

# **Baths and Bathing in Late Antiquity**

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# Summary

This thesis examines the cultural, religious and therapeutic functions of Roman baths and bathing during Late Antiquity, as they are presented in a wide range of primary literary sources, and the way in which they are addressed in current research. The chronological scope of the work stretches from the late 3<sup>rd</sup> to the early 7<sup>th</sup> century. The geographical focus is on the Eastern part of the Roman Empire. The aim of the thesis is, primarily, to analyse aspects of bathing during this period that have not been previously addressed in detail (such as medicinal uses of bathing) and to examine the issues that have been discussed in the past but had not been answered unequivocally, or which have not been treated in an exhaustive manner – such as the matters of nudity and equality in a bath-house environment, or of Christian attitudes to bathing in this context. The thesis also considers what the knowledge of the subject topic contributes to our understanding of the period of Late Antiquity. The thesis examines the changes that occurred in the bathing culture during Late Antiquity and their causes, exploring in detail the impact of Christianity on bathing customs, and devotes special attention to how the perceptions of bathing were presented in the contemporary sources. This will be achieved by investigating passages from a wide range of texts mentioning baths and bathing and subsequently drawing conclusions based on the analysis of the primary sources.

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## ***Abbreviations***

ANF – A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, A. Cleveland Coxe (eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, T. & T. Clark 1885

CIC – *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, S. P. Scott (ed. and transl.), *The civil law*, Cincinnati 1932

CMG – *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*

LCL – Loeb Classical Library

MPG – J. P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Graeca*, Paris 1857-66

NPNF – P. Schaff, H. Wace (eds.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, T. & T. Clark 1886-1900

NRSV – W. A. Meeks, J. M. Bassler (eds.), *The HarperCollins Study Bible. New Revised Standard Version*, HarperCollins 1989

## ***Introduction***

This thesis examines the cultural, religious and therapeutic functions of Roman baths during Late Antiquity, as they are presented in a wide range of primary literary sources as well as examining how these subjects are addressed in current research. My aim is, primarily, to analyse previously unresearched aspects of bathing during this period (such as medicinal uses of bathing) and to address the issues that have been discussed in the past but had not been resolved conclusively (such as the matter of nudity and mixed sex bathing). In particular, I intend to examine the changes that occurred in the bathing culture during this time and devote special attention to how the perceptions of bathing were presented in the contemporary sources. This will be achieved by investigating passages from a wide range of texts mentioning baths and bathing and subsequently drawing conclusions based on the analysis of the primary sources.

In particular, I wish to identify and examine the possible roles and functions of bath-houses for the Romans. I am going to examine the descriptions of bathing and bathers and attempt to determine the reasons for which bath-houses enjoyed such high popularity in Roman society in Late Antiquity. By doing this, I aim to further expand the understanding of one of the most important elements of the social life in the Roman Empire. Furthermore, I intend to determine the extent to which the Romans themselves of that time (or more specifically, the educated elite who produced the literary sources I will be using) appreciated – or not – the significance of bathing for their society and its place in everyday life. In the first chapter in particular, I will attempt to determine the extent to which bath-houses served as cultural institutions and places of social interaction, and whether the importance of bath-houses as places where such activities took place changed during this period.

Accepting the view that Late Antiquity was a period of change and transformation (an issue that will be discussed in a later part of the introduction), I will attempt to identify, examine, analyse and summarily discuss the factors that contributed to the changes in the infrastructure necessary to support bathing – such as water supply systems and the bath-houses themselves during this time period.

Subsequently, I will attempt to determine the influence these might have had on everyday bathing customs and the popular perception of bathing.

This will be followed in the second chapter by an attempt to establish whether it is possible to talk about the significance of Christianity in the developments concerning, and transformation of, bathing in Late Antiquity. The degree of continuity and change in bathing practices and social norms will be examined from the perspective of how – if at all – the ascendant religion made its mark on them, and whether the potential changes might have been the result of factors other than the new religion. In particular I will be examining the attitudes of representatives of the Church towards baths and bathing, focusing on such aspects as the perceptions of, and attitudes to the human body and sexuality, wealth and luxury, social life and the influence, if any, of bathing culture and customs on the language and activities of the Church in general.

In the third chapter I am going to attempt to establish the degree to which bathing and washing were incorporated into the medical practice of the day, basing my inquiry primarily on the medical compendium of Paul of Aegina, but also on the perception of medical profession in the texts of authors without a medical background. My secondary goals here are going to include determining the degree of continuity and possible differences in the use of water and bathing in the medical profession during the Late Antiquity compared to the earlier period, and ascertaining the importance of bath-houses and bathing in general to the medical profession during this time.

### ***Chronological and geographical boundaries***

The geographic focus of the dissertation is primarily on the areas that originally constituted the Eastern Roman Empire, and that subsequently came to be called the Byzantine Empire. This commonly used term denoting the Eastern part of the state established by the Romans is problematic in itself; not invented until well after the collapse of the entity it describes, its starting date cannot be unequivocally given in any but an arbitrary manner. Events to which one could point as symbolic dates of the beginning of the Byzantine Empire may include the reforms of Diocletian and the beginning of tetrarchy in 293; the consecration of Constantinople in May 330; the division of the Roman state after the death of Theodosius I between his sons,

Arcadius and Honorius, in 395; the fall of the old Rome and the collapse of the Empire in the West in 476; perhaps even the reforms undertaken during the reign of Heraclius (610-641), changing the administrative arrangement of the Empire and recognizing Greek as the official language within the Empire. In this thesis I am going to avoid the implications of using geographic terms; it should be assumed that any names and descriptions, unless it is indicated otherwise, are used for the sake of convenience. For the purpose of this work, I am going to use the term 'Eastern Roman Empire' to refer to the part of the Roman state that was governed from Constantinople (and post 476 to its entirety), and use the terms 'the East' and 'the West' as a shorthand for the Eastern and Western parts of the Roman Empire; in case of the latter, when the period after 476 is going to be discussed, 'the West' is going to refer to the geographic area rather than a political entity.

Since this thesis deals with subjects, sources and events that belong almost exclusively to the period post 300 AD, in most cases the date will be given alone, without indicating whether it belongs prior or post 1 AD; in such cases, it should be assumed the date is referring to the globally recognized common era. Where appropriate or necessary, the AD or BC abbreviation will be added. Given the controversies surrounding the use of both AD and CE styles of dating, it should be noted here that the choice the style of dating is based purely on traditional and long established scholarly practice and should not be treated as an expression of author's political or religious sentiments.

The period examined stretches from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, or beginnings of the Dominate, to the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. An appropriate symbolic date here would be 626, the year of the Avar raid on Constantinople, which resulted in the cutting of the aqueduct of Valens. The Arabic expansion and considerable territorial losses of the Roman state in the East that followed soon after constitute another terminus for this thesis, although, when appropriate for providing additional context or establishing basic facts, both earlier and later events and will be mentioned. In regards to literature, the dates of composition of Paul of Aegina's medical compendium and of the *Miracles of St. Artemios* can also be treated as symbolic cut-off points of Antiquity. These works, still drawing heavily from the earlier heritage, are at the same time displaying qualities that make them belong equally well to the mediaeval period. For the purpose of this work, I am going to refer to the whole of the transitory period, stretching from the late 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 7<sup>th</sup> century,

as ‘Late Antiquity’ and treat it as a separate chronological entity, with multiple characteristics differentiating it from both the ancient and mediaeval eras. The name itself is problematic; it implies a continuation of the older trends, while at the same time potentially indicating inferiority of the new developments occurring during this period. In the following work I have striven for a balanced approach. In general, Late Antiquity can be briefly characterised as a period during which the processes and phenomena described below became more prominent.

One of the key factors was the gradual decline of the local government resulting from increasing centralisation and the decreasing political influence and prestige of the local elites that began with the reforms of Diocletian (the *curiales* were burdened with additional financial responsibilities which became increasingly difficult to bear during the 4<sup>th</sup> century, to the point where the previously prestigious role started to be actively evaded),<sup>1</sup> combined with an increased role of the spiritual leaders of the communities in their everyday existence from the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

Shrinking of cities became notable, as many of them became partially, or even completely, depopulated – as a result of economic and social changes or hostile military activity (in particular from 5<sup>th</sup> century onwards). Another cause of this was an increased need for defensibility; often only a part of the city would end up being protected by walls, and much of its existing infrastructure would be either disassembled (for their building materials), reused in a different capacity or altogether abandoned. Finally, partial ruralisation became a feature of many of the cities as their population decreased.

The increasing influence of Christianity and the changes it brought in the spheres of not only religion, but also politics is another notable development of the time. Accompanied by the burgeoning role of bishops, who occasionally became real leaders of their city, and the increased and visible presence of clergymen and devotees of the ascendant faith, Christianity gradually came to dominate the spheres of culture (literature, art, architecture) and social life. The classical style in literature and art gradually became abandoned and replaced by new forms – often strongly inspired by the old ones, but nonetheless adapted to the new circumstances and, not infrequently, needs of the new religion. Piety and charity became, at least apparently, the leading values, while the older ones, such as civic pride and associated euergetism declined –

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<sup>1</sup> E. g. J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, “The end of the ancient city” in: J. Rich (ed.), *The city in late antiquity*, London 1992, pp. 6ff, 12ff.



at least in so far as the civic institutions were concerned. Donations to the Church and charitable works, on the other hand, swelled.

From the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards migrations, as well as invasions of various tribes, became a new major factor in the Empire's existence. Military reforms of Diocletian and his successors resulted in reorganisation of the army and considerable increase of the number of soldiers (along with the associated taxation necessary to support them). At the same time, the number of foreign soldiers in the ranks of the Roman army, particularly in the West, swelled, and by the time of the eventual collapse of the Roman state in that part of the Mediterranean, the Roman armies there consisted predominantly of federate soldiers of barbarian origin, making Roman military depend no longer on citizen soldiers but on federate forces. Meanwhile, the situation in the East was characterised by frequent border conflicts with Persia, with occasional major offensives that weakened both states and eventually opened both powers to the conquests by the newly established Arab Caliphate in the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

### ***General remarks***

I have decided not to concentrate much attention on the West, as that part of the Empire has been examined in more detail, as was has rightly been pointed out by L. Lavan in his bibliographic essay "Social space in late antiquity"<sup>2</sup> - along with a complaint about the lack of a new synthesis on bathing. This gap was to a considerable extent filled by the work of F. Yegul, who in his work discussed certain aspects of bathing that had not been previously explored, devoted some attention to the Roman East and extended his analysis much further into Late Antiquity than previous works.<sup>3</sup> His book, to a certain extent, addresses issues analysed in this dissertation (such as the transformation of bathing during Late Antiquity), and its publication resulted in some reconsiderations pertaining to the content and focus of this thesis. Yegul's opens with a detailed look into bathing activities and presentation of elements that added to create the bathing experience. Subsequently, he analyses the moral issues that appeared in the context of bathing: the use of luxury, nudity, gluttony and equality. He then focuses on the origins of Roman bathing, infrastructure and architecture of baths, examines bath-houses in different areas of the Empire and

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<sup>2</sup> L. Lavan, "Social space in late antiquity", in: L. Lavan, E. Swift, T. Putzeys (eds.) *Objects in context, objects in use: material spatiality in late antiquity*, Brill 2008, pp. 129-157.

<sup>3</sup> F. Yegul, *Bathing in the Roman world*, Cambridge University Press 2009.

proceeds to look into transformation of bathing during Late Antiquity and beyond. An older, but by no means obsolete work on bathing during the (primarily) early Imperial period was written by G. Fagan;<sup>4</sup> he made extensive use of Martial's poetry in order to analyse the realities of bathing in the early imperial Rome, analysed the increase of popularity of bathing in the Roman society from the time of late Republic onward, pointing out, among other causes, the fact that bath-houses offered a freely accessible, luxurious environment for socialising; he also noted the much more communal than nowadays character of city life. He also examined the trends of patronage related to bath-houses, exclusively private until the early imperial period. Fagan also noted the importance of bathing in medicine, drawing attention to texts authored by both medical and non-medical authors (during the early Imperial period), and by briefly examining the state of medicine of the day in the context of baths.<sup>5</sup> Some of the social and cultural aspects of bathing were also previously discussed in A. Berger's *Das Bad in der Byzantinischen Zeit*, an excellent dissertation examining the general place of bathing in the Eastern Roman Empire and discussing the sources mentioning the subject.<sup>6</sup> A now somewhat out-of-date article by J. DeLaine succinctly summarised the key reasons because of which Roman baths played such an important role in the society – as well as the reasons why, at the time of the article's publication, studies concerning bathing were relatively scarce.<sup>7</sup>

The sheer wealth of source material relating to certain times, themes and places in Late Antiquity and relative scarcity of texts dealing with the others make a truly comprehensive approach to baths and bathing in the period, especially within the framework of a PhD thesis, an impossibility. Much of the available material, however, the vast majority of which deals with the subject of this thesis only in passing, has still not been fully utilised, and it is my intention to, at least partially, address this gap in the scholarly work. The question of bathing in ancient medical works has not been previously addressed beyond general remarks, and is going to be explored in detail. Much more information can be, I believe, extracted from religious writings, such as those of Church Fathers and, to lesser extent, the lives of saints. Finally, some of the incidental remarks pertaining bathing from sources otherwise not concerned with bathing at any length will be examined to add to the picture emerging from more

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<sup>4</sup> G. G. Fagan, *Bathing in public in the Roman world*, Ann Arbor 1999.

<sup>5</sup> G. G. Fagan, *Bathing in public...*, p. 109.

<sup>6</sup> A. Berger, *Das Bad in Der Byzantinischen Zeit*, Munich 1983.

<sup>7</sup> J. DeLaine, "Recent research on Roman baths", *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 1 (1988), p. 11.

structured accounts discussing baths or bathing. In the final result, this thesis shall provide not only an overview of the wide range of functions that the baths had in the Late Antiquity, along with the remarks on the transformation of the baths and bathing culture, but also an analysis of their place in the popular consciousness of the time, as well as a synthesis of uses that bathing and washing had in the medical science of Late Antiquity.

The relative abundance of sources related to Antioch, including, among others, orations of Libanius, John Chrysostom's homilies and, concerning also the later period, the *Chronicle* of John Malalas, is sufficient to make that particular city the subject of a more in-depth study; I am going to look at it from this perspective throughout the first chapter. It is worth noting that other authors have also recognised the importance of Antioch in analysing the social and city life in Late Antiquity.<sup>8</sup> There are also, of course, numerous remarks on the bathing facilities in Constantinople and, to a lesser extent, in Alexandria. Taken together, references to baths in these three cities constitute, with ease, the majority of available knowledge on bathing facilities located in specific places of the Eastern Roman Empire. This is hardly surprising if one considers that nearly all of the prominent authors of Late Antiquity whose works survive to this date either lived, or at least spent considerable time in one of these major cities. The incidental remarks on baths in other locations of the Empire usually stress their extraordinary character and fame, describing them as either places of miraculous or near-miraculous healing (attributed, most commonly, to natural springs, supernatural forces at work or both) or as unusually beautiful and superbly adorned.

As the technology involved in the running of bath-houses and matters such as the layout of baths are not the main subject of my thesis, I am going to incorporate only the relevant material related to this area of study. I have decided to provide a general overview of these matters (as much as it is necessary to give a general idea of the practical issues that may have had an impact on the everyday use of baths) in the opening of Chapter 1. For this purpose, I have used primary sources such as the works of Vitruvius<sup>9</sup> and Frontinus<sup>10</sup> (due to general lack of relevant technical manuals on the

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<sup>8</sup> For example I. Sandwell, *Religious identity in Late Antiquity. Greeks, Jews and Christians in Antioch*, Cambridge 2007 or D. S. Wallace-Hadrill, *Christian Antioch. A study of the early Christian thought in the East*, Cambridge 1982.

<sup>9</sup> Vitruvius Pollio, *The ten books on architecture*, ed. Morgan M. H., London, 1914.

subject from later centuries), dealing with water supply to the baths, and selected secondary literature. An excellent work on the subject of baths and their workings was written by I. Nielsen,<sup>11</sup> who focused his attention on technical solutions used in bathing establishments and the water supply of bath-houses, analysing archaeological material as his main source. Considerable attention to the subject was more recently devoted also by F. Yegul.<sup>12</sup>

## *Chapter 1*

The first chapter is going to focus on analysing the cultural and social importance of bath-houses and bathing within late Roman society, and the changes relating to these areas that occurred during Late Antiquity.

To determine what the baths actually were (their general functions and internal layout; the technical infrastructure; their size) and the place of the bath in a city, town or military camp and similarities and differences in functions and roles of the baths in these locations, I am going to analyse the more prolific ancient authors (especially those who devoted some of their attention to city infrastructure), such as Vitruvius, and secondary literature on baths in general (archaeology and architecture) and on baths at chosen locations. I am also going to include a brief overview of the arrangements used by the Romans in regards to the water supply system. I have chosen not to focus much on archaeological findings, as they have, to a considerable extent, already been analysed (by, e.g., I. Nielsen).<sup>13</sup> I have, however, decided to include some of the recent studies, in particular on the system developed for and used in Constantinople.<sup>14</sup> The capital city enjoyed, on the one hand, a uniquely privileged position in the Empire; on the other, was located in an area that was particularly difficult to supply with water. This makes it an interesting case to study – even if parallels with Constantinopolitan arrangements must, for the same reasons, be made with particular care. By virtue of being the main imperial residence in the East, the

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<sup>10</sup> For the purpose of this work I have used translation of Frontinus' *De aquae urbis Romae* from the book of H. B. Evans, *Water Distribution in Ancient Rome. The Evidence of Frontinus*, Michigan, 1997.

<sup>11</sup> I. Nielsen, *Thermae et Balnea. The Architecture and Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, Aarhus University Press 1990.

<sup>12</sup> F. Yegul, *Bathing in the Roman world*, pp. 101-198.

<sup>13</sup> I. Nielsen, *Thermae et Balnea. The Architecture and Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, Aarhus University Press 1990.

<sup>14</sup> J. Crow, J. Bardill, R. Bayliss, *The water supply of Byzantine Constantinople*, The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies 2008.

needs of the city and its people were given very high priority as far as imperial patronage was concerned. In the age when the threat of usurpation (and, indeed, successful usurpations) was quite common, ensuring loyalty of the city's inhabitants was a necessity for any ruler who hoped to enjoy a long reign, and providing and maintaining capital's infrastructure were among the most straightforward measures for achieving that.

For the sake of completeness, it is necessary to devote attention to the construction efforts, maintenance and destruction of bath-houses. By examining these activities it will be possible to draw some general conclusions regarding the status of baths in the Roman society, and ascertaining the amount of attention the general state of baths and their maintenance received from the authors of primary sources will allow concluding on the extent of their importance for the communities in which they were taking place. In this context I am also going to examine the evidence concerning the reliance of Roman-style bathing on political stability and, to a lesser degree, on willingness of the emperors and the most influential and wealthy citizens to build and sponsor public baths, and the infrastructure necessary for their functioning. This will be followed by an analysis of the potential symbolic meanings the presence of baths may have had for the communities which were utilising them. This will be followed by an exploration of the role of the bath-houses in the consciousness of Romans themselves as well as foreigners who became aware of this – typically Roman – phenomenon of communal bathing. What was an outsider's perception of a bath-house, his reaction to the foreign custom? In what behaviour and actions, if any, this perception resulted, and what, in turn, was the Roman reaction to the outsiders' behaviour regarding the baths?

This will be followed by an overview of the question of nudity in the bathing environment in the Roman society and the possibilities it created for – perceived or real – equality among the bathers. This is closely related to the issue of whether men and women bathed together, if so, to what extent this was taking place, and what (if any) was the general attitude within the Roman society towards this issue. In turn, this analysis will serve as an introduction to a broader overview of baths as meeting places in general. This overview will include an in-depth look at the social functions the baths have served and activities they facilitated. In particular, I am going to examine the everyday interactions between the bathers, leisure activities that occurred in bath-

houses, and some of the more specific behaviours, such as displays of wealth and social status by the elite, and the ways in which these displays were achieved.

Finally, I am going to examine the evidence pertaining to situations not related to bathing or activities associated with it that did take place in baths. Such situations include, for example, utilising bath-houses for purposes for which they were not designed or for which baths were not suited. I will also look into certain behaviours that were singled out as unusual, for one reason or another. These will include, but will not be limited to, examples of bathing outside of the standard bathing facilities and the potential implications thereof. This will be followed by an overview of the potential risks of bathing and detrimental effects it might have had on bathers (this particular theme will be examined in more detail in chapter three), with a brief overview of some of the more drastic events that took place in bath-houses and an examination the reactions of the authors of the primary sources to these.

The main primary sources which I will be using in this chapter will include the works of Ammianus Marcellinus, the historians of the Church Sozomen and Socrates, the history of Zosimus, works of Procopius, laws, the later chronicles of John Malalas, Theophanes the Confessor and the *Easter Chronicle*, as well as witnessed by the early Church authors, especially John Chrysostom.. A few of the sources dealing primarily with the West will also be examined (such as the *Letters* of Sidonius Apollinaris), as they can be useful in drawing conclusions of a more general nature. Even a brief overview of the extant sources shows that almost invariably the references to bathing contained in the primary material are incidental. While such circumstances may on some occasions limit the researchers to reliance on anecdotal evidence, supported only by limited archaeological data and forcing them to make extrapolations, it may also be considered an unexpected boon. While a subject of major importance to the author can often be expected to have been covered with an agenda in mind, bath-houses and bathing more often than not serve as a background to other events, and thus their presented appearance can be deemed to be as close to reality as possible (or, at the very least, reality as perceived by the authors). In cases where bath-houses or bathing did become the main focus (at least temporarily) additional care will be taken to identify possible biases and distortions.

Taken together, the insights gained from examining the various aspects of bathing and of the attitudes towards it should allow a reconstruction of one of the most important institutions in the daily life of Romans in the period of Late Antiquity.

## Chapter 2

In the second chapter I am going to investigate issues related to culture, but primarily to religion, in the context of bathing customs and attitudes. The study will be concerned with Christianity, for the most part, but also Judaism and the traditional Roman cults and beliefs. Here I am going to discuss in detail the place of baths in a society that was becoming predominantly Christian, and attempt to answer the question of what changes, if any, the advent of Christianity brought to the bathing culture. I am going to begin doing so by examining the guides for Christians discussing the acceptable types of behaviour, such as the early Christian *Instructor* (written at the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> century) of Clement of Alexandria. This work provides guidance on everyday life for Christians, often referring to the Scripture as well as a plethora of pagan authors, and the advice offered shows a strong influence of Stoicism.<sup>15</sup> Tertullian's apologetic work is another useful source on early Christian attitudes towards the issues of daily life (including bathing), one stressing the overall compatibility of Christian teaching and values with the norms of the Roman society.<sup>16</sup> I am also going to examine homilies, particularly those by John Chrysostom, to determine whether the early Christian teaching on the subject of bathing changed significantly over time. I will subsequently look into the question of whether there were any specifically Christian attitudes to baths and bathing that were different from non-Christian ones; I will also address the issue of whether Christianity as whole can be treated as a factor of cultural change in relation to bathing, or whether some specific trends within the religion can be identified as having particularly strong impact.

Another question I wish to explore is the influence of the bath-related terminology on the Christian discourse relating to baptism; to what extent, and in what context words previously used to describe mundane activity came to be used to denote one of the most important rites of the ascendant religion, and why? I am also going to briefly look at the Christian interpretation of martyrdom (prior to Christianity

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<sup>15</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Christ the educator*, S. P. Wood (ed.), New York 1954, p. xvii.

<sup>16</sup> E. Osborn, *Tertullian, first theologian of the West*, Cambridge University Press 2003, p. 83ff. A work by T. D. Barnes, *Tertullian. A historical and literary study*, Oxford 1971 is another useful study of the theologian's life and work.

attaining of the status of a legitimate religion) in situations where it was linked with bathing or bath-houses.

Since baths were commonly associated with healing and medicine, some attention will also be devoted to Christian attitudes towards this aspect of bath-houses, in the particular context of miracles and supernatural healing, and a comparison will be made with the earlier accounts dealing with this question. Examining this area will necessarily mean creating some overlap between chapters two and three; this, however, should allow a more in-depth look at the matter as it will be explored from different angles and perspectives; in this chapter, the focus is going to be primarily on the more general Christian attitudes and ideas. Attention will also be devoted to the popular beliefs associated with bathing – beliefs and behaviour that lies beyond the mainstream religious or cultural currents; or, at least, behaviour indicated as such by the authors of the surviving sources.

Subsequently, I am going to examine the extent to which Christian authors associated baths and bathing with wealth and luxury, and whether it affected their attitudes towards the institution itself. It will additionally be noted whether such attitudes were new or uniquely Christian or, on the contrary, were a continuation of earlier trends. I will also devote attention to Jewish bathing customs during this period, and to the degree in which they resembled (or differed from) traditional Roman bathing, as well as potential reactions of the representatives of different religious groups to the bathing practices of their respective ‘outsiders’.

Among the major sources used in this chapter are going to be the orations and homilies of John Chrysostom, which provide plentiful insights on the everyday behaviour of Christians (at least those living in large cities) and on the attitude of clergy – as opposed to monks and ascetics – towards bathing. As someone who studied under Libanius and received Christian education, the ascetic-turned-priest preached in a manner that earned him the nickname ‘Golden Mouth’. More importantly, from the preserved records of his preaching emerges a vivid picture of the life and habits of contemporary Christians. Works of the other great theologians of the age, such as Gregory of Nazianzus or Gregory of Nyssa offer similar insights. I shall also look into some of the older texts, such as the guide of Clement of Alexandria, *Apostolic constitutions* as well as the Canons of the Church.



### *Chapter 3*

The third chapter is going to deal with analysing the hygienic and therapeutic aspects of the baths and will be based primarily on the writings of medical authors, especially Paul of Aegina. This author's compendium is the most complete summary of medical knowledge of the time; based on the foremost authorities of Late Antiquity, knowledge preserved in Paul's work is, unavoidably, abbreviated when compared to the original treatises from which it was drawn. However, it is also a product of the scientific culture of the time, a distilled version of the results of earlier research, assembled in an accessible and easy to use manner; I am going to discuss this matter in more detail in the chapter itself.

The overarching theme of this chapter is going to be the analysis of a number of aspects of bathing in the context of medical profession, primarily the extent to which bath-houses and bathing were employed by medical practitioners and, to a lesser extent, the theoretical underpinnings thereof.

The properties of different types of water and their particular therapeutic benefits, as described by ancient medical writers, are going to be examined first. This will be followed by a detailed examination of the bathing in the regimen prescribed for healthy people, and remarks on the theoretical underpinnings of such advice. The question of applicability of bathing in general for the ill is going to be discussed next. This will allow me to determine the general interest of medical profession in the uses of water, and establish the basic concepts related to it.

Subsequently, an extensive overview of the prescribed bathing treatment, according to the type of advised bathing, is going to be discussed. The focus will be, in particular, on the circumstances in which bathing in pure water, in various types of mineral waters and in water with the addition of a wide range of substances was deemed beneficial to the patients. This is going to be followed by a quick overview of the significance of bath-houses for the medical profession for reasons not directly linked to bathing.

Subsequently, I am going to take a more detailed look at a number of sources written by authors who were not professionally involved in medical practice, but who nonetheless mentioned this subject while discussing bath-houses. The very fact that such remarks can be found attests the widespread (though not necessarily based in

proper medical knowledge) associations between baths and health. Thus, in the end, the question of knowledge of medicine among non-medical authors is going to be examined – with particular attention to their attitudes to medicine and bathing.

I have devoted much attention to Hippocratic writings, as they constitute a basis for much of the later ancient medical knowledge; by comparing them with later treatises, it is possible to establish – at least to a certain degree – the extent of new research done by physicians and the direction it took. At the same time, it allows one to see how much of the old knowledge was incorporated into the new texts without significant changes, and to examine the general attitude to science in Late Antiquity, on the specific example of medicine. A more extensive study of Hippocrates and certain commentaries allowed me to gain knowledge on ancient medicine in general. I decided to use Paulus Aeginetas' (Paul of Aegina) medical compendium as the key work that summarises the medical knowledge of Late Antiquity.

The intended result of this Ph.D. is to provide an overview of select aspects of bathing that have not been previously researched, provide a detailed analysis of the most important episodes and anecdotal evidence from primary sources that are relevant to bathing, a detailed analysis of the impact of Christianity on bathing culture (and of bathing on the forming of Christianity) and a systematic overview of the use of bathing in Late Antique medicine. The latter two subjects in particular will involve a considerable amount of new and original research; re-evaluation and expanding on the existing scholarly texts will be the chief aim of the former.

The final conclusions will be followed by an appendix consisting of a table listing the bath-houses discussed in the thesis, listing (if these are known) their construction date, founder, dates major renovations, and additional information of interest.

### ***General overview of bathing in the Roman world***

Before beginning a more detailed and focused inquiry into the Roman bathing customs of Late Antiquity, I feel it necessary to – at least briefly – provide an overview of the Roman bathing prior to this time, as well as of the general socio-economic and political situation during the examined period. Such a summary analysis will allow for a more ready identification of the key changes in the bathing culture and environment and at the same time facilitate the avoidance of excessively

extensive interpolations within the principal substance of the thesis. More importantly, it will serve as a summary of the current state of the academic research pertaining to the subject. The secondary literature on Late Antiquity is quite extensive; one could list dozens of only general works. The most notable examples would include Peter Brown's books on the subject, dealing with socio-economic and religious factors and developments of the time;<sup>17</sup> Averil Cameron's works and the volumes of the *The Cambridge Ancient History* she co-edited;<sup>18</sup> J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz's works on various aspects of social and city life;<sup>19</sup> Michael Maas' *Age of Justinian* provides a wealth of information on the Empire in the 6<sup>th</sup> century;<sup>20</sup> a recently published work by J. J. O'Donnell, with a rather telling title *The ruin of the Roman Empire*,<sup>21</sup> is noteworthy for its attempt at re-evaluation of the Late Antiquity by seeking Rome's downfall in its (or rather of its elites) attachment to the past and ignoring of current troubles, portraying the Germanic successors of the Roman government as pragmatic realists and painting Justinian as a somewhat deluded and weak monarch. *The fall of Rome and the end of civilization* is another work dealing with transformation and change during Late Antiquity, focusing some of its attention on the visible decline of the quality of pottery as an indicator of more sweeping changes.<sup>22</sup>

Focusing on the downfall of Rome is nothing new; the vision of collapsing Rome has been engrained in historiography at least since Edward Gibbon's *magnum opus*,<sup>23</sup> and it is telling that many of the popular histories dealing with Late Antiquity focus on the themes of decline and collapse (even if the exact nature of these causes varies from author to author); one might take a look at Michael Grant's work in this context, who attributed the fall of Roman rule in the West to numerous disunities and clashes between the Romans and outsiders and (primarily) between the various interest, ethnic and social groups within the Empire itself.<sup>24</sup> This does not, of course,

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<sup>17</sup> P. Brown, *The world of late antiquity*, London 1971; *idem*, *The making of late antiquity*, Harvard University Press 1978;

<sup>18</sup> A. Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity Ad 395-600*, Routledge 1993; *idem* et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vols. 12-14, Cambridge 1997ff

<sup>19</sup> J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and fall of the Roman city*, Oxford 2001.

<sup>20</sup> M. Maas (ed.), *The Cambridge companion to the age of Justinian*, Cambridge University Press 2005.

<sup>21</sup> J. J. O'Donnell, *The ruin of the Roman Empire*, London 2009. While definitely an interesting read and one containing insightful observations, the work unfortunately did not manage to avoid some blatant moralising.

<sup>22</sup> B. Ward-Perkins, *The fall of Rome and the end of civilization*, Oxford 2005.

<sup>23</sup> E. Gibbon, *The history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire*, London 1776-1789.

<sup>24</sup> M. Grant, *The fall of the Roman Empire*, London 2005 (first published in 1976).

mean that all of the popular histories deal with the themes of fall and disasters; some manage to deal with the matter in a balanced fashion.<sup>25</sup> The tendency to seek (oversimplified) causes of the ‘fall’ of the Roman Empire (while ignoring its continued existence in the East) had its heartfelt critics as well.<sup>26</sup> It has to be said that modern scholarship on the subject tends to focus on transformation and change rather than collapse; still, it would take wilful ignorance to deny that the standard of living of average Roman citizens during Late Antiquity deteriorated compared to what their ancestors living during the golden age of Imperial Rome could enjoy. I hope to demonstrate that an informed and balanced approach to this period, focusing on the socio-cultural, religious and medicinal aspects of bathing, is possible.

Bathing for Romans already prior to Late Antiquity was primarily a social and cultural activity; medicinal and hygienic (in the modern sense of the word) functions of the large, public bath-houses, while also important, could have been (and often were) successfully performed in the humbler establishments, or private homes, not fitted with a bath. The true ‘Roman’ bathing, however, could only take place in a proper (and sufficiently costly, both in construction and upkeep) environment. Some of the estimates put the cost of fuel at two thirds of the total expense necessary for upkeep of the bath-houses;<sup>27</sup> one must however consider that this was not necessarily the case; the amount of water and the technical solutions used in running these institutions greatly varied, and the most conservative estimates put the amount of fuel necessary to provide sufficient hot water for a bather at about two and a half kilograms of wood (the main type of fuel used in bath-houses). There is some indication that other types of fuel, such as dried dung,<sup>28</sup> were occasionally used as well – one might imagine that this would not apply to the more luxurious establishments, but is perfectly plausible in the case of smaller, particularly rural bath-houses.

The experience of bathing in ‘Roman’ style involved spacious, well-heated (with the hypocaust, a system in which hot air was circulated under the floor raised on pillars, and occasionally also through pipes embedded within the walls) and lit rooms, pools with (ideally) constantly flowing water of different temperatures, symbolising

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<sup>25</sup> E.g. the somewhat flowery J. J. Norwich’s *Byzantium: the early centuries*, Viking 1988.

<sup>26</sup> J. W. Barker, *Justinian and the later Roman Empire*, Madison, Milwaukee, London 1966.

<sup>27</sup> P. N. Blyth, “The consumption and cost of fuel in hypocaust baths”, in: Delaine J., Johnston D. E., *Roman baths and bathing...*, pp. 89-98.

<sup>28</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Matthaëum (homiliae 1-90)*, 63, 4. The passage focuses on the worthlessness of gold (in and of itself) – while even dung has its uses!

wealth and mastery over the natural world, a number of attendants (typically slaves) and, above all, socializing in the company of other bathers. Such baths would frequently be decorated with mosaics, and in the wealthier establishments, also with statues. This was a far cry from the early Roman baths, small, dark spaces designed purely for washing; the considerable development of bath-houses was strongly affected by Greek and, to a lesser extent, Etruscan influences.

Beside the bath-house's permanent staff, the wealthy patrons often also had their own retinues of slaves at their disposal during their trips to the bath-houses, though the extent to which the slaves were present to attend their master, served only as display of their master's wealth, his bodyguards or were allowed to bathe with their owner cannot be said with certainty. I am going to address this issue below. It is known, however, that in some cases the slaves, in general, were allowed to bathe in public baths for free.<sup>29</sup> In the case of the *thermae*, the term commonly used to denote the largest and most luxurious of baths (and in which I shall be employing it), a variety of both physical and intellectual pastimes would also have been available. Providing such conditions, however, required significant financial resources – taken together, the construction, water supply, supply of fuel and upkeep of the attendants for the numerous baths could at times be highly draining for the cities' councils, or local benefactors. In Italy (as well as elsewhere) baths can be used to trace the trends in public spending as well as in private benefactions<sup>30</sup>. The sums involved also meant that the baths have been used to express the wealth and power of their founders and benefactors.

During the early fourth century some of the bath-houses still resemble, to an extent, the Greek gymnasia of old,<sup>31</sup> and in many ways it is the century during which the Roman bathing establishments have reached the zenith of their development, with the last of the grand *thermae* being built in major cities of the Empire. It was not long after that, however, that many of the provincial cities began to struggle to keep up

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<sup>29</sup> G. G. Fagan, "Interpreting the evidence: Did slaves bathe at the baths?", in: J. Delaine, D. E. Johnston (eds.), *Roman baths and bathing. Proceedings of the First International Conference on Roman Baths held at Bath, England, 30 March – 4 April 1992. Part 1: Bathing and society*, Portsmouth, Rhode Island 1999, pp. 29-30.

<sup>30</sup> J. Delaine, *Benefactions and urban renewal: bath buildings in Roman Italy*, in: *Roman baths and bathing. Proceedings...*, p. 67.

<sup>31</sup> Inge Nielsen distinguishes between the Greek and the Roman style of baths by asserting that the Roman baths made use of the hypocaust, and included either a *sudatorium* or *caldarium* (hot steam room or a hot water pool). I. Nielsen, „Early provincial baths and their relations to early Italic baths”, in: J. Delaine, D. E. Johnston (eds.), *Roman baths and bathing...*, p. 39.

their civic infrastructure in working order. Ubiquitous signs of the gradual decline of the decurial class, members of which were tasked with providing funds for their cities, are a clear indication of an apparent cause of the financial problems of urban communities. With the increasing centralisation and the imperial administration taking over governing of the provinces to greater and greater extent, the previously prestigious and desirable status of a municipal decurion for many became little more than an unwelcome burden. With the decurions escaping their financial duties (after having already lost much, if not most, of their say in local politics), provincial civic centres lost much of their *raison d'être* – and of funding for its upkeep. Eventually, much of the old civic infrastructure became little more than a source of building material.<sup>32</sup> The extent to which this affected bath-houses is going to be one of the themes explored in this thesis.

This leads to another major issue I am going to explore – how much, if at all, did the attitudes towards bathing change during this time? And what were the factors that contributed to this change, or lack thereof? The task of answering this question is not without significant difficulties. Few of the extant primary sources address the issue directly, and most of those that are relevant in this context have been written by the Church Fathers, and are thus, unavoidably, considerably biased in their assumptions and purpose. They are, however, a very good representation of what the preachers considered to be desirable behaviour, and contain examples of undesirable ones – often exaggerated, but nonetheless reflecting at least to an extent the actual behaviour of the Christian listeners.

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<sup>32</sup>E. g. J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and fall...*, pp. 30, 39, 61, 99 et al.

## ***Chapter 1: Baths and Roman society***

In this chapter I intend to provide a thorough overview of the elements necessary for Roman bathing and of the Roman bathing culture in general. I will begin doing so by examining the bathing-related infrastructure and its sources of funding. Subsequently, I will examine the symbolic value of bathing establishments, in order to determine the importance attached to them within the Roman society and the perceptions of Roman bath-houses and bathing customs in the eyes of those who, from the Roman perspective, were the “others”, foreigners. This will be followed by a detailed look into the questions of nakedness in Roman bath-houses and of sharing the bathing space by men and women. This analysis will lead into the examination of a broader question of bath-houses as social spaces, with particular emphasis on the role of bath-houses as places associated with wealth and luxury. Subsequently, I will examine the attempts of replicating at least some of the functions of bath-houses when adequate amenities were not available. Afterwards, I shall discuss the accounts of deaths and misfortunes that occurred in bath-houses, to further explore the associations related to bath-houses. Finally, a brief look at unusual uses of bath-houses will precede a summary and conclusions to this chapter.

### ***Importance of infrastructure: water supply, its maintenance***

The numerous bath-houses would have been useless if it was not for sufficient water supply; this subject, therefore, deserves at least a cursory attention. The development of bath-houses was dependent on the abundance of available water, but also spurred the development of water-related infrastructure. The delivery of water by aqueducts, as many other systems and institutions, was often modelled throughout the Roman Empire on the *urbs*. Depending on their wealth or sponsorship, other cities would build their own aqueducts, or receive at least part of the necessary funds from the emperor; in the absence of these, many places relied on cisterns for storing water (eventually, Constantinople itself became reliant on its extensive system of both open-

air and underground cisterns).<sup>33</sup> In the East, the title of the largest and most notable aqueduct would likely have to go to the structure completed by Valens, which supplied Constantinople until its devastation by Avars in 626.<sup>34</sup> The capital city was the main beneficiary of imperial patronage, and was followed in this respect by Alexandria and Antioch. The most well-known Constantinopolitan aqueduct was completed after decades of building works and was a whole complex system in itself; it dwarfed the old aqueduct built by Hadrian. The new capital's water system introduced – on an unusually vast scale – a system of open-air reservoirs and cisterns,<sup>35</sup> which were being added over the course of centuries, ensuring for the city huge reserves of water for any eventuality; this was particularly important, as the city was built in an area lacking in aquifers.

The two textual sources that are most often mentioned in the context of Roman aqueducts and water supply are the works of Sextus Julius Frontinus<sup>36</sup> (ca. AD 40-103), who in AD 95 was appointed *curator aquarum*, overseer of Rome's aqueducts and of Marcus Vitruvius Pollio<sup>37</sup> (ca. 80-25 BC), an architect and engineer. While Vitruvius' work is, in fact, a building manual and provides technical details on how to construct practically every type of building or machine used by Romans in his time, Frontinus is mainly concerned with Rome's aqueduct system; he also includes lavish praise of Nerva, the ruling emperor, and often mentioned emperor Octavian's associate, Marcus Agrippa, who greatly improved Rome's water supply. He omits, however, most of technical details of building and maintaining it. His treatise gives information about the date of construction and capacity of Rome's aqueducts, the importance of their maintenance, sizes of pipes used for transporting water from main

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<sup>33</sup> I have previously addressed several issues related to bath-house patronage in an article published in a CLIOHres volume: M. J. Zytka, "Power and patronage in the late antique bathing culture", *Constructing cultural identity, representing social power*, Pisa 2010, pp. 117-138.

<sup>34</sup> Collected results of a major research project on the water supply system of Constantinople have been collected in J. Crow, J. Bardill, R. Bayliss, *The water supply... .* A succinct but now somewhat obsolete description of the system can be found in C. Mango, 'The water supply of Constantinople', in: C. Mango, G. Dagron (eds.), *Constantinople and its hinterland. Papers from the Twenty-seventh Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Oxford, April 1993*, Ashgate 1995, pp. 9-18. A description of the water supply can also be found in F. Yegul's *Bathing in the Roman world*, pp. 97-100. As for the siege itself, see J. D. Howard-Johnston, "The siege of Constantinople in 626" in: C. Mango, G. Dagron, *Constantinople and its hinterland...*, pp. 131-142. Some interesting papers (including a reprint of the one mentioned above) on the military of the Eastern Roman Empire during this period can be found in J. D. Howard-Johnston (ed.), *East Rome, Sasanian Persia and the end of antiquity*, Ashgate 2006.

