concept of being alone. In the end, all the ending conclusions will be considered together to see if we can disseminate a notion of when to withdraw or not, and what this means for the bigger debate of privacy. In line with the previous two chapters, we will start with the case study toilets.

Toilets

As we can see in the table above, a clear majority of the references concerning toilets is of a temporal duration. This is to be expected of course, for a permanent retreat to the lavatory would not be common. More remarkable is the spread of motives between three positive reference and two unclear. The toilets are often used to draw the border between creditable and discreditable behaviour. All of the examples from Petronius are used to portray the freedman Trimalchio in a bad way. This is done by contrasting the behaviour of Trimalchio with how one was expected to behave (perhaps not speaking of or actually relieving yourself in front of others?).
The same notion of expected behaviour is reflected in Martial’s *Epigrams*. It turns out that there was some sort of mental framework surrounding the subject of lavatories. This framework encompassed behaviour and subsequently expectations, and is mirrored by the archaeological sources. A large part of the toilets was located on (fabricated) fringes of society (tucked away in corners, behind doors, or in small rooms), in order to separate what was deemed inappropriate from the public space. Even in humble dwellings, archaeologists still find ways of enforcements of this separation. It is hard to separate societal pushes from personal needs. Did the Romans want to be alone? I believe those cannot be separated in this case, for one incentive stems from the other. Without the needs of a group to either not see this phenomenon, or the need for an individual to not be seen, there would not have been the need for such enforced boundaries.

Sleeping

A brief overview of the table above tells us that in the textual references, withdrawing for sleep is regarded as a temporal and personal desire. The question whether this was creditable remains largely unclear, for the references to positive connotations are scant. Three references specifically mention withdrawal to a *cubiculum*, and the remaining one mentions no specific location. The reason why the majority slept in *cubicula* is evident. The archaeological evidence collected by Lauritsen shows a promising future when it comes to the option of closing off *cubicula* from the areas of high visibility. The rooms, often tucked away in the margins

129 Pliny the Younger, *Letters* VI.16.14 mentions that Pliny the Elder indeed was sleeping in a *cubiculum*. 
of the house, could additionally be closed off in order to secure a quiet night’s rest. Unfortunately, there is no elaboration in Mols’ work on Herculanean wooden furniture on the location of the fourteen remaining bedframes. Regardless, the fact that the majority of the textual references to sleeping takes place within the cubiculum, alongside the absence of negative connotations with this withdrawal, means that it was considered normal or logical to withdraw there for sleeping activities.

**Sexuality**

One thing that is surprising is the scarcity of literary references combining retreating somewhere with sexual activities conducted alone, even though it could have been a widespread phenomenon. In all of the references about masturbation, not a single one states a location or a withdrawal. The same problem arises with references about sex with a slave. Only two of them are known, of which one must be dismissed because of our criteria on what ‘alone’ means. The remaining one (married woman cheats with slave) is the only references that ticks all the boxes, and is outspoken in its negativity. When we consider the other textual evidence (that does not match out criteria, but is interesting nonetheless), we clearly notice this trend of negativity amongst all of the references. Was withdrawing for sex considered a bad thing? If we believe the literature, we have to conclude that indeed it was. The writers frequently mention the use of bedrooms/cubicula where they or their characters withdrew themselves to. We have already established the use of cubicula in order to seek out privacy, and it seems that sexual activities were no exception. The negativity surrounding solo acts of sexuality leads us to believe that it was neither considered normal nor was it accepted to retreat to a more private space. It seems
that whenever it was mentioned in a literary work, it formed part of a story which portrayed one of the characters in a bad way. Getting the character to retreat to a cubiculum in order to maintain secrecy could fit the bill perfectly for the narrative.

**Suicide**

![Suicide references chart]

There are a few things that immediately come to attention when it comes to suicide: first of all, all the references are of a personal and permanent nature. Regardless of the success rate of the suicides (we cannot be sure), the intentions were, as is the case with suicide, to withdraw without returning to society. The second fact is that a large majority of the references is judged positively. The one negatively judged death was conceived by hanging; a means of killing yourself which was frowned upon nevertheless. This means that overall withdrawing yourself in this case was considered as a creditable thing to do. All of the positive references form part of a narrative highlighting a brave man meeting his death whilst keeping his composure and thus his manly virtues alive. If we leave out the negative death by noose, we can consider the fact that even though these suicides (where one withdrew) were a minority (only 9 out of 444 mentions), they were judged as a creditable thing to do. Withdrawing and making the necessary arrangements effectively only added to the tranquillity expected from a noble Roman citizen.