<sup>35</sup> Probably the most well-known is the Basilica cistern mentioned by Procopius, *Buildings*, transl. H. B. Dewing, London, Cambridge, Mass. 1940, 1, 11, 10-15.

<sup>36</sup> Frontinus, *De aquae urbis Romae*, in: H. B. Evans (ed.), *Water Distribution in Ancient Rome. The Evidence of Frontinus*, Michigan, 1997.

<sup>37</sup> Vitruvius Pollio, *The ten books...*



lines and quotes laws which impose fines on offenders who would pollute water intended for public use or damage or endanger water lines in any way. Frontinus also elaborates on the distribution of the water delivered to Rome; how it is divided for general public use, for use “in the name of the emperor” and for private users.<sup>38</sup> It should be noted here that the water delivered *in nomine caesaris* was not only used by the court, but it was also (if not mainly) delivered to various facilities (like baths) as an imperial gift for the people.<sup>39</sup> In fact, Vitruvius<sup>40</sup> mentioned a way to divide the water tanks into three parts, so that private users would receive water only if public and imperial needs for water were satisfied. This arrangement, however, has not been attested archaeologically – at least in North Africa.<sup>41</sup> If that were the case for other regions of the Empire as well, it would mean that Vitruvius’ suggestion of improving water distribution was never really implemented beyond Rome itself. This would mean that these treatises cannot be used to determine the solutions used in the majority of the Empire, and that our most readily accessible accounts dealing with water-related engineering in the Roman world can only be applied to Rome itself – and are most likely only relevant for the early Imperial period, forcing any researcher to extrapolate from them with great care indeed. On the other hand, despite these reservations, the aforementioned sources do remain our most important literary accounts dealing with the matter.

The amount of delivered water was measured in *quinaria*, which is a name for the size of pipe;<sup>42</sup> such a system of measuring water delivery suggests that the water may have been flowing constantly. Although the flow of water depends on pressure as well as on a pipe’s diameter, Frontinus’ work might suggest that there was some effort put into ensuring that every *quinaria* provided a similar volume of water and that private users did not receive more water than they were entitled to; this would require using officially stamped pipes of proper diameter over the distance of at least 50 feet from the place where they would be joining main water lines to maintain

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<sup>38</sup> Frontinus, *De aquae...*, 78.3-86.

<sup>39</sup> A. O. Koloski-Ostrow, “Water as Symbol of Wealth? An Overview of the Roman Evidence”, in: *Koloski-Ostrow A. O (ed.), Water Use and Hydraulics in the Roman City*, Dubuque, Iowa, 2001, p. 8; Ch. Bruun, “Imperial Water Pipes in Roman Cities”, in: *Koloski-Ostrow A. O (ed.), Water Use and Hydraulics ...*, p. 52.

<sup>40</sup> Vitruvius, *The ten books...*, 8.6.2. Frontinus does not mention if this arrangement was used in his days.

<sup>41</sup> A. Wilson, “Urban Water Storages, Distribution and Usage in Roman North Africa”, in: *Koloski-Ostrow A. O (ed.), Water Use and Hydraulics ...*, p. 83.

<sup>42</sup> Frontinus, *De aquae...*, 25.1. One *quinaria* equalled 5/4 of a digit, therefore the diameter of *quinaria* was roughly 2.3 cm.

roughly the same water pressure in them.<sup>43</sup> Other causes of problems with water pressure were dishonest watermen, who were selling the access to water for their own profit, and illegal tapping of water conduits by private persons.<sup>44</sup> It should be noted that there is no actual material evidence that the pipes were attached to the water tanks in the way Frontinus described.<sup>45</sup> Perhaps it was just another worthwhile idea that was never introduced in practice, or was introduced only temporarily and on a small scale – or, as the case may be, no relevant material survived to be examined by archaeologists.

The constant flow of water (which sometimes meant that this resource was simply wasted) caused some discussion about the extent to which the aqueducts were a real necessity and to which they served to provide luxury and visible proof of the greatness of the Empire which could provide it for its citizens.<sup>46</sup> Apparently, in Rome itself there was little need to save water, except perhaps for the time of day when the demand for it was highest; in other areas of the Empire an aqueduct could ensure that the population would have a supply of fresh drinking water even during all but the worst droughts.<sup>47</sup> The surplus water could also be stored in cisterns, both public and private, especially where there was not enough rain to fill them. Simple water taps have also been found in many ancient houses that had running water,<sup>48</sup> and these were either used at the distribution boxes, from which water could be directed to various places in the house, or at the end of the line; in most cases the water was flowing into a basin in an atrium.

The cost of building aqueducts was very high, and the problems with keeping the water flowing after the construction ended were numerous as well. These included costly maintenance, changes in the amount of water available at the source, unstable land on which an aqueduct was built (this was the case with Rome's Aqua Claudia, which was not used during 9 of the first 15 years after its completion, due to necessary repairs) and the fact that they could be cut during siege or even used as a

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<sup>43</sup> Frontinus, *De aquae...*, 103.2.

<sup>44</sup> Frontinus, *De aquae...*, 87.

<sup>45</sup> H. B. Evans, *Water Distribution...*, p. 56.

<sup>46</sup> P. J. Aicher, *Guide to the aqueducts of ancient Rome*, Wauconda, Illinois 1995, p. 22; H. B. Evans, *Water Distribution...*, p. 54; A. O. Koloski-Ostrow, *Water as Symbol of Wealth...*, p. 1; C. Bruun, "Imperial Water Pipes...", p. 52.

<sup>47</sup> A. Wilson, "Urban Water Storages...", p. 83.

<sup>48</sup> G. C. M. Jansen, "Water Pipe System in the Houses of Pompeii. Distribution and Use", in: *Koloski-Ostrow A. O (ed.), Water Use and Hydraulics ...*, pp. 27-40.

way into the city by enemies.<sup>49</sup> In Rome itself, the aqueducts were either funded from spoils of war, by the patronage of wealthy citizens, or by the emperor.<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, some of the greatest aqueducts were built in provinces; examples would include Pont du Gard, which transported water to Nemausus (modern Nîmes) and reached 49m in height, Segovian aqueduct in Spain dating from Claudius' times, which is still working, or the 100 km long aqueduct which supplied water to Carthage; they were all impressive examples of Rome's power.<sup>51</sup> As a side note, J. P. Aicher discusses the idea that the private users in Rome did not have to pay for the water as was the norm in other Roman cities, as it was granted to the people by the emperor; he is unconvinced by the idea – while any private person who wanted to access the water line had to first gain permission from the emperor, this did not automatically mean that the granted access was free.<sup>52</sup> We might never have a definite answer to this question; on the one hand, those who would want such access to water could almost certainly afford to pay for it anyway, making such imperial patronage somewhat superfluous (and limited to individuals); on the other, imperial gifts such as this may well have been granted as a sign of favour – and to ensure, or at least strengthen, the loyalty of the beneficiaries.

Construction of an aqueduct would begin with finding an appropriate source of good quality water (springs, a number of wells or a river); then the engineer would have to set a course for aqueduct that would ensure the steady flow of water; conduits (made of masonry, lead or terracotta pipes) had to run either underground, on substructures (walls, up to 2 metres in height) or arcades, if the substructure was to be higher than 2 metres. In some cases, when arcades were too costly or too difficult to build, an inverted siphon could be used. Along the way settling tanks could be built; these allowed the water to be cleaned of sand and other impurities. Some of the water could be used outside of the town it was intended for; the rest would be stored in a *castellum*, a large water tank, from which it would be further distributed.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> This and other problems with aqueducts were shortly summarised by E. J. Owens in the initial part of his article "The Kremna Aqueduct and Water Supply in Roman Cities", *Greece and Rome*, vol. 38, No. 1, April 1991, pp. 41-42.

<sup>50</sup> P. J. Aicher, *Guide to the aqueducts...*, p. 26.

<sup>51</sup> P. J. Aicher, *Guide to the aqueducts...*, p. 5-6.

<sup>52</sup> P. J. Aicher, *Guide to the aqueducts...*, p. 26.

<sup>53</sup> Vitruvius, *The ten books...*, 8.6; Frontinus, *De aquae...*, 5-23; P. J. Aicher, *Guide to the aqueducts...*, pp. 7-17.

As the existence of typical Roman baths depended on the availability of water, quite often the number of baths, both public and private, would increase after a town obtained a stable water supply.<sup>54</sup> A. T. Hodge stated that the aqueducts were constructed mainly to supply water to the baths.<sup>55</sup> In terms of what the aqueduct water was mainly used for, this is clearly the case. Early baths (Greek and early Roman baths) consisted of a number of bathtubs, in which hot water was poured over the bathers by the attendants.<sup>56</sup> Separate bathtubs were not only a result of moral restrictions but, perhaps more importantly, of insufficient water supply, inadequate for creating large pools, which require incessant flow of water to maintain at least a degree of cleanliness. Without an aqueduct (or a nearby river and a system of pipes), the water for baths had to be taken from wells or carried in barrels or buckets; such an arrangement did not allow for maintaining large pools, even if there was much effort put into constructing and maintaining pumps and treadmills to power them, as the evidence from the Stabian baths in Pompeii shows.<sup>57</sup> After the political and military disturbances of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries in the West significantly disrupted the workings of some of the aqueducts, baths in many cities were either rearranged (for example, large pools disappeared completely and separate bathtubs were again introduced) or even closed down altogether. The maintenance of aqueducts was a major issue, and laws reflecting this were quite numerous. They regulated both matters of cleaning and maintaining of the structures themselves,<sup>58</sup> and specified the purposes for which the water could be used (for example, private recipients could obtain individual water supply as a privilege), and in what quantities.<sup>59</sup> Generally, the burden of maintaining the aqueducts in working condition fell on the owners of the land through which the system was passing (they were exempt from other taxation), and on the city officials. Without sufficiently strong central power to enforce these laws, the infrastructure would eventually become neglected, and the amount of

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<sup>54</sup> N. de Haan, „Si aquae copia patiat: Pompeian Private Baths and the Use of Water”, in: Koloski-Ostrow A. O (ed.), *Water Use and Hydraulics ...*, p. 42.

<sup>55</sup> A. T. Hodge, *Roman aqueducts and water supply*, London 1992.

<sup>56</sup> I. Nielsen, *Thermae et Balnea...*, p. 23.

<sup>57</sup> I. Nielsen, *Thermae et Balnea...*, p. 23. Author uses term *noria* to describe the device (later another one was built alongside the first), but the description suggests that it was a “Persian water wheel”, a type of pump, consisting of a chain with a series of containers, like amphorae or pots, attached to it and which could be powered by treadmills or windlasses; a *noria*, on the other hand, is a type of water wheel used for obtaining mechanical power; the pumps in Stabian baths were clearly powered by a treadmill.

<sup>58</sup> For example, *Codex Theodosianus*, XV, 2, 1 (330 CE); *CTh*, XV, 1, 23 (384 CE); *CTh* VI, 4, 29 (396 CE); *Codex Iustinianus*, XII, 3, 2.

<sup>59</sup> *CTh*, XV, 2, 24 (381-2 CE); *CI*, XI, 43 (439-41 CE).

available water would become insufficient. Without the continuous flow of water, the bath-house pools would quickly become unusable, and the alternative system of bathing, that of a series of individual bathtubs, would reappear, somewhat similar to ancient Greek public baths; this occurred when – either because of lack of funding<sup>60</sup> or enemy attacks – the supply of fresh water was insufficient to maintain the traditional way of bathing. For centuries the type of baths present in an area was a clear indicator its wealth and security, and of Romanisation in general: the sophistication of the installation could be used as both an indicator of the wealth of the founder as well as of the degree in which the typically Roman models were being used. During Late Antiquity, however, the cities and areas which could previously boast the technologically advanced and well-decorated bath-houses often had to downgrade their infrastructure, for the already mentioned reasons. The forms that were replacing them evolved and, in the long run, took the mediaeval, ‘Byzantine’ form and became the predecessors to the Turkish *hamams*. As with any gradual process, it would be difficult to pinpoint a particular development that would justify a sudden shift in terminology (such as from ‘Roman’ to ‘Byzantine’), and it is no different with bath-houses. However, of the two technical arrangements which I would deem the most important in, and the most characteristic for a Roman bath-house, that is the constantly flowing water and the hypocaust system, the heating was the one that survived quite well into the Byzantine period. It could therefore be justified to view bath-houses with flowing water as the most ‘Roman’, and lack thereof as something that distinguished the later ‘Byzantine’ bathing establishments. Nonetheless, making such distinctions seems to me to be rather artificial and non-productive; it would perhaps be better to argue that the characteristics of a ‘Roman’ bath-house changed over time, primarily due to economic factors (discussed in the introduction); unable to utilise all of the comforts and solutions available to their predecessors in earlier times, the late antique Romans had to make do with what was available.

The baths’ water tanks, where they existed, were usually placed on the roof, and the water from aqueducts, where available, was delivered directly into those, usually from large water tanks in the city. In some cases a bath would use a mixed system of water delivery; in Herculaneum, the aqueduct supplied water to the

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<sup>60</sup> J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and fall...*, p. 30.

frigidarium, while wells were used to supply the rest of baths.<sup>61</sup> Water from an aqueduct meant that there was a constant flow of clean water, which was necessary for maintaining at least some hygiene in larger pools, but at the same time it meant that the drainage system had to be highly effective. The drains could either run under the floor, or the water could first wash the floor and then go into the drain (the solution usually found in caldaria). Water from frigidaria was typically used for flushing toilets.

During Late Antiquity, there was a significant decline in the extent of private euergetism: the cities had to rely more and more on imperial benefactions. N. Zajac noted that providing various public buildings (among which the baths were most prominent) for the people served as a way of expressing the personal legitimation of the emperor's rule.<sup>62</sup> The baths were also, as was already noted many years ago, a way of expressing power over the natural environment (primarily water).<sup>63</sup> Even this imperial munificence, however, had its limits: in a memorable passage, Ammianus writes that during the emperor's stay in Rome, Constantius was awed by the city's architecture; among the notable buildings the emperor admired bath-houses, built in provincial styles, "*lavacra in modum provinciarum exstructa*".<sup>64</sup> Catherine Edwards clarifies that Ammianus was referring to the size of the baths, which brought to mind the size of whole provinces, rather than the style they were built in.<sup>65</sup> Judging from the context, this reading is quite plausible, as Ammianus' description of Rome's buildings is primarily focused on their size (Constantius was overwhelmed by the scale of the works that were undertaken by previous emperors and abandoned thoughts of surpassing them). This could, perhaps, be treated as an indication of the limited resources of the Empire – or the diminishing importance of Rome, no longer the Empire's centre of power. Indeed, there is very little evidence of any new construction works in Rome from 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards – although many of the existing structures did undergo renovations between 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries (including the baths

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<sup>61</sup> J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and fall...* p. 30.

<sup>62</sup> N. Zajac, *The thermae: a policy of public health or personal legitimation?* in: *Roman baths and bathing. Proceedings...*, p. 100.

<sup>63</sup> H. Drerup, "Architekturels Symbol", *Gymnasium* 73, 1966, pp. 181-196.

<sup>64</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 16, 10, 14.

<sup>65</sup> C. Edwards, *Writing Rome: textual approaches to the city*, Cambridge 1996, p. 97. E. Burton, writing in the 1820s, was appalled by the amount of funds drowned by the emperors in the construction of the *thermae* and interpreted this passage as Ammianus' complaint about the excessive spending on the relatively unimportant – in the American historian's opinion – structures (E. Burton, *A description of the antiquities and other curiosities of Rome*, C. & J. Rivington, 1828, p. 302).

of Agrippa, Caracalla, Diocletian, as well as those of the Severian palace and Sessorianum). The *thermae Constantinianae*, built by Constantine sometime prior to 315, had to wait for thirty years for renovation after their destruction by the Goths in 410.<sup>66</sup>

A particular way of demonstrating imperial power was recorded by Socrates Scholasticus, a 5<sup>th</sup> century Church historian, who made a note of a building initiative of Valens (the one who completed Constantinople's aqueduct), notable for its unusual character: after Procopius (the historian's earlier namesake) attempted to seize the throne (365-366), the emperor demolished the city walls of Chalcedon, as a punishment for supporting the usurper, and used the thus obtained material for building a public bath in Constantinople.<sup>67</sup> Socrates quotes a prophecy that was supposedly found on one of the stones from Chalcedon that predicted their removal and reuse in construction of a bath-house, as well as future barbarian raids on Roman territory that were to begin after Constantinople was supplied with abundance of water. For this, Socrates provides two possible interpretations: construction of the aqueduct of Valens, and building of the baths that used water from the said aqueduct, by the prefect Clearchus, and called "Plentiful water" – δαυιλής ὕδωρ – *dapsiles hydor*. Reusing of an old building was not, in itself, rare: in Ephesus, for example, the old civic centre was left beyond the new fortifications, and the materials from the prytaneion and other structures from the area were used to rebuild and adorn the new centre, including the Baths of Scholastica (renamed after the lady who sponsored the rebuilding).<sup>68</sup> This is a good example of the breakdown of the old civic organization of the city – and of how at least some of the previously valued comforts remained in many cases the same as before.

Theophanes the Confessor, an eighth- and ninth-century monk and chronicler, who compiled for his purposes many of the earlier authors during 810-815, similarly to Socrates mentions that the "impious Valens" (as the author characterised him) built

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<sup>66</sup> G. Alföldy, "Urban life, inscriptions, and mentality in late antique Rome", in: T. S. Burns, J. W. Eadie (eds.) *Urban centres and rural contexts in late antiquity*, Michigan State University Press 2001, pp. 11-12.

<sup>67</sup> "ὁ προσωυμία Κωνσταντιάναι" (called *Konstantianai*). Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 4, 8. This information is most likely repeated after Ammianus Marcellinus, *Roman history* (further referred to as *Res Gestae*), transl. J. C. Rolfe, Harvard University Press 1982-86, 31, 1, 4.

<sup>68</sup> J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and fall...*, p. 34.

an aqueduct, which the emperor named after himself;<sup>69</sup> although the aqueduct existed even before Constantine's reign, it was Valens who started to expand it, but Theophanes does not mention earlier works; it is typical that only the last emperor responsible for work on, and completion of, a major project is given credit for the whole enterprise, even when the chronicler was critical of the ruler's religious views. This is also another good example of the tendency to seek fame and lasting memory, preserved in the names of public utility buildings. Assuming that Valens did indeed consider naming the aqueduct as means of preserving his memory, one might add that at least in this case the method proved quite successful. What is perhaps most important about this account is the fact that the ancient historians and chroniclers recognized the importance of such major undertakings. Such construction efforts not only provided direct benefits to the local communities (their most important feature as far as the subject of this thesis is concerned), but in addition provided a clear example of Roman superiority over surrounding nations, and the master of Romans over nature. It is worth noting that the purposes for which major public works were undertaken were occasionally conflicting; at least this seems to be the case in a particular passage from Procopius. He included a much less flattering account of Justinian's passion for building than the one found in the panegyric *Buildings* in the *Secret history*,<sup>70</sup> also known as *Anecdota*, a source best characterised as invective (*psogos*). The ancient author reports that Constantinople's aqueduct (that of Valens) was already in a very poor state during Justinian's reign and delivered only a fraction of the water it should; despite that, Justinian did not allow money to be spent on repairing it, but instead, became engaged in construction of many other buildings, by the sea and in the suburbs, that did not (in Procopius' opinion) serve any useful function; because of this, there was a shortage of drinking water, and the baths were all closed down.<sup>71</sup> This information becomes all the more interesting when put together with a passage from Theophanes, who mentions the drought that plagued Constantinople in 562: he writes that the dominant northern winds caused the drought in November, when the scarcity of water led to fights at the fountains; the following August, Theophanes reports, there was another water shortage, and this time he

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<sup>69</sup> *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813*, transl. C. Mango, R. Scott, Oxford 1997 (later referred to as: Theophanes, *Chronographia*), AM 5860 (367/368).

<sup>70</sup> Procopius, *The secret history with related texts*, transl. and ed. A. Kaldellis, Indianapolis/Cambridge 2010.

<sup>71</sup> Procopius, *The secret history*, 26.24.



mentions that the baths were closed and that people were killed near the fountains (presumably, when they were fighting for the water); interestingly enough, the closure of baths is not mentioned when the first drought is reported, possibly indicating that despite the shortage of water, the running of baths was considered sufficiently important to keep using up the precious resource.<sup>72</sup> It would however be unwise to make any definite conclusions from this lack of information. It is impossible to determine whether the description of drought is simply repeated, or if the first account of it should be treated separately from the second; if that was the case, it could, after all, mean that at least some of the bath-houses remained operational even when the supply of water from the aqueduct (which also provided water to the fountains) was running low. In any case, these events are likely to have been those referred to in the *Secret history*<sup>73</sup>; if so, the date of Procopius' death would have to be placed sometime after 563 AD and could also mean that the prefect of Constantinople named Procopius, who was dismissed from the function in April of 563<sup>74</sup> was, in fact, the author of *Secret history*; this would then explain the bitter remarks about the "useless" buildings being built while the city suffered from drought (and perhaps also the neutral tone of the passage concerning this prefect, as almost every other official appointed by Justinian was described unfavourably). The question of the prefect's identity is a fairly important one in determining the degree of possible bias in Procopius' account; this, in turn, is significant in establishing the usefulness of one of the few surviving passages from this period that directly and in some detail refer to the functioning of urban infrastructure. The context for the prefect's dismissal in the *Chronographia* strongly suggests it was due to his inability to cope with the lack of water. If Procopius was indeed forbidden to spend money on repairs and restore the aqueduct's capacity, the unjust nature of the loss of his function would be evident and could, perhaps, even explain the reason (or one of the reasons) behind the writing of the invective. Averil Cameron, however, rejects this possibility. According to her, John of Nikiu's identification of the prefect Procopius (known from Theophanes) of 562 with the historian is most likely erroneous. She argues that if the *Secret history* was indeed written around 550s, then from 554 onwards there would have been no other work written by Procopius; and since the vituperative work looks unfinished,

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<sup>72</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 237, 239, AM 6055 (562/3).

<sup>73</sup> Procopius, *The secret history*, 26, 24.

<sup>74</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 239, AM 6055 (562/3).

perhaps Procopius died in or right after 554? She further argues that if both *Buildings* and *Secret history* had been written around 560s, then that would have been in stark contrast to the way the *Wars* were written: from a longer perspective, and without being connected much to the current events.<sup>75</sup> The *Secret history* claims to be a commentary to *Wars*<sup>76</sup> (and therefore it would make sense for it to have been written around the same time), and scathing criticism of Belisarius and Theodora written many years after their deaths does not seem likely, either.<sup>77</sup> Thus, linking Procopius the author and Procopius the prefect would require assuming either considerable chronological discrepancies in the primary sources (which is not entirely impossible), or a considerable delay with writing *Anecdota* by Procopius after he completed *Wars* (or, perhaps, a very long time of its writing).

Regardless of who the prefect Procopius might have been, and despite the fact that the information contained in both of the discussed here sources should be treated with significant caution, the texts do assert the reliance of the public bath-houses on the continuous supply of water. This is discussed in some detail in the work of C. Gates, who linked the disappearance of bathing culture in the West with the faltering water infrastructure.<sup>78</sup> This process was but one aspect of the general economic decline, which itself was quite complex and proceeded at an uneven pace. There are examples of slow degeneration even from the third century, but it did not affect everyone equally, and there are examples of, at least small scale, construction works (a bath-house, in this case) even in areas (like southern Etruria) that were generally becoming impoverished; still, T. W. Potter also mentions that at the beginning of the fifth century a large bath-house, that was in use until that point, was demolished, and replaced by what was most likely a villa; there is no mention of any conspicuous traces that would indicate the continued use of part of the old facility, or creation of a smaller bathing establishment.<sup>79</sup> The gradual impoverishment of agrarian communities and cities<sup>80</sup> was visible in all aspects of communal life, and necessarily

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<sup>75</sup> A. Cameron, *Procopius and the sixth century*, London 1985, p. 12.

<sup>76</sup> A. Cameron, *Procopius...*, p. 16.

<sup>77</sup> A. Cameron, *Procopius...*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>78</sup> C. Gates, *Ancient cities. The archaeology of urban life in the Ancient Near East and Egypt, Greece and Rome*. London, New York 2003, p. 349.

<sup>79</sup> T. W. Potter, "Towns and territories in southern Etruria", in: *City and country in the ancient world*, ed. J. Rich, A. Wallace-Hadrill, London, New York 1994, p. 203.

<sup>80</sup> B. Ward-Perkins, "Specialized production and exchange", in: *Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors, A.D. 425-600*, Cambridge 2000, p. 355; Idem, *The fall of Rome...*, Oxford 2005, p. 42. In both of the cited works, Ward-Perkins stresses the role of the specialisation of various regions in the

affected costly-to-run establishments, such as bath-houses. Nevertheless, there is some evidence from fifth-century Gaul showing that, while there are definite examples of crisis, at least some of the landowners were able to retain relatively luxurious lifestyles.<sup>81</sup> Letters of Sidonius Apollinaris provide much insight into this matter, and I am going to discuss some of them below. As for the East, the literary sources provide less information on the decline of the water infrastructure in this period – the anecdotal evidence from Procopius, while intriguing, is not representative, and the generally better economic situation of the Eastern part of the Empire in this period combined with few signs of material decay suggest that the water infrastructure continued to supply the cities without significant problems. It was only in the seventh century, as Liebeschuetz – discussing the case of Anatolia – notes, that while gymnasia went out of use, and even some of the aqueducts were abandoned, the bath-houses survived, and in some cases were newly built as well. It is also in this time that the civic structures become neglected, as the need for defences consumed available resources; the old public buildings in some cases became the source of material for walls.<sup>82</sup>

C. Bouras, in an article published in 2002, noted that Byzantine aqueducts have not been studied systematically; the situation has been at least partially improved by the more recent studies, such as the already mentioned project examining the water supply system of Constantinople<sup>83</sup>, or the recent volume on Constantinople itself published in Poland (which deals to a certain extent with the subject of the city's water supply).<sup>84</sup> While in certain areas of the former Empire only a few of the aqueducts built in Late Antiquity survived the Dark Ages, and the old water supply was mostly replaced by tanks, cisterns and wells, in others the infrastructure was preserved and maintained with care. The city of Rome itself benefited from major public works undertaken by some of the popes. While the city's civil administration still performed maintenance until the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, papal involvement was not

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economic decline – as trade was becoming disrupted by the invasions and faltering commercial infrastructure, centres of production had no way of exchanging goods and making profit, which led to their downfall – the economic situations in many regions became even worse than before Roman period (B. Ward-Perkins, *The fall...*, p. 136).

<sup>81</sup> Sidonius Apollinaris, *Poems and Letters*, transl. W. B. Anderson, London, Cambridge, Mass. 1965, 2, 2.

<sup>82</sup> J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and fall...*, p. 39.

<sup>83</sup> J. Crow, J. Bardill, R. Bayliss, *The water supply...*

<sup>84</sup> A. Kompa, M. J. Leszka, K. Marinow (eds.), *Konstantynopol. Nowy Rzym. Miasto i ludzie w okresie wczesnobizantyjskim*, Warszawa 2011.

uncommon. In particular, Honorius I was responsible for constructing a mill on Janiculum that was supplied by water from Aqua Traiana, and Gregory II restored the water to baths located by San Lorenzo fuori le Mura.<sup>85</sup> From a letter of Gregory I, we know that over the course of sixth century, many of the aqueducts that were destroyed by Vitigis in 527 were restored (although they did require further repairs).<sup>86</sup> Provision of water for the city was necessary for baptisteria, mills and baths for pilgrims, making its supply a crucial matter. The public works expenses on part of some of the popes indicate their role as leading figures of the city. The number of establishments, both public and private, provided with water steadily increased throughout antiquity – and the trend did not change during Late Antiquity.<sup>87</sup> To these, Church amenities were added as well, including baptisteria and bath-houses. Notably, an imperial visit of Constans II to Rome in 663 recorded in the biography of the pope Vitalian mentions the emperor’s visit to the baths at the Basilica of Vigilius at Lateran.<sup>88</sup> Nonetheless, R. Coates-Stephens points to the cutting of the aqueducts during the Gothic Wars as a possible reason for the end of the operation of the great bath-houses in Rome during the sixth century (he also considers the possibility that the baths went out of use prior to that). It is also possible that due to the drop in Rome’s population and presumed reduction of the water consumption in bath-houses, the actual water supply *per capita* was, after partial restoration work on the aqueducts after 527, at a record high.<sup>89</sup> Finally, the evidence of restoration work during Late Antiquity and the early Mediaeval period indicates that the specialised technological knowledge necessary for complex engineering was still being preserved.<sup>90</sup> It may be noted here that R. Coates-Stephens does not consider in the cited article the possibility that a skilled workforce may have been drawn from outside of Rome (e.g. from the Eastern Empire). One good example of the water infrastructure surviving throughout the Late Antiquity can be seen in Thessalonica, which retained its aqueducts and water tanks; few cities were as fortunate. The author also noted that a lot has been written about

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<sup>85</sup> R. Davis (ed.), *The book of pontiffs (liber pontificalis): the ancient biographies of the first ninety Roman bishops to AD715*, Liverpool 1989, 62.5, 91.2.

<sup>86</sup> R. Coates-Stephens, “The walls and aqueducts of Rome in the early Middle Ages, AD500-1000”, *Journal of Roman Studies* 88, (1998), pp. 177-178., R. Coates-Stephens, “The Water-Supply of Rome from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages”, *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia*, vol. 17, (2003), p. 168.

<sup>87</sup> R. Coates-Stephens, “The Water-Supply of Rome...”, pp. 168-169.

<sup>88</sup> R. Davis (ed.), *The book of pontiffs...*, 78.2.

<sup>89</sup> R. Coates-Stephens, “The Water-Supply of Rome...”, p. 173.

<sup>90</sup> R. Coates-Stephens, “The Water-Supply of Rome...”, p. 184. Coates-Stephens notes here that the evidence from *Liber pontificalis* provides hardly any information of technical nature.

the changed significance of baths in the Byzantine cities after the Dark Ages. Some were leased to those who were running them; others were owned by monasteries (and likewise rented out by them). Old Roman baths in Thessalonica, after some modifications, were again in use during middle Byzantine times; we have no information about their water supply, however.<sup>91</sup>

While mostly examining a period later than that on which my study is primarily focused, A. P. Kazhdan's and A. W. Epstein's work provides further support for some of the observations being made here. They note that during seventh century, cities underwent a major transition from the ancient to mediaeval way of life – though with a reservation that the 7<sup>th</sup> century is only a “crude demarcation”.<sup>92</sup> They further note that luxurious, communal bathing disappeared completely in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and remains a privilege of some of the emperors. Some revival of bathing took place only during the 12<sup>th</sup> century – but looking into it would be far beyond the scope of this work. The authors do note that while the communal aspect of bathing was gone, bathing itself remained a part of medical treatment, and was still practised for hygiene, though for example monks bathed rarely, the most common rule dictating to do so once a month.<sup>93</sup>

The relationship between bathing and water supply becomes especially visible when the functioning of the infrastructure does become disrupted. Relating the siege of Aquileia (of 361), the historian Ammianus Marcellinus informs us that the city's aqueducts were cut and, subsequently, the river's flow was changed, to deny the besieged drinking water – but the city managed to sustain itself on water from wells.<sup>94</sup> This was in no way unusual: the examples of Rome and Pompeii show that the majority of aqueduct water was used for the purpose of bathing, whether in public or private baths;<sup>95</sup> of course, the use of aqueduct water for drinking had priority, and the baths were the first (at least in theory), after private homes, to lose their supply in case of a crisis, but in general, the cities were rarely reliant on aqueducts when it came to the supply of drinking water. This should not come as a surprise – if one keeps in

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<sup>91</sup> C. Bouras, “Aspects of the Byzantine city, eighth-fifteenth centuries”, in: *The economic history of Byzantium*, ed. A. E. Laiou, vol. 2, Washington DC 2002, pp. 525-6.

<sup>92</sup> A. P. Kazhdan, A. W. Epstein, *Change in Byzantine culture in the eleventh and twelfth centuries*, University of California Press, 1985, p. 2.

<sup>93</sup> A. P. Kazhdan, A. W. Epstein, *Change in Byzantine...*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>94</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 22, 12, 17.

<sup>95</sup> C. Gates, *Ancient cities...*, p. 348.

mind that the aqueducts were mainly built to provide water for bath-houses and industry rather than direct consumption.

The breaking of aqueducts commonly accompanied sieges; it was usually done in an attempt to force the besieged city to surrender due to the lack of sufficient supply of drinking water – Aquileia is just one example of this. While cities often had an alternative water supply (like wells), the aqueduct water was used for drinking due to its generally better quality; the majority of it, however, was usually used to supply the baths. The lack, or significant reduction, of freely flowing water was enough to cause the closure of at least some of the public baths. The most explicit example is provided by Procopius, who, while relating the siege of Rome by the Goths, specifically states that the Romans were unable to use their baths due to their reliance on aqueduct water.<sup>96</sup> We also learn that the Goths later attempted to use the damaged *Aqua Virgo* aqueduct to infiltrate the city, but were thwarted by the masonry put in the passage on Belisarius' orders.<sup>97</sup> The attackers realised they have been spotted, and abandoned plans for using the aqueducts for attack. Belisarius' far-sightedness in blocking the passage has a very simple explanation: only months before, he used exactly the same tactics as the Goths tried to use to capture Naples (536 AD); he ordered the city's aqueducts to be cut after an unsuccessful assault and, informed by one of his soldiers of the possibility, had the tunnel widened enough for a group of his men to infiltrate the city.<sup>98</sup> In the case of Rome, the aqueducts were necessary for supplying not only water to the baths, but also power for the grain mills; Belisarius devised a makeshift water wheel to power the machinery to deal with that problem.<sup>99</sup>

Yet another siege in which the city's water supply played an important role took place at Auximus in 538.<sup>100</sup> The initial plan to damage the city's water cistern failed due to the quality of the structure, as the soldiers who managed to get inside it were not able to break the masonry.<sup>101</sup> Consequently, Belisarius ordered his men to poison the water in the cistern with corpses, herbs and lime. The Goths still managed

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<sup>96</sup> Procopius, *History of the wars*, transl. H. B. Dewing, London, New York 1914-1926, 5, 19, 27. Further in text: Procopius, *History*.

<sup>97</sup> Procopius, *History*, 6, 9, 2ff.

<sup>98</sup> Procopius, *History*, 5, 8-10.

<sup>99</sup> Procopius, *History*, 5, 19, 21ff. Since the Goths tried to destroy the water wheel by throwing debris into the river, Belisarius ordered iron chains to be spread across the river, thus both securing the power source for the mills and preventing the Goths the possibility of invading the city by the river.

<sup>100</sup> Procopius, *History*, 6, 27, 1ff. Auximus – modern day Ancorna.

<sup>101</sup> Procopius, *History*, 6, 27, 21.

to survive on the (not fully sufficient) water from the city's wells. Auximus eventually surrendered due to famine.

Other examples of breaking the aqueducts by attackers include Gelimer's attempt at recapturing Carthage<sup>102</sup> and the (successful) Byzantine siege of Petra.<sup>103</sup> In the case of Petra, the aqueduct consisted of three separate pipes, the first of which was immediately cut by the Romans, the second one, hidden under the first, was found thanks to the information provided by an enemy soldier – but the third one, hidden under the other two, actually provided water for the besieged until the city fell. This clever arrangement Procopius attributes to Chosroes himself; it was clearly something unusual.

While in most of the cases mentioned above we do not have a direct reference to baths, and in some of them it is clear the besieged (Auximus, Petra) did not use the Roman-style baths, they yet again illustrate the tendency of attackers to disrupt the defenders' water supply in order to obtain their surrender. While this tactic usually did not have the desired effect (as cities usually had water supply sufficient for direct consumption even without water from the aqueducts), it did disrupt all of the non-essential activities that required significant amounts of water – first and foremost, bathing.

Deliberate destruction of aqueducts was not always a wartime event. Listing Theodosius' activity in Antioch, Malalas states that the emperor demolished an old aqueduct, attributed by the chronicler to Julius Caesar (E. Chilmead's 1691 Oxford edition of Malalas' *Chronographia* wrongly "corrects" this to "Julianus Caesar"),<sup>104</sup> which supplied the acropolis (and the bath he built there) with water. The passage describes Theodosius' efforts to enclose whole of the city with new walls, as it had grown far beyond the old ones.<sup>105</sup>

Wars and imperial edicts were not the only cause of destruction of infrastructure; natural disasters took their toll both on a greater scale, and with greater frequency. The presence of functioning bath-houses itself, while highly desirable, itself contributed to the destructive effects of earthquakes. Sozomen highlights this risk associated with bath-houses when he describes the earthquake that destroyed

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<sup>102</sup> Procopius, *History*, 4, 1, 2. Gelimer, after cutting the city's water supply, did not attempt to besiege the city.

<sup>103</sup> Procopius, *History*, 8, 12, 20.

<sup>104</sup> Malalas *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, transl. E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys, R. Scott, Melbourne 1986 (further referred to as 'Malalas, *Chronographia*'), p. 188.

<sup>105</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 13, 40.

Nicomedia (24 August 358) and prevented the council that was planned to take place there.<sup>106</sup> The earthquake caused a great conflagration in the city; the fire originated from the braziers and furnaces (of baths and from those used by the craftsmen); additionally, the previously prepared fuel was often covered with oil, which added to the intensity of the flames. The narrative here is quite lively, and the details, such as how the fires started, are likely to have either been taken from the popular memory and the still circulating tales of the calamity – or from the testimonies of survivors of other great fires. This earthquake is also reported by Ammianus Marcellinus, but there is no mention in his work of how the fires originated.<sup>107</sup> While firestorms started by earthquakes were (and still are) common, it is important to note that the bath-houses only increased this threat. Socrates makes a mention of the destruction of the old baths of Achilles during the fire in Constantinople in 432 (although he does not mention how much, or if, the baths themselves added to the intensity of the disaster).<sup>108</sup> The baths were promptly rebuilt and re-opened on 11<sup>th</sup> of January 433.<sup>109</sup>

Man-made fires were another risk to the city's infrastructure: Procopius, recounting the events that occurred during the Nika Riot (532), mentions the destruction of Hagia Sophia, the baths of Zeuxippus, part of the imperial complex, colonnades and numerous private houses.<sup>110</sup> Later accounts mention these and other buildings being destroyed: Malalas lists the destruction of the praetorium, the Chalke, part of the public colonnade up to the Zeuxippon, the Great Church, part of the hippodrome and other, unspecified, buildings; the fires took place over several days. Malalas mentions in the description of the aftermath of the riot that Justinian proceeded to construct granaries and reservoirs near the palace, as a precaution for the future (in addition to rebuilding what was destroyed).<sup>111</sup> Theophanes' account of the Nika Riot also includes a list of buildings burnt down by the rioters; among those he counts are the baths of Alexander, and also the hospice of Sampson, where many of

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<sup>106</sup> Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 4, 16. The earthquake is said to have been foreseen in a vision by the monk Arsacius; Sozomen goes into some detail describing both the monk's efforts to warn the city and the fire itself.

<sup>107</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 17, 7.

<sup>108</sup> Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 7, 39.

<sup>109</sup> R. Janin (ed.), *Constantinople byzantine. Développement urbain et repertoire topographique*, Paris 1964, p. 216.

<sup>110</sup> Procopius, *History*, 1, 24. Geoffrey Greatrex analyses of the uprising and the damage in his article "The Nika Riot: A Reappraisal", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. 117, (1997), pp. 60-86. One of his conclusions was that, since the sources do not contradict each other, they should be treated as describing damage sustained by the city during subsequent stages of the riot; a chronological reconstruction of the order of these events is also provided.

<sup>111</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 18, 71.



the patients died because of the fire.<sup>112</sup> The *Easter Chronicle* lists the destroyed buildings as well: the baths of Alexander (part of the hospice of Euboulos),<sup>113</sup> the hospice of Sampson and two other buildings omitted by Theophanes – the hospice of Euboulos and the church of Holy Peace – Hagia Eirene;<sup>114</sup> M. Jeffreys noted that the *Easter Chronicle* presented an abbreviated version of these events, omitting two and a half days of the riot and the mention of some of the buildings from the list.<sup>115</sup> As it could be expected, the primary focus of the authors is on relating the destruction of public buildings, although the destruction of large areas of private housing is also mentioned; the main criterion seems to be the size of the destroyed structures – it is likely that among the buildings not listed specifically there were smaller bathing establishments.

We should not forget here of the cutting of Constantinople's own water supply by the Avars. As the Persians were pursuing their campaign against the Romans that forced Heraclius to lead an expeditionary force away from the capital, the Avars, allied at the time with the Persians and accompanied by their Slav allies, briefly besieged the city.<sup>116</sup> Fortunately for the Constantinopolitans, the Persian force which arrived on the other side of the Bosphorus was prevented (by the Roman fleet) from directly supporting the Avars who, unprepared for a longer siege, were forced to withdraw after well over a week of assaulting the city's walls – and after cutting the aqueduct. The damage inflicted on the structure must have been severe, as repairing it did not become a priority until after the great drought of 758, during Constantine V's reign. The emperor entrusted the necessary reconstruction and maintenance to one Patricius, who recruited a large workforce from around Greece and Anatolia to fulfil the task.<sup>117</sup> The disruption of the water supply to Constantinople forced rather drastic changes in bathing customs and, in the long run, in further development of the city's system of water tanks and cisterns. P. Magdalino commented that the Christian population of the city could adapt to the new conditions, living without the sumptuous baths and nymphaea (which, taken together, used most of the water from the destroyed

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<sup>112</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 184, AM 6024 (531/2).

<sup>113</sup> R. Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine...*, p. 219.

<sup>114</sup> *Chronicon Paschale 284-628 AD*, transl. M. and M. Whitby, Liverpool 1989, 622.

<sup>115</sup> M. Jeffreys, "Bury, Malalas and the Nika Riot" in: P. Allen, E. Jeffreys (eds.), *The sixth century. End or beginning*, Byzantina Australiensia 10, Brisbane 1996, p. 45.

<sup>116</sup> P. Sarris, *Empires of faith. The fall of Rome to the rise of Islam, 500-700*, Oxford University Press 2011, p. 254.