When we look at the ways domestic spheres could accommodate to these wishes for seclusion, we can conclude that ending your life in private could be achieved easily in the Roman house. The three cases who set their houses on fire after they evacuated everyone would be protected by the monolithic appearance of most
atrium-house façades. If they wanted to withdraw themselves inside the house, the cubicula (as is attested by 4 out of 9 cases) could meet these demands, as was discussed in the previous subchapters about ‘sleeping’ and ‘sexuality’.

Magic

The one reference we have on magic does not offer us much clarity on the need for withdrawal. The witch Pamphile retreats to her room in order to change into a bird. In that sense it is temporary and personal. Unfortunately, it remains unclear whether this action of withdrawal was considered as something discreditable.

The vagueness concerning magic makes it hard to look for possibilities for withdrawal. The one reference we do have, ‘Pamphile’s upper room’ (superius cubiculum), could probably accommodate to this just fine. The upper chambers were also located on the margins of the Roman houses, and perhaps could additionally be withdrawn from the eyes and ears of nosy persons, in this case: Lucius and Photis, by doors and locks. It is difficult to conclude from this whether magic was something best conducted in solitude, for there are very few traces claiming so.
Like with magic, the references and archaeological evidence concerning walking is very scarce, especially when we remind ourselves of this pivotal mode of transportation. Nightly walks alone in Roman times could mean two things, according to this data. First of all, for elite women (such as the Empress) it was unheard of to wander around in Rome, merely escorted by a single servant. Second of all, for workers returning home, it could end nastily with death, because at night the streets were the playground of the vile and violent. Thus, both examples of walking alone played a part in a negative narrative (although in the example of the worker in peril, it was not the action itself that was considering discreditable) and this is remarkable. Does this mean that walking alone was something not done according to Roman morals? Or is this a consequence of a lack of data because of the apparent normality of walking alone, and the result of the resulting two uncommon examples? I believe it is the latter, for by sheer practicality, the Romans must have been bound to have walked alone, sometimes by choice, sometimes by circumstance. The evidence remains interesting nonetheless, for the sheer mention of walking alone is rare, and in those two instances where it is mentioned, it is probably due to the goal of the narratives (dangerous nightlife and scandalous behaviour). Walking alone can thus also be considered, regardless of its normality and its appearance in everyday life, as something quite exceptional.
Summary of case studies
Now that we have seen all the case studies considered alone according to the framework of the first two chapters, there is one thing that immediately attracts attention: the gradual shift from inside to outside the house runs parallel with a decrease in literary references as well as archaeological evidence. It seems that we can perceive a slide of the variable ‘alone’ to the left withdrawal-side of the axis (see Figure 1) only when inside of the house. One can conclude from this that the house thus constituted the ideal refuge from the daily hustle and bustle, or moreover, that it was much harder to withdraw outside of the house than it was for those inside. This latter part might come expected as a result from these six case studies, as two of them (magic and walking) are much harder to attest archaeologically than the others, but nevertheless. In short: the sliding scale does not necessarily move to the left side (withdrawal) when one enters the house, for there are many rooms still in the public eye within the house. But, whenever the sliding scale does move to the left side, an overwhelming majority of the instances happens inside of the house.

Figure 1: Participation axis

![Figure 1: Participation axis](image)

Figure 2: Levels of alone

![Figure 2: Levels of alone](image)

Tier 1: solitude
Tier 2: servants
Tier 3: company

There are clear signals that Romans in search of withdrawal knew where and how to find it. The many mentions of cubicula in all of the case studies help us to argue in favour of a room in the Roman house clearly destined for private, and not merely more intimate occasions, as is often alleged. Even though the Roman society was a status-driven society and the house served as a stage for the constant interplay between a Roman and his desired public appearance, the cubiculum could and would also serve to accommodate the first tier:
that of solitude. Let us gather and tally all the data from the textual references into one graph, and see what they can tell us about overall the mentality surrounding withdrawing.