<sup>117</sup> W. Müller-Wiener, Wolfgang, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbul: Byzantion, Konstantinupolis, Istanbul bis zum Beginn d. 17 Jh.* Tübingen 1997, p. 273.

aqueduct);<sup>118</sup> this remark is similar to the one made by Liebeschuetz a few years earlier: that Christianity's ascetic ideals made impoverishment more bearable.<sup>119</sup>

While in most of the cases mentioned above we do not have a direct reference to baths, and in some of them it is clear the besieged did not use the Roman-style baths, they do illustrate the tendency of attackers to disrupt the defenders' water supply in order to obtain their surrender. While this tactic usually did not have the desired effect, it did disrupt all of the non-essential activities that required significant amounts of water – first and foremost, bathing. It will not be out of place here to remind that many of the Roman aqueducts were built first and foremost to supply the baths, rather than to provide water for daily consumption.

### *Construction works*

The remarks contained here serve chiefly to provide some background information on the matter of construction and maintenance of the bath-houses themselves. These are necessary for a deeper understanding of comments and remarks on bath-houses and bathing contained in the primary sources. Much has been written about the expenses associated with construction and upkeep of baths, as private benefactions (chiefly aimed at gaining popularity, especially before the economic crisis of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century), as part of the duties of local officials (decurial class) or as imperial generosity. After the 4<sup>th</sup> century, this generosity was most often expressed in reconstruction and repairs of older bath-houses that became damaged in natural disasters, rather than new initiatives; this does not necessarily signify a crisis, though – the capacity of existing baths might have been sufficient for a non-increasing population. As for private munificence, J. J. Wilkins, for example, traces it back to the old custom of throwing coins to the crowds. The changes in mentality and social developments around the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE promoted the change in the form of sharing the wealth by the richest to a more permanent and practical euergetism<sup>120</sup> – one resembling, to a degree, the Greek liturgies.

Treadgold's remarks in his popularising work *History of the Byzantine state and society*<sup>121</sup> noted that many of the pleasures and entertainment offered by the city

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<sup>118</sup> P. Magdalino, "Medieval Constantinople", pp. 1-111, in: *Studies on the history and topography of Byzantine Constantinople*, Burlington VT, 2007, p. 18.

<sup>119</sup> J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and fall...*, p. 11.

<sup>120</sup> J. J. Wilkes, "Approaching Roman Baths", in: *Roman baths and bathing. Proceedings...*, p. 17.

<sup>121</sup> W. Treadgold, *A history of the Byzantine state and society*, Stanford, 1997.

life were condemned by the clerics – and among the pleasures condemned was even going to the baths; but this criticism was spurred mostly by the perceived threat of sinning for those who participated in those activities, rather than the activities themselves being sinful.<sup>122</sup> This is an important observation and I will return to it when I will be discussing the attitudes of churchmen towards bathing in chapter two. Treadgold also notes that while the period from mid-fifth to early seventh centuries was one of considerable growth in all spheres during its first half, it was followed by an unmistakable decline in the second. Prior to the 540s, the Byzantine state could boast both successful conquests and financial stability of the state. Following that, however, conquests become too costly and many of the gained lands were soon lost. Private wealth diminished;<sup>123</sup> this could be observed in the cities, which, beginning from the second half of the 6th century, started losing their ancient character, and were shrinking as districts were abandoned and walls contracted. Theatres and hippodromes become unused except in the largest cities. Large old buildings were replaced by smaller ones, the old city plan ignored. Life in the cities changes its character, Treadgold writes – but the change was not catastrophic.<sup>124</sup> In the late sixth-early seventh centuries, with the exception of the largest cities, majority of the civic infrastructure was abandoned; large baths closed down, theatres and hippodromes went out of use completely. In their place, other, smaller buildings were erected, and the city life continued, albeit in a somewhat different form, while economy suffered from much limited trade, especially in cities that previously specialised in a specific industry.<sup>125</sup> City squares were built over, but social life continued in the streets and smaller than previously bath-houses. While the decline affected whole of the Empire, it was worse in the West.

Similar remarks can be found in a slightly later (and focused specifically on the period discussed in this thesis, unlike Treadgold's general synthesis) work by Liebeschuetz, *Decline and fall of the Roman city*.<sup>126</sup> Speaking of Gerasa (now Jerash in Jordan), he mentions that the temples there became abandoned, theatres decayed, part of former hippodrome went out of use and was built over with houses. In numerous, but perhaps not all cities, public buildings around the fora, theatres,

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<sup>122</sup> W. Treadgold, *A history...*, p. 260.

<sup>123</sup> W. Treadgold, *A history...*, p. 273.

<sup>124</sup> W. Treadgold, *A history...*, p. 280.

<sup>125</sup> B. Ward-Perkins, *The fall of Rome...*, p. 136.

<sup>126</sup> J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and fall...*, p. 30.

amphitheatres and large bath-house buildings were allowed to decay, from mid-fifth century onwards.<sup>127</sup> As for Gerasa, however, some new buildings did appear during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries: work was done on fortifications, but also a bath-house was built, paid for by an *agens in rebus*; and a portico and small baths next to cathedral were funded by bishop Placcas in 454/7. Eight of the thirteen known churches were built in 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>128</sup>

Listing particular examples of cities which underwent such changes, and which occasionally took more drastic forms, would serve little purpose here. J. F. Wilson's monographic work on Baniyas provides a fairly typical picture: the city shrank and declined during the late Roman and early Byzantine period and while, Wilson notes, a few cities continued to flourish, this was certainly not the case with Baniyas. Over time, the city underwent transformation into a mediaeval town – it shrank, becoming more compact and defensive, but would have most likely died out completely if it had not been for an influx of refugees – in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>129</sup> Interestingly enough, there are records of income from the baths in the city from the 10<sup>th</sup> century as well, hinting at the possibility that large baths were operational during that time;<sup>130</sup> however, even if this was true, then this revival came too late to be relevant for the purpose of this study.

In the following passages, I have focused especially on the chronicle of John Malalas; much of his focus is on Antioch (the place with which he is associated), and the extensive information he presents on bath-houses (primarily their construction and repairs) make his work a valuable source for my research. It is in large part thanks to the abundance of information in the *Chronicle* of Malalas that the image of Antioch, vividly painted in the orations and letters of Libanius, while much faded, remains visible. The chronicler used various sources of information for his work: archives (both personally, and by using earlier texts), oral testimonies and personal experience. He is known to have travelled around the Empire and his work reflects this.<sup>131</sup>

In the chronicle of Malalas, one of the indicators of how good an emperor was is the amount of public buildings he funded, or ordered to be built, as this contributed to the well-being of the people and the glory of their cities; indeed, the construction

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<sup>127</sup> J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and fall...*, p. 99.

<sup>128</sup> J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and fall...*, p. 61.

<sup>129</sup> J. F. Wilson, *Caesarea Philippi. Baniyas, the lost city of Pan*, New York – London 2004, p. 112.

<sup>130</sup> J. F. Wilson, *Caesarea Philippi...*, p. 138.

<sup>131</sup> B. Croke, "Malalas, the man and his work", in: Jeffreys E., Croke B., Scott R. (eds.), *Studies in John Malalas*, Byzantina Australiensia 6, Sydney 1990, pp. 1-25.

works are treated by Malalas as gifts. Since much of Malalas' focus was on Antioch, he mentions especially many of the buildings constructed there. The subjects of his writing about were almost exclusively built by the emperors, present in the city itself – or, at least, that is the impression he conveys. In reality, some of the structures were built without direct imperial involvement or supervision, and in some cases, Malalas attributed the euergetism to the wrong emperor altogether.<sup>132</sup> Despite these serious shortcomings (or perhaps thanks to them), the *Chronicle* can be seen as an expression of certain ideas and concepts commonly associated at the time of *Chronicle*'s composition with major public works (the building of public baths appears most often in this context). An obvious implication of the tendency to assume a direct involvement of the ruler in large-scale euergetism is that private benefactions during the second half of the sixth century were exceedingly rare; the perceived necessity of the emperor's presence for (at least) initiation of the project is also telling. On the other hand, Malalas can be at least partially justified for making assumptions that reflected the reality of his times (but not necessarily of the past): even the fourth century was a period when the imperial presence in particular locations did boost their significance (and wealth) considerably – evidence of such imperial activity might have convinced Malalas that the public works were all initiated in a manner similar to the one he knew from personal experience; indeed, he does not seem to know much about private euergetism.<sup>133</sup>

Malalas records how Hadrian ordered the senators present in Antioch to reconstruct the city's baths after an earthquake,<sup>134</sup> the reconstruction of Centenarium baths by Marcus Aurelius after another earthquake<sup>135</sup> and how Commodus built a bath, named by him Commodium.<sup>136</sup> A number of baths are linked by Malalas to the reign of Septimus Severus: one built in Alexandria, as a sign that he forgave the city, for supporting Pescennius Niger against him, called Severianum.<sup>137</sup> Malalas mentions that Severus arrested one Thermos, Niger's friend, who was notable for building another bath in Alexandria. While rebuilding Laodicea, which was destroyed by

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<sup>132</sup> B. Croke, "Malalas...", p. 7. Whenever a major investment was made, Malalas assumed imperial presence in the city; in some cases, he even invented fictitious reasons for it (usually a conflict with Persia).

<sup>133</sup> B. Ward-Perkins, "Specialized production...", p. 377.

<sup>134</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 11, 9.

<sup>135</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 11, 30.

<sup>136</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 12, 2.

<sup>137</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 12, 21.

Pescennius for resisting him, Severus built a bath-house in the vicinity of city's harbour, as there was a suitable spring located there.<sup>138</sup> In Antioch itself, he built a bath in the eastern part of the city, called Severianum (similarly to the one in Alexandria); Malalas ascribes its construction to gratitude for the "omen of victory" (acclamation Severus received before he left to fight Niger in Egypt).<sup>139</sup> Another public bath was ordered to be built from funds left over from money for heating of the baths that collapsed in an earthquake. The new bath-house was built in the city, on the terrain bought from one Livia, and ultimately called Livianum, as a compromise, since each of the officials involved initially wanted to name it after himself.<sup>140</sup> This is a good example of the tendency to seek fame and lasting memory, preserved in the names of public utility buildings. Other baths built in Antioch included Diocletianum, constructed during Diocletian's stay there at the time of his Persian campaign;<sup>141</sup> Malalas also mentions that Diocletian built other baths in Antioch, including the Senatorial baths. The chronicler gives much credit to Valens for building a number of structures in Antioch, including basilicas and a public bath located near the hippodrome.<sup>142</sup>

Moving away from Antioch, it might be worth mentioning here that the old palace of Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa in Caesarea Philippi was remade into a bath-house sometime during Hadrian's reign – the baths were provided with water from a local spring.<sup>143</sup>

Malalas credits Constantine with finishing the building of the baths of Zeuxippus in Constantinople, which were re-decorated by the emperor with columns, marbles and bronze statues. These statues deserve additional attention: they were described in the work of Christodorus, a poet, active during Anastasius I's reign (491-518).<sup>144</sup> Described in verse and the form of *ekphrasis*, over eighty statues are listed, and it is clear that the collection was rather eclectic. Gathered primarily during Constantine the Great's reign to embellish the Zeuxippon, with the collection

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<sup>138</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 12, 21.

<sup>139</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 12, 22.

<sup>140</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 12, 22.

<sup>141</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 12, 38.

<sup>142</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 13, 30.

<sup>143</sup> J. F. Wilson, *Caesarea Philippi...*, p. 41.

<sup>144</sup> S. Bassett, *The urban image of the late antique Constantinople*, Cambridge 2004. A. Kaldellis, while underlining the importance of S. Bassett's work, pointed out its potential weakness in attempting to interpret Christodorus' work too literally and provided a commentary focused on the literary aspect of the *ekphrasis*. A. Kaldellis, "Christodoros on the statues of the Zeuxippus baths: a new reading of the *Ekphrasis*", *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 47 (2007), pp. 361–383.

expanded in the following decades, the statues represented deities, mythological heroes and historical figures. The focus in creating the second largest collection of statuary in the new capital (beside the Hippodrome) was on tradition and symbolism, and underlined the *Romanitas* of the New Rome. At this point time there appears to have been no objection on the part of Christians to the display of effigies representing pagan deities; arguably, they were a part of the common cultural heritage. Malalas mentions that the baths were officially opened on 11 May 330 (as part of consecration ceremonies of the city), a good indicator of how important the facility was for Constantine; the great bath-house was necessary for the city's rebirth in its new role as the capital.<sup>145</sup> If the capital city was indeed treated by the emperor as his possession,<sup>146</sup> then Constantine made sure that his bath-house properly represented this.

A link can be made here with the Carosian and Anastasian baths in Constantinople, described by Malalas and attributed by the chronicler to Valens; some of the ancient authors claim that they were both named after the emperor's daughters.<sup>147</sup> The choice of buildings that were given the names of Valens' children is interesting in itself, as it reasserts the importance of the bath-houses as public structures that, apart from their material functions, were used for honouring of important people. Ammianus Marcellinus states that the Anastasian baths were named after Constantine's sister<sup>148</sup> – this can be easily explained, however, by the fact that both the sister of Constantine and Valens' daughter shared the same name – and that both of the emperors were involved in the building of the same structure. The eponymous sister has apparently disappeared from popular memory and the bath-house became firmly associated with the later emperor's family member. The commemorative function of the baths, as well as of other edifices, is mentioned by Chrysostom. For various reasons, however (these will be discussed in the second chapter), patronage of civic infrastructure such as baths was not particularly beneficial

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<sup>145</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 13, 8. Repeated in *Chronicon paschale*, 529.

<sup>146</sup> N. Zajac, "The thermae...", p. 103. This observation here refers to Rome, but is equally applicable to the "second Rome", Constantinople.

<sup>147</sup> Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 4, 9; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 6, 9; Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 57, AM 5860 (367/8). The commentary to Theophanes (p. 89n) mentions that Zosimus' *New History*, transl. R. T. Ridley, Sydney 2004, 5, 9, 3 supports the chronicler's version of the etymology of the baths, but the passage in question does not refer either to the baths, nor to the aqueduct.

<sup>148</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 26, 6, 14 this passage is also mentioned in the commentary referred to in the previous footnote.

(at least, not as supporting the Church would have been).<sup>149</sup> One of the points made by Chrysostom to discourage excessive investments in secular structures was that buildings might be eventually used by the patron's enemies. A case where this might have actually occurred, though in rather specific circumstances, has been described by Procopius in the *Wars*, where the Persian commander is said to have been anticipating having a bath in the recently completed Roman bath-house in Dara (more on this later).<sup>150</sup>

Describing some of the more notable buildings from across the Empire, Malalas mentions that an exquisite bath-house in Gortyn, Crete was destroyed, together with much of the city, in an earthquake.<sup>151</sup> The author goes into much detail when describing the destroyed bath-house: the building consisted of 12 chambers, each representing a month. One furnace was sufficient to heat the whole building – a feat of construction that deserved a separate mention. Theodosius restored the summer and winter parts (as was requested by the local landowners; it is not mentioned whether the locals restored the rest of the bath-house or not), in addition to money provided for restoration of the area. Malalas mentions (without going into detail) that a different arrangement of chambers was used for bathing each month, and describes the bath-house as “perfect”; judging from this remark, the bath-house must have indeed been exceptional, as its layout, decoration and technical arrangements (furnace) are all mentioned. The fact that the bath's description occupies a significant amount of space in the chronicle attests to the continued and very strong (positive) feelings the Romans had for bathing during this period.

Among the other reconstruction efforts listed by Malalas, the example of Nicomedia is rather prominent. After the city suffered from an earthquake (for the fifth time in total, according to Malalas) and was flooded by the sea,<sup>152</sup> Theodosius constructed many buildings in that city: these included public baths, but also churches, the harbour and others. The imperial involvement in the reconstruction is, again, presented here as necessary. Similarly, during the Marcian's reign, Tripolis in Phoenicia Maritima “suffered from the wrath of God”.<sup>153</sup> There was a bath-house

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<sup>149</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Joannem (homiliae 1-88)*, 65, 3.

<sup>150</sup> Procopius, *History*, 1, 13.

<sup>151</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 14, 12.

<sup>152</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 14, 20.

<sup>153</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 14, 29.



there, known as Ikaros, and it was rebuilt. It was known for its statues, depicting famous mythical characters.

A notable for its scale and lack of imperial involvement bath-house building undertaking was mentioned by Theophanes in his *Chronicle*, in the entry on AM 5959 (466/7 CE). It includes information that during this year a workforce of three thousand men was employed in Alexandria for building a great pool in the district of John, along with two baths, that were called Health and Healing (*ἡ ὑγεία και ἡ ιασίς-he Hygeia kai he Iasis*).<sup>154</sup> This information is notable not only for the large number of workers involved in the construction, but also for mentioning their number in the first place; it was apparently impressive enough to be recorded in the chronicle. It is also telling that Theophanes specifies that the workers were employed by the city itself – the buildings were constructed from the city’s own means, without the involvement of an outside benefactor; clearly, that was something unusual for works of such scale, and an impressive display of Alexandria’s wealth, status and lack of actual need for benefactions. The choice of neutral (that is, not commemorating individual people) names for the baths further highlights that they were the result of a common effort and civic pride, rather than individual euergetism.

The perceived need for imperial donations is expressed once again in Malalas’s text, when he is describing the works of emperor Anastasius, who is shown as especially active in expanding infrastructure. Apart from investing in and heavily fortifying the captured town of Dara near the Byzantine-Persian border (new buildings included two baths, which open the list, and cisterns),<sup>155</sup> the emperor, as a “gift to taxpayers”,<sup>156</sup> initiated construction of many city walls, aqueducts, public baths and other buildings. Malalas indicates that the emperor’s increased activity was spurred by an omen of his coming death, suggesting Anastasius’ desire to be remembered as a good and kind emperor – again, through the association with benefactions, among which providing bath-houses for the citizens was most prominent. Malalas also gives Justinian the credit for building two churches, a bath-house, a hospice and some cisterns in Antioch.<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, sometime during the October of 527, Justinian sent the newly appointed *comes orientis*, Patricius, to Antioch, with a considerable sum of money for the reconstruction of Palmyra in

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<sup>154</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 115, AM 5959 (466/7).

<sup>155</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 16, 10. Repeated in *Chronicon paschale*, 609.

<sup>156</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 16, 21.

<sup>157</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 17, 19.

Phoenicia, its churches and baths in particular.<sup>158</sup> The chronicler does not mention the reason why it needed reconstructing. Another official, *illustris* Hesychius, restored a public bath-house in Miletus, regulated the Maeander, and built a large church in the city.<sup>159</sup> Despite these projects, completed by the private benefactor, the city did not experience a major revival; for example, already in the sixth century the city's old market was demolished; the lack of significant imperial interest (and resources) could not have been replaced even by wealthy individuals.

As for Constantinople, Justinian finished the Dagistheos baths, started by Anastasius and named after the area in which they were constructed.<sup>160</sup> During his reign, the city was more than once damaged by earthquakes, especially during 554 and 557 AD; baths are mentioned among the buildings destroyed in 554. Malalas does not state that they were rebuilt, perhaps considering it to be obvious.<sup>161</sup>

Procopius, in his *Buildings*, describes how the emperor Justinian I built baths at Bithynian Pythia, utilising the natural spring to provide them with hot water; he also mentions that the local populace knew of and utilised the curative properties of the spring long before the baths were constructed.<sup>162</sup> What was, then, the significance of building a bath-house in a place where people already bathed? While Procopius is not writing about this in an explicit way, it appears that the place has finally become truly Roman, thanks to the emperor. The type of bathing that the natural setting necessitated was replaced by a more "civilised" one. Still, it was the constant flow of naturally hot water that caused Justinian to consider the benefaction in the first place; the possibility of implementing an elegant solution to the major issue of heating and supplying water to the baths such as this must have had a strong appeal to the ruler with a keen interest in building (and, one might add, incorporating hot springs into a bathing establishment by Romans was not an unusual practice – the baths at Bath in Britain are the best known, though certainly not the only, example of it). The same fragment mentions Justinian's reconstruction of the great baths in Nicomedia which collapsed in an earthquake. Because of the building's size, many thought that it would

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<sup>158</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 18, 2.

<sup>159</sup> J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and fall...*, p. 49.

<sup>160</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 18, 17.

<sup>161</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 18, 118

<sup>162</sup> Procopius, *Buildings*, 5, 3. In earlier period, this place of healing was associated with Apollo; Christians linked it with Archangel Michael – which shows how important the spring was; it was not only used for medical purposes, but also had a religious importance. The place is also mentioned in J. Lefort, "Les communications entre Constantinople et la Bithynie", in: C. Mango, G. Dagron (eds.) *Constantinople and its hinterland...*, pp. 207-218.

not be rebuilt; apparently only the emperor's unexpected and benevolent intervention allowed the reconstruction to proceed. Jean-Michel Spieser observed that one of the reasons for Justinian's wide-scale building programme was the inability of individual cities to manage their own construction needs.<sup>163</sup> The reason for this, he suggests, was not so much impoverishment of the curial class, but rather the increasing number of people who, by "escaping" into senatorial ranks, became exempt from the duties towards their cities. Greece, Spieser notes, is not mentioned among the areas where Justinian was ordering the construction of bath-houses; the monumental buildings there did not undergo many changes over the period of 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the baths changed the least.<sup>164</sup>

### ***The Riot of Statues***

I am now going to examine one of the most important events that took place in Antioch in the 4<sup>th</sup> century – the so-called Riot of Statues. This well-known event is going to serve as a *sui generis* case study, as the events involved, and the reactions to these, allow us to gain a considerable insight into the importance of bathing for the day-to-day functioning of a major city. My focus is going to be primarily on the account of these events provided by John Chrysostom, who on several occasions made remarks relating to the closure of the city's bath-houses, and bathing in general. It needs to be said that the emperors, who often used their wealth and power to provide free bathing for all, occasionally also used their authority to deprive their subjects of their daily pleasures as a punishment. The events that shook the proud city of Antioch in 387CE are a prime example of this; the material discussed below also touches on the subjects of social interaction and medicine, if to a lesser extent. It may be worth noting here that the Riot of Statues, aftermath of which I am going to discuss here in more detail, started in the baths as well.<sup>165</sup> This should not come as a surprise; one would be hard pressed to find a better spot for a lively exchange of grievances – with enough people present to form at least a small mob. After the riot, Theodosius I ordered the closure of all of Antioch's baths and theatres; these events were related in vivid detail by John Chrysostom, on whom fell the task of providing the spiritual

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<sup>163</sup> J.-M. Spieser, *Urban and religious spaces in Late Antiquity and early Byzantium*, Ashgate 2001, chapt. 3, p. 9.

<sup>164</sup> J.-M. Spieser, *Urban and religious spaces....*, chapt. 2, p. 328.

<sup>165</sup> Libanius, *Orations*, 22.2-7.

guidance to the Antiochenes in the aftermath of the disturbances. The preacher seemed glad that the various entertainment facilities, like theatres, were shut down, but sympathised with his fellow citizens, especially the sick, elderly and pregnant women, who all relied on bathing for relief.<sup>166</sup> The disturbances could have had, however, more dramatic consequences. The civic infrastructure, as was already discussed, was at a constant risk due to risk of fires, whether resulting from natural occurrences, accidents, or riots.

During the Riot itself the imperial effigies were torn down and defaced, an act that comprised treason, and which greatly enraged the emperor Theodosius I. The restrictions immediately imposed on the city included the ban on all public entertainment and closure of bath-houses. This was regarded as a severe punishment: bathing, Chrysostom wrote, is a necessary medicine for those of poor health – for people of either sex and any age; women who have given birth recently are among those that would especially need to use the baths,<sup>167</sup> and Chrysostom calls being forbidden to bathe a grievous matter but, at the same time, he considers the restrictions to be much less harsh than what might have befallen the Antiochenes. As the weeks passed, however, a group of (as might be guessed, young male) citizens decided to circumvent the restriction on bathing, and went to the riverbank, where, as Chrysostom reports, they indulged, apart from bathing, in dancing and general merriment, and even pulled some women into the water. Chrysostom was appalled by all this: morally dubious riparian activities aside, the whole event, which apparently drew considerable attention, could bring renewed anger of the emperor, and result in further punishment of the city. It is worth noting that the event took place only about three weeks after the closure of the city's baths: the need for bathing, together with the lack of other forms of "civilised" entertainment, made people seek less cultured forms of social interaction, even despite the risks (Chrysostom reminds his audience that before the initial restrictions were imposed, many were ready to flee the city in case Theodosius would decide to punish them in a violent manner). Ultimately, Chrysostom was concerned that carefree and frivolous actions might draw new dangers on the Antiochenes, and urges his listeners to admonish those seeking to bathe despite the closure of the public baths.<sup>168</sup> The excursion to the riverside, while

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<sup>166</sup> John Chrysostom, *Ad Populum Antiochenum (homiliae 1-21)*, 14, 15.

<sup>167</sup> John Chrysostom, *Ad Populum Antiochenum (homiliae 1-21)*, 14, 15.

<sup>168</sup> John Chrysostom, *Ad Populum Antiochenum (homiliae 1-21)*, 18, 13.

allowing bathers to wash themselves, was clearly also a form of entertainment. Chrysostom's concern, however, was about the timing and possible repercussions of the event, rather than bathing in the river. It is not easy to draw definite conclusions from the evidence available, however: we do not know if, and to what extent, Antiochenes were bathing in the river prior to the imperial edict; it is quite likely that especially the young people would enjoy the natural setting and unrestrained environment. Due to the limited testimonies, it is difficult to say whether what Chrysostom described had been a reaction to the change and evidence of Antiochenes adapting to new circumstances, or simply a more-or-less ordinary event that drew attention because of external causes. Procopius mentions another instance when the citizens, this time of Rome itself, were unable to use the baths, due to aqueducts having been cut by the Goths: he does not make any mention, however, of Romans using – or seeking – an alternate way of bathing.<sup>169</sup>

The events surrounding the Riot serve as a potent example of the ways in which the imperial power could be exercised to control the population without resorting to violence. Limiting access to entertainment venues and bath-houses was one of the means of punishing unruly citizens, and it was an effective and strongly felt reminder of the emperor's displeasure. The reactions of the Antiochenes to the ban show how severely such punishment could be felt, and how important the restricted pleasures (and in the case of bathing – also necessities) were in day-to-day life.

### *Symbolism of the baths*

I am now going to look in more detail at the symbolic aspect of Roman bath-houses, and by extension, of bathing itself. I will specifically focus on the instances where bathing or bath-houses acquire importance beyond their mundane uses. Much of this considerable symbolic value can be attributed to the link between the bath-houses and the wealth necessary to build and run them, strongly tying symbolism of bath-houses with various aspects of patronage and euergetism. Some of the symbolism came from the undeniably Roman character of the bathing, as a primarily social and cultural activity. Examining this aspect of bathing in more details ought to prove particularly useful for establishing the degree to which this form of leisure was ingrained in the late antique daily life. The symbolism, in some cases, was very

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<sup>169</sup> Procopius, *History*, 5, 19.

obvious: Procopius relates an interesting story of the Persian ruler, Chosroes, taking a bath. The author of the *Wars* describes how the king, after sacking a significant part of Roman territories and capturing Antioch (540 AD), went to Seleucia and there bathed in the sea.<sup>170</sup> He bathed alone; while the act itself had a significant symbolic meaning (the Persian ruler was bathing in the Roman sea), at the same time the action itself was presented to Procopius' readers as un-Roman as possible: not only did Chosroes prefer the sea to the excellent baths he could find in any of the captured cities, he also bathed alone; while this was not specifically pointed out by Procopius, such behaviour was in stark contrast to the Roman tradition of communal bathing. In addition to that, he also made sacrifices to the sun – by that time, action unacceptable to the Christian majority of the Roman Empire. Throughout the text, Chosroes is portrayed as a cunning and untrustworthy ruler. Thus, it is likely that even a seemingly neutral action was to have a deeper meaning, hinting at the Persian ruler's foreignness and creating hostility to him in the readers through subtle choice of words. Regardless of this, the act of bathing in the sea should primarily be seen as an explicit expression of power, and there can be little doubt that Procopius' readers would have missed this.

Two earlier passages from Procopius' *Wars* mention how a Persian commander of a besieging force demanded that Belisarius, who found himself surrounded in the recently re-fortified city of Dara (during the Summer of 530), should prepare a meal and a bath for him.<sup>171</sup> This information is provided twice, perhaps because of its unusual character (first time, as a part of narration, the second, in a letter that was included in its entirety in the book), or perhaps the demand was, indeed, made twice: at the very beginning of the siege and later on in one of the letters that were exchanged during the siege. The Persian *mirranes* (commander), named Perozos (Firouz), made his request indicating that he intends to eat and bathe the following day (after he captures, or receives the surrender of, the city). The tone of the Persian commander's letters is that of obvious mockery: Dara has been captured by the Byzantines not long before the described events took place and had been fortified considerably; the bath-houses there were also newly built and Perozos' "request" was to indicate that the Roman facilities were very soon going to accommodate the Persians; this, however, did not happen. Procopius tells of an interesting event that

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<sup>170</sup> Procopius, *History*, 2, 11.

<sup>171</sup> Procopius, *History*, 1, 13, 17; 1, 14, 12.

took place during the siege: a young Persian soldier issued a challenge to the Romans, wanting a single combat; Andreas, an instructor of a wrestling school and serving at the time as an attendant of one of the officers, Bouzos, accepted the challenge, and won.<sup>172</sup> Another Persian soldier, an experienced veteran, also issued a challenge, and was similarly defeated by Andreas. While the duels certainly helped to raise the morale of the Romans, Procopius felt it necessary also to inform his readers that Andreas' duties included assisting Bouzos in the bath, making the situation somewhat ironic: after the *mirranes'* demands for having a bath prepared, two of his bravest soldiers were killed by a "bath attendant"; Procopius did not, however, use the occasion to draw more humour from the situation – quite likely, the vision of Romans defending their baths in combat would have detracted somewhat from the tone of the narrative. Did Chosroes know about these events? If he did (and it is quite likely, as during the last years of his father's rule he already played a significant role in politics), then perhaps his immersion in the sea had the additional significance of "avenging" the failure of his father's commander? While Perozos could not enjoy the bath in the Roman building, ten years later Chosroes could freely swim in the Roman sea.

Much can be said about the cultural symbolism of the baths: bath-houses are, and were, widely recognized as one of defining elements of *Romanitas*, the culture as whole; and the contemporaries appreciated this as well: both the Persians and the Huns (more on them later) constructed bath-houses, modelled on the Roman ones, although for different reasons; when Chosroes, after sacking the city, recreated Antioch on Persian soil,<sup>173</sup> he provided the new city with every typically Roman feature, including the baths.<sup>174</sup> The city was then populated by captives from Roman Antioch. Anthony Kaldellis noted that the whole arrangement was to serve as a symbolic extension of Chosroes' rule; but at the same time it again showed that the new city would be quite different from other Persian settlements. Averil Cameron noted that Procopius' portrayal of both Chosroes and Justinian serves to explain events by referring to the personalities of the rulers, rather than objective circumstances. Chosroes is shown to be capricious, scheming and dishonest.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Procopius, *History*, 1, 13, 31ff.

<sup>173</sup> Procopius, *History*, 2, 14. This took place after Chosroes conquered Antioch on the Orontes in 538.

<sup>174</sup> A. Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea. Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity*, Philadelphia 2004, p. 127, A. Cameron, *Procopius...*, pp. 163-165.

<sup>175</sup> A. Cameron, *Procopius...*, p. 163-165.

Whenever he is shown in a perceived attempt to resemble a Roman (or, as in this case, trying to create something – a city – that was supposed to be Roman-like), it is evident that the Persian ruler is a foreigner; the king's actions by the sea hint at this even further. The passage from *Wars* also shows that the baths were seen by Chosroes as one of the most important characteristics of Roman culture.

One of the more interesting accounts concerning the foreign adoption of Roman customs described a bath-house built by the Huns; it served to emulate Roman luxury and customs, and it was, perhaps, also as a display of wealth and influence.<sup>176</sup> Recalling the embassy to the Huns of 448, of which he was a member himself, Priscus tells the story of an unfortunate Roman, who was captured by the barbarians: he was ordered to build a bath-house, and hoped that he would be released upon its completion. The Huns, however, still needed someone to perform the function of the bath's attendant, and the duty was forced on the hapless builder. While mentioned in an anecdotal manner, the story is a clear evidence of the influence the Roman way of life had on the neighbouring peoples; the Roman luxury was desired (and obtained) by Onegesius, who was described by Priscus as the second in power among the Scythians. If we remember that the same account also mentions that Attila himself avoided any luxury, the evidence is all the more compelling: even the highest ranking among barbarians considered the Roman way of bathing superior to others, and clearly preferred it to the less civilised ones. Furthermore, it seems that from all of the Roman institutions, baths had the greatest appeal to the Huns, as they did not seem to bother with re-creating other elements of the Roman culture; this could also mean that the bath-house was relatively easiest to obtain and use and was perhaps the most cost-effective way of imitating an obviously Roman custom. Priscus mentions that Onegesius' bath-house was used extensively for social interactions, further hinting at the emulation of Roman culture.

### *Nudity and its implications – social and sexual attitudes*

Nudity was an inextricable element of bathing, and thus necessarily had impact on the perceptions of the activity. In this section I am going to explore the social and sexual attitudes to nudity in a bath-house environment by examining

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<sup>176</sup> Priscus, *Fragmenta*, in: C. W. Muller (ed.), *Fragmenta historiorum graecorum*, vol. 4, Paris 1851, f. 8.



several of the sources mentioning the subject. Making an argument during one of his homilies, Chrysostom remarked that no shame is caused by nakedness in a bath-house, and goes as far as to include himself among the bathers.<sup>177</sup> He attributed the lack of shame to the presence of other naked bathers; this allows to make a case for baths being a place where some, at least, social norms were suspended. Shared nudity, in the context of a bath-house, remained common and accepted. This context appears to have also made the ubiquitous nudity, for the most part, de-sexualised; this most likely, is what caused the bathers not to feel ashamed in the first place, and indicates that nakedness was a norm at public bath-houses at the time (late fourth – early fifth century).

Another indication of the normality of nakedness in the baths comes from a commentary on the letter to Timothy: the baths are the place where both the influential and the poor are alike (naked).<sup>178</sup> An interesting concept, to be sure, but it would seem it only holds up to a point: Chrysostom himself often remarked about ways in which the rich ensured that their status was visible to all, most commonly by having a numerous retinue of slaves following them around and separating them from unwanted interaction with the lower classes. Incidentally, it is also in this passage that Chrysostom observes that the influential bathers have been in the past exposed to dangers in the baths after they remained there while their servants left, for one reason or another. I am going to return to the subject of vulnerability in bath-houses later.

Arguments can be made for nakedness in a bath-house fulfilling the function of a social leveller, and these will be addressed in subsequent parts of this chapter. F. Yegul, however, stated that visiting baths provided merely an illusion of a classless society.<sup>179</sup> Easily accessible and open to everyone, baths differed significantly from, e.g., theatres and arenas, with their strict separation of seats. Slaves were allowed in the baths, often not only as attendants of their masters, but they were also allowed to bathe with them, or on their own. Yegul also expressed the (more than likely, in my opinion) idea that some of the smaller baths functioned very much like modern day private clubs, or that they catered for a specific social group. He brings up the

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<sup>177</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Matthaëum (homiliae 1-90)*, 81, 4. The argument goes on explaining that those full of vice are not ashamed of their evil ways when they are in company of others like them; should they appear among those “clothed with virtue”, they would immediately be out of place and feel shame. That said, there is no indication that the nudity itself is sinful in any way. The comparison focuses on being ‘one of the crowd’; it does not link nudity with vice.

<sup>178</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam i ad Timotheum (homiliae 1-18)*, 2.

<sup>179</sup> F. Yegul, *Bathing...*, pp. 35-37.

example of the baths of Etruscus mentioned by Martial<sup>180</sup> or the Hunting Baths from Lepcis Magna, with their distinct decoration (which in itself, however, cannot be treated as a definite proof of the way the bath was used). Aside from potential ‘exclusive’ baths, Yegul continues, people would have had their favourite places – not unlike with modern cafes, lounges or pubs. He concludes that ‘classlessness’ in baths was only illusory. The number of slaves and attendants, behaviour of bathers, their speech would still have distinguished the elite from others. Indeed, while nudity might have created an appearance of equality – something that the church authors were so keen to note – the status symbols were still present and visible. G. Fagan is a little more appreciative of the role of baths as potential social levellers, but ultimately rejects this idea as well.<sup>181</sup> He argues that while there was a possibility of segregation of the sexes, there is no evidence to suggest that there might have been segregation due to social status of the bathers – at least when the large, public baths are concerned (which, as Fagan notes, were most often located in the heart of the city, or by the city gates – further suggesting their availability to all); he does admit, on the other hand, that there might have been some ways of separating bathers by the entrance – by means of high entry fees, or screening by the entrance; Fagan mentions two exclusive such baths – the Sarno baths at Pompeii and the baths of Etruscus in Rome. As members of all of the social groups met in the baths, this might have indeed created an impression of baths serving to negate the social differences. Fagan argues, however, that, unlike in the case of *convivium* (a form of banquet during which men of different ranks could freely interact on roughly equal terms; somewhat similar to the Greek *symposium*), there was no widespread ideology of equality in the baths, and points to the single example he found in Clement of Alexandria’s *Instructor*.<sup>182</sup> Fagan further argues that even if there had been such ideology, it would not have necessarily been something that found a practical reflection. He brings up the criticism to which the hot baths were occasionally exposed, on the grounds that they had a negative impact on military discipline and strength in general – and yet the existence of hot baths is attested all over the Empire, including inside of military camps. This is used to prove that even if certain views were held by part of the elite, it does not necessarily mean they were shared by all, or that they had any major impact on the

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<sup>180</sup> Martial, 6.42, F. Yegul, *Bathing...*, p. 36.

<sup>181</sup> G. G. Fagan, *Bathing in public...*, pp. 207-208, 213-219.

<sup>182</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Instructor*, in: ANF, vol. 2, ed. A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, 3.47.3. This work will be discussed in more detail later.

society as whole. Certainly, the preaching and writings of prominent Christian churchmen, discussed later in more detail, do appear to have been expressions of what they wanted their communities to be like, rather than a reflection of their actual state.

Ultimately, Fagan argues that for the well-off, baths were a place where they could show off and make a spectacle – its elements would include the size and composition of the slave retinue, jewellery, behaviour. Despite all the mingling, everyone knew perfectly well where they stood on the social ladder.

It might be worth noting that in the context of apparent equality Fagan brought up the matter of *bullae*, amulets worn by freeborn youth (by relating Plutarch)<sup>183</sup> that it might have been used to distinguish the free from the slaves – and thus deter older men from making unlawful advances.

Some interesting arguments (although not accounting for legal implications of homosexual advances on the freeborn youth) on the possible meanings of nudity can be found in A. Eger's paper: the author argues that since the clothes, indicating social status, were left upon entering of the bath-house, baths created opportunities for subverting social roles, and that the darker and more private sections of bath-houses may have become "subversive sexual space", allowing to exploit the already existing nudity.<sup>184</sup> That said, despite likelihood of such occurrences, there is precious little evidence in the late Roman sources that would be even hinting at such behaviour; Late Antiquity has left us without its Martial. Perhaps the only relatively well known case of homosexual behaviour from this period is the one that resulted in the execution of its perpetrator, a popular Thessalonican charioteer, which sparked a violent riot.<sup>185</sup> This in turn led to a massacre ordered by the emperor Theodosius and the famed episode of allegedly seeking forgiveness by the emperor from the bishop of Milan, Ambrose; but that is of little importance here. The sources discussing these events shy from providing details about the offence that started the chain of escalating events and do not mention where it was supposed to have occurred. A rare and unusual record of a possible sexual attraction between two women was made by Socrates, the Church historian. He relates how Valentinian's wife, Severa, was charmed by Justina's (the daughter of Justin, the late governor of Picenum) beauty,

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<sup>183</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia* in: F. C. Babbitt (transl.), *Plutarch's Moralia, in fifteen volumes*, vol. 4, Cambridge Mass., London 1962, 288A.

<sup>184</sup> A. Eger, "Age and male sexuality: 'queer space' in the Roman bath-house?", in: *Age and ageing in the Roman Empire*, ed. M. Harlow, R. Laurence, Portsmouth, Rhode Island 2007, pp. 141, 151.

<sup>185</sup> Sozomenus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 7.25.1-7; Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.17; John Malalas, *Chronographia* 13.43; Theophanes, *Chronographia* 1.72-3.

after seeing her in a bath;<sup>186</sup> the passage mentions a longer period of familiarity between the two women, which eventually led them to taking baths together. Socrates strongly hints at Severa's infatuation with Justina, inflamed by seeing her beauty in the bath; the empress described Justina to Valentinian, who eventually married the girl.<sup>187</sup> Regardless of whether the event took place after Severa's death or not, the passage clearly indicates that in certain circumstances, physicality and nudity did play a significant role during bathing; one that went beyond the more commonly acknowledged blurring of social distinctions. Nonetheless, with only vague possibilities and the lack of any tangible evidence, one can only speculate on the cause of this state of affairs. A good reason for the silence of the sources would be the very nature of majority of the preserved material: whether historical or religious, the accounts had little room for describing forbidden relations, either due to their relative irrelevance, or sheer perceived impropriety; on the other hand, at least some attention was devoted to the matter of sharing bathing space between men and women.

### ***Mixed sex bathing***

Few aspects of the Roman bathing attracted as much attention as the question to what extent members of the two sexes bathed together. As will be discussed below, this matter remains somewhat controversial, and the issue is occasionally muddled by modern assumptions and preconceptions. My aim here is to examine the available evidence and, where necessary, confront the existing opinions on the subject. Since the later sources contain relatively few remarks on this matter, it should not be out of place to include some of the remarks concerning the (predominantly) earlier period. F. Yegul states that mixed bathing has been the norm for most of the Roman history – but at the same time was being rejected by the more conservative authors.<sup>188</sup> Indeed, the first public baths in Rome were divided in two parts, for men and women. Vitruvius advised the same, suggesting locating hot rooms adjacent to each other.

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<sup>186</sup> Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 4, 31. Justin is said to have been executed by Constantius, after the emperor interpreted Justin's dream as prophesying that Justin's progeny will attain imperial power.