First of all, the fact that there are no references to societal expectations seems unexpected. The Roman society was a society with seemingly strict modes of behaviour, and for long has the idea reigned that being a member of elite society equalled a life lived in public. This notion is contrasted by the surprisingly high number of personal motives to withdraw. Only with the four societal-personal (all from toilet references) incentives, is it clear that there seems to be expected social behaviour which the character in the references do not match. Additionally, all these instances of withdrawal from life at the forefront are generally considered positive (twelve positive and only three negative, out of 22 references). It is also evident that outside from the nine references to a permanent withdrawal (all of them from suicide references), there are no further instances pointing to a person pulling back in order to stay outside of the grooves of society permanently. Does this mean permanent withdrawal was absent within our time-frame? We only need to fast forward to a few centuries later, towards the rise of Christianity, to witness an upcoming ascetic pull where, amongst others, hermits and stylites stood in the spotlight. To summarise briefly: the graph shows us that the Romans displayed a mostly personal desire to withdraw briefly, and this was generally not considered as a bad or dishonourable thing to do.
**Conclusion**

We set off this journey with the question: why did Roman individuals in 1st century BC and AD Italy choose to withdraw themselves from society? In response to Wallace-Hadrill’s remark about the difficulty elite Romans must have encountered in achieving real privacy and the static nature of the Roman spatial functionality, a number of scholars started to look into just that. Amongst many others, articles about the functions of cubicula, fulleries, doors in Campanian houses, and many others sprung up. Unfortunately, all of them lacking a, in my view critical, aspect namely: a broader idea of the Roman notion of why and how the Romans withdrew.

This thesis aims at contributing to this discussion, and is built upon a theoretical framework surrounding definitions of and limitations to ‘being alone’. With this framework, established in chapters 1 and 2, six case studies were explored (toilets, sleeping, sexuality, suicide, magic, and walking). To look into these case studies, the textual references (chapter 3) were weighed against the archaeological sources (chapter 4). This division was useful because it allowed us to separate what we read from what still is there to see. The Romans wrote about the occasions, incentives, and consequences of withdrawal, but, as is visible in the case of Trimalchio or the death by hanging, this was often used as part of a narrative.

The textual evidence showed a decrease in references as soon as the case studies moved away from a domestic environment. Even within the domestic environment the evidence remains scarce. There could be several reasons for this. For example, the Romans did not deem it (as is likely to be the case with walking alone) worthy of writing down. In the big plays, annals, and other literary sources, the importance lies in telling a story, and these aspects either did not fit or were considered common knowledge, and therefore did not require to be written down. The lack of sources could also be due to the fact there simply might not have been a societal space within which people were expected to or allowed to withdraw.

The reigning thought has been that the Roman society knew a (to quote Riggsby) mandate of publicity. This means that life and its activities should take place in the eye and vicinity of the public, rather than in private. Occasions of withdrawal were considered to be anti-social, in the strict sense of the word, and were therefore looked down upon, resulting in a combined internal and external pressure to not withdraw yourself and keep on the ‘right’ side of the participation-axis. In other words: participation is expected, withdrawing is encouraged when absolutely necessary.
This stance against privacy has long been the reigning view of modern scholars looking at the Roman world, particularly at the daily life of the elite citizens. As we have seen in the fifth chapter, the textual sources counter much of this view. The majority of the textual references point to a personal wish to withdraw for a short period, which was generally viewed as a creditable action. It is cases like the suicide by noose (a terrible thing to do anyway, according to the Romans) and the references to Trimalchio’s appalling manners that were viewed as negative. We have also seen in the fourth chapter that the archaeology of the surveyed Roman houses showed great potential to accommodate to these wishes for withdrawal. Doors, partitions, and rooms tucked away in the house all provided a means with which its inhabitants could retreat themselves, and according to textual references, the Romans did not refrain from doing so. It is therefore that the ideas of scholars arguing for the precedence of public life should be nuanced.