<sup>187</sup> Socrates' text could be read as suggesting that Valentinian legalised bigamy in order to "not reject" – or possibly "not divorce" – Severa, while marrying Justina. T. Barnes however concluded that the law actually created the possibility of remarrying after a divorce – T. Barnes, *Representation and reality in Ammianus Marcellinus*, Ithaca, NY, 1998, pp. 123-125.

<sup>188</sup> F. Yegul, *Bathing...*, pp. 6, 30.

Baths from Pompeii and Herculaneum indeed had this layout.<sup>189</sup> Addressing the issue of whether men and women bathed at same or different times, Yegul concludes that most likely both were true, depending on the discussed period. Hadrian introduced law separating the sexes in the baths.<sup>190</sup> This law was later confirmed by Antoninus, but eventually lifted by Heliogabalus.<sup>191</sup> Continuing his argument, Yegul mentions source remarks talking of “baths for men” and “baths for women”; for example, Severus reportedly punished soldiers who were bathing in “baths for women” in Daphne.<sup>192</sup> Furthermore, there is an inscription detailing the way in which a bath-house at Vipascum (Portugal) was to be run, and included rules governing the opening times of the baths, half of the time for women, rest for men. Noting that this is but a single example from a far province, Yegul argues that baths were one of the more unified institutions of the Empire in the way they worked, and therefore it is not unlikely that this particular evidence was, as far as bathing time arrangements were concerned, unique.<sup>193</sup> Quoting Fagan,<sup>194</sup> Yegul comments that the bathing arrangements were, most likely, significantly different depending on time, place, arrangements in particular baths and personal morals of the bathers. Finally, remarking on an inscription that called for aid of the god Silvanus to help stop women from entering the pools reserved for men, Yegul agrees with Rudolfo Lanciani that preventing such occurrences from happening was apparently beyond human power.<sup>195</sup> In addition to the earlier remark, Fagan concluded that bathing in mixed company was not uncommon, and that Martial found himself surprised at unwillingness of women to bathe with men – but reminded the reader that one should remember about Martial’s own, rather loose, morals when it came to sexual matters.<sup>196</sup> Finally, an article devoted to the subject by R. Bowen-Ward rather firmly rejects the idea that men and women bathed separately, by questioning the existence of an alleged edict by Hadrian that forbade mixed sex bathing and examining literary (including early

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<sup>189</sup> F. Yegul, *Bathing...*, p. 32.

<sup>190</sup> *Historia Augusta*, Hadrian, 18.10. *HA* also contains probably the most often cited anecdote about Hadrian, in which he gifts a poor veteran a number of slaves with means necessary for their upkeep, only to be confronted by a crowd wanting to abuse the emperor’s generosity on his next visit to the baths in which the veteran received the gift (*HA*, 17.5). Factual accuracy of that highly popular story aside, it is a clear example of the trope of a ‘good’ emperor mingling with his subjects in a bath-house, not to mention his generosity!

<sup>191</sup> F. Yegul, *Bathing...*, p. 33.

<sup>192</sup> *Historia Augusta*, Severus, 53.1.

<sup>193</sup> F. Yegul, *Bathing...*, p. 33.

<sup>194</sup> G. G. Fagan, *Bathing in public...*, p. 29.

<sup>195</sup> F. Yegul, *Bathing...*, p. 34.

<sup>196</sup> G. G. Fagan, *Bathing in public...*, pp. 27-28.

Christian) evidence. His conclusions are clear: the abundance of references to men and women bathing together, whether made as a matter of course or in a critical manner, indicate that at least in public establishments the bathing space was shared by bathers of both sexes.<sup>197</sup>

Justinian's novels addressed the matter in a straightforward, if somewhat narrower, manner – leaving little doubt that it was perfectly acceptable for a married woman to bathe with men other than her husband – as long as the husband expressed his consent to that. Such an agreement should not be read as husband's permission for any impropriety (although, conceivably, impropriety arising from such encounters could not be ruled out). For a woman, bathing or dining with men without a husband's consent was considered one of the valid reasons for divorce,<sup>198</sup> or flogging.<sup>199</sup> The passage about banqueting or bathing with other men is accompanied by others, listing activities that, when performed without the husband's permission, were deemed a sufficient reason for repudiating (or beating) one's wife. Other reasons included remaining away from the husband's house or participating in entertainment in public places, such as theatres. This is perhaps one of the most useful source remarks from this period that provides a clear answer to the question of mixed bathing, even if it does leave open the question of just how widespread the practice would have been; clearly, at least widespread enough to warrant a mention in the law. The very fact that dining and bathing were put together side by side indicates that both activities were deemed equally "dangerous". There is only a small step from there to conclude that these particular laws were concerned not so much with public morality (after all, no mention is made of unmarried or widowed women), but with strengthening the husbands' control over their spouses. After all, no distinction is made in law between a woman's family and any other men; should one be willing to risk over-interpreting the law, read strictly, it extended husband's power to the point where he could, potentially, prevent his spouse from maintaining extended contact with her male relatives.

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<sup>197</sup> R. Bowen-Ward, "Women in Roman baths" in: *Harvard Theological Review*, 85, No. 2 (1992), pp. 125-147.

<sup>198</sup> Novellae J. 117.8 (CIC III: 557-8)

<sup>199</sup> Novellae J. 117.14 (542) (CIC III: 564)

### *Bath-houses as a social space*

Having examined the possible implications of nudity in the bathing environment and of sharing the bathing space by men and women, I am now going to explore the more general social aspects of bathing. This is necessary for a better understanding of the role bathing played in day-to-day life, as well as of the opinions and comments on the matter that were expressed by the Romans themselves. Describing the excesses of contemporaries in Rome, Ammianus mentions that the upper class citizens would, for example, come to the baths with fifty of their own servants, and still demand the services from the bath's attendants.<sup>200</sup> Furthermore, these people would have considered it a courtesy to merely ask a person what hot baths or waters he was using or where he was staying; and when leaving the baths, even outside of Rome (like the baths of Silvanus in Campania) or "healing waters of Mammaea" at Baiae, the rich get "dried with the finest linens" and carefully choose from the splendid clothes to wear, which they bring in overabundance even to the baths ("he brings enough with him to clothe eleven men").<sup>201</sup> Ammianus was not alone in noting the showcasing of one's material standing in bath-houses; Chrysostom makes numerous references to baths as meeting places: among their other uses, baths seemed to be a popular place for, again, presenting wealth for all to see; along with theatres, Chrysostom mentions the baths as providing an opportunity for women to appear in their best attire.<sup>202</sup> Interestingly enough, he uses the opportunity to jab at the empress, pointing out that even if she suddenly appeared in the church, covered in gold, at the same time as St. Paul would, he would attract more attention, as there are many women who possess splendid clothes (but there is none other as great as St. Paul). Another criticism on how gold is used in adorning people (and even prized animals) appears in the commentary on the letter to Philippians; the bishop mentions here a saying stating that the jewellery loses much of its value in the baths, among other places.<sup>203</sup> As for the retinues of slaves accompanying their owners, Ammianus

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<sup>200</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 28, 4, 9.

<sup>201</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 28, 4, 19.

<sup>202</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Colossenses (homiliae 1-12)*, 10.

<sup>203</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Philippenses (homiliae 1-15)*, 10. Perhaps a reference to the likelihood of losing or damaging the precious ornaments.

wasn't alone in mocking them; baths, together with the fora, are mentioned by Chrysostom as places where the rich would show off their wealth, by the means of having a swarm of servants and slaves following them.<sup>204</sup> In a different context, the image of master followed by his entourage, again to baths (and theatres), returns when Chrysostom complains about the lack of interest on the part of masters in the spiritual well-being of those who serve them. Apparently, not only did the masters refrain from bringing their servants and slaves to the church with them – they did not even compel them to go there on their own!<sup>205</sup> The question of the spiritual value of compulsory church attendance is not raised. The image of the rich man, followed everywhere by his slaves, appears again, this time to exemplify how, in fact, the owner becomes as a slave, for he fears to go anywhere (to the market or the baths) without his entourage, while his slaves can move freely even without him. The difference in rhetoric is quite significant here: the entourage of servants here is not just a display of wealth, but a necessity born out of fear. Context implies that the riches themselves are the cause of distress – or more accurately, the fear of losing them. Chrysostom's message is clear: how much happier a poor man is, being able to go wherever he wants without worry! As for whether the slaves were able to use the public baths, Garret Fagan concluded that typically the Romans did not object to this, though many questions regarding this subject remain: there is no conclusive evidence on whether the slaves could bathe together with their masters, for example, and little evidence to examine the possible changes in the general attitudes over time.<sup>206</sup> In any case, taken together, the remarks on the various possessions brought to and displayed in bath-houses paint a vivid image of the wealth shown off there, underlining their role as a prime ground for social interaction.

I am going to return to the matter of Christian attitudes towards bathing in the second chapter; however, some of the Christian sources can be rather useful in constructing the more general picture of the social activities happening in the bath-houses. The image of baths as lively, noisy places is often reinforced by off-the-cuff remarks in Chrysostom's homilies. On more than one occasion, the churchgoers are admonished about their inappropriate behaviour in the church – one that would be

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<sup>204</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam i ad Corinthios (homiliae 1-44)*, 40, 6.

<sup>205</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Ephesios (homiliae 1-24)*, 22.

<sup>206</sup> G. G. Fagan, "Interpreting the evidence...", pp. 30, 34.



more expected in bath-house.<sup>207</sup> It is difficult to establish to what extent the churchgoers were unusual in their implied irreverence – at the same time, however, Chrysostom’s repeated complaints help to reinforce the image of bath-houses as full of unrestrained conversations and socializing. Elsewhere, a visit to the baths is treated as another occasion to lead a discussion, one on par with having a meal: here, however, the emphasis is on what the topic of the discussion Chrysostom would like to be: Hell. Keeping the threat of eternal suffering always in mind would, in preacher’s opinion, turn away the thoughts of people from both earthly pleasures and suffering.<sup>208</sup> As with much of his preaching, however, the reader can easily guess that the everyday habits of Chrysostom’s listeners were exactly the opposite to what the homilies suggested, once again hinting at the lively conversations enjoyed while bathing. The image of a bath-house as a busy and noisy place is reinforced by some remarks from the dream book of Artemidorus, who expounds the meaning of a bath-house appearing in a dream as indicating turmoil and disturbance – in accordance to the qualities associated with baths.<sup>209</sup>

These examples show well how common and popular baths were in terms of social interactions that took place there; in this respect, they appear more often than taverns. This image is supported by a fragment of a different homily, where bath-house is presented as a place where ordinary men (as opposed to ascetics) hurry after a day’s work.<sup>210</sup> Another allegorical story talks of a woman going about her everyday matters, such as visiting the bath-house or shopping at the market (more on this below).<sup>211</sup> In Chrysostom’s opinion, visiting a bath-house was one of the two places to which a good wife could go on her own (the other being, not unexpectedly, the church). Even then, the visit to a bath-house should only take place when the woman needed to take care of her hygienic needs – as opposed to socialising or enjoying other pleasures offered by the baths.<sup>212</sup>

In a completely different context, the baths again appear as a public place in one of the homilies largely devoted to the problem of cruelty towards the slaves; admitting that he knows how insolent and impudent the slaves can be, Chrysostom

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<sup>207</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Acta apostolorum (homiliae 1-55)*, 30; *In epistulam i ad Corinthios (homiliae 1-44)*, 36, 8; *In epistulam i ad Timotheum (homiliae 1-18)*, 9; *In Acta apostolorum (homiliae 1-55)*, 29.

<sup>208</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Romanos (homiliae 1-32)*, 31.

<sup>209</sup> Artemidorus, *The interpretation of dreams*, 1.64.

<sup>210</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ii ad Timotheum (homiliae 1-18)*, 14.

<sup>211</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Joannem (homiliae 1-88)*, 34, 3.

<sup>212</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Joannem (homiliae 1-88)*, 61, 3.

warns against excessively harsh treatment of the slaves: he reminds that the bruises and marks on the slave's body, visible to everyone when she is naked in the bath<sup>213</sup>, are a clear evidence of cruelty of her mistress.<sup>214</sup> The topic of slaves returns a little later, and this time it is the master who has them following him into the baths or a theatre. As a side note, the bishop showed a good deal of pragmatism in the choice of his arguments here: he shows concern for female slaves only, and points out that when the slave is reprimanded with foul language, it actually brings shame to the mistress who uses it. Likewise, knowing that the female slaves would be at much greater risk of being injured by their mistress rather than the master, he points out that not only it is a shameful thing to hit any woman, regardless of her position, it is even more shameful when it is another woman who beats her. Chrysostom calls for moderation, especially if the slave is also Christian, but did not oppose the institution of slavery itself.

In a passage to which I have referred earlier discussing nudity in the baths, Chrysostom notices that due to the fact that everyone is naked in the baths the place offers what could be called nowadays social equality;<sup>215</sup> in the same passage, the baths are listed as a place where men tend to gather. All of the passages mentioned are very straightforward in their message; for Romans, bathing was, first and foremost, a social activity, an opportunity to interact with and, perhaps, impress each other. The freely accessible, comfortable environment of public baths offered informal and relaxing setting, superior in that respect to other public places (like theatres or markets – and, of course, churches).

An altogether different situation in which a social function of bathing is mentioned comes from the funeral oration written in honour of Basil of Caesarea by Gregory of Nazianzus. Gregory reminisces of his (and Basil's) youth, and recalls the initiation "ritual" that accompanied the arrival of new students to Athens.<sup>216</sup> Near the end of the initiation, the newly arrived was led to a bath-house, accompanied by other students, and after finally being allowed to enter, was recognised as their equal. The

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<sup>213</sup> Another example of a casual remark on the nakedness in the baths, without any sign of disapproval for it.

<sup>214</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Ephesios (homiliae 1-24)*, 15.

<sup>215</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam i ad Timotheum (homiliae 1-18)*, 2.

<sup>216</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Funebris oratio in laudem Basilii Magni Caesareae in Cappadocia episcopi (orat. 43)*, 16, in: F. Boulenger (ed.), *Discours funèbres en l'honneur de son frère Césaire et de Basile de Césarée*, Paris, 1908. One might note that the initiation was in its character not unlike the "hazing" that students joining fraternities (particularly at American universities) tend to undergo.

following collective bathing was apparently meant to help the ‘freshman’ relax, and to be a social event as well. The chosen bath-house seems to have been a crucial place for the whole ceremony; whether the bathing mentioned had a deeper, symbolic meaning, is not mentioned. Gregory adds that Basil was spared all this, in recognition of both his great intellect and because of coming from a good family (and, apparently, thanks to some pleading on Gregory’s part).

A notable case of social interaction (or rather, lack thereof) within a bath-house is mentioned by Theodoret, who discusses an interesting example of ostracism, which occurred on religious grounds. The events took place on Samosata, and the account can be treated as an example of how much importance was given to the element of communality in bathing. Following the exile of the Samosatene bishop Eusebius by the emperor Valens in 374 for his resistance to the Arian doctrine, the Arian Eunomius was appointed to the bishopric.<sup>217</sup> Mostly ignored by the locals from the moment of his arrival, one day he decided to bathe. Seeing a small gathering outside the bath-house, he invited the bystanders to join him; not only did they not enter, but even those who were in the bath-house when the bishop arrived avoided Eunomius, to the point where they would not share the same pool. Thinking this was out of respect for him, the priest left so that the bathers could continue their routine without his interference. According to Theodoret, however, as soon as the Arian left the building, the pool in which he bathed was emptied, and used only after refilling. Eventually hearing of such outright hostility, Eunomius left the city, concluding he will not be able to perform his function there. Theodoret made it clear that, personally, Eunomius was quite approachable and amicable; it was only his religious affiliation that made him so abhorrent to the Samosatenes.<sup>218</sup> I will return to this episode in the following chapter.

### ***Bathing and luxury***

Presence of wealth has previously been discussed to some extent; the following passages are going to focus on bath-houses as embodiments of wealth and luxury in their own right, and the implications this had for the Romans. When listing the luxuries present at Macellum in Cappadocia, where Julian and Gallus were sent

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<sup>217</sup> Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 4, 13.

<sup>218</sup> Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 4, 13.

away after they were spared from massacre that left Constantius as the sole ruler of the Empire, Sozomen mentions that the place was quite magnificent, and included baths, gardens and fountains.<sup>219</sup> The text describing Macellum serves as an illustration of the seemingly excellent conditions in which the future emperor was being raised, which provides a good contrast with his later actions, heavily criticized throughout the fifth book. The baths themselves are listed as first of the splendid amenities and luxuries, perhaps indicating their importance.

Gregory of Nazianzus, while criticising the love of luxury among Constantinopolitans, focuses his attention on the great baths of Zeuxippus.<sup>220</sup> While mentioning that he himself does not go there, he makes it clear that his own home town lacked such splendid amenities, and that they are distracting his listeners too much from pursuits more worthwhile than bathing.<sup>221</sup> Criticising the splendour, Gregory does not express any criticism of bathing itself; more on this subject in the following chapter.

Chrysostom had a lot to say about the luxuries that accompanied bathing: in a particular example, a rich man is contrasted to one suffering from poverty: the rich man enjoys fine clothes, good food, overall well-being – and baths. The poor one, in comparison, is hungry and destitute. While it was not uncommon for the poor to be able to go to the baths, especially when the entry was free, the rhetoric used obviously cannot mention this, though the wealthy could afford to use more lavish baths, while using more expensive cosmetics and having more attendants.<sup>222</sup>

A fairly common trope employed by Chrysostom in criticising the excesses of the wealthy was to contrast them with the simple life of the poor, and pointing out how the poor person was, in fact, better off than the rich one. Poverty meant an easier path to salvation, one with far fewer obstacles; in such comparisons, descriptions of the luxurious bath-houses (along with other possessions, and activities)<sup>223</sup> serve to underline the difference between the poor and the rich. Not criticising bathing or bath-

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<sup>219</sup> Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 5, 2.

<sup>220</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Contra Arianos et de seipso* (orat. 33), 8, MPG 36.

<sup>221</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Contra Arianos et de seipso* (orat. 33), 7, MPG 36. The provincial background, despite his education, has caused the Nazianzen enough unpleasant moments that, in rhetorical exaggeration, he refers to it as a crime (for which he apparently continued to suffer).

<sup>222</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam i ad Corinthios (homiliae 1-44)*, 11, 10. It should be also remembered that there were usually many baths available in any town or city, and that they varied greatly in size and amenities; unless a poor person was able to find a sponsored bath, he would have to satisfy himself with the cheapest place.

<sup>223</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam i ad Thessalonicenses (homiliae 1-11)*, 9.

houses themselves, the preacher's rhetoric makes it clear that at least some of the aforementioned establishments were decidedly luxurious.

In one of the homilies on the letter to Ephesians, Chrysostom states that he would be happy to see the people renouncing all worldly luxuries – but does not expect them to do so, and allows them to freely use the baths, take good care of the body, have servants, eat and drink well and enjoy the world in general, as long as it is done in moderation.<sup>224</sup> This is yet another case when the baths are mentioned as the first among the worldly things his listeners enjoyed, and among the luxuries.

Another exemplary rich man finds himself owning huge tracts of land, many houses and, among the other assets signifying great wealth, baths. All this temporal wealth is rejected by Chrysostom as worthless in face of the man's inability to enter Heaven; but in the list of earthly possessions, the baths come right after the houses, and before the slaves, indicating their importance.<sup>225</sup>

The baths, together with other edifices, are mentioned as being able to preserve the name of the man who built them; but this is deemed hardly worthwhile – more so, should the man in question have committed evil deeds, the building would then serve only as a reminder of his crimes, or, in the best case, of the hardships he has suffered. Furthermore, the building could later be used by the man's enemies.<sup>226</sup>

Chrysostom mentions that some of the wealthier landlords provided the people with baths and markets, but failed to erect churches and, while they were making donations for the poor in the city, they would do better to financially aid those that would care for the souls in the countryside. In the same passage, Chrysostom criticises the landowners for providing their farm workers with too many luxuries: among these, the baths are criticised as making the people softer and less able to work hard.<sup>227</sup> A similar remark appears elsewhere: in condemning the manner in which the wealthy spend their money on splendiferous and vain investments, instead of helping the poor, Chrysostom includes among the selfish expenses the building of baths.<sup>228</sup> An obvious example of extravagance in building of a bath-house was lavish decoration; floor and wall mosaics, statues and expensive materials used for making them significantly added to the total cost of the structure. The character of decoration could

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<sup>224</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Ephesios (homiliae 1-24)*, 13.

<sup>225</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Matthaem (homiliae 1-90)*, 63, 4.

<sup>226</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Joannem (homiliae 1-88)*, 65, 3.

<sup>227</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Acta apostolorum (homiliae 1-55)*, 17.

<sup>228</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Romanos (homiliae 1-32)*, 14.

vary greatly, from simple to exquisite, from purely ornamental to semi-religious. While the mosaics and wall paintings might sometimes hint at the character of the establishment (like in the case of the rather explicit paintings found in the *apodyterium* of the Terme Suburbane in Pompeii)<sup>229</sup>, quite often it is impossible to decisively establish the reasons for the particular choice of the ornaments – the Hunting Baths from Lepcis Magna are a good example of this; whether the owner was supplying animals for the arena, or whether the bath-house belonged to some hunting association,<sup>230</sup> or whether the choice for the motif had nothing to do with the profession of the person who chose it during the redecoration will not become clear unless additional evidence is found. Even in the case of the Suburban Baths the exact function of the erotic pictures is unclear – were they a “catalogue” of services offered at the establishment, or simply a decoration?<sup>231</sup> Because of their unique nature, the exact interpretation of the pictures is impossible, though L. Jacobelli considers them to have served as reminders of where the customers have left their clothes. Were similar ornaments present in other bath-houses? Quite possibly, but without the exceptional circumstances that occurred in Pompeii, they most likely succumbed to time; during the times of the late Empire, depictions of similar scenes, if they were still present, would have likely become less common due to Christian morality, influenced more and more by the ascetic ideals. Nonetheless, they constitute a stark example of association between bathing and sexuality; the exact nature of this association remains however, at least for the time being, unclear.

One of Chrysostom’s homilies provides an example showing that a bath-house could have been seen as a profitable investment: an avaricious man, travelling through land, is unable to stop himself from counting revenues arising from many different places, among them the baths.<sup>232</sup> Setting the context aside, it is clear that at least some of the bath-houses were being regarded as highly profitable, while remaining expensive to build and maintain.

Romans were not alone in their liking of luxury: Procopius describes the Vandals as a nation living in a highly extravagant manner – he starts the list with mentioning that all the Vandals enjoy the baths on a daily basis (this having started

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<sup>229</sup> L. Jacobelli, *Le pitture erotiche delle Terme Suburbane di Pompei*, Rome 1995.

<sup>230</sup> J. J. Wilkes, „Approaching...”, p. 23, F. Yegul, *Bathing...*, p. 36.

<sup>231</sup> L. Jacobelli, *Le pitture erotiche...*, pp. 60ff.

<sup>232</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam i ad Corinthios (homiliae 1-44)*, 23, 8-9.

when they conquered Libya).<sup>233</sup> They also like to eat sweetest and best things, wore silk and gold clothes, and spent time on indulging on various pleasures. The picture emerging from Procopius' text seems to indicate that not only did the Vandals fully embrace the Roman lifestyle (and many elements of Roman culture) after taking North Africa, but that they even surpassed Romans in extravagance. J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz noted how the damage done by Vandals during the capture of Carthage was in large part repaired. Circus and amphitheatre were still functioning, the Green and Blue factions still provided mimes and charioteers for the games; the poet Luxorius recited at the Baths of Gargilius. The baths of Antoninus were in decay, however, similarly to the abandoned basilica on Byrsa hill.<sup>234</sup> Nonetheless, many of the elements of Roman culture remained present.

Another instance where bathing is listed by Procopius among the luxuries appears in book eight and involves, again, the Huns: Sandil, king of the Utigurs (Utrigurs), one of the Hunnic tribes, urged Justinian to reject the Cutigurs (Kutrigurs), another tribe, who were defeated by Utigurs on behalf of Romans, from his lands.<sup>235</sup> When Utigurs were defeated, "tens of thousands" of Byzantine slaves, earlier captured by them, escaped; at the same time, about two thousand Cutigur warriors, with their families, fled and sought refuge on Byzantine soil. Justinian allowed them to settle in Thrace. This caused Sandil a good deal of grief – since the enemies he and his people fought with, for the Byzantines, could now, thanks to the Byzantines, enjoy a much better living conditions than the loyal allies. Among the luxuries he is convinced the Cutigurs now had available were gold embroidered clothes and baths; Justinian sent the Utigur delegation away making many vague promises, but ultimately did not address the issue raised by the allied Huns.

Given the number of scandalous remarks about Theodora that can be found in the *Secret history*, the one describing the empress' bathing habits is relatively mild: the fragment mentions that she took caring for her body to excess (though still not to the degree she would have wanted, this being simply impossible to achieve). Among other things, she entered bath very early in the morning, and left it very late.<sup>236</sup> While it indicates a significant excess as far as usual practice was concerned, the criticism does not seem particularly venomous – yet obsession with the passing beauty would

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<sup>233</sup> Procopius, *History*, 4, 4, 6-9.

<sup>234</sup> J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and fall...*, p. 95.

<sup>235</sup> Procopius, *History*, 8, 19.

<sup>236</sup> Procopius, *The secret history*, 15.6ff.

have elicited negative response from the contemporary readers. One could speculate whether the bath mentioned would have been the – adjacent and connected to the palace – Zeuxippus. Had that been the case, and if the assertions about the different bathing times for men and women were justified, it would be possible to read more into this remark. Was Procopius trying to imply that the empress was spending so much time in baths not only to care for her beauty but also to draw gazes of male bathers to it? It is hard to tell; there is nothing that would imply this directly, and given Procopius' bluntness in many other parts of the *Secret history*, such circuitous hints and allusions in this particular section of his work would be somewhat surprising. Justinian's laws did not regulate bathing hours and the regulations concerning bathing early in the day, issued centuries earlier (and by no means necessarily still followed), designated early hours of the day as the time when the ill were to have their baths and could undergo their treatment.

### ***Bathing in the absence of proper amenities***

I have previously discussed the Riot of Statues, a notable example of a situation in which the standard bathing facilities were not available, which in turn forced would-be bathers to resort to using a river. While the examples of bathing in natural environment are rare, I believe they deserve a separate section – if only because of their unusual character. Furthermore, the desire to bathe even when suitable facilities were unavailable is telling in itself, and can be interpreted as evidence of the otherwise ubiquitous character of Roman bathing. There is at least one other notable example of the use of an improvised bathing site, provided by Sidonius Apollinaris, who has recorded one of the most interesting accounts of bathing outside of a proper bathing establishment. In a letter, written near Nemausus (modern Nîmes) sometime in the 460s during a journey on which he spent some time in an inn between the estates of his friends, he describes how, upon realizing that both of the baths that his friends had were out of service (due to ongoing construction, or perhaps repairs), he ordered his servants to dig a sizeable hole near a stream, had it covered with a roof of wattled hazel, and had it further covered with *cilicium* (a crude cloth made of goat hair). When water was thrown on the red-hot stones that were placed in the hole, Sidonius and his friend were able to enjoy the chit-chat and beneficial effects of a steam-bath simultaneously. The stay in the makeshift *sudatorium* was concluded with



bathing in the hot water, and followed by a quick application of cold water.<sup>237</sup> It is easy to notice that the physical effect achieved by such bathing was quite similar to the one produced by “proper” baths: Sidonius even mentions the feeling of weakness he and his companion experienced after the prolonged stay in the hot and humid environment – which, as in a bath-house, was removed by rapid cooling of the body. The recreation of bath-house conditions in the natural setting seems to indicate a deeper need for at least a partially “Roman” bathing environment. It might also indicate, as John Percival has suggested,<sup>238</sup> the continual worsening of living conditions in 5<sup>th</sup> century Gaul. The political and economic decline in the West affected also the sphere of culture, and perhaps the return to nature was even more forced and not nearly as welcome as Sidonius would like us to believe. The description of the construction process might suggest that Sidonius already had some experience in constructing such baths; it cannot be ruled out that similar arrangements were made on other occasions; still, another letter dating from the same period describes the idyllic estate Sidonius acquired as his wife’s dowry: almost half of the letter is devoted to describing the rather spacious, judging from the description, bath-house located there, complete with all the key elements, including the *hypocaust* (the whole building had few decorations, though).<sup>239</sup> While these examples come from the Western part of the Empire, they highlight the general importance of funding for the functioning of the proper bath-houses (in case of Sidonius’ bath, his forest, located very close to the bath-house, supplied the fuel). It is quite possible that both of Sidonius’ friends had more important expenses and could not afford to repair their baths; still, at least Sidonius himself has fared quite well (or, at least, was putting much effort in creating such an impression).

### ***Inappropriate or unusual uses of baths***

Certain aspects of bath-houses, such as their size, infrastructure or fame, occasionally caused them to be used in ways for which they were not originally

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<sup>237</sup> Sidonius Apollinaris, *Poems and Letters*, book II, l. 9, 8-9.

<sup>238</sup> J. Percival, “Desperately Seeking Sidonius: the Realities of Life in Fifth-Century Gaul”, *Latomus* 56, 1977, pp. 284-287. Similar remarks on Sidonius’ attempts to veil impoverishment of Gaul’s aristocracy were made by Jill Harries, who noted that the archaeological evidence, although far from complete, show a deepening crisis. J. Harries, *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome AD 407-485*, Oxford 1985, pp. 131-133.

<sup>239</sup> Sidonius Apollinaris, *Poems and Letters*, 2, 2.

designed. In this section I am going to discuss a few of such uses, making note of the possible implications of such situations.

Anastasian Baths of Constantinople served as temporary quarters for two legions, *Divitenses* and Younger Tungricani (*Tungricanosque Iuniores*), at least sometime during the year 365; Procopius, Julian's relative, gained their support for his usurpation.<sup>240</sup> The baths were certainly spacious enough for that purpose; lack of more detailed remarks makes it impossible to determine just how comfortable the facility was as temporary barracks, or what the reaction of the soldiers (or, indeed, the local citizens) might have been to this arrangement.

Recalling Job's plight, Chrysostom reminds that there were none poorer than he was; he mentions the homeless, who in their extreme poverty spend their nights in the baths. Still, he continues, at least these wretches have one ragged piece of cloth and a roofed shelter, while Job had none of these things.<sup>241</sup> Liebeschuetz mentions another bath-house, in Thessalonica, that, after falling into disuse, was used as a shelter.<sup>242</sup> The use of baths as a haven by the poor is quite interesting, it is difficult, however, to say exactly for how long they would be able to stay there each night, as the opening hours would vary according to season, and Chrysostom does not specify which particular baths were the most often used by the homeless to spend the night in. Since the public bath-houses were free to use and would have remained comfortably warm for a long time after the last customers left, they were ideal places in which the poor could spend the night, as baths, especially public ones, rarely remained open after dark. It is less likely that the smaller, private bath-houses would have been used for that purpose, although it cannot be ruled out altogether.

Procopius reports how John (the Cappadocian), the praetorian prefect, wanting to save money on preparing the rations for soldiers, ordered the dough to be baked in a public bath-house (baths of Achilles instead of a proper bakery – the bread fell apart back into flour and rotted; about 500 men are reported to have died because of poisoning caused by consumption of the spoiled food (this took place in 533 AD)).<sup>243</sup> This clearly indicates that while it was possible to use the bath-house furnaces for baking bread, the result was much inferior to preparing bread in proper bakeries.

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<sup>240</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 26, 6, 14.

<sup>241</sup> John Chrysostom, *De diabolo tentatore (homiliae 1-3)*, 3, 5.

<sup>242</sup> J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and fall...*, p. 131.

<sup>243</sup> Procopius, *History*, 3, 13, 16.

While food preparation did occur in bath-houses, there is nothing to indicate that it was intended for any other use than immediate consumption.

Finally, an interesting account from Theophanes, showing how commonplace bath-houses were in the popular consciousness: relating Tiberius' ascent to the throne as Augustus in 578, the chronicler writes that the circus factions wanted to know the name of their new Augusta. In reply to the request, Tiberius announced that her name is the same as that of the church opposite the baths of Dagisteos; that is, Anastasia.<sup>244</sup> Theophanes does not say why Tiberius chose such a roundabout way of replying to the crowd, but apparently it was transparent enough for the gathered crowd.

### *Death, accidents and mishaps while bathing*

Examining only the previous parts of the chapter, one might conclude that the Roman bath-houses were, for the most part, idyllic places; to some extent it would be true – after all, their appeal to an average Roman was undeniable. In the following passages, however, I shall examine some events indicating that the carefree atmosphere usually enjoyed by the bathers was, on rare occasions, brutally disturbed.

An account of the circumstances of the death of Fausta, wife of Constantine, is provided in Zosimus' *New History* (after Eunapius account):<sup>245</sup> Constantine is said to have locked her in an overheated bath, and by killing her this way, "comforted" his mother (since he already killed his son Crispus, from the earlier marriage, because of suspicion that he had an intercourse with Fausta).<sup>246</sup> Zosimus attributes Constantine's embrace of Christianity to seeking forgiveness for the killings (and other crimes), as, he claims, priests of other cults denied the emperor the possibility of purification. This rumour must have been rather widespread, as Sozomen found it necessary to reject it long before Zosimus' work was even written, pointing out that many pro-Christian edicts were issued long before Crispus' death.<sup>247</sup> Still, Zosimus' narrative makes it

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<sup>244</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 249, AM 6071 (578/9). Same passage also mentions that wife of the former emperor, Justin, became greatly disappointed at that point, as she did not know about Tiberius' wife and wanted to marry him to keep her position; rumours claimed she even became Tiberius' lover before Justin's death.

<sup>245</sup> C. M. Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian empire*, Routledge 2004, p. 6.

<sup>246</sup> Zosimus, *New History...*, 2, 29.

<sup>247</sup> Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 2, 5. Sozomen also mentions a number of stories in which pagan gods did grant forgiveness even for great crimes – in an attempt to show that if Constantine had indeed been trying to purify himself with the help of Hellenic priests, they would not have refused him. Theophanes' *Chronographia* merely mentions under AM 5816 (323/4 AD) that Constantine's son,

clear that it was easy to make, at least some, bathing facilities lethally hot. A different interpretation of the circumstances surrounding Fausta's death was proposed by D. Woods, who suggested she might have died as a result of an attempted abortion, possibly of a child conceived with Crispus; a bath-house was considered a suitable place for preparing for, and performing, an abortion, and an accidental death during the procedure was not entirely unlikely.<sup>248</sup>

Bathing proved to be the undoing of a group of Germanic raiders, who were caught by surprise by Jovianus, a cavalry commander, sometime during 365/6; they were too distracted by bathing and did not take any precautions against a possible attack.<sup>249</sup> While their surroundings were far from the sumptuous and lazy atmosphere of the Roman baths – the Germanic soldiers bathed in a river – they were nonetheless caught badly unprepared; the vulnerability caused by bathing was effectively exploited by Jovianus.

In similar circumstances met its end a poorly organised Roman expedition into Persian territory during the summer of 503 AD. After defeating a detachment of Persian troops, a part of the Roman forces, led by Areobindus, unaware of the presence of the rest of the hostile army under the command of 46-year-old king Cabades (Kavadh), began to feel more at ease and abandoned some of the usual precautions. Many of the soldiers went to a nearby stream to wash the meat they were to consume, and some decided to bathe in it as well, to cool themselves. The Persian commander, having already learned about the defeat of his vanguard, noticed that the nearby brook became muddy and concluded that not only were Romans very near, but that they also must be unprepared for battle. He immediately launched an attack, which surprised the Romans, most of whom were eating at the time. As Procopius relates, the outcome was a complete disaster for the Roman army.<sup>250</sup> In seeking respite from the heat of the afternoon, the bathing soldiers ensured the utter defeat of their own forces. This example, again, shows well that if one wants to enjoy bathing in nature, time and place ought to be carefully considered. It should be noted that the account of bathing in the stream can hardly be described as typical: it serves to explain the defeat of a Roman army during a military campaign. Aquatic activities

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Crispus, died a Christian, without even mentioning Fausta, while Socrates and Theodoret do not refer to these events at all.

<sup>248</sup> D. Woods, „On the death of empress Fausta”, *Greece and Rome*, vol. 14, no. 1 (April 1998), pp. 76ff.

<sup>249</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 27, 2, 2.

<sup>250</sup> Procopius, *History*, 1, 8, 16-17.

don't feature prominently in Procopius' texts, and when they are finally mentioned, it is purely due to external factors, rather than because the act of washing occurred. Keeping this in mind, it would be logical to assume that, even when they lacked baths, soldiers did wash themselves when it was possible, and that it would have been a common practice for them to use springs or rivers for that purpose when on campaign – the relative lack of other accounts of such washing, in all probability, is caused by the mundane and common character of the activity.

Theodoret mentions another death that occurred in a bath: after threatening the monk Aphraates (whose bold conversation with the emperor Theodoret quotes), Valens' chamberlain went to prepare a bath for the emperor; there, as Theodoret relates, the man lost his senses and stepped into the still boiling-hot water, and died; the man's death was attributed by Theodoret to Aphraates' prayers and he wrote that Valens was aware of the monk's power – yet it only made him even more stubborn in his support of the Arian doctrine.<sup>251</sup> This story, while not very reliable, does highlight some of the risks involving bathing; it was clearly possible for some baths to be devoid of safety measures that would prevent such death as described. The hot water was supposed to be mixed with cold before the bathing could begin. Assuming that Theodoret related a real occurrence, the text makes it possible to speculate that the chamberlain may have suffered from a heat stroke after entering the room and stumbled into the hot water. Experiencing an overheated bath must not have been uncommon, since it is used as an example in Chrysostom's the *Exhortation to Theodore after his fall*.<sup>252</sup> John implores Theodore to think of the eternal and incessant suffering in the fires of hell whenever he would find himself in an overheated bath (or whenever he is suffering from a fever). It is interesting that the first thing mentioned as the one that might resemble being in the river of flames was being in an excessively warm bath-house, the fever – perhaps surprisingly – only second.

Another example of a death attributed to supernatural causes is to be found in Basil of Caesarea's homily on the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste.<sup>253</sup> Left to freeze to death

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<sup>251</sup> Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 4, 23.

<sup>252</sup> John Chrysostom, *Ad Theodorum lapsum (lib. 2)*, 1, 10.

<sup>253</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *In quadraginta martyres Sebastenses*. It should be noted that the cult of the Forty Martyrs was very important in Basil's family. Even the family's tomb was located in a shrine dedicated to the Sebastean martyrs; R. Van Dam, *Families and friends in late Roman Cappadocia*, Philadelphia 2003, pp. 16-17. Other accounts of the martyrdom of the forty Christian soldiers include that of Gregory of Nyssa and many later ones. Later authors suggest the martyrs were actually in the water, and not on the frozen surface.

unless they rejected their faith, the Christian soldiers bravely endured the cold; however, one soldier broke down and ran to the hot bath-house, readied to tempt those being martyred, and died right after entering it;<sup>254</sup> the most probable rational cause of death is a thermal shock. This account of martyrdom may be seen as having a different meaning from the most straightforward: the death for the faith is presented, as is usual in such a text, as the greatest good. While a direct opposite of what would be accepted by the readers or listeners as normal, the story uses the contrast to emphasize its message. Thus, by knowing the purpose of the paradox, it is possible to extract from this account yet further evidence suggesting that a cultured way of bathing, in proper surroundings, was, under normal conditions, preferred to bathing in an environment that lacked the suitable amenities.

Procopius relates that the events which led to enmity between Uraïas (who was offered, but refused, the position of the king of Goths) and Ildibadus (who became the king) started in a bath-house.<sup>255</sup> The wife of Uraïas came to the bath-house in splendid garments and with numerous attendants (not unlike a wealthy Roman woman would; although it would be difficult to speculate whether she was directly inspired by the Roman behaviour, or whether the social dynamic in Gothic bath-houses was similar to that of their neighbours' for other reasons). The wife of Ildibadus, on the other hand, was modestly dressed, as her husband, who only recently became a king, had not become rich yet. She was insulted, as she lacked retinue and wealth fitting her status, and later on demanded revenge from her husband. Ultimately, Uraïas was killed because of his wife's arrogance; at first he was accused of plans to desert to the Byzantines, and as this plot did not work out, he was assassinated. Ildibadus himself was killed not long afterwards, with his death attributed in no small part to unjust killing of the popular Uraïas.

Theophanes relates another case of a sudden death in a bath-house: "A certain Olympios, an Arian, who was washing in the baths of Helenianai palace, died miserably in the pool after uttering terrible blasphemies. This was depicted on an image".<sup>256</sup> Theophanes continues that the image showing Olympios' death was later removed by one Eutychnianus, who was bribed by the Arians to perform the deed, but who soon afterwards died, as his body wasted away. While yet another example of

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<sup>254</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *In quadraginta martyres Sebastenses*.

<sup>255</sup> Procopius, *History*, 7, 1, 37.

<sup>256</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 143, AM 5991 (498/9). The commentary on p. 219n traces the source of this information to Theodorus Lector and John Damascene.

religious propaganda that should be treated with a pinch of salt, the account is likely to have had inspiration in some, subsequently appropriately embellished, event. A stroke caused by strong emotions in a well-heated room is not an unlikely occurrence, however, and such an event would have likely been observed by a considerable number of people (and, in this case, later used in religious polemic). Finally, the death of Constans II (who was assassinated at Syracuse in 668 by his own *praepositus*) happened while the emperor was bathing as well; the killing would have had little chance to fail, as it was made easy by both the defencelessness of the monarch and the killer's easy access to his person.

Kidnapping and arrests made at baths were also known. The capture of Paul, the first patriarch of Constantinople of this name is discussed in detail in the chapter below; Theophanes relates a later event of a similar nature. Marcian's victory over Zeno's forces (in 479) was nullified by *magister* Illos' swift action, bribing most of Marcian's forces, when the emperor stopped to dine and retired for the night. Marcian was thus forced to seek refuge in the church (of the Apostles) next day, and was ordained priest before banishment.<sup>257</sup> What is more interesting here, however, is the fact that his brothers, Procopius and Romulus, were arrested during the night while they were bathing in the bath of Zeuxippus. While they managed to escape afterwards and safely reached Rome, the famous baths proved to be a suitable place for capturing unsuspecting people. The choice of the place for arrest was good – unarmed and unprepared for violence, bathers were an easy target (which, arguably, is a good reason for the large retinues of slaves and servants accompanying the rich).