What does this mean for the debate? I think we can conclude one thing safely: perhaps the time is now to start asking different questions. Privacy and being alone in first century AD and BC Italy does not seem so rigid as often implied. The debate surrounding privacy must therefore be revised and broadened. Instead of focusing on specific case studies, it may prove exciting and refreshing to zoom out and research the mentality, rather than its outings or symptoms. It is hard to lay claims about the existence of a notion of privacy with specific case studies, when the wider mentality surrounding withdrawal remains a subject hardly touched by modern research.

All in all, we have encountered several indications that there was room for the Roman wolves to leave their pack structure (the evidence points mainly towards a temporary and most of all a personal wish to retreat). In addition to the textual references, there are also many indications that some aspects of society were carefully devised in order to make withdrawal possible. Even though the Romans, like many others, may have known many properties of a wolf pack, this does not constitute a mandate of total publicity. It does not automatically dismiss personal needs. It does not dismiss the existence of lone wolves.

There are still numerous ways in which this debate can continue. First of all: there are many gaps left open in this thesis that deserve much more attention. Lauritsen’s priceless research only spans a fraction of the Campanian houses and therefore it remains dangerous to extrapolate these data carelessly onto other houses. Second of all: I narrowed my research down to six case studies, of which magic and walking proved very hard to get a hold on. There is a wide array of other possible activities requiring similar analysis. Finally, even
though I attempted to read and take in as much as I can, chances are that I have missed out a good deal of data which can help this discussion along. Over the course of this thesis, I have argued for a reconsideration of the mentality surrounding withdrawal, for it touches one of the core values of Roman society: how one should behave in public. A better understanding of the do’s and don’ts surrounding withdrawal can effectively offer us a better understanding of Roman society in general.
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### Appendix I: Locations of *cubicula*\(^{130}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Insula</th>
<th>Name house</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Thresholds away from entrance(^{131})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pompeii</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of the Citharist</td>
<td>Five <em>cubicula</em>, bordering two peristyles</td>
<td>4-5-6 (F-A-P-C, F-A-T-P-C or F-A-T-P-C*-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of the Cryptoporticus</td>
<td>Series of three <em>cubicula</em>, bordering peristyle</td>
<td>4 (F-A-P-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of the Lararium</td>
<td>Two <em>cubicula</em>, bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of P. Casca Longus</td>
<td>Two series of two <em>cubicula</em>, bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of the Ceii</td>
<td>One <em>cubiculum</em>, bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>House of Paquis Proculus</td>
<td>Two <em>cubicula</em>, bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>House of Fabius Amandus</td>
<td>One probable <em>cubiculum</em>, bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>House of the Priest Amandus</td>
<td>Two <em>cubicula</em>, bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>House of the Ephebus</td>
<td>Five <em>cubicula</em>, bordering two <em>atria</em>, and one further inside the house</td>
<td>3-4-7 (F-A-C, F-A-A-C, or F-A-A-C*-C*-C*-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>House I.7.19 (Unnamed)</td>
<td>Four <em>cubicula</em>, three bordering <em>atrium</em>, one further inside the house</td>
<td>3-4 (F-A-C, F-A-P-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Thermopolium of Vetutius Placidus</td>
<td>One <em>cubiculum</em>, bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>House of the Four Styles</td>
<td>Six <em>cubicula</em>, all bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>House of the Beautiful Impluvium</td>
<td>One <em>cubiculum</em>, bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>House of the Orchard</td>
<td>Three <em>cubicula</em>, one bordering <em>atrium</em>, two others further inside</td>
<td>3-4-5 (F-A-C, F-A-P-C, F-A-P-C*-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>House of Ceres</td>
<td>Three <em>cubicula</em>, all bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>House of Menander</td>
<td>Two <em>cubicula</em>, entered from different entrance/<em>fauces</em> and <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>House of the Cabinet Maker</td>
<td>Three <em>cubicula</em>, one entered from <em>fauces</em>, other two from <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>2-3 (F-C, F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>House of the Lovers</td>
<td>Four <em>cubicula</em>, three bordering <em>atrium</em>, one bordering the peristyle</td>
<td>3-4 (F-A-C, F-A-P-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>House of Venus in a Bikini</td>
<td>Three <em>cubicula</em>, all bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>House of the First Floor</td>
<td>One <em>cubiculum</em>, bordering peristyle</td>
<td>4 (F-A-P-C)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{130}\) All house plans and room designations come from P. and M. Clements, *AD79 Eruption*. <https://sites.google.com/site/ad79eruption/home> 21-5-2016.