### ***Conclusions - chapter one***

Throughout the period of Late Antiquity, bathing remained one of the most important (if not the most important) aspect of Roman social life. Significant effort and resources were being used to keep the bath-houses in good repair and fully operational – although, as the time passed, larger investments became something that, with few exceptions, only the imperial treasury could manage; increasing centralization (at least in part the result of diminishing local funding) meant that even in some of the larger cities keeping the traditionally arranged baths open was impossible, as the supply of water by the means of aqueducts was diminishing – the

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<sup>257</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 127, AM 5971 (478/9).

unchanging popularity of bathing meant that more cost- and water-efficient bath-tubs, after centuries, returned to majority of public baths.

With increasing centralization, patronage became associated more and more exclusively with imperial benefactions; the privilege of naming of the public buildings and preservation of one's memory, still highly popular in the late fourth century among private patrons, was becoming increasingly rare from the fifth century onwards. This tendency affected bath-houses the most, as they were the frequently recipients of the donations. Baths were also quite vulnerable to political and military disturbances, as the infrastructure crucial for their functioning was first to be targeted in war, aside from requiring significant resources to remain operational. Upkeep of the bath-houses was occasionally so high that it was possible to erect a new bath-house from only a few years' worth of funding that was previously allocated for running of bathing establishments. It is therefore not surprising that cost-cutting sometimes became a necessity – abandoning communal bathing, however, was out of the question. At the same time, building and re-building of public structures (first and foremost bath-houses) was considered to be one of the most important activities of the 'good' emperor. The rulers, on their part, had an excellent way in which to express their – motivated by genuine or feigned feelings – generosity towards the people through such patronage, making sure to enshrine the gratitude and loyalty of their subjects. Aside from occasionally being useful tools for increasing popularity of the benefactor who built or paid for the upkeep of the baths, bath-houses could have also been profitable businesses, and as such, were often seen as profitable enterprises. Despite the economic transformations and occasional decline, bathing was one of the few habits (one might say informal institutions) within the Roman society that was being preserved throughout the crises at sometimes considerable cost and effort. Arguably, it was an area of the Roman daily life that enjoyed the greatest degree of continuity during Late Antiquity; it certainly attracted great efforts aimed at achieving exactly that, occasionally to the point of preserving the key aspects of the institution even in the lack of the infrastructure.

In popular consciousness of both Romans and outsiders, bathing became a symbol of Romanisation, wealth and luxury. Desire to use Roman or Roman-style facilities might have been motivated by cultural aspirations or seeking pleasure (as was in the case of the Huns), sometimes coloured by emulating Roman culture and using its achievements (the Vandals), or by the need to symbolically humiliate



Romans, or prove the domination over them (the Persians). Within the Roman society bath-houses were, with few exceptions, associated with wealth: as possessions, as places where the rich could publicly show off their precious clothes, ornaments and numerous slaves and servants or as establishments where even the less fortunate could experience at least a degree of luxury. At the same time, for the vast majority bathing was seen as part of a daily routine, at worst a mildly indulgent one, if pushed to an excess. Risking a comparison with modern-day habits, a visit to the baths was a social equivalent of going to a pub after a day's work, except it was even more acceptable to frequent baths on a daily (occasionally more than once a day) basis. The social attitudes towards bathing did not change much during this period; the interplay between Christianity and the Roman bathing culture will be discussed in greater detail in chapter two, but it can be noted here that while certain changes did occur, they were relatively subtle and gradual.

Both nakedness and bathing in mixed company remained commonplace throughout Late Antiquity. With a few specific exceptions, the matter of men and women bathing together was practically unregulated by the civil law. Laws of the Church, while objecting to this widespread practice, only begin to prescribe penalties for it from the end of the eighth century – long after the end of the period being discussed here. Nudity itself is not addressed in the laws and remained, undoubtedly, a common sight in bath-houses.

Because of their considerable size, abundance and the associated infrastructure, bath-houses offered a range of potential uses other than bathing. In lack of other accommodation, they were occasionally used to house troops, or provided shelter for homeless or refugees. The furnaces were also useful for preparing food, but this was normally done only on a small scale.

The relaxed atmosphere of bath-houses was, on rare occasions, disrupted by dramatic events. Accidental deaths occasionally occurred, and the vulnerability of bathers was exploited every now and then by assailants, kidnappers or officials seeking to harm or apprehend their targets. Rare enough as they seem to have been, such events did not seem to detract from the general appeal that bath-houses had for the Romans.

## ***Chapter 2: Baths, bathing and religion***

### ***Introduction***

In this chapter, I am going to examine bathing from the perspective of religion – primarily Christianity. Christian sources contain numerous remarks reflecting everyday life, and I have already made some use of them in the preceding chapter; here, I wish to focus specifically on the relationship between bathing and Christianity.

From the moment the new religion, Christianity, began to gain followers in the Roman Empire, its adherents found themselves in a difficult situation. Serious arguments were raised against Christians taking up service in the military and holding public offices, as both came with the necessity of performing or participating in sacrifices to deities, as well as participating in violence or ordering executions – both deemed at the time incompatible with Christian beliefs. Furthermore, Christians separated themselves from the wider society also by refusing to partake of sacrificial foods, by not participating in public festivities, avoiding many of the public entertainments and keeping their own religious rites secret. On the other hand, as I am going to demonstrate, there can be little doubt as to whether bathing, in general, was acceptable; even a cursory glance at the Christian sources shows that bathing was not considered inherently tied to any objectionable activities, and was seen as a necessity of everyday life for all, with a notable exception of those practicing the most radical forms of ascetism. Nonetheless, bathing was treated with a dose of caution, and much of this chapter is going to be devoted to an in-depth examination of Christian attitudes to this activity.

Sermons are among the more interesting sources for learning about the everyday life and habits of the people to whom they were addressed. They provide an immense wealth of information about activities, concerns and desires of Christian people, occasionally also providing small glimpses into the world of those following other religions. That said, one has to approach such sources with considerable caution, as more often than not, they present the priest's opinions and world view, rather than those commonly held by his congregation (and, by extension, people who determined

the actual everyday social norms). This problem is widely recognized;<sup>258</sup> in addition, the audience would have been composed only of baptised Christians, and thus the issues discussed in the sermons were tailored to the needs (as they were seen by the priest) of that part of society. For the purpose of this study, however, this concern is somewhat less relevant, as the study focuses on the changes that were occurring during Late Antiquity, in no small part brought by the ascendant Christianity which already began to dominate the social discourse. These changes, while sweeping in some areas of life, such as, most conspicuously, religious practices and, to a lesser extent, the greatly increased respect for lifelong virginity and relegation of marriage to an inferior alternative to a virtuous, unmarried life, have been relatively small elsewhere. Public life, the military, and most social norms changed only slightly because of Christianity, or were only beginning to change – except for those most devout who chose to follow a more ascetic lifestyle. Attitudes to bathing, on which I will be focusing, appear to have changed very little; Christian preachers and moralists, for the greater part, simply repeated the already well-known warnings of the pre-Christian moralists and gave the same advice that was already present before the advent of Christianity, if from a somewhat different perspective. The minor changes in the tone of the arguments and the Christian overtones did little to alter the core message of moderation and avoiding of excesses, already preached by the earlier philosophers.

Furthermore, the fact that the preachers felt the need to repeat said advice time and again seems to indicate that the everyday behaviour of the churchgoers in Late Antiquity was not much different from that of the members of the earlier, pagan society.

Analysing Christian attitudes towards, among others, city life (on the example of Antioch –as I have indicated before, a very useful location for conducting a case study), I. Sandwell has made some interesting observations which I have found particularly suitable for providing a general background to this chapter.<sup>259</sup> Drawing heavily from the teachings of John Chrysostom, the author concluded that Christianity (from the 4<sup>th</sup>, and certainly 5<sup>th</sup> centuries) attempted to govern all facets of life – which in Antioch, at least, was made more difficult by the existence of a vibrant Jewish community, which offered life that was in many ways attractive to Christians.

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<sup>258</sup> E.g. J. L. Maxwell, *Christianization and communication in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge 2006, p. 5ff.

<sup>259</sup> I. Sandwell, *Religious identity in Late Antiquity...*, pp. 126-147.

Christianity was present throughout the city – shrines, churches and festivals made it visible. Chrysostom, however, wanted more – a full transformation of the city into a Christian one, filled with people sharing its values. Promotion of ascetism, charity and greater respect for the clergy, along with dismissing many aspects of the old civic life (like non-Christian festivals, or euergetism expressing itself through construction of public buildings, aimed at gaining fame) became common themes in Christian preaching. This is consistent with observations that D. S. Wallace-Hadrill made a few decades earlier – Christianity advised reducing all of the bodily needs to a bare minimum and focusing efforts on prayer and spirituality instead.<sup>260</sup> Bodily cleanliness, likewise, was not needed – the state of the earthly shell did not matter, at least not as much as cleansing the soul of sin. Finally, Christians should not be seeking honour; *philotimia* was rejected in favour of humility.

Such transformation was occurring slowly, and not without some resistance from those Christians who still held the old values in high regard. The most obvious example that can be mentioned here is that of the emperor Julian; later nicknamed the Apostate for his rejection of Christian faith and activity aimed at restoring paganism. The author Zosimus can be mentioned here as well. Gradually, however, the influence of Christianity was making itself seen more and more. The words “bathing” and “washing”, for example, gained an additional meaning: they entered the Christian dictionary as synonyms of baptism and, more generally (and not so originally) of spiritual cleansing. This led to a veritable flood of comparisons, similes and references to everyday bathing customs and practises in the didactic texts and homilies, primarily those that were used to better explain to the lay audiences the nature and importance of baptism.

### ***Baptism***

Church fathers, when mentioning washing, bath and cleansing, usually refer to the baptismal font and the removal of sins. Typical phrases mention “font that cleans off the sins”<sup>261</sup> or purity obtained through the font.<sup>262</sup> Again, the words relating to water – washing, font – that are being used here could, in a different context, refer to a

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<sup>260</sup> D. S. Wallace-Hadrill, *Christian Antioch...*, pp. 155-159.

<sup>261</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistulae*, 78; in: P. Gallay (ed.), *Lettres*, Paris 1964, 1967; *Carmina moralia*, 24, 34, MPG 37. Similar expressions can also be found in *Carmina de se ipso*, MPG 37.

<sup>262</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *In laudem sororis Gorgoniae* (orat. 8), 14, MPG 35.

fully mundane activity. It is worth noting at the very beginning, however, that John Chrysostom, while mentioning bathing on numerous (and greatly varied) occasions, made it clear that earthly bathing, while good and beneficial, is always inferior to spiritual cleansing. This attitude is universal throughout the texts of the Church authors, and remains a constant.

In his speech on baptism, Gregory of Nazianzus rather straightforwardly explains why the baptism is called, among other things, a bath: “because it washes.”<sup>263</sup> The font is said there to give the power to resist temptations,<sup>264</sup> and thus Nazianzen urges his listeners not to postpone the baptismal cleansing.<sup>265</sup> Gregory, in a rather obvious fashion, alludes to the then still fairly widespread practice of delaying baptism in order to preserve the unique opportunity to remove all of the person’s sins until such a time that the baptised person would simply not have much further opportunity to sin – either because of greater spiritual development, old age, or, in some cases, imminent death.<sup>266</sup> Gregory argues that even before the baptism, people should live a good life, since, unlike sins, good deeds will not be washed away by the rite.<sup>267</sup> It is not difficult to imagine that one who already lived a relatively good life before the baptism would have also found it easier to adopt a lifestyle appropriate for a Christian after the rite. The font offers cleaning of both soul and body, and the purity obtained this way was deemed by Gregory to be far greater than any cleanliness available to those who adhere to the law of Moses.<sup>268</sup> Another similar example, made by John Chrysostom, features also the Jewish laver: also this ritual washing is set far above the ordinary bathing – but was still considered to be far below the cleansing that comes from “God’s grace”.<sup>269</sup>

The bathing metaphor is further explored by Chrysostom: when compared to the spiritual “bathing”, cleansing of the soul offered by the Church, ordinary bathing is always presented as the inferior one; it is cleansing merely of the bodily dirt, while

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<sup>263</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *In sanctum baptisma (orat. 40)*, 4, MPG 36.

<sup>264</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *In sanctum baptisma (orat. 40)*, 10, 28, 32, 35, MPG 36. The strength that baptism brings does not come without an effort, though (32), and without it, the soul might end up in an even worse state when the old habits (“evil spirit”) return (35).

<sup>265</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *In sanctum baptisma (orat. 40)*, 11, 20, 25, MPG 36.

<sup>266</sup> E. Ferguson, *Baptism in the early Church: history, theology, and liturgy in the first five centuries*, Cambridge, Mass. 2009, pp. 617ff.

<sup>267</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *In sanctum baptisma (orat. 40)*, 21-22, MPG 36.

<sup>268</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Funebris oratio in patrem (orat. 18)*, 13, MPG 35.

<sup>269</sup> John Chrysostom, *Ad illuminandos catecheses 1-2 (series prima et secunda)*, 1, 2.

the other one purifies the soul.<sup>270</sup> While it is hardly a surprising comparison, it marks the actual baths as the most common – and the most obvious to the listeners – place of washing and cleaning of the bodies. Seeking to bring into the minds of his flock the idea of cleaning oneself, Chrysostom relied on the image that would have been the most familiar to his listeners, omitting such possibilities as washing by the river; a good indicator of how commonplace and easy to access the baths were – at least in major cities.

The baptismal font could have had, however, an opposite, “blackening”, effect, Gregory rhetorically asserted, when the baptism is administered by the heretics – in particular, Arians. The religious controversy started by Arius (who claimed that the Son and Father in Trinity did not share the same substance, and that the Son was inferior) was one of the main reasons for the first Council of the Church (in Nicaea in 325), but despite its condemnation by majority of the bishops gathered there, remained influential, and received support from several emperors throughout the fourth century. Gregory judged that those who accepted baptism from the adherents of the Arian controversy were being “cheated” of their salvation.<sup>271</sup> This is because accepting the baptism from Arians meant – in his view – also accepting their version of faith. The rite itself is deemed a “real” baptism, but accepting the “false belief” immediately pushes the newly created Christian away from God. The salvation that comes through the uncorrupted font is, in turn, likened to the earth and air in its abundance.<sup>272</sup>

Chrysostom again uses bathing as a metaphor, for baptism and the regeneration it offers, in the commentary to the letter to Galatians,<sup>273</sup> where he was recalling both the crucifixion and the restoration of fertility by God to Sarah, wife of Abraham. As God allowed the previously barren Sarah to bear a child, so will the baptism and the words of the priest bring about new life and freedom.

C. Marksches<sup>274</sup> remarks that texts indicating that baptism was being associated with rebirth came from as early as second century; however, baptism was also, if indirectly, linked with death.<sup>275</sup> This can be traced back to the first letter to

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<sup>270</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ii ad Corinthios (homiliae 1-30)*, 15, 6.

<sup>271</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *In Aegyptiorum adventum (orat. 34)*, 12, MPG 36.

<sup>272</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmina dogmatica*, 9, MPG 37.

<sup>273</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Galatas commentarius*, 4, 28.

<sup>274</sup> C. Marksches, *Between two worlds. Structures of earliest Christianity*, London 1999, p. 65.

<sup>275</sup> C. Marksches, *Between two worlds...*, p. 64.

Romans;<sup>276</sup> baptism in Christ means baptism in his death as well, and being “buried” with Christ in such a way will enable being raised from the dead. Immersion in the baptismal pool was therefore symbolic of entering the grave with Jesus – and, in turn, being able to walk out of it again. Entering the sacred water symbolised burying of the ‘old’ man and rebirth of the ‘new’ one.<sup>277</sup>

Moving away from the religious texts, it is possible to find more direct evidence of the importance of baptism among the laity. Certainly, it was important enough for Procopius to mention it when he was describing the plot on the life of the commander of auxiliaries, Solomon, who was residing in Carthage at the time of Justinian’s edict forbidding the baptism of Arians (who included the Vandal soldiers employed by the Romans).<sup>278</sup> The law itself is given as a secondary reason; he cites the prime reason as the question of ownership of the conquered Vandal lands – many of the soldiers having married Vandal women, and, encouraged by their wives, claimed the Vandal land as their own through marriage, while the emperor claimed for himself (while allowing the soldiers to keep slaves and valuables). While the text suggests that the edict concerning baptism alone would not have been enough to cause the mutiny, it may have triggered the events that followed. The fact that the historian considered it at least a major reason for the rebellion goes to show how seriously the matter was treated at the time.

Procopius mentions another event, in which baptism played a crucial role: Areobindus, at the time the main Byzantine commander in North Africa, sought refuge in a church, after an undecided skirmish between his men and those won over by another high ranking officer, Gontharis (Guntharic), who was plotting to seize power for himself. Areobindus went out only when the bishop of Carthage, Reparatus, sent by Gontharis as messenger, performed “*to theion loutron hierourgenas*”, a “sacred bath” (baptism) on a child, and swore by that rite that Areobindus will be safe.<sup>279</sup> Areobindus then went with the priest to Gontharis, together with the baptised child. Despite his promises, and the sacred rite, after a shared dinner, Gontharis sent his men to kill Areobindus anyway. It is telling that Areobindus considered the priest’s oath, involving the child’s baptism, as a sufficient guarantee of his safety; perhaps it was the best one he could obtain – Procopius does not state if Reparatus

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<sup>276</sup> NRSV, Romans 6:3f.

<sup>277</sup> I. Sandwell, *Religious identity...*, p. 196.

<sup>278</sup> Procopius, *History*, 4, 14, 14ff.

<sup>279</sup> Procopius, *History*, 4, 26ff.

was aware that his oath was going to be made false. Unfortunately, Procopius does not delve deeper into the exact meaning of the rite and the oath. It would seem that the ceremony was forced upon the bishop, and Areobindus clearly believed that Gontharis would respect its sanctity. Procopius relates that Areobindus was not released immediately, and that his murder during the night was committed on Gontharis' orders. Lack of the exact wording of the oath, however, allows to speculate that, perhaps, its letter (though not intent) might have been kept. Alternatively, Gontharis either decided that the oath was not binding on him, or did not mean to keep it from the beginning.

The sanctity of baptism was occasionally underlined by referring to the superficial and imperfect effects of physical bathing. Such comparison is made by Chrysostom in another homily, where it is even more strongly accented that the ordinary bathing is far less superior to the spiritual.<sup>280</sup> Here, however, he mentions a river and a lake as other possible means of washing oneself, alternative to the bath-house. The bathing itself is described as ineffective in washing away anything but the most external, physical, dirt. In a rhetorical manner, Chrysostom assures that if physical washing indeed removed guilt, he himself would have bathed as much as possible. This was most likely a jab at judaising Christians and the practice of ritual washing, as at the time the preacher was struggling to prevent those in his pastoral care from adopting some of the traditionally Jewish customs.<sup>281</sup>

Another excellent example places bathing, together with dining, as a matter of this world; both of them, writes Chrysostom, have their own time. He continues to point out that the Christian teaching, as opposed to temporal things, has no specific time (like washing and eating do), and should be learned continuously.<sup>282</sup> In a similar vein, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, he suggested to his listeners that they ought to engage in disputes about topics such as the threat of hell even in places of leisure, such as baths.<sup>283</sup>

The metaphor of bathing returns again in a homily on spiritual purity: like a person who has just bathed would rather refrain from going to the market, so that he could enjoy the effects of the bath for a longer time, so should people who have just

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<sup>280</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ii ad Timotheum (homiliae 1-10)*, 6.

<sup>281</sup> A. von Stockhausen, "Christian perception of Jewish preaching in early Christianity?" in: A. Deeg, W. Homolka, H.-G. Schöttler (eds.), *Preaching in Judaism and Christianity*, p. 68.

<sup>282</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Joannem (homiliae 1-88)*, 11, 4.

<sup>283</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Romanos (homiliae 1-32)*, 31.



partaken of the Holy Communion ought to act with care (in fact, with much greater care than after physically bathing), to not lose the benefits the Communion brings, as the worldly matters and influences are likely to reduce them to nothing.<sup>284</sup> The simile is very straightforward, though not particularly common in this context. More often than not, similar advice could have been offered to the newly baptised. Communion appears here as a source of cleansing on its own; the extent to which it was actually treated as such by Chrysostom, and how much of the argument was purely rhetorical, however, is a separate issue. Nevertheless, the familiar image of an everyday activity was bound to attract the attention of those present in the church, who were all too often engrossed (as the preacher pointed out time and again) in thoughts about mundane matters instead of paying attention to the preacher's words.

Chrysostom refers to the baths again in a homily on the first letter to Corinthians, stigmatising the various sins, among which fornication is used as the foremost example. He goes on discussing how people who commit other sins do not feel the immediate need of cleansing themselves, and do not go into the baths after, for example, extortion; but they immediately do so after an intercourse with a prostitute. Chrysostom ascribes this urge to clean oneself to the strong consciousness of the committed sin.<sup>285</sup> The Antiochene, however, then points out that the physical nature of the sin does not make it worse than the others; or rather, the other sins, like the extortion, are not any less serious or damning for the lack of physical contact. This is an important indicator of the lack of obsession with physical sin, so pronounced in the later period, especially in the West; it helps to explain why there was relatively little suspicion as far as morality was concerned surrounding the communal bathing at the time. The preacher skilfully avoids addressing the issue of the actual physical need for washing one's body after engaging in an intercourse, preferring to direct the attention to the nature of sin in general rather than focusing on particular issues. Indeed, two centuries later and much further to the West, Gregory the Great, discussing in a letter to Augustine of Canterbury appropriate conduct of a couple after an intercourse, remarks that for a very long time it has been customary among the Romans for both the husband and the wife to bathe (and that the couple would not

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<sup>284</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Matthaeum (homiliae 1-90)*, 5.

<sup>285</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam i ad Corinthios (homiliae 1-44)*, 17, 2. The preacher further explains why Paul singled out this particular sin, and how others are, in fact, as bad as this one.

enter a church for a while afterwards).<sup>286</sup> Given that at Rome some of the public bath-houses were still functioning at that time, this remark should not be surprising.

In a somewhat similar manner, bathing is used as an example of everyday activities, along with eating and walking, when Chrysostom reminds his listeners of the ever-present tempter; in no way, however, does he suggest here that the bathing presents any additional risk of sinning, greater than the one presented by the other activities; the bishop continues on to say that even at the time of sleep people are in danger, as their dreams are used by the devil to awaken unclean passions. Bathing is not mentioned here again.<sup>287</sup>

It should be noted that abstaining from bathing, like in the case of the famous 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century ascetic Antony,<sup>288</sup> was considered by many a good way of doing penitence: along with fasting and prayers, denying oneself the pleasures of bathing was often used in an attempt to gain forgiveness for sins.<sup>289</sup> Rejection of bathing should therefore be seen as a voluntary abstaining from a good and – generally – beneficial activity, for the sake of practicing self-perfection and as a sacrifice made for the sake of a greater good. Here, like in the other sources, no link is made between bathing and any morally suspicious activities. Such decisions of sacrificing a good, but not essential thing in pursuit of perfecting oneself, after all, were not uncommon, and quite separate from rejecting inherently sinful activities.

The Christian belief in the power of baptism did not go unnoticed by its critics; it has been mocked by Julian the Apostate in his speech *Against the Galileans*, likely inspired by the works of Porphyry and Celsus.<sup>290</sup> Unfortunately, the work is known only from the lengthy quotations preserved in the work of Cyril of Alexandria, which is itself incomplete. The emperor opened his argument against baptism by addressing remarks from the first letter to Corinthians, in which Paul addresses his listeners, pointing out that many of them were sinners and wrongdoers – but they have all been cleansed by baptism.<sup>291</sup> Julian argues that there is no observable effect of

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<sup>286</sup> Gregory the Great, *Epistles*, 64, in: NPNF, ser. 2, vol. 13, ed. P. Shaff.

<sup>287</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Acta apostolorum (homiliae 1-55)*, 31.

<sup>288</sup> Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 1, 13.

<sup>289</sup> Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 6, 16.

<sup>290</sup> The work is discussed by, *i.a.*, R. Smith, *Julian's gods : religion and philosophy in the thought and action of Julian the Apostate*, London 1995, pp. 189-207 and, more recently, by D. Hunt, "The Christian context of Julian's *Against the Galileans*" in: S. Tougher, N. Baker-Brian (eds.) *Emperor and author. The writings of Julian the Apostate*, The Classical Press of Wales 2012, pp. 251-261.

<sup>291</sup> 1 Cor 6:9-11, NRSV.

baptism on physical ailments; how could it, then, be thought to have the power to wash off sins, the much more serious afflictions of the soul?<sup>292</sup>

### ***Martyrdom, miracles and healing***

In his first oration against Julian,<sup>293</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus writes that martyrs have been cleansed by the blood, rather than by the (baptismal) font, referring to the fact that many of the martyrs died before they were baptised; in their case, the martyrdom served the same purpose.<sup>294</sup> Baptism by blood is elsewhere explained by reminding the listeners of the water and blood that flowed from crucified Christ's side.<sup>295</sup> The rhetorical value of such comparisons is not to be underestimated; the vivid image of washing one's body in one's own blood that the preacher was evoking would not have gone unnoticed by the gathered laity. Addressing the question of whether the martyrs were true Christians despite not being properly baptised with a firm "yes", Gregory would – in all likelihood – have managed to get the crowd's attention.

A somewhat different example of "bathing" linked to martyrdom can be found in one of Basil of Caesarea's texts, the homily on the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste<sup>296</sup> (allegedly martyred during Licinius' persecutions in 320), already briefly discussed in the previous chapter. Basil describes how one of the Christian soldiers, who were forced to stay on a frozen pond for refusing to make a sacrifice to a pagan deity, finally broke down and ran to the nearby bath that was prepared for the specific purpose of luring the Christians away from the pond (as that would mean giving in to the persecutors' demands); but upon entering it, the soldier immediately died.<sup>297</sup> While, read from a purely medical perspective, the description could indicate a thermal shock resulting from sudden change of temperature of environment, the nature and purpose of the work make it difficult to ascertain whether Basil himself

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<sup>292</sup> Julian, *Against Galileans*, in: W. C. Wright (transl. and ed.), *The works of the Emperor Julian*, vol. 3, Loeb 1923, 1.245.

<sup>293</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Contra Julianum imperatorem* 1 (orat. 4), 51, MPG 35.

<sup>294</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Contra Julianum imperatorem* 1 (orat. 4), 51, MPG 35.

<sup>295</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmina moralia*, 34, MPG, 37.

<sup>296</sup> It should be noted that the cult of the Forty Martyrs was very important in Basil's family. Even the family's tomb was located in a shrine dedicated to the Sebastean martyrs; R. Van Dam, *Families and friends...*, p. 16-17. Other accounts of the martyrdom of the forty Christian soldiers include that of Gregory of Nyssa and many later ones. Later authors suggest the martyrs were actually immersed in the cold water, and not on the frozen surface.

<sup>297</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *In quadraginta martyres Sebastenses*.

was aware of the likely causes of the man's death. Perhaps he was simply relating the story as it was passed down; what makes the account particularly interesting is the way in which the bath-house, usually associated with comfort and relaxation, becomes the place of death, physical and immediate (the subject that was discussed in the first chapter), as well as eternal. It is the freezing (or even frozen) pond that becomes the source of eternal life, within the reach of those determined – and faithful – enough to endure the slow death from hypothermia. The warm and deceptively pleasant bath not only fails to provide the unrealized martyr with comfort, but kills him as surely as the place of his companions' torment – yet without the benefit of an eternal life to follow. Using to the fullest the everyday experiences associated with a visit to a bath-house and extreme cold, the Cappadocian's retelling of the story of the martyrs makes a good use of the tragic irony. By reversing and contrasting the familiar images, Basil skilfully manages to get the attention of the readers or listeners by exposing them to a series of apparent paradoxes.

Theophanes related another case (discussed in the previous chapter) of a sudden death in a bath-house: the death of Olympius (and later of Eutychianus)<sup>298</sup> appear to have supernatural origins, although it would not be unfeasible to assume that – presumably highly agitated – Olympius' death might have been the result of the combination of increased blood pressure and the conditions found in the bath-house. Regardless of the actual cause of Olympius' death, the image presented by Theophanes is quite powerful; the familiar environment of a bath-house contrasted with the drama of a blasphemer's death were likely meant to strengthen the resolve of the homoousian Christians and assure them of the correctness of their understanding of faith.

The attitudes of Christians to medicine were varied; some interesting notes on the subject have been made O. Temkin. On the one hand, the body was not important; suffering was a way of becoming closer to God, and it was the immortal soul that was the most important. Such was the general attitude of the ascetics. On the other hand, many Christians had a positive view of the body. In any case, the medical rhetoric was fairly common in ecclesiastic teaching.<sup>299</sup> Ascetic rejection of medical advice in general (and avoiding bathing in particular) can be seen on the example of Anthony's

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<sup>298</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 143, AM 5991 (498/9). The commentary on p. 219n traces the source of this information to Theodorus Lector and John Damascene.

<sup>299</sup> O. Temkin, *Hippocrates in a world of Pagans and Christians*, Baltimore and London, 1991, p. 138.

*Life* written by Athanasius; Anthony was said to have sported better health after leading an ascetic life than those who partook of diverse diet and baths.<sup>300</sup> On the other hand, Temkin noted, Macarius accepted physicians as being useful for the ordinary, weaker Christians (and in some cases even for monks); similarly, Diadochus, 5<sup>th</sup> century bishop of Photica, argued that as long as the sick put their faith in Christ rather than the doctors, there is nothing wrong with summoning physicians; medicine, he wrote, came into being with human experience. Furthermore, by employing a doctor's help, the ascetics can also protect themselves from vainglory.<sup>301</sup> Finally, the body of a martyr, transformed by the very act of martyrdom, for the believers became imbued with holiness; the suffering of the martyrs – the sacrifice they have made of their own bodies for the faith and God – was widely believed to have granted their remains supernatural powers; the bones, flesh and even miraculously preserved blood gained the status of relics, and now served as a conduit for divine power.<sup>302</sup> The mere presence of relics and physical contact with them played an important role in the cult of the martyr saints – a few examples will be discussed later in this chapter.

Sozomen makes a mention of miraculous healings that occurred at a fountain in Nicopolis in Palestine (identified at the time with the biblical Emmaus);<sup>303</sup> these were associated with the place where Jesus and his disciples, according to the church historian, were supposed to have washed their feet.<sup>304</sup> The water from the fountain was believed to remove illness, from both men and animals. The spring (or fountain) is not mentioned in Luke's gospel, but its fame appears to have been firmly established by the time Sozomen was writing about it. This would have made it one of the earliest Christian sacred springs, and possibly one of the few made "holy" by Christian believers rather than pagans. Unfortunately, I have been unable to determine from where the information about Christ washing his feet in that place originated. Nonetheless, the faithful flocking to the fountain in search of healing who washed

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<sup>300</sup> O. Temkin, *Hippocrates...*, p. 154.

<sup>301</sup> O. Temkin, *Hippocrates...*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>302</sup> G. Clark, "Bodies and blood: late antique debate on martyrdom, virginity and resurrection" in: Montserrat D., *Changing bodies, changing meanings. Studies on the human body in antiquity*, London, New York 1998, pp. 109-110.

<sup>303</sup> The distance of Nicopolis from Jerusalem is about 31-32 kilometres – while the distance mentioned in Luke 24:13 is 60 stadia, or about 11.5 km. Identifying the biblical Emmaus with Nicopolis would have meant that the disciples walked over 62km in a single day, in addition to stopping for a meal in the village. This makes it unlikely – though not impossible – that Emmaus Nicopolis was indeed the location where the events described by Luke might have taken place.

<sup>304</sup> Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 5, 21.

themselves with the water they considered blessed, seemed to have no doubt that it was the real thing; it is but one example of Christians seeking both physical health and blessings through washing their bodies. Another place where people ventured in search of healing was the hot springs area in Bithynia, which Procopius mentioned in his *Buildings*: the author describes how Justinian I built the baths there, utilising the natural spring to provide them with hot water. It, too, was considered to have had supernatural powers: while it was originally associated with Apollo (and the Byzantines used it even before the baths were built),<sup>305</sup> Christians linked its apparent healing powers with the Archangel Michael.<sup>306</sup> It was popular among the Byzantines, and was even visited by the empress Theodora, in 529.<sup>307</sup> Sozomen mentioned that not long before his death, Constantine went to Helenopolis (previously Drepanum) in Bithynia, named so in honour of his mother, the church historian claims; this has been eloquently disputed by J. Drijvers.<sup>308</sup> The dying emperor went there to bathe in the mineral springs in an attempt to cure his illness.<sup>309</sup> This, however, was not sufficient, and the emperor decided to depart for Nicomedia, where he soon, after receiving baptism, died. Judging from the description, the hot springs in which Constantine had bathed may very well be the same that drew Justinian's attention nearly two centuries later; this might suggest that Justinian simply extended or renovated older baths, and Procopius, in all likelihood, gave him credit for the whole work.

Sozomen's description of the Emmaus-Nicopolis healings does not make any mention of possible rational causes that might have effected the recovery of the afflicted people (and it is safe to assume that at least some did get better, thus justifying and compounding the fame of the healing water). His attribution of the healing properties of the spring to a singular event associated by the locals with the events described in Luke's gospel is direct and unquestioning. Procopius in his account, on the other hand, is much more careful: he only mentions that Justinian renovated the local church of St. Michael (in addition to other construction works in

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<sup>305</sup> This link was already made nearly a century ago by G. F. Hill, "Apollo and St. Michael: Some Analogies," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 36 (1916), p. 146. Hill notes that the place where the baths were built is near modern day Yalova.

<sup>306</sup> Procopius, *Buildings*, 5, 3, 16-20.

<sup>307</sup> J. A. Evans, *Empress Theodora. The partner of Justinian*, University of Texas Press, 2004, p. 29.

<sup>308</sup> J. W. Drijvers, *Helena Augusta. The mother of Constantine the Great and the legend of her finding the True Cross*, Brill 1992, pp. 9-12.

<sup>309</sup> Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 2, 34.

the area), without even mentioning that there might be anything supernatural about the curative properties of the Bithynian hot spring.

The places of supposed miraculous healings were not confined to any particular part of the Empire: at Abu Mina, in Egypt (east of the lake Mareotis) a healing shrine to St. Menas was built sometime during the fourth century. It developed swiftly and acquired, among other facilities and possessions, a bath house.<sup>310</sup> The place quickly gained fame for the many healings attributed to the saint there. While the healing was not associated here with bathing specifically, including a bathing facility near the shrine into the complex once again shows the importance of bathing of the sick.

To speak of links between religion and baths without mentioning *The Miracles of St. Artemios*<sup>311</sup> would be to make a serious omission; the bath-houses of Constantinople make many appearances in this work, often serving as a background for the (martyred during emperor Julian's reign) saint's healing miracles. Artemios was associated with curing male genitalia and hernias. Because of this, many of the accounts of his miracles are closely tied to places associated with treatment and healing: churches, hospitals, and baths. The saint's coffin that held the relics is itself compared to a spring – sanctified like the river Jordan and carrying blessings: clear, pure and inexhaustible.<sup>312</sup> The imagery here is very straightforward and the author's intention of presenting the saint's tomb as a place of spiritual cleansing (by using words associated with washing and cleansing) is hard to miss. As for the miracles themselves, one of the accounts tells a story of a female keeper of the double bath of Paschentios<sup>313</sup> (the double bath of the hospital in the quarter of Paschentios). Her still-breastfed baby developed a hernia; she wanted to go and wait upon the saint, but could not leave the baths, as she lived only with her husband. 'Divine admonition' resulted in forming of a plan: since she and her husband lived in one of the baths, she prepared a votive lamp there, in the name of St. Artemios. In her sleep, she saw a nobleman from the palace entering the bath in which the lamp was lit; he was wearing

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<sup>310</sup> R. Alston, *The city in Roman and Byzantine Egypt*, London and New York 2002, p. 109.

<sup>311</sup> *The Miracles of St. Artemios. A collection of miracle stories by an anonymous author of seventh-century*, transl. V. S. Crisafulli, intr. J. W. Nesbitt, Leiden, NY, Köln 1997.

<sup>312</sup> *The Miracles of St. Artemios...*, m. 34.

<sup>313</sup> *Ta Paschentiou – xenon* near the Deuteron palace (possibly in the northern part of the city, south of Blachernai) R. Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine...*, p. 404. also: *de ceremoniis*, frag. 173. The exact location is unknown. The palace that is mentioned may have been Deuteron palace, rather than the imperial one; it is impossible to tell. *Tinos ton endoxon tou palatiou*.

a belt and a cloak on entering the bath. He asked whether his towels had arrived and pretended to be angry at his servants who did not bring them. He sat down on one of the benches, and seeing that the woman was distressed, asked about the cause; the woman explained her situation and was comforted by the nobleman, who assured her that the God, through the Saint, would cure the child. He also said that if his servants showed up, the bath attendants should prepare a pleasant bath for him; he also wished good health to the woman's son. When the woman woke up, the child was cured; in the morning, she went to thank God and told everyone on the way to the church about the miracle.<sup>314</sup>

This account seemed important enough to be included whole, albeit in an abbreviated form, in this work. Immediately a number of conclusions can be drawn: first, worshipping a saint, even if in a simple fashion, was quite acceptable on the premises of a bath-house. Secondly, the events that occurred in the woman's dream seem to mirror closely an everyday experience that might have otherwise occurred in one of the city's baths. However, it is difficult to establish how likely (or unlikely) the man's appearance in that particular bath-house would have been, as even the palace from which he would have come from is not possible to identify – while it might have been the Deuteron palace, the very nature of the “dream” narrative make taking guesses futile.

Another account of a miracle that features bathing prominently is that of Stephen, deacon in the Great Church and *poietes* (composer of acclamations and songs) for the Blues; the account states that the event took place sometime before 641AD (that is, before Heraclius died).<sup>315</sup> He suffered ruptured testicles, which was caused by shouting acclamations – or by lifting weights, as the source is not clear on that. As he was ashamed of his problem, he tried to conceal it: he went to the baths at times when they would be empty, so he could bathe alone. The man finally informed his parents of his illness, and was treated with cold cauteries, three times a day and a surgery was performed on the fourth day – this is another fine example of how detailed was, at least in some respects, the narrative. The young man was apparently cured, but the illness returned. He was again bathing in poorly illuminated baths, during noon or the evening hours. He sought the saint's aid – when there were no people around, he rubbed the affected part on the saint's tomb, begging for cure and

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<sup>314</sup> *The Miracles of St. Artemios...*, m. 11.

<sup>315</sup> *The Miracles of St. Artemios...*, m. 21.



declaring that no doctor will touch him anymore. Some days later, he went to the Livanon (Libanon) bath, in the quarter of Anthemios, to bathe at dawn, so that he would not be seen. Upon leaving the hot chamber, he discovered that his ailment was gone.

This account is interesting for many reasons – not only does it indicate a belief in the efficacy of very direct forms of approaching saints for healing, but, what is more relevant here, presents what can be taken for a not uncommon situation – a young man trying to cope with an embarrassing affliction. Giving up bathing was clearly not an option, neither before, nor after the (ineffective) medical intervention, despite the risk of humiliation in case his condition was spotted. The treatment for the hernia was typical; brief summary of the procedure goes to indicate that where best human measures failed, the saint's intervention finally solved the problem. Finally, it was in a bath-house that the saint – it would appear – decided to aid the young man by removing his affliction. The mention of the specific bath-house where the miracle took place further indicates the author's desire to make it something more tangible, and perhaps show the saint's willingness to bestow his blessings regardless of the sufferer's current location. Likewise, it is possible that the bath-house was mentioned to indicate a place where the saint's intervention has already happened, potentially making it another place where those seeking healing could hope for receiving a cure. The account also reinforces the link between bathing and health, sending a message that not only physicians (who, unlike saints, may fail at their task) can make use of baths to restore people to health. I shall return to the subject of interaction between religion and medicine in the context of healing in the introduction to chapter three.

I have decided to finish the subject of miracles related to bathing, washing and baptism with a reflection on a description from Malalas, commemorating the death of St. Gelasinus, who was martyred in Heliopolis in Phoenicia (modern day Baalbek), during Maximus Licinianus' reign. Gelasinus was a mime, and during a performance during a festival, he was, in a mockery of Christian faith, thrown into a large bathtub of warm water; but after he was 'baptised' so by another mime, he announced that he had a vision of God, and was now really a Christian; the spectators, enraged by this, killed him.<sup>316</sup> The story bears uncanny resemblance to that of martyrdom of St. Genesius of Rome, killed in the same circumstances and in the same time period in

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<sup>316</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 12, 50.

Rome; these martyrdoms have been given considerable attention by R. Webb.<sup>317</sup> They represent the trope of a story or a *mimesis* becoming reality, and the performances mocking and ridiculing Christianity appear to have been quite popular at that time. Parodies of Christian rites by performers didn't seem to have been unusual even after the religion became accepted by the state, as well over half a century after the alleged death of the martyr described by Malalas, Gregory of Nazianzus complained about the mockery to which his fellow Christians were – apparently – still subject on stage.<sup>318</sup> The choice of the rite of baptism as a target for mockery is not surprising; to an unaccustomed bystander the apparent incongruity between what looked like a part of an everyday activity and the enormous importance attached to baptism by Christians may well have seemed comical. The popularity of the stories about actors and mimes truly accepting new faith on the stage is not hard to explain, either: for Christians, such stories of miraculous conversions caused by an intended parody of baptism spoke volumes of the power granted by God to the rite.

### *Encounters and social interactio in a Christian society*

As early as the second century, Tertullian remarks on how Christians share with pagans so many of the everyday activities – they eat the same food, dress the same way; participate in crafting, trade and, of course, bathing. While the apologist abhorred many of the pagan customs and rejected certain institutions, bathing was clearly not one of them. Indeed, the main theme of that section was the participation and integration with the pagan community (as far as it was possible for a Christian to do), rather than rejecting it.<sup>319</sup>

I have briefly in the previous chapter that the baths of Zeuxippus played an important role in the final exile of Paul, the orthodox bishop of Constantinople; the event was dated by Theophanes to AM 5849<sup>320</sup> (356/7AD), though that date is highly unlikely, as the bishop is presumed to have died around 350. That event was notable for a number of reasons: aside from being probably the earliest known account

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<sup>317</sup> R. Webb, *Demons and dancers: performance in late antiquity*, University of Harvard Press 2008, pp. 125-126.