\(^{131}\) F = *fauces*, A = *atrium*, T = *tablinum*, C = *cubiculum*, C* = circulation space, vestibule or other unidentified room.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Insula</th>
<th>Name house</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Thresholds away from entrance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herculaneum</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>House of the Skeleton</td>
<td>Two <em>cubicula</em>, bordering hallway tucked away in the house</td>
<td>4 (F-A-C*-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of the Wooden Partition</td>
<td>Three <em>cubicula</em>, bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of the Bronze Herma</td>
<td>Two <em>cubicula</em>, bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>House of the Mosaic Atrium</td>
<td>Four <em>cubicula</em>, bordering peristyle</td>
<td>4 (F-A-P-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of the Alcove</td>
<td>One <em>cubiculum</em>, bordering hallway</td>
<td>4 (F-A-C*-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of the Deer/Stags</td>
<td>One <em>cubiculum</em>, bordering hallway (off main axis of house)</td>
<td>4 (F-A-C*-C)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Samnite House</td>
<td>Two <em>cubicula</em>, bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of the Beautiful Courtyard</td>
<td>Three <em>cubicula</em>, accessible through hallway bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of the Bicentenary</td>
<td>Four <em>cubicula</em>, bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of the Corinthian Atrium</td>
<td>Two <em>cubicula</em>, both bordering <em>atrium</em> (one at front, one at the back)</td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of the Wooden Sacellum</td>
<td>One <em>cubiculum</em>, bordering <em>atrium</em></td>
<td>3 (F-A-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of the Great Portal</td>
<td>Two <em>cubicula</em>, bordering vestibule</td>
<td>3 (F-C*-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>House of the Black Hall</td>
<td>Four <em>cubicula</em>, three bordering the <em>atrium</em>, one bordering the peristyle</td>
<td>3-5 (F-A-C, F-A-T-P-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of the Tuscan Colonnade</td>
<td>Three <em>cubicula</em>, all bordering peristyle</td>
<td>4 (F-A-P-C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>House of the Double Atrium</td>
<td>One <em>cubiculum</em>, bordering peristyle</td>
<td>5 (F-A-T-A-C)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Appendix II: Reference classification

### Toilets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Works</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Positive/negative</th>
<th>Motive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Petronius, <em>Satyricon</em> 41</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Soc. + pers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petronius, <em>Satyricon</em> 47</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Soc. + pers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seneca the Younger, <em>Epistles</em> LXX.20</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Personal</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Sleeping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Works</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Positive/negative</th>
<th>Motive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apuleius, <em>Metamorphoses</em> I.26</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pliny the Younger, <em>Letters</em> VII.27.12-13</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Personal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apuleius, <em>Metamorphoses</em> II.15</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Personal</td>
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### Sexuality

<table>
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<th>Works</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Positive/negative</th>
<th>Motive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seneca the Elder, <em>Controversiae</em> II.1.24</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Personal</td>
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### Suicide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Works</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Positive/negative</th>
<th>Motive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Julius Caesar, <em>The African War</em> 88.4</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livy, <em>Roman History</em> XLII.28.12</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valerius Maximus, <em>Memorable Sayings and Doings</em> VI.8.3</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diodorus Siculus, <em>The Library of History</em> XXXVIII.4.2-3</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seneca the Elder, <em>Controversiae</em> X.7</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Personal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appian, <em>Roman History: Civil Wars</em> IV.4.25</td>
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<td>Personal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appian, <em>Roman History: Civil Wars</em> IV.17.135</td>
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<td>Positive</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacitus, <em>Annals</em> III.15.6</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacitus, <em>Histories</em> II.49</td>
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### Magic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Works</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Positive/negative</th>
<th>Motive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apuleius, <em>Metamorphoses</em> III.20</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Walking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Works</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Positive/negative</th>
<th>Motive</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juvenal, <em>Satires</em> III.282-285</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
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<td>Juvenal, <em>Satires</em> VI.116125</td>
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<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>