<sup>318</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat. 2 (Apologetica)*, 84. Cf. K. F. Smith, "Drama (Roman)", in: *Encyclopedia of religion and ethics*, ed. J. Hastings, v. 4, C. Scribner's Sons 1932, p. 907.

<sup>319</sup> Tertullian, *Apology*, 42, 1-3.

<sup>320</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 42-43, AM 5849 (356/7). The translators' note on p. 72 clarifies that the majority of described events actually took place between 342 and 350 AD (when Paul died).

directly referring to the presence of a patriarch in a bath-house, the narrative makes it clear that Zeuxippon was deemed a naturally suitable place for conducting discussions and holding meetings on both secular and ecclesiastical matters. Some additional context should be provided here for the sake of clarity. After the death of Eusebius (in 341), Paul and Macedonius, an Arian, were simultaneously elected as bishops. Hermogenes, *magister equitum*, acting on Constantius' orders to expel Paul, was murdered by an enraged mob, which forced the emperor himself to exile Paul. The enthronement of Macedonius, however, was delayed. Paul, after a visit to Rome, where he obtained support of its bishop (Julius), returned to Constantinople. This time it was the prefect Philip who was ordered to exile Paul, as Constantius was staying in Antioch at the time. To avoid danger, Philip summoned Paul to the baths of Zeuxippus and, from there, sent him to the exile (initially, to Thessalonica); Theophanes follows closely the version of Socrates' *Church history*<sup>321</sup>, (which was also repeated by Sozomen<sup>322</sup> in his own work), though both Socrates and Sozomen state that Paul was led out through the palace, which had direct connection with the baths, rather than the window, as Theophanes states. The route through which Paul left the Zeuxippus is, for the purpose of this work, of secondary importance; the importance of the baths in this story is the key in analysing the passage. Philip was well aware that he might share the fate of Hermogenes should he attempt to banish Paul officially, and thus decided to use the neutral territory that the bath-house provided, and lured the bishop inside claiming that he merely wanted to discuss with him some everyday issues. It is difficult to ascertain whether Paul was suspicious of Philip's motives in inviting him to Zeuxippus – it is likely that he did not, especially since after Hermogenes' death the city was punished by the limiting of the amount of corn it received from the emperor by half, and the people would, perhaps, have been temporarily more reluctant to engage in violence against imperial officials; this would have made the need for the subterfuge less apparent. Still, the informal setting was effectively used by the prefect, and Paul was not given another chance of returning to Constantinople.

During the Easter of 404, the baths of Constantine became the gathering place for supporters of John Chrysostom, as the bishop was forbidden from entering his church; John's supporters gathered and had celebrated Easter in the spacious baths

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<sup>321</sup> Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 2, 16.

<sup>322</sup> Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 3, 9.

instead (clearly unfazed by the pagan-themed statuary present there even on such an occasion).<sup>323</sup> Sozomen provides a detailed account of the events that led to this, as well as of how John's supporters were eventually removed – from the bath-house in which they have gathered. In the aftermath of Chrysostom's exile, many of his supporters stopped frequenting public places (like the markets or baths), perhaps fearing for their own safety.<sup>324</sup> One wonders whether the bishop felt some satisfaction from his Constantinopolitan followers' choice for a gathering place, after his many reprimands to his Antiochene flock for behaving in the church as if they were in a bath-house. The persecution, even though limited, has caused the believers to temporarily convert a social space of a bath-house into religious space. This is not unparalleled – previously, the shape and form of a basilica has been adopted by Christians for the needs of their religious gatherings; an impromptu conversion of a bathing area is perhaps more surprising, but at the same time underlines the social role of bath-houses that these establishments fulfilled on a daily basis. As a side note, the persecution has also helped to bolster religiosity and devotion of the faithful, driving many to the behaviour that Chrysostom wished to encourage.

The following passages focus on a relatively well-known incident – the accusation, process and eventual baptism of Isokasius, who was being suspected of paganism. As a side note, the person of *comes* Iacobos, a physician renowned for his cooling therapies (Malalas mentions) played a prominent part in the described events. Iacobos was very popular among the senate and with the emperor for his excellence in medicine and philosophy. In recognition of his talents, a statue of him was set up in the baths of Zeuxippus (sometime during the reign of Leo),<sup>325</sup> joining the impressive collection (described in the previous chapter) of effigies of mythological figures and famous people. He was the one who intervened on behalf of Isokasius, then an ex-quaestor, who was accused of being a pagan. Kaldellis notes that he indeed was a “notorious pagan teacher”;<sup>326</sup> the *Easter Chronicle* describes him as a landowner and an inhabitant of Antioch, who held many offices (and performed well in them), and

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<sup>323</sup> Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 6, 18; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 8, 21.

<sup>324</sup> Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 8, 23.

<sup>325</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 14, 38. This event is also mentioned by J.B. Bury in his *A history of the later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene (395 A.D. -800 A.D.)*, London 1923, p. 223.

<sup>326</sup> A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium. The transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition*, Cambridge 2007, p. 138. Fame of Isokasios was so widespread that even Theodoret of Cyrillus urged his charges to study under that philosopher (despite his “fame” of being a pagan).

that he was renowned for his intellect; the *Chronicle* also includes a somewhat puzzling remark that the arrest came as a result of rioting in Constantinople, but it doesn't seem to have any bearing on the following events.<sup>327</sup> Iacobos asked for Isokasius to be tried in Constantinople, and not by the provincial governor. The tribunal met in the Zeuxippus; apparently the Constantinopolitans present there freed Isokasius and went with him to Hagia Sophia, where he was instructed and baptised. Acclamations in favour of Leo were uttered as Isokasius was being freed, to prevent potential suspicion of an open rebellion from arising. From the scant and partially conflicting source remarks regarding this event (it was mentioned in the Easter Chronicle,<sup>328</sup> by Theophanes,<sup>329</sup> John of Nikiu<sup>330</sup> and in the Suda lexicon<sup>331</sup>, among others) it is difficult to ascertain what exactly occurred in the *thermae*, but they do agree that the Zeuxippus complex did play a part in the events surrounding the judicial process and eventual release of Isokasius. It cannot be ruled out that the events were at least in part orchestrated – although no direct confirmation of that can be found in the sources themselves. One final remark that can be made here that a few years before the trial, in 464, a great fire swept through Constantinople; whether this had any influence on the location of the ex-quaestor's trial, however, I found impossible to determine.

A rather detailed analysis of the trial was made by J. Prostko-Prostyński, who examined the proceedings in order to determine the exact nature of the judicial body that was examining the case. Analysing the sources, he noted that the information offered by the later sources might all come from either the *Chronicle* of Malalas, or an even earlier source used by all of the later authors, including Malalas.<sup>332</sup>

Discussing the information relevant to this study, Prostko-Prostyński relates the already presented facts. Praetorian prefect, Pusaïos (Pusaeus), was in charge of the process that took place in the baths of Zeuxippus. After a brief hearing, the accused was freed by the gathered crowd, brought to the 'Great Church', instructed and

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<sup>327</sup> *Chronicon Paschale*, 595.6-596.12.

<sup>328</sup> *Chronicon Paschale*, 595.6-596.12.

<sup>329</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 115.9-19.

<sup>330</sup> John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*, transl. R. H. Charles, Oxford 1916, 88.7-11. This rather dramatic account of the events does specify that Isokasios converted to Christianity spontaneously and of his own accord, while not devoting much attention to the place where the tribunal assembled; the verdict initially passed on Isokasios was exile. After his conversion, Isokasios is said to have regained the Emperor's favour, and his previous position.

<sup>331</sup> Suda II 601.14-15.

<sup>332</sup> Jan Prostko-Prostyński, *Iudicium quinquevirale. Sąd senatorski w Rzymie i Konstantynopolu od Gracjana do Justyniana*, Poznań 2008, p. 139.

baptised, and on the next day returned home.<sup>333</sup> According to one theory, the proceedings took place in the forum of Zeuxippus (Augustaion). Isokasius was to be judged by “συγκλήτος” which in Malalas always referred to the whole senate; also, during the second half of fifth century, officials bearing the rank of *vir illustris* were also judged in front of the senate.<sup>334</sup> What is most relevant here, however, is the discussion on the location of the proceedings, J. Prostko-Prostyński is firmly convinced that they took place in the baths of Zeuxippus. Malalas mentions the statue of *comes* Iacobos placed in Zeuxippus – while discussing the location of the trial. Neither of the two senate buildings was located in Zeuxippus. Malalas mentions that the people observing the trial were loudly acclaiming the emperor Leo I – the crowds would have been unable to observe the proceedings in any official building. Finally, the baths of Zeuxippus would not have been an unusual place for trial: in 465 (only a year after the fire mentioned previously!) the *praefect vigilum* Menas was accused of *stuprum* (the term for a serious sexual offence) and was to be judged at the Hippodrome, with the emperor and the people present (although in that case things went out of hand, and Menas was murdered at the Hippodrome before the verdict could be given).<sup>335</sup>

### ***Christian attitudes towards bath-houses and bathing***

I will now examine some of the material already partially discussed in the first chapter. Many of the sources written by the various Church figures, while not intended to be used as such, offer a historian a glimpse into their attitudes towards many of the secular activities. Here I will focus primarily on those attitudes and the links between Christianity and bathing. Because of their association with wealth, and the wary attitude of Christians towards individual wealth, the question of whether Christians could own bath-houses will be explored in some detail. Another potentially problematic issue is nakedness, nudity and sharing of the bathing space by members of the opposite sexes. A brief passage devoted to this matter appears in F. Yegul’s *Bathing in the Roman world*,<sup>336</sup> noting the generally, if cautiously, positive Christian attitude to bathing, tempered by, predominantly, the fear of bathing in mixed

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<sup>333</sup> J. Prostko-Prostyński, *Iudicium quinquevirale...*, pp. 139-140.

<sup>334</sup> J. Prostko-Prostyński, *Iudicium quinquevirale...*, p. 141.

<sup>335</sup> J. Prostko-Prostyński, *Iudicium quinquevirale...*, 144-145

<sup>336</sup> F. Yegul, *Bathing in the Roman world*, pp. 201-206.

company, but also of overindulgence and pleasure seeking. The latter two aspects of bathing also shaped the Christian stance on the activity itself, and will be addressed in turn as well. Subsequently, attention will be devoted to the perception of baths as places of everyday interaction and activity, their mundane role in the daily life of the faithful. A brief glance will be made at examples of how, near the end of the period discussed in this thesis, the Church not only accepted bathing, but also integrated it among its good works. I will also examine what the Church canons had to say on the subject of bathing.

Chrysostom's remarks on the vanity of trying to preserve one's name have already been discussed in the previous chapters. While discussing the futility (or even undesirability) of erecting public structures simply to commemorate oneself and underlining the importance of subsidising missionary work, Chrysostom markedly refrains from criticising sponsoring of the baths themselves. Certainly, while spending money on other projects would have been more worthwhile, baths themselves are not subject to any criticism here.<sup>337</sup> Over time, the wealthy did indeed begin to sponsor Christian buildings and institutions more and more – at the cost of communal ones; examples include (but are certainly not limited to) mosaics in churches, which occasionally included the names of the sponsors, and even the mosaic artist himself.<sup>338</sup> It would appear that while the rich have indeed decided to employ their funds in the service of the Church, their desire to keep their names preserved for posterity did not disappear. Ownership of a bath-house, however, was not necessarily a bad thing; while wealth could be dangerous for the rich, when used for the good of the Church or the Christian community, it was quite acceptable. Bryan Ward-Perkins notes that, in the *Life of Melania*, the saint gave away her wealth: one of her estates in Thagaste was “larger than the town itself, with a bath-building, many craftsmen (goldsmiths, silversmiths, coppersmiths), and two bishops, one for our own faith, the other for the heretics”.<sup>339</sup> In the list of properties and indicators of wealth, a bath-house is mentioned in the first place and, quite clearly, it appears as a perfectly acceptable establishment. Such casual remarks are a further indication that abstaining from bathing was something very rare, fit perhaps only for the most radical ascetics. Even for a future saint there was no dishonour to be associated with (or, as in this

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<sup>337</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Joannem (homiliae 1-88)*, 65, 3.

<sup>338</sup> C. Marksches, *Between two worlds...*, p. 172

<sup>339</sup> B. Ward-Perkins, *The fall...*, p. 131 (fragment translated by E. Clark).

case, own) a bath-house – at least as long as this wealth was used in a pious manner, or given to the Church.

Similarly, the preacher appeared to have no objection to nudity in the baths. While segregation of the sexes seemed to be recommended, and caution was certainly advised when it came to bathing in public, nudity itself was treated, at worst, as an unfortunate necessity. As much as bathing created an opportunity for stirring sinful desires, that, in itself, was not a reason to abstain from bodily cleansing. Lack of shame caused by one's own nudity in a bath-house was something natural to Chrysostom,<sup>340</sup> as well as being something that diminished the differences in social status of the bathers.<sup>341</sup> Nonetheless, in a separate work, Chrysostom does advise against allowing young men (or boys) bathing with women, and against allowing them to spend time in general among members of the opposite sex.<sup>342</sup>

One of the more comprehensive accounts of Christian attitudes to bathing, however, comes from Clement of Alexandria, and his *Instructor*, and it is notable for its rather strict tone when it comes to the subject of bathing (especially when compared with the general emphasis on moderation rather than ascetism).<sup>343</sup> He lists bathing among various excesses in which people might indulge, but here, the censure is directed at lack of temperance rather than activity itself.<sup>344</sup> Other behaviour criticised by Clement included using excessively costly items for everyday activities (which included bathing), which he attributed to pride and – in case of men – to effeminacy (*μαλακία*).<sup>345</sup> In Clement's understanding, effeminacy, softness, among men appears to have amounted to impulsiveness and the desire for luxury, which could be seen, for example, in wearing unnecessarily elaborate clothing, accompanied by the lack of "manly" virtues, such as endurance and patience. Furthermore, the moralist points out that those ostentatious displays of wealth served to seduce women who – as he writes – had few reservations stopping them from undressing in front of men in their own baths. It is this aspect of bathing that seems to be the one to which Clement objects the most: he warns that by the very fact of being open to both sexes,

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<sup>340</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Matthaëum (homiliae 1-90)*, 81, 4.

<sup>341</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistolam i ad Timotheum (homiliae 1-18)*, 2.

<sup>342</sup> John Chrysostom, *An address on vainglory and the right way for parents to bring up their children*, transl. M. L. W. Lainster, in: *M. L. W. Lainster (ed.), Christianity and Pagan culture in the later Roman Empire*, Cornell University Press 1967.

<sup>343</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Instructor*, A. Roberts, J. Donaldson (eds.), ANF, vol. 2.

<sup>344</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Instructor*, 2, 2, 25.

<sup>345</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Instructor*, 2, 11.



baths tend to promote promiscuous behaviour. Modesty appears to be washed away there, and even those who do not allow strangers in their baths are still surrounded, and bathed, by their servants, thus allowing lust to be stirred anyway – especially when the slaves are likewise stripping themselves in the baths. Interestingly enough, Origen’s teacher contrasts modern women, willing to undress without shame, with athletes of old, who would – according to him – cover their nudity before the contests.<sup>346</sup> It is hard not to notice that Clement seems to treat women with much more suspicion than men when it comes to potential immodesty, even though the bishop is otherwise willing to treat men and women on equal footing.<sup>347</sup> The stereotype of a female who can incite lust in men – whether willingly or accidentally – seems to have changed little from Clement’s times to later antiquity. Pointing to the baths as a particularly risky area for Christians, without condemning the activity itself, seems to have remained a rather common attitude during the following centuries; for example, writing two centuries later, Athanasius warned virgins that they should be avoiding public baths, as washing in such places could be harmful not only to themselves, but primarily to those who would see them naked; he even blames biblical Susannah for inadvertently bringing about the downfall of the elders.<sup>348</sup> In the biblical episode, a beautiful young woman is bathing alone in her garden that was closed for that purpose; however, two elders, who have previously seen her on a number of occasions and began to lust after her. They surprise the young woman in the bath and, both their advances rejected and blackmail ineffective, falsely accuse Susannah of adultery. Eventually the young woman is saved by the wise Daniel, and the elders, for their false accusations, are put to death instead. Using this passage as an example of a cautionary tale about the dangers of bathing in public might appear jarring to the modern reader – especially since the elders are described in the passage as wicked and unjust even before the bathing scene occurs. Nonetheless, the regrettable tendency to blame women for the lack of self-control and misogynist attitudes among men seems equally strong nowadays as it was in antiquity, in particular in societies where the rights of women have not yet been fully recognized. The alleged problem lay in the lack of segregation in public bath-houses, as mixed bathing remained popular from early imperial period to at least end of the fourth

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<sup>346</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Instructor*, 3, 5.

<sup>347</sup> J. Ferguson, *Clement of Alexandria*, New York 1974, p. 72.

<sup>348</sup> D. Brakke, *Athanasius and the politics of ascetism*, Oxford 1995, pp. 41, 43. The episode is present in the Catholic and Orthodox canon of the bible (Daniel 13, NRSVCE).

century. Some private baths may have been exclusive to one of the sexes.<sup>349</sup> Athanasius' advice appears to be a direct reference to the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which urge women to bathe separately from men, in moderation, and ideally later in the day (when there would be fewer bathers present).<sup>350</sup> Another critical remark on mixed bathing can be found in the *Panarion* of Epiphanius of Salamis (bishop of that city on Cyprus in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century), a collection of polemical arguments rejecting various views considered by him to be heretical and intended to provide a spiritual 'antidote' or 'medicine box' (hence the work's name) for the faithful. He mentions there the baths of Gadara, where people travelled to use the baths for healing, but while the curative properties of the waters used for bathing there are considered to be God's work, Epiphanius warns that the place itself has become one of mortal peril, as members of both sexes bathe there together.<sup>351</sup> The church canons, as discussed in the previous chapter, forbade men and women from bathing together,<sup>352</sup> although perhaps it should be noted that the Laodicean synod was a local assembly, and thus its decisions might not have had an immediate impact on the Christian society as a whole, and were only representative of the general attitudes of the assembled clergy – especially considering the lack of punitive measures for those who would not comply with the restrictions. It was not until the late 7<sup>th</sup> century that bathing in mixed company became a punishable offense. This could indicate that mixed bathing was still present among Christians, although the fact of repeating a much earlier canon could simply mean it was included for the sake of preserving a rule that was deemed proper, without the rule itself having much relevance to the actual state of affairs. Finally, it is difficult to imagine that the Council would impose a law with such harsh punishment if the condemned practice was still widespread among the faithful.

The matter of bathing separately aside, Clement also shares his thoughts on why people – including himself – frequented baths: hygiene, warmth, health and pleasure. He outright declares that bathing for pleasure should be avoided, and that while women can bathe to remain clean and healthy, men should only bathe when it is necessary for their physical well-being. He rejects the warming oneself as a valid

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<sup>349</sup> D. Brakke, *Athanasius...*, p. 43.

<sup>350</sup> *Apostolic constitutions*, ANF, vol. 7, ed. A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, 1, 9.

<sup>351</sup> Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion*, in: K. Holl (ed.), *Epiphanius, Bände 1-3: Ancoratus und Panarion, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* 25, 31, 37, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1:1915; 2:1922; 3:1933, vol. 1, 30.7.5

<sup>352</sup> P. Schaff (ed.), NPNF, the canons of the Synod in Laodicea, canon 30, the canons of the Council in Trullo, canon 77.

reason to bathe (on the grounds that this can be achieved by other means). The Alexandrian repeats the common observation that bathing too often leads to weakening of the body, even to the point of fainting, and warns that excessive bathing might prematurely age the body. Comparing body to iron (which also softens from heat), Clement notes that, like iron, flesh can be tempered with cold. This is followed by practical (and common) advice about avoiding bathing after meals or when one is exhausted and using types of bathing appropriate to the bather's temperament and time of year. Finally, the reader is exhorted not to use the help of others while bathing, as the bathing assistants serve to promote luxuriousness and creates a division between the bathers.<sup>353</sup> After discussing bathing of the body, Clement proceeds to explain how superior to bodily cleansing is purifying the soul with the Word of God. Supporting this view with a number of more or less directly relevant biblical quotations, Clement nevertheless accepts that washing of the body is occasionally still necessary.<sup>354</sup>

Baths appear multiple times in Chrysostom's texts when he is reminding his flock that they should not be acting in the church as if they were in a secular place; the church, he wrote, deserves silence and order, as opposed to typically noisy places, such as baths, theatres, markets.<sup>355</sup> In another of his homilies, Chrysostom similarly complains that his listeners are behaving in the church like they would in a bathhouse, or in the market: they are chatting, making noise, laughing – while in all the other churches the faithful remain in a reverent silence.<sup>356</sup> The topic of talkative churchgoers (this time, specifically women) returns in commentary on the first letter to Timothy, and again the baths, along with the market, appear as the usual place for talking – in fact, Chrysostom claims that the women present in the church talk even more than they usually do in the baths or while shopping.<sup>357</sup> It would be interesting to know whether Chrysostom was speaking here from personal experience or merely made use of rhetoric; after all, exaggeration and referring to places and events familiar to his listeners was not uncommon for the preacher. In a yet another example the baths are said to be, along with the church or a market, a gathering place. Chrysostom reminds his listeners here that they should not merely frequent the church, like all the

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<sup>353</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Instructor*, 3, 8.

<sup>354</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Instructor*, 3, 8.

<sup>355</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Acta apostolorum (homiliae 1-55)*, 30.

<sup>356</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam i ad Corinthios (homiliae 1-44)*, 36, 8.

<sup>357</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam i ad Timotheum (homiliae 1-18)*, 9.

other places, but also actively seek the benefits of going there, or their effort will be useless.<sup>358</sup> In the passages mentioned above, the baths themselves are of little, if any, importance; the stress is instead laid heavily on the proper attitude towards Christian rites and teachings. The repeated use of bathing and associate behaviours as examples of behaviour inappropriate in a church, however, strongly conveys the image of Antiochene churchgoers as unruly – and, apparently, bringing their bathing habits into even religious gatherings.

That said, Chrysostom was keen to reverse the situation – one of his homilies brings up a hypothetical situation, indicating that discussing religious topics in (for example) a bath-house would have been quite desirable, as such conversation would likely have kept the faithful from wrongdoing.<sup>359</sup> Reminding themselves of how little value there is in transient pleasures with debates on punishments for their sins in the afterlife, the bathing Christians could use even such moments of relaxation to perfect themselves. Such advice was likely aimed at those who desired to involve themselves deeper into Christian lifestyle without giving up their everyday pleasures.

The image of Christians enjoying a trip to a bath-house is supported by a fragment of a different homily, where bath-house is presented as a place where ordinary men (as opposed to ascetics) hurry after a day's work.<sup>360</sup> The bath, together with the church, is also one of the two places to which a good wife may go – as for the most of the time she ought to be staying at home (this was briefly mentioned in the preceding chapter). The visit to the baths, however, should take place when the woman genuinely needed to clean her body, and not – as might be guessed – when she would merely feel the need to chat or enjoy the other pleasures of bathing.<sup>361</sup> This attitude is very similar to that of Clement – it would seem that, as far as approach to bathing was concerned, not much has changed over the course of nearly two hundred and fifty years. Both authors are addressed an audience of 'ordinary' Christians, and tailored their advice accordingly. Outright bans are rare, the emphasis is on moderation; the fact that Clement was writing for Christians who could still face persecutions, while Chrysostom was preaching to the adherents of what by then had effectively become a state religion seems to have had very little bearing on the

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<sup>358</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Acta apostolorum (homiliae 1-55)*, 29. With a deal of heavy sarcasm, Chrysostom notices that more people than usual appear at the church during Easter – but at the same time, they make so much noise, that is could hardly be called a human behaviour!

<sup>359</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Romanos (homiliae 1-32)*, 31.

<sup>360</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ii ad Timotheum (homiliae 1-18)*, 14.

<sup>361</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Joannem (homiliae 1-88)*, 61, 3.

teaching pertaining to the daily life. If anything, the tone of Chrysostom's rhetoric on the subject of frequenting the bath-house seems to be slightly more relaxed and understanding than that of Clement – perhaps to reach out more to the now wealthy and influential Christians, without risking alienating them with too harsh words? The form of the teaching is likely to have played a role here: addressing a live audience, Chrysostom had to reflect more on its reactions, and tried to guide and convince rather than simply dictate.

In a different homily, Chrysostom makes use of an allegory: a pregnant woman is going about the town, visiting a bath-house or market, only to be seized by the childbirth pangs, completely unprepared for the oncoming labour. The example is used in an attempt to convince the listeners that they should always be ready for the life's end, as that, too, might come unexpectedly.<sup>362</sup> Here, like in many of the earlier examples, a bath-house is one of the places where Christians may find themselves during the course of the day. It introduces a level of familiarity and leaves the listener more exposed to the unexpected parallel drawn between the unexpected nature of birth – and death.

Theodoret provides an excellent example of the importance of social interactions that were associated with baths: he recalls the exile of the Samosatan bishop Eusebius by the emperor Valens, and how an Arian, Eunomius, took his place.<sup>363</sup> From the moment of his arrival, as the church historian relates, the non-orthodox bishop was universally boycotted by the city's inhabitants; when at one time he went to bathe, his servant closed the door behind them, but as the new bishop noticed that some people have gathered outside, he invited them in. None of the locals accepted the invitation. Even those who were already present in the bath-house refused to enter the pool in which the bishop was immersed at the time. Concluding, according to Theodoret, that they were refusing to enter the same pool out of respect for him, Eunomius left it, but other bathers did not use the pool until it was drained of the water “polluted” by the Arian, and refilled again. When Eunomius learned of this, he decided that, in face of such abject hostility, there was no point in continuing his work in Samosata any longer, and left. Although the lack of listeners during ceremonies, which the Arian bishop had also experienced, had suggested the widespread enmity towards Arianism, the incident in the bath-house made a very

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<sup>362</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Joannem (homiliae 1-88)*, 34, 3.

<sup>363</sup> Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 4, 13.

explicit statement. Eunomius' behaviour is described by Theodoret as courteous and moderate, which makes it all the more obvious that the negative response towards him was motivated purely by religious reasons. The extent to which the Samosatenes were supposedly detesting Arianism is telling: the incident in the bath-house went beyond the usual forms of social ostracism and took a nearly superstitious form.<sup>364</sup> A somewhat superficial similarity can be spotted between the avoiding of the "Arian-tainted" bathing water and the cautioning (previously mentioned) of Chrysostom against the tainting effects of baptismal "bath", should it be accepted from non-orthodox Christians. While Chrysostom's approach has more to do with rhetoric and simply warns against associating with the "heretics", the townsfolk of Samosata have expressed their sentiment in a much more direct manner.

Eventually, as it was discussed in the first chapter, the nature of the bath-houses changed. These changes were accompanied by a gradual inclusion of some of the remaining establishments into the ecclesiastic possessions. As the great baths went out of use, many of the formerly secular establishments became attached to religious foundations, which charged for their use – these are best known from the example of Constantinople,<sup>365</sup> but are well known from Rome as well.<sup>366</sup> Magdalino noted that the *diakoniae*, religious confraternities which, among other activities, assembled weekly to feed and wash the poor, "Christianised" the bathing during the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Twenty-five of these confraternities have been attested in the sources between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>367</sup>

Similar developments have been observed in early mediaeval Italy by P. Squatriti.<sup>368</sup> He noted that while a gradual shift from large to smaller bath-houses can be seen, bathing culture itself remained strong. Here, too, *diaconiae* existed and, among other aid, provided baths to the poor on Thursdays. Around sometime during 840s, the popes had the baths near the cathedral restored. Baths still retained their character as meeting places, at least for the nobles and the well-off. Showing off

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<sup>364</sup> Eunomius successor, Lucius, as Theodoret relates, evoked similar, if not even more radical reaction – the ball with which some boys were playing was "purified" in the fire after landing under the donkey on which Lucius was riding. This apparent remainder of the old superstition, while not approved of, allowed Theodoret to further emphasise the Samosatenes' loathing of Arianism (Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 4, 13).

<sup>365</sup> P. Magdalino, "Medieval Constantinople", p. 33.

<sup>366</sup> F. Yegul, *Bathing in the Roman world*, pp. 203-204.

<sup>367</sup> P. Magdalino, "Medieval Constantinople", p. 33.

<sup>368</sup> P. Squatriti, *Water and society in early medieval Italy, AD 400-1000*, Cambridge University Press 1998, pp. 44-53.

wealth, especially by women, continued as before, and the same warnings about the moral risks that women who went bathing had to face were being repeated. One change that can be mentioned is the fact that the bathers tended, in general, to wash themselves rather than use the help of attendants.

Church canons devote little attention to the matter of bathing; the first remark can be found in the canon 30 of the synod in Laodicea (dated to about 363) expressly forbids male Christians, especially the clergy and the ascetics, bathing with women (but does not list any specific penalties for doing so).<sup>369</sup> The much later (692) Council in Trullo basically repeats this prescription in canon 77, but adds penalties: clerics caught breaking this rule were to be deposed, laymen were to be excommunicated.<sup>370</sup> Such was also to be the standard punishment for those who would associate themselves with Jews in any significant manner; prohibition named specifically using services of Jewish doctors, taking medicines given by Jews and bathing in their company.<sup>371</sup>

### ***Wealth and luxury in the context of bathing***

That a bath-house might have been luxurious, profitable and serve as a place for displaying one's wealth was already discussed in the previous chapter; here, I wish to focus on the themes of wealth and luxury in the context of bathing and bath-houses from the perspective of Christian rhetoric. One example, briefly explored in the first chapter, is that of the apparent splendour of the baths at Cappadocian Macellum, along with the rest of the estate, which in the account of Sozomen takes an appearance that could rival any other imperial palace, is described in detail.<sup>372</sup> The baths themselves are listed as first of the splendid luxuries, indicating their importance. They, in and of themselves, do not appear to be of particular importance here. Instead, by being mentioned, they would seem to exemplify how even the best environment in which the future emperor was growing up did not prevent him from "straying" from the right path. Sozomen does not mention information concerning, e.g., the constant invigilation to which Julian was subjected, his fear for life or being allowed very little

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<sup>369</sup> P. Schaff (ed.), *The seven ecumenical councils of the undivided church*, NPNF, the canons of the Synod in Laodicea, canon 30.

<sup>370</sup> P. Schaff (ed.), NPNF, the canons of the Council in Trullo, canon 77.

<sup>371</sup> P. Schaff (ed.), NPNF, the canons of the Council in Trullo, canon 11.

<sup>372</sup> Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 5, 2.

contact with the outside world; doing so would have detracted from the presented idyllic image. The description is left without a commentary on the effect the supposedly excellent conditions had on the young prince's upbringing, but it wouldn't take much imagination to see it as indicating that too much luxury and wealth surrounding the future emperor had a negative impact on his developing character. It is worth noting that Julian presented himself as living a simple life of moderation,<sup>373</sup> quite different to the image spun by Sozomen.

On the subject of luxury, Gregory of Nazianzus mockingly calls the great baths of Zeuxippus in Constantinople "the new Jerusalem",<sup>374</sup> referring to their popularity, and adds that he does not frequent them. The Nazianzen addresses those Constantinopolitans who thought him a provincial rustic, and mentions that his home town lacked the grandeurs of the capital city, such as the beautiful baths.<sup>375</sup> In turn, he criticises his listeners for enjoying (and paying too much attention to) the worldly luxuries. Gregory does not, however, criticize the bathing itself. Such arguments fall quite directly into the already well-established tradition in Christian preaching that condemned excess and lack of temperance and promoted moderation – a tradition, one might add, that can easily be traced back to earlier pagan moralists.

Presence of various statues in bath-houses is widely attested, these included the statue of Medea after which the Domitian's bath was named, the bronze statues of Daedalus and Icarus and of Bellerophon and Pegasus in the summer bath-house in Tripolis and the bronze statues in the baths of Zeuxippus, placed there by Constantine. General remarks about various decorations in Malalas seem to imply that at least the larger cities were well-decorated.<sup>376</sup> This could mean that the embellishments specifically mentioned by Malalas were of exceptional quality – that many of them were situated in bath-houses is yet another indication of the important role these establishments played in everyday life, and their suitability for displaying art. The presence of pagan-themed statuary did not bring about outrage, or even criticism, from the Christian authors. The distinct lack of such remarks appears to indicate that at least until the 7<sup>th</sup> century Christians were generally happy to accept old statues as

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<sup>373</sup> Julian, *Misopogon*, in: W. C. Wright (transl. and ed.), *The works of the Emperor Julian*, vol. 2, Loeb 1923.

<sup>374</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Contra Arianos et de seipso* (orat. 33), 8, MPG 36.

<sup>375</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Contra Arianos et de seipso* (orat. 33), 7, MPG 36. The provincial background, despite his education, has caused the Nazianzen enough unpleasant moments that, in rhetorical exaggeration, he refers to it as a crime (for which he apparently continued to suffer).

<sup>376</sup> E. Jeffreys, B. Croke, R. Scott (eds.), *Studies in John Malalas...*, p. 103.



purely decorative and had no intention of condemning them as idols; no longer worshipped, depictions of pagan deities were now a mere ornament.

Socrates relates<sup>377</sup> (and Sozomen repeats after him)<sup>378</sup> a number of anecdotes about the bishop of Novatians, Sisinnius (he performed this function around the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries); the image the reader is presented with is that of a cheerful and witty person, who was apparently very fond of bathing. When rhetorically asked why he, a bishop, was going to the baths twice a day, he was quoted to reply that bathing more than that would have been inconvenient. Given that bathing was not typically an expeditious affair, visiting baths multiple times in one day was likely to consume a better part of it. While both authors are keen to appreciate the witty reply made by Sisinnius, it is rather clear that going to the baths more than once a day was considered somewhat excessive. Indeed, if compared with the advice of the more ascetically inclined preachers and authors, Sisinnius' bathing habits appear as quite luxurious and extravagant, especially for a bishop. This is in stark contrast to the ideals espoused by the other, more ascetically inclined monks and clergymen; T. T. Rice's commentary on the subject of bathing was that three baths a day were considered by the church to be excessive, although two were not unusual. There is also a mention of the clerics in the 8<sup>th</sup> century being rebuked by their superiors for taking two baths a day.<sup>379</sup> Nevertheless, even in the eyes of Sozomen, the great admirer of Palestinian ascetics, the Novatian bishop's behaviour does not seem to provoke censure, perhaps because of the man's apparent amiability. This, incidentally, can be contrasted with Chrysostom's behaviour – who, while diligently performing his preaching and formal duties as the orthodox bishop of the capital, mostly neglected to fulfil the social expectations, such as hosting dinner parties and socializing, of the Constantinopolitan elite. Once again one is reminded that the ascetic lifestyle was quite different from the one a high-ranking clergyman was expected to lead, and it is, in a way, a testament to Chrysostom's honesty that he lived the life he preached – even if at the same time it alienated him from the upper classes.

Chrysostom had a lot to say about the luxuries that accompanied bathing: in a particular example, a rich man is opposed to one suffering from poverty: the rich man enjoys fine clothes, good food, overall well-being – and the pleasures of bathing. The

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<sup>377</sup> Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 6, 22.

<sup>378</sup> Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 8, 1.

<sup>379</sup> T. T. Rice, *Everyday life in Byzantium*, New York 1967, p. 155.

poor one, in comparison, is hungry and destitute. While it was not uncommon for the poor to be able to go to the baths, especially when the entry was free, the rhetoric used here obviously could not have mentioned this. Admittedly, the wealthy could afford to go to some of the more lavish, private baths, while using more expensive cosmetics and having more attendants at their disposal, both their own and provided by the bath-house.<sup>380</sup> It should be also remembered that there were usually many baths available in any town or city, and that they varied greatly in size and the number and quality amenities they offered. Unless a poor person was able to find a sponsored bath, he would have to satisfy himself with the cheapest place, perhaps bathe without any assistance and, in all likelihood, spend less time relaxing there in general.

In a similar manner, the wealthy person is placed in a bath-house in another homily, enjoying the pleasures provided by the facility; these are presented as a luxury, put together with an excessively well supplied table and a number of servants attending the rich man's matters.<sup>381</sup> Chrysostom concludes that the poor should not be covetous of the earthly pleasures that are out of their reach, as in leading a simple life in poverty they are following a path to salvation. The less well-off should thus be happy that at least some of the temptations of this life are outside their means – while the wealthy, once again, are sent a signal that they ought to avoid indulging in pleasures that they can afford.

Bathing again appears, together with eating, as one of the things that are necessary in life – but which are harmful when overused.<sup>382</sup> However, when Chrysostom finds himself in a situation where he is accused of, among other things, using the baths, and sees that there are some who think that he should not frequent them, he defends himself by saying that there is nothing which would forbid Christians from bathing, and that there is no honour to be gained from being dirty.<sup>383</sup> This has interesting implications for considering the negative approach to bathing common among the ascetics, but the contradiction here is not explicit: the monks were to avoid pleasure and various temptations, and both abounded in the baths; but not necessarily the cleanliness. Baths can be found listed by Chrysostom among the things that were made by God common and for all to use, like cities or markets.<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam i ad Corinthios (homiliae 1-44)*, 11, 10.

<sup>381</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam i ad Thessalonicenses (homiliae 1-11)*, 9.

<sup>382</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Joannem (homiliae 1-88)*, 9, 4.

<sup>383</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Titum (homiliae 1-6)*, 1.

<sup>384</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam i ad Timotheum (homiliae 1-18)*, 10, 12.

While the ascetics preferred to avoid all of these, it is clear that at least in Chrysostom's opinion none of them were evil or dangerous of themselves.

I have briefly discussed in the previous chapter the alleged eagerness of the Vandal people to embrace the luxurious Roman lifestyle. It is worth noting that, in this case at least, their religious affiliation is not brought up by Procopius. The excessive love of wealth and extravagance ascribed to the Vandals by the author could have easily been linked with the Arian faith, should Procopius wished to do so. Otherwise willing to pay at least lip service to the role of the religion in shaping of many of the events he described (and, occasionally, not shying from including mentions of events bordering on supernatural), the historian seems to have been content to indicate the ethnicity, rather than religion, of the conquerors of the previously Roman North Africa as the chief cause of the moral failings of the Vandals.<sup>385</sup> That said, the criticism of the Vandal people, while dressed in different words is, quite clearly, based on the same ideas and values that were preached by Chrysostom over a century before. Far from moralising or trying to provide a better model of life in his text, Procopius is nonetheless pointing out the same failings for which the Romans themselves were criticised by their own preachers.

A particular reference to the functioning of the baths (and the use of wealth) can be found in a fragment where Chrysostom compares a pile of gold a rich man possesses to a heap of dung: the comparison is clearly in favour of the dung, as it can be used in a number of useful ways, for example, in heating a bath (while the gold itself has no practical uses whatsoever).<sup>386</sup>

### ***Baths and popular beliefs***

Christians were not the only ones to casually mention baths when talking about religious (or quasi-religious) matters. Ammianus Marcellinus, when discussing the extent to which superstitions were common among fellow pagans, remarks mockingly that some of them needed to consult calendars to make sure that astrological signs are good before various undertakings. The practice itself does not seem to be criticised, but the comments on resorting to astrology even before engaging in activities such as eating a meal, showing publicly or going to the baths

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<sup>385</sup> Procopius, *History*, 4, 4, 6-9.

<sup>386</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Matthaëum (homiliae 1-90)*, 63, 4.

show disdain for such overreliance on the supernatural signs.<sup>387</sup> Ammianus is, of course, exaggerating, but the examples he provides do make clear the mundane and everyday nature of bathing. Ammianus mentions another instance of belief in the supernatural, specifically, belief in omens, that involved a bath-house. During Valens' stay in Savaria<sup>388</sup> (in 375), an owl was spotted perching on the top of the imperial bath, and made sounds that were interpreted as foretelling death; despite attempts of many people to chase away the owl with thrown objects, nobody was able to successfully hit the hooting bird.<sup>389</sup> In this case, the link between the building and the emperor seems to have been the key element in interpreting the omen – one that, while coming relatively early, would have later be seen as quite true.

Bath-houses themselves were sometimes used for quasi-magical purposes; one example provided by Ammianus describes how a young man was executed during the reign of Valens' for “magically” (as it was apparently judged to be) trying to alleviate his stomach trouble by first touching the marble (of wall or floor) in a bath-house, then his chest, while reciting the seven (Greek) vowels; he was tortured and beheaded for this.<sup>390</sup> Ammianus does not elaborate on whether the practice was indeed supposed to have a “magical”, pseudo-medical or actual medical significance. F. R. Trombley argues that the little “ritual” was most likely prescribed by a physician in order to take the patient's mind off the recurring pain, and the authorities simply mistook the recitation for some form of sorcery.<sup>391</sup> The location where the man was seen performing his little ritual was important only in so far as the public character of the baths was concerned (in that the youth was spotted doing something suspicious).

The link between the baths and superstition appears also in a homily targeting a practice that Chrysostom found laughable: he mentions seeing some servant girls making a mark with mud on a child's forehead that was supposed to turn away evil charms and protect the child from other supernatural influences. Here, the baths themselves do not seem to have any particular significance: they are not mentioned

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<sup>387</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 28, 4, 24. For a discussion on Ammianus' own religious leanings, see R. L. Rike, *Apex Omnium: Religion in the Res Gestae of Ammianus*, University of California Press 1987.

<sup>388</sup> Modern day Hungarian town Szombathely, near the Austrian border.

<sup>389</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 30, 5, 16.

<sup>390</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 29, 2, 28.

<sup>391</sup> F. R. Trombley, *Hellenic religion and Christianization: C. 370-529*, Leiden 1994, p. 57.

again, and the bishop continues ridiculing the alleged power of mud to keep the devil away.<sup>392</sup>

One more example of (what might be called superstition) associated in the baths, this time noted with some approval, comes from Chrysostom: at one point he must have noticed that his faithful were making sign of the cross when entering the baths (or, also absent-mindedly, when lighting a candle); seeing this evidently habitual behaviour, he advises his flock to consciously develop beneficial habits – like, for example, not swearing.<sup>393</sup> This habitual making sign of the cross could potentially indicate the awareness of the somewhat risky (that is, providing opportunities to sin, if only by thought) nature of bathing establishments. It also shows Chrysostom's appreciation of simple conditioning of his listeners (as means of reducing the risk of sinning).<sup>394</sup>

Baths were given considerable attention in the dream book of Artemidorus, written during 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>395</sup> The interpretation of dreams seems fairly straightforward – qualities and properties of everyday objects, places and events seen in a dream are extrapolated and given explanation that is in one way or another directly relevant to those meanings. Artemidorus even comments on earlier authors, and explains how meaning of certain dreams has changed, reflecting the change in bathing customs. While written prior to the times that are of main interest for the purpose of this study, the wealth of information on bathing customs included in the dreambook and the fact that bathing practices changed relatively from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup>, and even 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, are enough to justify giving this source more attention.

Artemidorus comments that early authors did not link dreams of bathing or washing with inauspicious events, as bathing took place in private bath-tubs.<sup>396</sup> However, since public baths came into being, the dreams of bathing or even seeing a bath were believed to indicate bad luck. Because baths were noisy places, seeing them indicated turmoil. In a similar vein, sweating meant harm and change of the skin colour meant anguish and anxiety.

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<sup>392</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam i ad Corinthios (homiliae 1-44)*, 12, 13.

<sup>393</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Acta apostolorum (homiliae 1-55)*, 10.

<sup>394</sup> While the concept wasn't a new one, it indicates Chrysostom's willingness to use tools other than pure persuasion to help his flock follow the right path.

<sup>395</sup> Artemidorus, *The interpretation of dreams*, transl. and com. Robert J. White, Noyes Press, Park Ridge NJ 1975.

<sup>396</sup> Artemidorus, *The interpretation of dreams*, 1.64. This is the main section of the dream book devoted to bathing, and by far the longest entry on the subject.

Artemidorus replies that such negative associations might have been correct earlier, when people bathed less often, and usually only after returning from battle or after hard work. In his times, however, bathing was a common and luxurious activity; he believes that dreams of washing in bright, spacious and warm baths are auspicious. For sick, it means return to health, for healthy – success in business. He notes that this is only true if the bathing takes place as normal; entering hot baths with clothes on meant sickness and mental anguish; for the sick enter the baths clothed, and anxiety causes people to sweat. The remark indicating that the sick would enter the bathing area dressed is worth additional attention; this is not something commonly mentioned in other sources.

Assistance or lack thereof while bathing might also indicate problems: a poor person dreaming of being attended by many others indicated illness (for in no other circumstances this would have happened normally), and for wealthy, conversely, bathing alone was an ill omen – as they would normally be accompanied by others. The following were considered ill omens for everyone: not being able to sweat, seeing bath-houses where rooms or ceilings have caved in or finding no water in the tanks. Here Artemidorus mentions how an acquaintance of his, a lyre player, had a dream that he went to wash himself, but found no water to do so. He was subsequently disqualified from a contest for trying to bribe the judges (and thus was unable to achieve what he wanted). Artemidorus did not comment any further on his friends' attempted bribery.

Dreams of bathing in natural, warm springs signified health for the sick, but unemployment for the healthy – as the people likely to visit the springs were the sick and those who did not have anything to do, reinforcing the idea of hot springs' association with recuperation and leisure. Dreams of washing in clean, clear water, wherever it was found, were auspicious, but dreams of swimming, Artemidorus notes without giving further explanation, were always symbolic of danger and disease. Following the dream book's advice, one learns that scrapers, brushes, towels meant attendants; losing one of them in a dream signified loss of an attendant; this provides further evidence for the presence of private attendants in the baths. On their own, scrapers meant harm (as they scrape off sweat, but add nothing to the body); they could also mean a courtesan, Artemidorus argues, and for the same reasons. A flask of oil or box with scrapers meant a good wife, faithful handmaid, or a useful slave, further hinting at the usefulness and value of bath-related accessories. Dreams of

singing in the baths were believed to be generally inauspicious.<sup>397</sup> They meant that the dreamer's voice will become indistinct and furthermore, many people were condemned to prison after having such dreams (although this passage lacks further explanation). The act of washing was a figurative way of saying that something will be disclosed (thus threatening to wash someone meant revealing some information about them).<sup>398</sup>

Dreaming of washing one's face or using ointments was also inauspicious, since it signified some flaw. An example of a young man is given, who dreamt that he anointed his face "like a woman would" and subsequently went to a theatre – he was later caught committing adultery. A different example mentions a merchant dreaming of washing his face with wine, and who later found his stocks of wine went bad. Artemidorus comments that wasting something by using it improperly in a dream indicates misfortune.<sup>399</sup> Such an inappropriate use can also be seen in another dream, in which a runner who previously won a crown for sprint at the Olympic games saw himself washing his feet in the crown as if it was a wash basin. In a later competition, he lost and was disgraced. The commentary to this explains that this was because in the dream he dishonoured his former crown.<sup>400</sup>

The examples mentioned above indicate a number of things about the attitude to bathing and accepted behaviour in the context of bathing and washing. It is not difficult to see that practically all of the presented dream interpretations are strongly grounded in everyday practice and experience, as these were crucial for Artemidorus' methodology. What is perhaps even more interesting is the fact that a later dreambook (dated to between 4th and 6th centuries), the *Oneirocriticon* of Daniel, devoted very little attention to bathing; one of its entries merely states that seeing a bathtub, or bathing in one signified confusion, without providing further details – and that building a bathtub meant distress.<sup>401</sup> The only other remark that might be relevant here concerns a dream vision of taking off one's clothes. It is interpreted as a good omen for the sick, but bad for all others.<sup>402</sup> It is similar to Artemidorus' remark, who

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<sup>397</sup> Artemidorus, *The interpretation of dreams*, 1.76.

<sup>398</sup> Artemidorus, *The interpretation of dreams*, 2.4.

<sup>399</sup> Artemidorus, *The interpretation of dreams*, 4.41.

<sup>400</sup> Artemidorus, *The interpretation of dreams*, 5.55.

<sup>401</sup> *The Oneirocriticon of Daniel. The dreambook of the holy prophet Daniel with the help of the Holy God, according to the alphabet*, nos. 71, 74 in: Steven M. Oberhelm, *Dreambooks in Byzantium Six Oneirocritica in translation, with commentary and introduction*, Aldershot 2008.

<sup>402</sup> *The Oneirocriticon of Daniel...*, no. 14.

interpreted losing one's clothing in a negative light, unless the dreamer already was in a difficult situation – in which case the clothes symbolised the surrounding evils and problems, and their loss meant good things.<sup>403</sup> Still, one should not draw far-reaching conclusions from the brevity of remarks on bathing in Daniel's dream book, as the whole text is much shorter and more general than that of Artemidorus and completely devoid of detailed explanations of particular visions; it dispenses with the older tradition of careful and detail explanation of dreams in favour of highly generalised and concise remarks.

Finally, a brief remark on a minor event that took place during Belisarius' campaign in North Africa involving, again belief in omens. It does not concern bathing directly; however, given how much attention ancient authors devoted to natural springs, and the connection thereof with bathing (especially when a spring was famed for miraculous properties), it should be justified to address the relevant *passus*. The passage describing the event is from Procopius, and relates<sup>404</sup> finding of a spring by Roman soldiers. They found an abundant source of water when preparing fortifications near Byzantium, and the amount of water it provided proved to be sufficient for the needs of the Byzantine army. Furthermore, Belisarius, perhaps persuaded by Procopius, apparently considered finding the spring a good omen (or, at least, decided to present the discovery to his troops as such). Successes indeed followed. A. Cameron noted that the way Procopius presented the events during the expedition and his own attitude was to stress the divine approval for the re-conquering of Africa.<sup>405</sup> The reason for this might have been either genuine belief that this was the case, or a conscious literary choice, expressing author's somewhat (genuine or otherwise) naïve piety.

### ***Bathing in the Jewish community***

Somewhat aside from the population of the Roman Empire, in terms of culture and customs, were its Jewish inhabitants. With numerous religious rules regulating matters of ritual and physical purity, a few remarks on the impact these had on the Jewish bathing customs should not appear out of place.

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<sup>403</sup> Artemidorus, *The interpretation of dreams*, 2.3.

<sup>404</sup> Procopius, *History*, 3, 15, 34

<sup>405</sup> A. Cameron, *Procopius...*, p. 173.



The Jewish texts regulating bathing can be found in Mishnah, Tosefta and other Talmudic commentaries. A bath-house was seen as one of the necessary institutions in a city, for ritual reasons – but Jews also frequented gentile establishments, as can be seen from a relatively well-known passage from Mishnah. Rabban Gamaliel, questioned about bathing in a bath-house of Aphrodite, replied that the bath-house was not made for Aphrodite, but that the statue was made as a decoration. Furthermore, he explained that since the statue was not treated with respect offered to cult idols – in fact, gentiles urinated in its presence, removing any doubt about the purely decorative role of the statue.<sup>406</sup> Therefore, prohibitions concerning idols did not apply.<sup>407</sup> As for the gentiles themselves, while several forms of interaction between them and the Jews were prohibited, bathing was not one of them; the usual contact in a bath-house, even if physically close, was not problematic in terms of moral or ritual purity,<sup>408</sup> with an exception of a situation when a Jew and a gentile would be sharing such space on their own.<sup>409</sup>

Areas where hot springs could be found were generally associated with frivolity and moral dissolution; places like Hammat Gader and Emmaus are mentioned as famous for their hot springs. Such attitude is quite in line with the reputation the more famous resorts, such as Baiae, had at the time, but is an interesting contrast to the general depiction of places of healing that were considered to be miraculous by Christians (such as the Emmaus-Nicopolis). That said, S. Hoss mentions that some rabbis wanting to discuss legal issues would meet at baths, to avoid drawing attention of the authorities to themselves.<sup>410</sup>

An important question related to bathing was nakedness – considered an obstacle for performing various religious functions (like studying torah or praying, as well as wearing the *tefillin*, phylacteries containing scrolls with inscribed passages from the Torah). The matter has been discussed to some extent by M. L. Satlow; what is of the greatest interest here is the conclusion that a bath-house was not necessarily unsuitable for religious activity – provided that all of those present in a given room

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<sup>406</sup> *The Mishnah*, J. Neusner, (ed.), Yale University Press 1998, *Abodah Zarah* 3.4.

<sup>407</sup> S. Hoss, *Baths and bathing. The culture of bathing and the baths and thermae in Palestine from the Hasmoneans to the Moslem conquest*, Oxford 2005p. 71, M. L. Satlow, “Jewish constructions of nakedness in Late Antiquity”, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 116, no. 3 (1997), p. 435.

<sup>408</sup> J. Klawans, “Notions of gentile impurity in ancient Judaism”, *Association of Jewish Studies Review*, vol. 20, no. 2 (1995), pp. 285-312.

<sup>409</sup> *The Tosefta*, J. Neusner (ed.), Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 2002, *Abodah Zarah* 3.4 E.

<sup>410</sup> S. Hoss, *Baths and bathing...*, p. 69.

were clothed (i.e. had their genitals covered).<sup>411</sup> Regulations concerning such matters do strongly imply that at least some of the Jews did bathe completely naked, though S. Hoss states that a cloth around the hips seems to have been more common.<sup>412</sup> Furthermore, she mentions that women were discouraged from bathing in public baths, as this might have been a cause for divorce and the loss of her *ketubah* (previously agreed sum to be paid by the husband in case of a divorce); according to another interpretation, this would happen only if the woman behaved in a clearly improper manner,<sup>413</sup> and given clear remarks on the subject of female nudity in public bath-houses in *Mishnah*,<sup>414</sup> it would seem the latter interpretation is correct.

Bathing on Sabbath was not, itself, forbidden, although it was restricted in a number of ways: the heating of water, carrying of bathing implements and helping others in washing were among the prohibited activities – this still allowed for bathing in the seawater and in baths supplied by hot springs. The differences between the Jewish and Roman bathing customs were not reflected in the construction of the baths. Reception of Roman bath-houses by the Jews was generally good.<sup>415</sup> Other limitations on bathing were related to fasting. During certain fasts bathing was outright prohibited – although this was not required in all cases.<sup>416</sup> Similarly, mourners were to avoid bathing in principle, however bathing was deemed acceptable by some rabbis if it was done for health reasons.<sup>417</sup>

Briefly discussing Christian bathing life, Hoss points out to the similarities in the pragmatic approach towards bathing exhibited by the followers of the newer religion.<sup>418</sup> The gymnasia, associated with paganism, were seen in a highly negative light; the last mention of a gymnasium in Egypt comes from 370 CE. Christians continued to attribute the curative powers of certain places to supernatural forces, although with the difference that they were now associated with saints rather than pagan deities.<sup>419</sup> Abstaining from bathing (alousia) became commendable over the

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<sup>411</sup> M. L. Satlow, “Jewish constructions...”, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, pp. 432-433, S. Hoss, *Baths and bathing...*, p. 75.

<sup>412</sup> S. Hoss, *Baths and bathing...*, p. 76.

<sup>413</sup> S. Hoss, *Baths and bathing...*, p. 76.

<sup>414</sup> *The Mishnah*, *Ketubot* 7.8.

<sup>415</sup> S. Hoss, *Baths and bathing...*, p. 79.

<sup>416</sup> *The Mishnah*, *Taanit* 1.4-1.7.

<sup>417</sup> *The Mishnah*, *Berakhot* 2.6.

<sup>418</sup> S. Hoss, *Baths and bathing...*, pp. 81-83.

<sup>419</sup> A. Berger, *Das Bad...*, pp. 78-80.

course of the fourth century, under the influence of ascetics.<sup>420</sup> There also are records of baths being closed for the time of mourning (such as after the death of Constantine in 337).

## ***Conclusions***

Bathing played an important role in the religious discourse of the Christians for a number of reasons. It shared superficial similarities with Christianity's rite of baptism, and thus provided a wealth of already familiar vocabulary and expressions that could be easily adapted in describing and explaining of baptism itself. When contrasted with the rite, everyday bathing was invariably presented as inferior, imperfect, occasionally even entirely redundant; the miraculous effects of baptism, on the other hand, are underlined and praised. The perceived sanctity and importance of baptism had wide-reaching consequences: the rite could be befouled if administered by heretics, and thus harm, rather than help. The rite's apparent simplicity, similarity to mundane washing and the lack of any particular signs of supernatural involvement have also been used to mock baptism by opponents of Christianity.

The language of bathing was occasionally extended to martyrdom, in cases when "baptism" by the martyr's own blood was discussed. On the occasion when bathing appeared in the description of martyrdom, its usual connotations, that of peaceful and pleasant environment, was reversed to create a surprising and shocking narrative – a carefully constructed effect that would not be nearly as effective without drawing on the well-established image. Bath-houses also served as a backdrop to a number of supernatural events, ranging from the deaths of blasphemers to miraculous healings. The places associated with healing often had a longer history: springs to which Christians went to bathe, hoping to regain health with the assistance of saints, were often frequented by non-Christians, seeking aid of various deities, in the earlier centuries. Occasionally, baths appear in narratives of miracles simply as a location in which a supernatural event occurred, their names preserved to emphasise the reality of the miracle.

Christians, in general, did not reject the communal aspect of bathing; while the persecutions still lasted, it provided a means of integration and facilitated co-existence, albeit not devoid of risks moral in nature, and therefore treated with some

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<sup>420</sup> On *alousia*, also see F. Yegul, *Bathin in the Roman world*, p. 206.

caution. Once Christianity became fully legal, little changed. Deeply ingrained in daily routines, bathing was simply another element of secular life – necessary for those who did not reject the society as whole, potentially distracting from godliness, but hardly something to be abhorred. There was nothing preventing the use of bath-houses for conducting secular nor, indeed, pious activities. While the ownership of bath-houses was a clear sign of wealth, this wealth could be used to facilitate good works, and therefore did not automatically draw censure. It was certainly more pious to use one's wealth to directly assist the Church than to use it for mundane and secular purposes, such as bath-house building; but, in the end, the long-term profits of such investments did not uncommonly make their way to the Church.

Those Christians who rejected the society as whole and chose an ascetic lifestyle did reject bathing; however, this was simply a consequence of rejecting everything that could provide pleasure and distract one from God. The most objectionable aspects of using bathing establishments were the risk of temptation arising from the presence of members of the opposite sex there, followed by the relaxation and pleasure that threatened self-discipline. For the ordinary Christians, however, only moderation and avoidance of active pleasure-seeking were advised – which was in line with advice concerning other daily activities, such as eating or drinking. Nakedness in a bath-house was a given, and not an issue in itself. Eventually, bath-houses started being used by Christians for charitable purposes: either for bathing of the poorest, or as a source of income for other Church-run activities.

As a major part of daily life, baths were incidentally witness to, or associated with, activities that might be described as superstitious. Unusual behaviours or occurrences could have been given deeper meanings, although in most such cases the fact that they happened in a bath-house was incidental; the places themselves were not given special significance – with the exception of dream books. In these, the appearance of a bath-house, or items or people linked with them, were interpreted in a reasoned and fairly straightforward manner, with the symbolic meaning derived from their everyday associations.

The Jewish population of the Empire made use of the Roman baths, and the social norms and attitudes of this community were quite similar to those displayed by Christians. Aside from a few specific rules pertaining to prayer and the Sabbath, Jews used bath-houses in the same manner as Christian Romans did.

## ***Chapter 3: Bathing in medicine***

### ***Introduction***

The chief aim of this chapter is to present a comprehensive overview of medicinal uses of bathing recommended by the Graeco-Roman medicine in Late Antiquity (with occasional references to treatments that would have been best performed in bath-houses) and to examine briefly the similarities and differences between the descriptions of treatments that involved bathing. To the best of my knowledge, such a collection of remarks on the uses of water, primarily bathing and washing, in late ancient medicine has not been previously attempted. I will be examining the uses of water in medicine from the general perspective of bathing practices, rather than from a medical point of view. Lacking professional medical knowledge, I would rather avoid making excessively speculative guesses, and leave the assessment of the actual efficacy of the ancient procedures to those better versed in medicine in general and balneotherapy in particular. Assembling together the various passages and remarks on bathing will, hopefully, assist those interested in examining ancient therapeutic methods from a medicinal perspective. It should be mentioned here that I have limited the extent of medical subjects dealt with in this chapter by largely excluding from it the study of afflictions classed by the ancient authors as ‘feminine’ (chiefly gynaecological and obstetrical matters). I found this large and complex topic deserving a separate study; since my study concentrates on bathing, analysing various gender issues that I would inevitably encounter would exceed by far its intended scope.

The extent of continuity in the medicinal uses of water and bathing throughout antiquity is quite astonishing – from the Hippocratic *Corpus* all the way to the late antique compendia. This may be in part ascribed to the high degree of traditionalism (broadly speaking) in medicine, although it could be equally, if not more, likely to be the case of continued use of well-tested and familiar therapies. Doctors who considerably deviated from the usual regimens were commented upon, and while some of them attained more widespread fame, occasionally a positive one, they remained rare, and attracted attention precisely because of unusual methods of treatment; a few of these practitioners will be mentioned further in the text.

An overview of the comments made about medicinal uses of bathing made by authors who were not trained doctors themselves, at the end of this chapter, is going to serve a dual purpose: it will provide an indication of how widespread medicinal bathing was in practice (hinting at the extent to which the written down prescriptions were actually used). Furthermore, it will show the extent to which the society (or at least the more highly educated parts of it) was versed, if at all, in the medical science.

It should be mentioned that, when approaching the task of writing this chapter, I have considered attempting to identify the diseases described by the ancient authors using modern day terminology. In a few cases, this was possible to accomplish without much ambiguity, however due to lack of sufficient knowledge of clinical medicine on my part and major difficulties in adopting a sound methodology for this task, I have decided to employ a more basic approach and presented the diseases and their symptoms by referring to the descriptions of the ancient authors. While I have occasionally postulated an opinion about what the described ailment may be classified as by modern medicine, such assertions should be treated as a layman's guesses, based only on cursory research. Retrospective diagnosis in general is recognized as an extremely difficult, perhaps impossible, if not downright counterproductive endeavour, even for a medical professional.<sup>421</sup> K.-H. Leven argues that the change in pathogens, as well as the 'virgin soil' phenomenon (making a population's first exposure to a pathogen often wildly different from subsequent symptoms), make correct identification of many of the diseases impossible. The only potentially beneficial use of retrospective diagnosis, according to Leven, is in attempting to create models that would help to imagine the overall impact of an epidemic. Such cautious approach is, of course, less necessary in situations when clearly identifiable, unambiguous problems (such as injuries) are described, as their causes are clear (and often also irrelevant to the efficacy of the treatment).

Quite often washing or bathing was only a minor element of the treatment; however, as this thesis' focus is specifically on bathing, I am only going to mention other elements of the therapy in passing. The order in which the described ailments are arranged is dictated primarily by the type of bathing treatment used in therapy, followed by the arrangement of the treatments in Paul of Aegina's compendium

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<sup>421</sup> K.-H. Leven, "'At times these ancient facts seem to lie before me like a patient on a hospital bed' – retrospective diagnosis and ancient medical history", pp. 375-378, 383-384., in: H. F. J. Horstmanshoff, M Stol (eds.), *Magic and rationality in ancient near eastern and Graeco-Roman medicine*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2004, pp. 369-386.

(itself, generally, following the order of describing treatments of various parts of the body from head to feet). In cases when the treatment involved multiple types of bathing and washing, references to it will be made in separate sections of this chapter.

The secondary literature on Roman medicine is extensive; as my focus is on primary source analysis, I am going to use secondary material in a limited fashion, primarily to provide here a brief overview of the key features of Roman medicine in Late Antiquity – a basic context for the subject at hand.

Prior to Greek influence, Romans did already possess a system of medicine, although it lacked organisation.<sup>422</sup> The impact of Greek medical science transformed it considerably, expanding the scope of treatments, introducing new terminology and resulting in a reshaping of medical Latin, effectively creating a ‘unified’ Graeco-Roman medicine<sup>423</sup> and resulted in the emergence of four major ‘schools’ of medicine (‘methodistic’, ‘empiric’, ‘dogmatic’ and ‘pneumatic’). These approaches to the medical craft eventually came to be combined, and Galen represents such a ‘mixed’ approach, referred to as ‘eclectic’ in the scholarly literature (although the presence of the traditionally established schools is well attested until much later).<sup>424</sup> By the mid-seventh century, practically all of the Roman medicine was dominated by Galenism, with its theory of the three major systems within the human body (central to these were brain, heart and liver respectively) and the assumption that health is dependent on the balance of the four Hippocratic humours (blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile). The Galenic approach was easily reconciled with monotheism (the belief that the cures were placed by the Creator on earth for humans to benefit from them), and therefore generally acceptable to Christians as well;<sup>425</sup> as is discussed later in this chapter, such views were even casually included into some of the Christian rhetoric.

Aside from the more famous professionals, many of the doctors in the Roman Empire (especially those practising among the less well-off and taking care of slaves) were slaves themselves, often specially purchased and trained in the profession chosen by their owners. Training slave doctors was seen as a sound investment. Laws regulating prices of such slaves made their way into codes compiled during Late Antiquity, indicating continuity in presence of slaves in the medical profession.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>422</sup> J. Scarborough, *Roman medicine*, London, Southampton 1969, p. 24.

<sup>423</sup> V. Nutton, *Ancient medicine*, Routledge, London 2004, pp. 157-158, 171.

<sup>424</sup> J. Scarborough, *Roman medicine*, pp. 45, 51.

<sup>425</sup> V. Nutton, *Ancient medicine*, p. 302.

<sup>426</sup> V. Nutton, *Ancient medicine*, pp. 165, 294.

The texts examined here include – primarily – the works of Hippocrates and Paul of Aegina (the author of the most widely read compendium of medical knowledge of the time, *Επιτομής ιατρικής βιβλίο ἑπτὰ*, better known under the titles such as *Epitomae medicinae libri VII* or *De re medica libri septem* of which the most useful for me will be books 1-4, heavily reliant on Galen and Oribasius). As Hippocrates and Paul are the key authors for my research on medicinal uses of baths, I have devoted to them and their works more attention in this text. It may be noted here that we do not possess much information about Paul himself, beside the place of his origin, the fact that he was active in Alexandria and remained there after the Arab invasion in 642.<sup>427</sup> He was probably a Christian, and aside from the compendium, he wrote several treatises dealing with podiatry – though none of these survive.<sup>428</sup> The impact of his work, however, can hardly be overstated; the collected medical knowledge assembled by Paul was extensively studied by both Byzantine as well as Arabic doctors, and was rediscovered in the West in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, with the publications of the text in Greek in 1528 in Venice.

I will now briefly discuss the other prominent medical authors whose works I have used in writing this chapter.

Some of the major sources for this chapter are the works of Galen, one of the most renowned Roman physicians and philosophers, born in Pergamum in 129. He died in Rome, most likely around 210. He is considered the creator of medical theory including an adaptation of Hippocratic humoral theory, and included in his treatises ideas taken from Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. He became a source for Byzantine physicians, including, i.a., Oribasius (discussed below), who, while writing his synopsis of Galenic medicine, was also including information on contemporary medical practice. This tendency continued through the encyclopaedias of Aetius of Amida, Alexander of Tralles, and – ultimately – Paul of Aegina. Later authors not only quoted Galen's works, but also compared them with Dioscorides' (military surgeon during Nero's reign) *Materia medica* (which, incidentally, also provided Paul with much information for his seventh book on pharmacology). Such an approach was

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<sup>427</sup> J. Scarborough, A.-M. Talbot, "Paul of Aegina", in: A. P. Kazhdan (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, Oxford University Press 1991.

<sup>428</sup> P. E. Pormann, "Paulos of Aigina" in: P. T Keyser, G. L. Irby-Massie, *The encyclopaedia of ancient natural scientists*, London 2008, p. 629.



first adopted by Oribasius and continued to be used by most Byzantine encyclopaedists.<sup>429</sup>

Oribasius can be credited with transferring doctrines of Galen into the Byzantine (post-Late Antiquity) period. He was born in Pergamum around 325, died after 395/6. His life was the subject of one of the biographies of contemporary pagan philosophers by Eunapius of Sardis.<sup>430</sup> He was taught by Zeno of Cyprus, a well-known doctor and teacher of his day. He became a friend of Julian during the future emperor's confinement in Asia Minor. In 355, he became Julian's personal physician and librarian. On Julian's order, Oribasius summarised Galen's works (this task was completed after 361), however, these particular works, unlike his *Collectiones medicae* (Ἱατρικαὶ συναγωγαί), have not survived. He accompanied Julian on the fateful expedition of 363 and was present at the emperor's deathbed. Oribasius quoted verbatim from cited medical works and paired each quotation with another of similar content, not necessarily from the same tract or author, as is seen in his streamlining of Galen's writings. Oribasius' version of Galen was generally followed by Aetius of Amida and Paul of Aegina, and it was in such form that Photius (the 9<sup>th</sup>-century patriarch of Constantinople, perhaps best known for the compilation of extracts from nearly three hundred works) knew Galen's writings. Arabic physicians used Oribasius in translation, and by the 5<sup>th</sup> century he had been rendered into Latin.<sup>431</sup>

Aetius of Amida was one of the most renowned physicians of the Late Roman Empire. Born in the city with which he is associated, he was predominantly active around 530–560 and worked chiefly in Alexandria and Constantinople. He wrote an encyclopaedia of medicine, an impressive compilation of 16 books (which later also became known as *Tetrabiblion*), which included numerous quotations from earlier authors, both Greek and Roman, sometimes paraphrasing their text in a more accessible style. The work addresses all major medical issues known at the time.<sup>432</sup>

While these three authors, being the chief sources for Paul of Aegina, certainly deserve some attention, the decision to also focus on the Hippocratic works perhaps deserves some additional explanation. The Hippocratic corpus lacks a single clear conceptual framework and the scope of knowledge it contains is extremely broad, the

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<sup>429</sup> J. Scarborough, "Galen", in: *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A. P. Kazhdan, Oxford 1991, p. 816.

<sup>430</sup> Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists*. Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists*, transl. W. C. Wright, Loeb Classical Library 1921.

<sup>431</sup> J. Scarborough, "Oribasios", in: *The Oxford Dictionary...*, p. 1533.

<sup>432</sup> T. E. Gregory, J. Scarborough, "Aetios of Amida", in: *The Oxford Dictionary...*, p. 30.

result is an unsystematic presentation of information; this is also characteristic of some of the particular Hippocratic works: aphorisms, sayings and maxims.<sup>433</sup> As for the question of the actual authorship of the *Corpus*, V. Langhof rejects it as misleading, pointing out that it is essentially impossible to answer due to the nature of writing during that period. In this context, the lack of the concept of intellectual property, common reusing of material, the re-working of texts by other authors and other associated difficulties prevent authoritative identification of an original source.<sup>434</sup> These questions, however, do not change the fact that the *Corpus* remains the most important source of knowledge about early Greek medicine; and while that collection of texts was assembled and completed over a millennium before Paul's compendium, I found these works share a considerable number of similarities in the practical approach to particular ailments, at least as far as the use of bathing, washing and water in general is concerned; there are, of course, exceptions, and these will be discussed as well. Furthermore, the Hippocratic *Corpus* became a major source of inspiration for Galen, and many other physicians, during the Roman imperial period – and whose texts then, in turn, have been compiled by the medical authors of the Late Antiquity and beyond (such as the discussed Paul of Aegina). Such transition of knowledge appears to have been typical of the period – various compendia and encyclopaedias gained in popularity as the authors strove to catalogue and preserve the ancient wisdom – often leaving very little of their own mark on the compilation. By the sixth century, the most heated theoretical debates on the human nature (and, by extension, the most efficacious ways of restoring patients to health) had become largely a thing of the past. Similarly, the efforts of medical authors seem to have turned from original research and its propagation (something in which Galen excelled) to perfecting the already known cures and treatments and writing extensive manuals. While perhaps this particular remark is now mostly of antiquarian interest, it might be worth noting that T. C. Allbutt blamed, in part, authors of such compendia for the subsequent loss of the more detailed works of earlier authors, as these were later deemed excessively wordy or unnecessarily detailed, and were simply not

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<sup>433</sup> V. Langhof, "Structure and genesis of some Hippocratic treatises", p. 220 in: *Magic and rationality...*, pp. 219-275.

<sup>434</sup> V. Langhof, "Structure and genesis...", p. 257.

copied, due to existence of their abbreviated versions.<sup>435</sup> On the other hand, it is precisely because of this process one may treat such medical compendia as at least somewhat reliable indicators of the state of medical art among the majority of its practitioners who, while usually had access to the more commonly available encyclopaedias, would not have been likely to have a ready access to the more highly specialised treatises, if only because of the high costs involved.

There remains the question of the extent to which such compendia presented the current state of medical knowledge, and the degree to which they simply copied older authorities. The evidence of wide-spread study of the text indicates that the compendium remained a source of practical knowledge for the practitioners for a very long time. This does not, of course, mean that parts of the work did not become outdated or impractical to implement over time – as a whole, however, the encyclopaedic and practical nature of the treatise meant that it remained an easy to use for centuries after the date of its composition. It may be noted here that while the great majority of the compendium was derived from the earlier works, numerous remarks and comments in the book devoted to surgery indicate a considerable degree of personal expertise and constitute a significant original input on Paul's part.<sup>436</sup>

In the previous chapter, I have partially examined the links between religion and medicine, in the context of miraculous healing linked with water and bathing. Here, I wish to briefly return to that subject, this time from the perspective of links between medicine and belief in supernatural healing factors, with emphasis on places associated with healing (sanctuaries devoted to healing in particular).

In human consciousness, water and healing were inextricably intertwined from the earliest antiquity. A great number of temples and sanctuaries devoted to the gods of healing were located by, or incorporated, springs and water sources famed for their healing properties. It should therefore not be surprising, then, that the association between water and health was still strong during Late Antiquity, and indeed survived in many shapes and forms in Byzantine and Islamic cultures, its presence remaining in the Western Europe as well; this trend was more recently (from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onward) revived in the Western world in the form of resorts and spas (to speak only of that part of the world; Japanese bath-houses, especially those using thermal waters,

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<sup>435</sup> T. C. Allbutt, "Byzantine medicine – Finlayson memorial lecture", p. 413, in: T. C. Allbutt, *Greek medicine in Rome. The Fitzpatrick lectures on the history of medicine delivered at the Royal College of Physicians of London in 1909-1910, with other historical essays*, London 1921, pp. 389-424.

<sup>436</sup> P. E. Pormann, "Paulos of Aigina" in: P. T. Keyser, G. L. Irby-Massie, *The encyclopaedia*, p. 629.

remain a popular way of relaxing to this day). Ancient examples of temple complexes that included springs or baths include Epidaurus<sup>437</sup> and Menouthis – the latter was eventually replaced by a Christian church (dedicated to the healing saints Cyrus and John) – a fairly typical example of Christianising the sacred landscape.<sup>438</sup> The question whether the cult of saints at Menouthis was invented from scratch or merely fostered to overshadow the local cult of Isis remains; such measures may have appeared necessary to the local Christians, as the fame of the site attracted pagans for many years after the temple's closure. Many of the more than a hundred healing shrines from Italy (dedicated chiefly to Asclepius,<sup>439</sup> but also Diana of Nemi) were located directly by mineral springs. Perhaps one of the most famous sites of healing was the Asclepieion on Kos, located outside the city; the complex included of three temples, fountains with sulphurous water, and later acquired Roman style baths. The building works took place over the course of six centuries, starting sometime during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. At Corinth, a small shrine was built in the vicinity of underground basins, and its location not far from the sea allowed the possibility of using it for bathing; evidence of at least ritualistic bathing is present. Off the coast of Attica, a sanctuary at Oropus was dedicated to Amphiaraos and Hygieia, and remained in use for a long time. The sacred spring nearby, interestingly enough, was not used for rituals, but attracted offerings in the form of coins. The shrine of Asclepius in Athens was built near a natural spring, and the site retained its sacred character during Christian times – as a location of a church to saints associated with healing, Cosmas and Damian. A temple to Asclepius at Aegae (Aigai) was razed, and replaced by a church in 331 AD.<sup>440</sup> A similar transformation occurred in Rome itself, as the original temple to Asclepius on an island on the river Tiber was replaced by a church to St. Bartholomew and a hospital.<sup>441</sup> In general, the process of replacing the old deities with saints or angels was gradual, but the sacred, previously pagan, places tended to retain their 'supernatural' character under a new, Christian, guise.

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<sup>437</sup> A. Cruse, *Roman medicine*, Tempus Publishing 2004, p. 26.

<sup>438</sup> A. Cruse, *Roman medicine*, p. 139, D. Montserrat, "'Carrying on the work of the earlier firm': doctors, medicine and Christianity in the *Thaumata* of Sophronius of Jerusalem", p. 230 in: H. King (ed.), *Health in antiquity*, Routledge 2005, pp. 230-242, V. Nutton, *Ancient medicine*, p. 305.

<sup>439</sup> Focusing predominantly on the Roman period, I have decided to consistently use the Roman spelling of the deity's name.

<sup>440</sup> V. Nutton, *Ancient medicine*, p. 303.

<sup>441</sup> P. Barefoot, "Buildings for health: then and now" pp. 207-212 in: *Health in antiquity*, pp. 205-215, V. Nutton, *Ancient medicine*, p. 160.

It may be noted here that treatments prescribed at such sanctuaries commonly included hot or cold baths.<sup>442</sup> Associations of Hercules as a ‘helper’ deity led to him being associated with medicine as well, and Herculean motifs appear on both medical instruments and bathing utensils.<sup>443</sup>

The rise of Christianity changed attitudes to health and medicine to a certain extent: the general understanding was that illnesses should be cured, whether by medicine or prayer, but at least some Christians were prepared to accept illness as a means to keep their body, and its desires, under control.<sup>444</sup> While it is difficult to establish the views of ‘ordinary’ Christians, many of the Church authors expressed ideas on medicine, ranging from acceptance (with implicit or explicit statements on the dependence of the efficacy of cures on God’s will), through cautious assent, to hostility – although the latter was quite rare.<sup>445</sup> Not all such apprehensiveness should be taken at face value, however; many of the stereotype-based stories in which the lay doctors fleece their patients without being able to provide them with a cure serve more as a build-up to saints’ intervention and miracles than outright condemnation of medicine and its supporters (unless said supporters happened also to mock Christianity and its saints).<sup>446</sup> One such story has been passed down by Sophronius: Gesius, an Alexandrian professor of rhetoric, despite his baptism, mocked Christianity and claimed that the supposedly miraculous cures were simply taken from standard Hippocratic and Galenic medicine. After becoming ill, he was eventually humbled and cured by the saints Cyrus and John.<sup>447</sup> Stories of this nature tend to focus on the lack of belief in Christian saints’ powers and ‘faith’ in lay medicine of those who are being criticised, and the superiority of Christian miracles is presented with unquestioning certainty. It should be noted here that a fairly common way of obtaining an allegedly miraculous cure was to bathe in, or drink from a (considered to be sacred) spring<sup>448</sup> – something, indeed, well within the parameters of lay medicine. As is discussed later in this chapter, *The Miracles of St. Artemios*<sup>449</sup> provide other

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<sup>442</sup> A. Cruse, *Roman medicine*, p. 29.

<sup>443</sup> A. Cruse, *Roman medicine*, p. 152.

<sup>444</sup> G. Clark, “The health of the spiritual athlete”, p. 228, in: *Health in antiquity*, pp. 216-229.

<sup>445</sup> V. Nutton, *Ancient medicine*, p. 306.

<sup>446</sup> D. Montserrat, “Carrying on the work...”, p. 233, V. Nutton, *Ancient medicine*, p. 306.

<sup>447</sup> Sophronius of Jerusalem, *Laudatio SS. Cyri et Joannis, martyrurum*, Bringel P. (ed.), *Panegyrique des saints Cyr et Jean, Patrologia Orientalis* 51.1 No 226. Turnhout, Brepols, 2008; V. Nutton, *Ancient medicine*, p. 305.

<sup>448</sup> D. Montserrat, “Carrying on the work...”, p. 235.

<sup>449</sup> *The miracles of St. Artemios...*, mm. 3 and 20, to mention only two.

excellent examples (discussed in the previous chapter at greater length) of ‘miraculous’ cures being obtained by following an advice or being subjected to treatment from a supernatural source that might have, otherwise, come from a medical practitioner. On the other hand, even the predominantly lay medicine in antiquity was not free from certain ‘supernatural’ elements. One of the Hippocratic works, entitled *Regimen IV* or *Dreams* differs from the other three *Regimens* in advising regimen that is based on dreams of the patients, rather than on physical symptoms.<sup>450</sup> Its author believes that unusual dreams, ones that are in contrast to what can be observed when one is awake, signify problems with health. For example, when in a dream the stars, planets, moon or sun appear to be disfigured, have disappeared, are arrested in revolution or appear as through mist or cloud, it signifies problems with health caused by excessive moisture and phlegm.<sup>451</sup> Dry regimen is advised here, including vapour baths. Apart from unusual phenomena in the sky, the dreamer may also see floods (which indicate excess of moisture) or black and scorched land (which signifies that the body is too dry).<sup>452</sup> Accordingly, dry and moist regimen is advised, including numerous baths in the latter case. Another group of unusual dreams includes one in which “monstrous bodies”<sup>453</sup> appear, indicating surfeit of unaccustomed food and calling for emetics, light diet, hot baths and rest, and one in which the dreamer sees enemy soldiers and strange monsters, which indicate disease or oncoming madness, in which case hot baths should be avoided. It is worth mentioning this work in the discussion; such an approach seems to have continued in some form or other throughout antiquity. Later dream books (such as the previously discussed of Artemidorus)<sup>454</sup> employed similar ‘methodology’ and expanded it to predict good or bad events in general. What is perhaps most interesting about *Regimen IV*, however, is the general consistency of the prescribed cures to those listed in the previous *Regimens*, and the fact that the gods, while occasionally mentioned, are not being relied on here as a source of health – they are invoked only to aid in preventing a disease from occurring in the first place.<sup>455</sup>

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<sup>450</sup> Hippocrates, *Diaeta IV*, transl. W. H. S. Jones, in: E. H. Warmington (ed.), *Hippocrates*, vol. 4, LCL, London, Cambridge-Massachusetts 1967 (later: *Diaeta IV* P. J. van der Eijk, “Divination, prognosis and prophylaxis: the Hippocratic work ‘On Dreams’ (*De Victu* 4) and its near eastern background”, p. 195 in: *Magic and rationality...*, pp. 187-218.

<sup>451</sup> Hippocrates, *Diaeta IV*, 89.

<sup>452</sup> Hippocrates, *Diaeta IV*, 90.

<sup>453</sup> Hippocrates, *Diaeta IV*, 93.

<sup>454</sup> Artemidorus, *The interpretation of dreams*, transl. R. J. White, Noyes Press, Park Ridge 1975.

<sup>455</sup> P. J. van der Eijk, “Divination, prognosis and prophylaxis...”, pp. 188-189; 202-203.

On the other hand, religious medicine was not free from influence of rational medicine, by any stretch.<sup>456</sup> Reaching back to Aelius Aristides, one of the most famous valetudinarians of antiquity, we find he strongly relied on the dream visions of Asclepius for his cures. These dreams would have been subsequently analysed by Aelius' doctors and friends, and the god appears to possess medical knowledge consistent with that of the doctors. Here, at least, the god does not provide healing directly (as he was deemed to do in descriptions from Epidauros; doctors are not mentioned there, and do not appear to have been practicing in the temple area).<sup>457</sup> Indeed, it seems to have been fairly common that the god's activity would be limited to diagnosing the illness and prescribing an (effective) cure.<sup>458</sup>

It needs to be said that salubrity of the Roman public baths has been brought into question; main arguments include insufficient flow of water to keep the communal pools clean, and the lead lining of pipes that caused poisoning.<sup>459</sup> N. Morley's paper provides a useful if brief overview of the subject,<sup>460</sup> in which he notes the disparity between the idealised picture of a Roman city emerging from treatises, compared to the one reconstructed from archaeological evidence and casual remarks of Roman poets, suggesting that while the baths themselves might have been unhygienic by modern standards, they would still have contributed to the reduction of the number of potential disease carriers – parasites – and that the freely flowing drinking water from aqueducts (often constructed primarily to provide water for the baths rather than specifically drinking water) would have been healthier than that provided from wells or rivers. It is worth keeping in mind that fairly often, as was mentioned before, the construction of an aqueduct was motivated by the necessity of providing considerable amounts of water to run the larger, more extravagant baths. The fresh drinking water was in such cases more of a (certainly welcome) concomitant benefit of the construction rather than its point, and therefore one may well add the availability of clean drinking water in many of the smaller cities to the list of indirect health benefits arising from the presence of bath-houses. Furthermore,

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<sup>456</sup> H. F. J. Horstmanshoff, "Asclepius and temple medicine in Aelius Aristides' *Sacred tales*", p. 339, in: *Magic and rationality...*, pp. 325-341.

<sup>457</sup> H. F. J. Horstmanshoff, "Asclepius and temple...", p. 330.

<sup>458</sup> H. E. Sigerist, *A history of medicine*, vol. 2, Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 67.

<sup>459</sup> S. C. Fox, "Health in Hellenistic and Roman times: the case studies of Paphos, Cyprus and Corinth, Greece", p. 60 in: *Health in antiquity*, pp. 59-82.

<sup>460</sup> N. Morley, "The salubrity of the Roman city", pp. 192-193, 198 in: *Health in antiquity*, pp. 205-215.

John Scarborough's remark on the similarity between the careful planning of baths and the legionary *valetudinaria* (garrison hospitals) is worth mentioning.<sup>461</sup> The field hospitals included areas for bathing, and the impact of the experience of bath-house architects on the development of hospitals should not be underestimated. There is a clear interplay between the development of the two institutions, and in all likelihood it was the hospital that benefited more from solutions used in bathing establishments, and not *vice versa*. This should be kept in mind when considering the impact of baths on Roman medicine in general, and when associations between baths and healing are discussed. To what extent such similarities were noted among the general population is difficult to establish, but one can easily imagine that a veteran soldier returning to his community would recall times spent in a *valetudinarium* when enjoying his afternoon bath.

### ***Importance of water in medicine***

To speak of the health benefits of bathing, one should first examine the properties of the waters used for it; already for the earliest of the ancient medical authors, water was important for many reasons: as part of the environment in which people live (especially in *De Aere Aquis et Locis*),<sup>462</sup> as a drink, as a requisite for bathing, finally as part of a human being (*De Diaeta I*). A physician, in order to properly engage in his craft, needed to have been aware of a locality's natural conditions that had influence on its inhabitants. Bathing itself is also occasionally mentioned as one of the activities related to the medical profession in general. The Hippocratic author mentions arguments brought up people questioning the validity of medical craft: since the patients sometime get well without professional medical help, therefore it is luck, not medical help, that is the most important in getting back to health. The author in turn explains that the patient, unwittingly, might do the same thing as a physician would advise (bathing or refraining from it is given as an example) and regain health in accordance with the rules of the medical craft.<sup>463</sup> From all the possible measures that the ill person might have used, the author selected bathing to exemplify beneficial medical practices, showing at the same time its close links with medicine, pervasive availability and common associations in popular

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<sup>461</sup> J. Scarborough, *Roman medicine*, p. 77.

<sup>462</sup> Hippocrates, *De aere, aquis, locis*; transl. W. H. S. Jones in *Hippocrates*, vol. 1, 1948 (later in text *Aer.*).

<sup>463</sup> Hippocrates, *De arte*, 5.



consciousness with health. In this section, I will provide a general overview of the Hippocratic view on the properties of water; this holds relevance across the period of Late Antiquity, as it was adopted by the later authors with very few alterations.

The description of types of wind in *Airs...* mentions their effects on the water and provides a list of illnesses that are typical for places where particular winds are dominant: hot, southern winds tend to make water more brackish, and people affected by such a climate tend to suffer from numerous diseases, though not from acute ones;<sup>464</sup> Cold, northern winds make water hard and cold, and the diseases that accompany them are acute;<sup>465</sup> eastern and western winds are the healthiest ones, and they cause few problems; waters that are affected by them are clear and sweet-smelling.<sup>466</sup> The worst situation is that of people living in cities sheltered from eastern winds but exposed to both northern and southern winds; according to the author, in such places mists are plentiful and as they dissolve in water, they make it cloudy.<sup>467</sup>

The properties of water, however, seem to depend much more on the places from which they are drawn rather than on the dominant winds in the area; stagnant waters, coming from marshy lands, are described as having a tendency to be of bad colour and smell and are considered to be the worst ones: people drinking them suffer from numerous diseases, their intestines are stiff and hot which, in turn, makes them eat and drink much.<sup>468</sup> Waters coming from rocky terrains were also considered to be bad, as well as those from areas with hot springs or places where metals or minerals are abundant. Hard, and heating those who drink them, they cause constipation and are difficult to pass; but while the salty and hard waters are, in general, not healthy, they can be beneficial for those who have “soft bellies”, that is, the “moist” and phlegmatic people, since such water will “dry” them up; the author also mentions the popular belief that salty waters tend to be a laxative, but states that their effect is the opposite. The waters that flow from earthy hills and high places are deemed the best, as they come from very deep springs; especially good are those that flow in an eastern direction. This passage is practically the only one that is specifically about spring water in the Hippocratic corpus. While according to Hippocratic texts healthy people can drink practically any kind of water, those whose organs get easily heated will

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<sup>464</sup> Hippocrates, *Aer.*, 3.

<sup>465</sup> Hippocrates, *Aer.*, 4.

<sup>466</sup> Hippocrates, *Aer.*, 5.

<sup>467</sup> Hippocrates, *Aer.*, 6.

<sup>468</sup> Hippocrates, *Aer.*, 7.

benefit from the lightest and sweetest waters; also, such waters are best for cooking, as they are most solvent. The finest and clearest of all is rain water,<sup>469</sup> but it is also the one to become foul most quickly, so it needs to be boiled and purified; the author believes that rain water's tendency to become impure comes from the fact that it is "gathered by the sun" (it evaporates) from many sources, which include people and animals. The influence of the sun produces coction (πέψις); this term appears in many of the books of the *Corpus*, and it is always treated as a positive sign; it usually refers to the "humours", which need to be in balance – and mixed – for the person to be in good health. Often used in association with digestion, in case of water, coction indicates that the sun has removed the impurities (which, according to the ancient author, then became separated as the fog and mist). The waters coming from snow or ice are believed to be bad; an experiment is proposed: should water be left to freeze and then the ice melted, there would be much less water left than there was originally; the lightest, "best" part disappeared. This remark, quite clearly, stems from the fact that water in a solid state has a larger volume than in liquid form. The author of *Airs, Waters, Places* also believes that it is bad for health to drink many different types of water, and, similarly, to drink water from lakes or rivers that are fed by multiple streams and sources. In such cases, it is the wind that "strengthens" one of the types of water and makes it dominant; water of this type tends to be thick and carry sediments, causing kidney stones.<sup>470</sup> Later authors closely followed Hippocrates' when describing the properties of water; notes on them can be found in works of Aetius,<sup>471</sup> who in turn followed Rufus here, Oribasius,<sup>472</sup> Galen, and – eventually – Paul.<sup>473</sup>

In addition, the later authors categorised natural springs according to the dominant minerals present in their waters. Natural baths (or at least those using water from such springs) were to provide a variety of benefits to the bathers. The types of water listed by Paul are: nitrous, saline, aluminous, sulphurous, bituminous, copperish and ferruginous; some of the springs provide mixed waters.<sup>474</sup> In general, the mineral-rich springs are said to have desiccant and calefacient properties, and were therefore considered most beneficial for the humid and cold temperaments respectively, and as such, they were prescribed for ailments that were believed to result from the excess of

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<sup>469</sup> Hippocrates, *Aer.*, 8.

<sup>470</sup> Hippocrates, *Aer.*, 9.

<sup>471</sup> Aetius of Amida, *Libri medicinales* (later in text *Libri*), 1, 165.

<sup>472</sup> Oribasius, *Collectiones medicae*, 10 (later *Med. coll.*); *Euporistes*, 1, 14 (ch. 24).

<sup>473</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome de medicine libri vii* (later in text *Epitome*), 1, 50.

<sup>474</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 52.

humid and cold humours, and used whenever desiccative measures were observed to bring good results. The exact effects each type of water had are listed as well: nitrous and brackish waters are said to be especially good for the ailments of the head, defluxions of chest, watery stomach, various oedemas, swellings and collections of phlegm. Aluminous waters aid those spitting blood, vomiting, strong menstrual discharges and miscarriages. Waters containing sulphur are soothing and warm the nerves, relieving lassitude, but may also upset the stomach. Bituminous waters make the head heavy and dull the senses, but provide a steady degree of heat, and have soothing properties. Springs containing copper helped for problems with the mouth, tonsils, uvula and the eyes, while iron-rich waters aid those suffering from stomach and spleen afflictions. Additionally, the patient ought to immerse immediately the whole body, so that the initial effect of water would be the strongest: here, the curative effect was thought to depend on the “impression” the water made on the body, rather than absorption of the minerals from the water or the air. Properties of various types of waters are similarly listed by Oribasius<sup>475</sup> and Aetius.<sup>476</sup>

A rather different approach to water can be seen in the *Regimen*.<sup>477</sup> Here, the water was presented as part of the living organism: it is an element that nourishes everything, and is opposed to fire, which provides movement.<sup>478</sup> Neither of these can exist without the other, both contain an element of the other one, and everything that exists is a mixture of the two. This idea was in more than one way similar to the concept of yin-yang dualism, especially when one considers the obvious parallels: fire seems to be ‘male’ and water the ‘female’ element. In general, the perfect mix of the two elements was considered to produce the most intelligent (or sensible) people; dominance of water makes people slow-witted; that of fire, intelligent, but not constant, and in extreme cases susceptible to madness, or at least prone to display highly irregular behaviour.<sup>479</sup> In *Regimen II*<sup>480</sup> it is explained that, when used in bathing, fresh water has moistening and cooling properties, while salty water tends to warm up and dry the bather.

Apart from the remarks in *Airs, Waters, Places*, the different properties of different types of water seem to be ignored in other Hippocratic works, except for a

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<sup>475</sup> Oribasius, *Synopsis ad Eustathium filium* (later in text: *Synopsis*), 1, 29; *idem*, *Med. coll.* 10, 3ff.

<sup>476</sup> Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 3, 167.

<sup>477</sup> Hippocrates, *Diaeta I*.

<sup>478</sup> Hippocrates, *Diaeta I*, 3.

<sup>479</sup> Hippocrates, *Diaeta I*, 25.

<sup>480</sup> Hippocrates, *Diaeta II*, 57.

section devoted to drinking water in *The use of liquids*.<sup>481</sup> Fresh water is said here to be the best for use in surgery and in making medications. When applied to the skin it will moisten the body, and may be used for cooling or warming but, by itself, it has no other properties. This meant that it was easy for the doctors to decide when the water should be used externally, as there were relatively few regimens and treatments when a minor moisturizing effect would have been considered harmful. A more detailed list of uses of water is listed here as well: the water may be used for moistening ulcerated skin, washing out nostrils, or, taken internally, of the bladder. It may be used either to promote the growth of tissue, but also to reduce and diminish it; however, no specific details as to how to achieve such effects are given here. Similarly, it might be used to “restore colour, but also to dissipate it”;<sup>482</sup> again, no further details on how to do it are given. Water poured over the head and other parts of the body was said to promote sleep, to soothe convulsions and spasms and to ease the pains. According to Hippocratic texts, water may be used for warming the body in practically all cases, except when the patient is suffering from bleeding sores. It also has uses in treating dislocations, fractures and other ailments when bandages are commonly used, and for treating headaches. There are also a few words of warning: while moistening the patient is deemed to be a “weak” measure (and therefore it should neither be very beneficial, nor harmful if used improperly), cooling and heating are said to have strong effects. Another remark advises what seems to be common sense: too much heat may be harmful for the patient, as well as excessive use of water in general: it might result in “softening of tissues, powerlessness of the cords, paralysis of judgement, haemorrhages, loss of consciousness”;<sup>483</sup> and even death. Therefore, it is important to observe how the patient reacts to the treatment and to modify it accordingly.

### ***Regimen in health***

In this section, I shall explore the medical principles and assumptions that were used to design a regimen (guidelines to a healthy lifestyle) for people who did not suffer from any particular diseases. The main focus, of course, is going to be on

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<sup>481</sup> Hippocrates, *De liquidorum usu*, 1, transl. P. Potter in: *Hippocrates*, vol. 8, LCL, ed. G. P. Goold, London, Cambridge-Massachusetts 1995 (later: *Liqu.*).

<sup>482</sup> Hippocrates, *Liqu.*, 1.

<sup>483</sup> Hippocrates, *Liqu.*, 1.

bathing, although other elements of the advised regimen for healthy people will be mentioned as well. This general summary of various uses of bathing is, to a degree, a condensed form of treatments using water included in the Hippocratic *Corpus*, but the similarities between these and particular regimens and therapies prescribed by later authors are difficult to overlook; many of the following examples attest to that quite clearly.

An important remark concerning the modes of bathing can be found repeated quite a few times in the *Regimen in acute diseases*: a sudden change of the treatment, or of the habits of the patient, may cause him more harm even than the somewhat improper treatment or diet he is used to; the same rule applies to bathing.<sup>484</sup> Both the frequency of bathing and way in which the patient prefers to bathe were to be taken into consideration when the physician was to decide about changes in bathing regimen. This advice is occasionally repeated in the later texts as well.

How should the patient bathe? The earliest description of bathing facilities and activities is included in *Regimen in acute diseases*. For a bath to have a positive effect on the patient, it must fulfil certain requirements: the place itself should be free from smoke (which could come from both heating the water and the room in which the patient was to bathe, since at the time of Hippocrates the air in baths was heated with braziers) and have an abundant supply of water; also, bathing attendants should be present and ready to assist the patient in bathing. Only in such conditions the bathing will do more good than harm to the ill person, and in such cases it may be frequent, but always performed in a calm and relaxed manner.<sup>485</sup> Rubbing the patient with soap (which was a paste of olive oil and alkali) should be avoided; if soap was to be used, it should be warm and used in much greater amounts than usual, and with large amounts of water applied during and after using soap (or perhaps before and after the soap was used, but that would not explain why there should be so much of the soap in the first place; it could also be that the patient should not be exposed to the soap for a longer time). The passage to the bathing basin should be short and permit easy ingress and egress; unfortunately, no other description of the basin is given. The bather should be quiet and passive; all the activities, such as pouring of the water and rubbing, ought to be done by attendants. The water ought to be tepid; instead of a

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<sup>484</sup> Hippocrates, *De morbis* (Later :*Morb.*), transl. P. Potter, in: *Hippocrates*, vol. 5, LCL, ed. G. P. Goold, London, Cambridge-Massachusetts 1988.

<sup>485</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb.*, 65.

scraper, sponges should be used; the body ought to be anointed before it is dry, while the head should be rubbed with sponge until it is as dry as possible. Extremities, head and body in general should be kept from the chill. No food or drink should be given to the patient immediately before or after the bath.<sup>486</sup> This model of bathing was intended for seriously ill patients; the healthier ones did not require such cautious treatment.

The Hippocratic regimen for healthy people gives advice on how men should act according to season.<sup>487</sup> Other such regimens follow the pattern set by the great predecessor.<sup>488</sup> While Paul does not mention bathing specifically, his remarks on the need of restoring proper temperature to the body when it is either too cold or too warm clearly suggest the use of bath. In general, the most humid regimen is beneficial in summer and the driest in winter; therefore, bathing ought to be most frequent in summer and least in winter.<sup>489</sup> *Regimen III* states, more specifically, that in winter cold baths should be taken after exercises in the *palaestra* and hot baths after all the others; during spring and autumn warm baths are advised, and tepid ones during summer.<sup>490</sup> Some additional notes on cold baths were written by later authors. Paul, in the chapter already mentioned,<sup>491</sup> states that cold baths are good, but only for people who live correctly. They are best used during the warm season, and the bather's body ought to be heated by exercise. Cold baths are not advisable for people in state of lassitude (e.g. after intercourse), in cases of indigestion, after vomiting, after evacuation of bowels, or in lack of sleep; they may prove to be dangerous if used at random.

In addition, lean people ought to bathe more often than the 'fleshy' ones, as they are drier by nature; similarly, the "soft" and fleshy people tend to benefit from dry regimen. It is also written to be beneficial to use emetics during the winter half of the year.<sup>492</sup> The procedure of taking them starts with a hot bath, and includes drinking a cotyle (approximately a quarter of a litre) of wine, a hearty meal and a rest before vomiting. Oribasius<sup>493</sup> and Paul<sup>494</sup> make a mention that it helps the patient to wash his

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<sup>486</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb.*, 65.

<sup>487</sup> Hippocrates, *De diaeta salubri*, (later: *Salubr.*), 1, *Diaeta III*, 68.

<sup>488</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome* 1, 53; Oribasius, *Euporistes*, 1, 10.

<sup>489</sup> Hippocrates, *Salubr.*, 3.

<sup>490</sup> Hippocrates, *Diaeta III*, 68.

<sup>491</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 51.

<sup>492</sup> Hippocrates, *Salubr.*, 5.

<sup>493</sup> Oribasius, *Med. coll.*, 8, 21.

<sup>494</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 42.

face after vomiting, as this brings a feeling of relief or the head, and to flush the mouth with fresh water to remove the stomach acid, to prevent damaging the teeth.

The working people, who are suffering from fullness, caused by excessive eating combined with insufficient exercise, ought to go to the baths, where they can get themselves rubbed, and do some exercise or, if that is already being done, simply eat less food.<sup>495</sup> An additional note on the regimen for travellers mentions anointing as beneficial during a journey, as it helps to endure the fatigue.<sup>496</sup>

In case of actual obesity (which was not given as much attention in the Hippocratic writings), a number of actions may be taken; many of these involve bathing. The body ought to be reduced, by the means of heating; exercise, medicines and mental anxiety are all helpful as well; rubbing with oil containing the root of wild cucumber or gentian is also advised. There should be a period of abstinence from food after bathing, which ought to be followed by sleep instead. The water used for bathing should be diaphoretic (that is, allowing easy perspiration), preferably from a natural source (Mitylene is mentioned here specifically). Should the patient be unable to use such waters, he might do with sea water mixed with flower of salt,<sup>497</sup> or large amounts of nitre in the bath. Diuretics and cathartics may be used as well. Such treatment is advised by Oribasius,<sup>498</sup> Aetius<sup>499</sup> and Paul;<sup>500</sup> Galen<sup>501</sup> offers a slightly different therapy: after exercising, the patient should be wiped dry, rubbed with an ointment, then bathed and finally be allowed to rest or engage in a desired activity. At this point he may eat as much food as he wants to, however, it should not be very nourishing.

A contrary treatment is advisable to those who are emaciated: the patient ought to bathe before eating food, and be rubbed with linen before entering the water, until the skin is reddened. After the bath, hard, but slow rubbing of the skin will make it harder.<sup>502</sup> To help the patient restore an emaciated part of the body (e.g. after it was injured and immobilised), it is good to resort to rubbing and pour – in moderation – warm water on the patient.<sup>503</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 54; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 5, 29.

<sup>496</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 55; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 5, 31

<sup>497</sup> Fine, hand-picked sea salt.

<sup>498</sup> Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 5, 40.

<sup>499</sup> Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 4, 32.

<sup>500</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 57.

<sup>501</sup> Galen, *De sanitate tuenda libri vi (San. Tu.)*, 6,8 in : K. Koch (ed. ), CMG, vol. 4, 2, Leipzig, Berlin 1923.

<sup>502</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 58; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 5, 41; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 4, 58.

<sup>503</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 59; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 5, 42; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 4, 34.

Later authors added some further details, focusing on temperaments, to the more general advice of Hippocrates; for example, the excess of ‘heat’ in a patient was attributed to the (yellow) bile; bathing (especially after meals) and walking were deemed sufficient in such cases, at least for some; other patients also needed to exercise. If the heat was seen to be accompanied by dryness, the patient was considered to benefit most from succulent food, baths and (rather limited) exercise. In the summer, a bath would need to be taken early and after a meal. Patients showing signs of both hot and humid temperaments should especially use a bath before eating, two or three times a day, and the amount of consumed food should be reduced in quantity as well; natural hot baths were deemed to be the best in such circumstances. Additionally, in such a case, promoting excretions by exercise and baths (and some medications, more liberally prescribed by later medical authorities) was deemed beneficial as well.<sup>504</sup>

For cold temperaments, the doctors were advised, in a fashion similar to the oldest guidelines, to prescribe everything that was deemed to heat up the body: among the prescribed cures were, again, such activities as bathing, exercise, and a proper diet. The cold and dry temperament was deemed to be the worst for the patient, and therefore such a person needed to be ‘humidified’ as well (for that purpose, bathing, especially in fresh water, was the best possible solution)<sup>505</sup>

In the chapters detailing regimens designed for various temperaments, Paul included, as the first element of any treatment, lengthy descriptions of bathing procedures. He specified that dry temperaments benefit from long, tepid baths (although in cases where the dryness is inherent, and not resulting from diet, it can’t be cured permanently). The procedure he mentions involves bathing, having a drink afterwards, a period of rest, taking another bath and rubbing the body with oil. The interval between the baths ought to be four to five hours, if the patient was to receive a third bath that day (taking into account the uneven length of ancient hours, Paul specifies that he is referring to their length at equinox). Before dressing up, the patient should be rubbed with oil (to help retain the water in the organism). In case of moderate dryness, a less rigid diet may be used. In this case Paul does not differentiate the dryness of the body according to its ‘temperature’, and bathing is no

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<sup>504</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 70; Galen, *San. Tu.*, 6; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 6, 51; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 4, 9.

<sup>505</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 71; Galen, *San. Tu.*, 6.



longer mentioned. It is clear, however, that the regimen is generally the same as with more serious ‘dryness’ of the patient.<sup>506</sup>

Generally speaking, when the various regimens advise to give the patient water as the only drink, this advice usually corresponds with situations where the patient would benefit from bathing in sweet (fresh) and soft waters, ones that were believed to increase the patient’s general ‘moisture’.

### ***Afflictions and conditions for which bathing was advised in general***

In this section, I am going to discuss the cases in which bathing was deemed a generally desirable activity. Such cases were plentiful, and the particulars of bathing varied considerably between diseases; hence the further division of the section, based on the recommended type of water to be used.

### ***Bathing in drinking water***

In theory, bathing in fresh water was a simple way of moistening the patient, and (depending on the circumstances) of warming or cooling the body. Furthermore, it allowed to relax the patients’ body – an effect desired in most illnesses, if not for direct therapeutic effect, then for the patients’ overall feeling of comfort and well-being. Bathing was also seen as a way of aiding recuperation. The frequency with which such treatment was prescribed, and the wide range of ailments accompanied by it, should not be therefore surprising. One of the earlier chapters in Paul’s compendium is devoted to treating of intoxication, this was to include vomiting, bathing, unction and rest; such course of action is advised by Oribasius<sup>507</sup> and Paul.<sup>508</sup> The unpleasant aftereffects of drinking wine in general may have been eased with exercise, friction, bathing and limiting the amount of consumed food.<sup>509</sup> Others who gave advice on this matters suggested similar measures.<sup>510</sup>

In another of the early chapters of his work, devoted generally to beneficial activities suitable for healthy people, Paul notes that sexual activity ought to be

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<sup>506</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 72; Galen, *San. Tu.*, 6.

<sup>507</sup> Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 5, 33.

<sup>508</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 33.

<sup>509</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 95.

<sup>510</sup> Hippocrates, *De diaeta II*; Galen, *San. Tu.*, 5, 5; Oribasius, *Med. coll.*, 5; *Euporistes*, 1, 12; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 1.

preceded by exercise, or a bath.<sup>511</sup> This advice was taken from Oribasius, but other authors were of similar opinion.<sup>512</sup> Galen and Paul also provide advice on the treatment of excess of semen: should men affected with it abstain from sexual activity, they will become feverish and have troubling dreams. The patient will be relieved if he takes a bath and has his loins rubbed with an oil of either roses, apples or unripe olives.<sup>513</sup>

In his chapter devoted to baths in general, Paul lists some of the milder, everyday affections that can be helped by bathing in warm water, which, according to him, relieves lassitude, dispels plethora, warms, soothes, softens, removes flatulence, promotes sleep and introduces plumpness. He sees warm baths as the best and proper for any person.<sup>514</sup> This information seems taken directly from Oribasius<sup>515</sup> and Aetius.<sup>516</sup> In a similar context, Galen informs that baths may well be taken in the morning, but on the condition that the bather ate little the previous evening.<sup>517</sup>

Paul's comments on lassitude from exercises are quite developed: he distinguishes four types of lassitude, in almost all cases he advises the use of tepid baths; the patient should then stay in the warm water for a longer while. Repeated bathing brings greater effects. In cases when the patients' muscles are constricted, hotter water should be used, and the bather ought to immerse himself in cold water immediately after the hot bath; rubbing and light diet complement the therapy.<sup>518</sup> This fragment is taken directly from Oribasius,<sup>519</sup> and is very similar to that of Aetius;<sup>520</sup> they all can be traced back to Galen (who, as discussed below, seems to have drawn heavily from earlier tradition himself).<sup>521</sup> In cases when the skin appears pale and is constricted, Galen advises intensive exercises and the hottest baths, followed by a jump into cold water.<sup>522</sup> This advice is repeated by Oribasius<sup>523</sup> and Paul.<sup>524</sup> It may be noted here that while Paul generally avoided theoretical remarks and focused on

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<sup>511</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 38.

<sup>512</sup> Oribasius, *Med. coll.*, 4, 38; Galen, *San. Tu.*, 3, 11; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 3, 18.

<sup>513</sup> Galen, *San. Tu.*, 4, 14; Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 38.

<sup>514</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 51.

<sup>515</sup> Oribasius, *Med. coll.*, 10, 6.

<sup>516</sup> Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 3, 169.

<sup>517</sup> Galen, *San. Tu.*, 6.

<sup>518</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 20.

<sup>519</sup> Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 5, 15.

<sup>520</sup> Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 4, 55.

<sup>521</sup> Galen, *San. Tu.*, 3, 7.

<sup>522</sup> Galen, *Hyg.*, 3, 10.

<sup>523</sup> Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 5, 16.

<sup>524</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 21.

practical advice, the positive effect resulting from the bathing prescribed here is in line not only with the medical practice, but also with the principles of the humoral theory. Jumping into cold water with one's eyes open was supposed to have a positive influence on the eyes themselves.<sup>525</sup> It should be noted here that Hippocratic medicine devoted much attention to curing various fatigue pains, in which bathing played a significant role.<sup>526</sup> Those who were unaccustomed to training were to benefit most from vapour and hot baths (πυρῖησι καὶ λουτροῖσι θερμοῖσι) and also from gentle application of oil to the body (soft massage). Those who train regularly but have overstrained themselves would be helped by hot baths with rubbing, but they do not need the vapour baths. Should the patient suffer pains from exercises to which he is not accustomed, the case might be more serious: fever, shivering and pain will appear if he is not treated. Such a patient ought to be bathed by someone else in a moderately hot bath, without too much water. Apart from that, he ought to take a light diet, some purging and plenty of rest, gradually returning to normal regime over the course of six days.

Sleeplessness among people who have no other health problems is to be treated, according to Paul, by bathing, especially if the bath is taken in the evening.<sup>527</sup> As was often the case, Paul was following Oribasius' advice.<sup>528</sup> In addition, including large quantities of lettuce in the diet was believed to be very effective as well, due to its humidifying properties. The desire to relax the patient's body prior to sleep is obvious here.

A different section of Paul's work focuses on various types of pain not accompanied by fevers, first and foremost, the headaches.<sup>529</sup> Depending on the cause of the headaches, different measures should be employed: if the pain was caused by excessive heat, the patient should be treated with poured cold water. If the cause of headaches was cold, then hot baths were advised. Pain arising from bilious humour, similar in symptoms to one caused by heat, but also characterized by pains in the stomach, paleness and occasionally bitter taste in the mouth was best treated with

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<sup>525</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 31; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 5, 27

<sup>526</sup> Hippocrates, *Diaeta II*, 66.

<sup>527</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 98. Consequently, the treatment for sleepiness involved cutting down on any humidifying measures.

<sup>528</sup> Oribasius, *Med. coll.*, 6.

<sup>529</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 4. F. Adams notes that Paul abridged Galen's *De compositione medicamentorum secundum locos libri x.*, 2, and that similar material is covered by Oribasius, *De loc. affect.*, 4, 1 and Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 6, 40.

tepid baths. The treatment is prescribed without an in-depth explanation for the reasons behind it, but well in line with the basics of humoral theory.

Treatment of melancholy, when it was thought to be arising from the brain, was thought to significantly benefit from frequent bathing; similar therapy was believed to help for mania.<sup>530</sup> Again, the relaxing and “balancing” effects bathing would have for such patients need hardly be mentioned here.

That even many centuries after Hippocrates, physicians still had problems with recognising some of the less common “ailments”, may be shown on the example of what Paul referred to as love-sickness. Due to incorrect diagnosis, some physicians apparently prohibited those suffering from it, among other things, from bathing; the proper regimen for the lovesick, Paul argues, involves bathing, use of wine, physical activity and amusement in general – the goal here is clearly to distract and amuse the patient, while attempting to relieve the anguish.<sup>531</sup>

In case of acute diseases, Hippocratic medicine considered bathing to be especially beneficial for diseases seated in the chest (and less so, for example, in the case of other ailments, such as malaria). Among the benefits of bathing the author mentions soothing of the pain in the sides, chest and the back, concocting and bringing up sputum, easing respiration, removing fatigue, softening the joints and the skin, relieving heaviness of head and moistening of nostrils.<sup>532</sup> Washing in hot water and hot baths were advised for almost every one of the lung afflictions, including damaged bronchial tubes (for which the patient, if he survived, should be washed with hot water, unless the pain is very strong, in which case the patient should be cooled),<sup>533</sup> pulmonary oedema,<sup>534</sup> pulmonary varices,<sup>535</sup> swelling of the lungs,<sup>536</sup> tuberculosis,<sup>537</sup> for a separately listed condition arising from gathering of fluid within the lung,<sup>538</sup> or one characterised by pain in the back, groin, fever chills, breathing difficulties, coughing up yellow-green sputum, and occasional presence of blood in the urine.<sup>539</sup> If the patient was suffering from pulmonary oedema and the physician

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<sup>530</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 14; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 6, 8; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 8, 17.

<sup>531</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 17; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 8, 9.

<sup>532</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 67.

<sup>533</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 54.

<sup>534</sup> Hippocrates, *Int.*, 3.

<sup>535</sup> Hippocrates, *Int.*, 4.

<sup>536</sup> Hippocrates, *Int.*, 7. *Morb. II*, 58, *Morb. III*, 7.

<sup>537</sup> Hippocrates, *Int.*, 9; *Morb. II*, 57.

<sup>538</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 59.

<sup>539</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 56.

was not sure where to make an incision to draw off the liquid (when no swelling was visible), he was advised to first bathe the patient in hot water.<sup>540</sup> In general, washing with hot water was prescribed before drawing off the fluids that were accumulating in the lungs, although when tuberculosis affecting a side of the lung was described, washing was not listed among the curative procedures – instead, after draining the lung for ten days, the physicians were advised to inject warm wine with oil into the lung, and to repeat this infusion for five days.<sup>541</sup> A very similar treatment for removing pus in pneumonia is mentioned earlier – the length of time for which infusions should be repeated is not listed there, though it contains a clarification that the infusions should be made twice a day, in the morning and in the evening.<sup>542</sup> Washing the patient in copious amount of hot water should be done here before the physician's attempt to locate the best place for making the incision.

The illness described as erysipelas of the lung, however, was to be treated, among other measures, with bathing in cold, rather than hot, water.<sup>543</sup>

On the whole, if the patient was to benefit from bathing, liked to bathe and there were no serious reasons for him not to do so, he ought to engage in the activity, even twice a day.<sup>544</sup> On the other hand, if the benefits provided by bathing were not necessary, he should abstain from it, especially if he showed symptoms indicating that bathing was not going to be appropriate for him. The author of *Affections* states that hot baths used in moderation soften and increase the body, but used in excess, they moisten the dry parts of the body and dry the moist ones. When the dry parts are moistened, they bring weakness and fainting; when the moist parts are dried, they produce dryness and thirst.<sup>545</sup> As this advice is very general, and rather obvious, it is not always possible to trace whether the later physicians were following it, or simply used common sense and experience when writing their own treatises. Hippocratic texts also suggest bathing for those who are about to have an enema or take an emetic.<sup>546</sup> Similarly, the body should be softened by hot baths if the patient is

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<sup>540</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 61.

<sup>541</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 60.

<sup>542</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 47.

<sup>543</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 55.

<sup>544</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb.*, 68.

<sup>545</sup> Hippocrates, *De affectionibus (Aff.)*, transl. P. Potter, in: *Hippocrates*, vol. 5, ed. G. P. Goold, London, Cambridge-Massachusetts 1988, 53.

<sup>546</sup> Hippocrates, *Aff.*, 15.

suffering from bowel obstruction.<sup>547</sup> As can be seen, this approach to pulmonary diseases, with some modifications, has been taken by the later authors as well.

Curing of infertility consisted to a large extent of keeping the body in the right condition, by balancing any intemperaments. This was possible to achieve by adopting a healthy regimen, including appropriate bathing habits. A couple's sterility, overall, was deemed to be mostly caused by the woman's problems, for which the cures tended to consist of baths and unguents. Notably, however, the fault was likely to be on the man's side if he was either too fat, or too emaciated.<sup>548</sup>

Hippocratic advice for the patients suffering from a phlegmatic disease, characterised by general weakness, vomiting of saliva and bile was that they should bathe in small amount of hot water and then bask in the sun.<sup>549</sup> This is a rather straightforward example of applying the general rule that illnesses arising from what was believed an excess of one humour could be treated by promoting the opposite qualities in the patient.

Paul mentions a disease called lycaon or lycanthropia, which is described as making the affected people act like wolves and stay near sepulchres during night. Further symptoms include paleness, poor vision, dryness of the eyes, tongue, lack of saliva and thirst, and ulcerated legs, the result of frequently falling over by those affected by the illness. Description of the therapy states that at the beginning of illness it may be cured by severe bloodletting, followed by baths in drinking water, wholesome foods, purging, and theriacs (complex, multi-ingredient drugs renowned for their alleged efficacy as antidotes or even panacea), and followed by the cures used in melancholy. If the disease is at a later stage, the patient should receive soporific embrocations (lotions or liniments rubbed into skin), and have nostrils rubbed with opium before rest.<sup>550</sup>

Patients suffering from toad poison should, after initial treatment, do plenty of walking and running and bathe daily, to counteract the possible lethargy induced by the poison.<sup>551</sup> Following a somewhat similar rationale, patients who drank an excessive amount of poppy juice were to be given emetics and cathartic enemas; after being administered further medicines orally, the patient ought to be bathed in hot

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<sup>547</sup> Hippocrates, *Aff.*, 21; *Int.*, 44-46; *Morb. III*, 14.

<sup>548</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 74; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 5; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 9, 45.

<sup>549</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 70.

<sup>550</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 16; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 6, 11; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 8, 10.

<sup>551</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 35.

water, and given strong smelling substances to smell, for further stimulation. The bath may be followed by high-fat content broths or wine.<sup>552</sup>

Before setting of a dislocated shoulder, the patient should be bathed, so that the relaxed body would undergo the treatment more easily<sup>553</sup>. Similarly, patients who suffered spine injuries should be bathed (to relax the body) before attempts at correcting the dislocation are made.<sup>554</sup>

### ***Bathing in sea water, mineral waters, waters with added substances***

I am now going to examine the treatments that involved bathing or washing the patient in water to which various substances have been added. These could be of plant, animal or mineral origin, and in some cases were used jointly. It can be safely assumed that such treatment would have exclusively taken place in an individual bath-tub (if full body immersion was desired), or even a bowl (if only a part of the body was to be washed). The latter cases will be specifically addressed in a later section. As was noted earlier, mineral waters were considered to have additional properties when used for bathing when compared to pure water. The wide range of ailments that were treated with bathing utilising the various water types, as well as with water with additives, clearly reflects this assumption.

Discussing regimen suitable for the elderly, Paul notes that they benefit especially from various heating measures, and for them, the best time to bathe is soon after midday (after the seventh hour).<sup>555</sup> This advice is repeated after Galen,<sup>556</sup> and similar remarks can be found in works of both Oribasius<sup>557</sup> and Aetius.<sup>558</sup> Paul and Oribasius also provide guidelines for preparing the bath that is especially suitable for the elderly: it should contain rosemary, pyrites, salts, burnt lees of wine, nitre and pumice stone. Other useful ingredients include mustard (added in small quantity), stavesacre and seeds of thymelaea.<sup>559</sup> The bath should be followed by sweet and warming drinks and wine.

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<sup>552</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 42.

<sup>553</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 114.

<sup>554</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 117.

<sup>555</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 23.

<sup>556</sup> Galen, *Hyg.*, 5.

<sup>557</sup> Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 5, 18.

<sup>558</sup> Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 4, 30.

<sup>559</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 26; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 5, 22.

The subject of very strong chills and rigors in fevers was discussed at length by various authors; Paul notes that Archigenes stated that for some of the patients, a bath of hot oil helped, and that Galen recommended rubbing the patient with various substances.<sup>560</sup> F. Adams lists works of Galen that deal with the subject, and informs that Celsus' advice mentioned taking a bath and that Aetius, similarly to Archigenes, advised applications or bathing in oil, noting that castor oil was best for this purpose.<sup>561</sup>

Giving advice on dealing with cephalaea and hemicrania, under which names he discusses various forms of persistent headaches,<sup>562</sup> Paul noted that people of humid temperaments might benefit from natural baths; further indication that mineral waters were deemed to have “drying” properties.

Bathing and washing was considered by Paul to be the best cure for most of the afflictions of the eyes – at least when the patient was suffering from pain, the body did not require purging, and the inflammation was receding. Other authors also devoted significant attention to eye afflictions.<sup>563</sup>

Copious hot defluxions (discharges) were to be best treated with iron (II) sulphate (referred to as copperas) dissolved in water, which was then to be used for washing the eye. Treatment of subconjunctival haemorrhaging (hyposphagma, rupture of the veins of tunica adnata, most often caused by strong impact) was to be treated by washing the eye with the blood of a wood pigeon, common pigeon, or in warm milk of a woman, with dissolved frankincense. Ocular emphysema, according to Aetius, was to be treated by fomentations applied with a sponge, by pouring hot water over the head, and by baths. Sclerophthalmia, (when the sclera reduces the area of cornea's transparency), was to be helped with fomentations with sponges freshly taken out of hot water. Xerophthalmia, or inability to produce tears, was to be treated with baths, unguents, and a wholesome diet; in addition, Galen recommended fomentations with hot water, or decoction of poppies. Getting rid of lice that took hold in the eyebrows

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<sup>560</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 46.

<sup>561</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 46; cf. commentary in *The seven books...*, vol. 1, p. 306, mentioning Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 5, 130. Other works listed here include: Celsus, *De medicina octo libri* (Later: *De medicina*) 3, 11-12; Galen, *De differentiis febrium libri ii*, 2; *De causis differentiis.*, 2, 5; *De tremore, palp. et rigore*.

<sup>562</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 5. Chiefly based on Galen's *De med. sec. loc.*, 3.

<sup>563</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 22; Francis Adams traces this back to Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 8, 50, and notes similarity with Aetius' advice to be found in *Libri*, 8. Galen discusses eye diseases in *De loc. aff.*, 4 and *De med. sec. loc.*, 4.



involved clearing away the lice, followed by washing of the area in seawater, and by further applications. Mydriasis, an excessive dilation of pupil, with accompanying worsened sight, was thought to be caused by an excess of one of the humours, and the therapy involved bleedings, cupping at the back of the head and washing the patient's face with sea-water, brine or oxycrate (mixture of water with vinegar). Curing phthisis, atrophy of the eye (involution of the eye) was to be achieved by general exercise, careful rubbing of the head and the eyes, and by bathing the face with water; in addition, ointments should be applied to the head. This treatment in many ways resembles the general regimen prescribed for other weakened and atrophied body parts. For amaurosis, or dimness of sight, the patients were to use ointments, although it was important for them to immerse the eyes in hot sea water before applying the ointment. The condition in which the eyes were partially forced out from eye sockets (as can happen during excessive effort), or ecpiesmus, was to be helped by pouring cold, salty water poured over the patient's face. This was likely intended to reduce inflammation and pain.

Apoplexy (generally corresponding in description with a stroke, but the term could also mean a loss of consciousness arising from other causes) is commented on at some length by the Roman authors. The fairly complex treatment described by Paul allows the patient to be bathed after 3 weeks from the attack, and advises bathing him in warm water to speed up the recovery. The treatment of paresis (paralysis of part of the body), following a stroke, depended on whether the patient's state was improving: if that was the case, and the richer diet led to visible improvement, the patient was allowed to be led to a bath. Bathing then becomes an essential part of treatment after the thirtieth day from the stroke. After cataplasms or rubefacients are used to treat the affected limb, the swelling that this might cause was to be treated with bathing, but the patient was to be led to the baths with much care: either carried, or transported in a hand-pulled vehicle. If swelling was absent, natural bathing (in natural springs, which generally meant highly mineralised waters) was suggested. If the paralysis was combined with relaxation or distension, the suggested treatment was to pour hot water over them, preferably one taken from the sea, with astringent substances, such as marjoram or bay-berries boiled in it before the application. In the summertime, the patients could simply swim in the sea. For the convalescence period, bathing in

natural cold baths was again prescribed.<sup>564</sup> Apoplexy is mentioned in the Hippocratic *Aphorisms*, without a particular treatment regimen, however.<sup>565</sup>

Paul advises taking hip-baths to alleviate the pain for patients suffering from tenesmus. The water should be boiled either with a mix of fenugreek, mallows or linseed, or, alternatively, with bramble, myrtle, flowers of the pomegranate, bays and green cypress shoots, mixed in equal parts.<sup>566</sup>

Similarly, soothing – and frequent – hip-baths are suggested for those suffering from kidney stones, with additional fomentations and other relaxing and soothing measures. Paul also suggests drinking tepid water after the bath and before eating. Patients with abscesses in kidneys are, likewise, to be helped with hip-baths, especially of oil mixed with water.<sup>567</sup> In a similar vein, an aposteme (abscess) in kidneys was to be relieved with hip-baths of oil and water.<sup>568</sup>

Similarly to the earliest Greek suggestions, in certain kidney diseases bathing was discouraged, and was to be replaced by anointing.<sup>569</sup> In general, though, bathing in large amounts of hot water was advised for many of the kidney diseases by the Hippocratic texts.<sup>570</sup>

Ileus in Paul's work is described as similar to colic (unless the affection of colon arises from acrid and pungent humours). The patient is to be put in a hip-bath of hot oil. The cures for ileus and colic are similar, but the measures used for the treatment of ileus may be more drastic due to a more serious nature of disease.<sup>571</sup> Hippocratic advice on treating ileus is similar.<sup>572</sup>

Cachexia, which was linked with early stages of oedematous afflictions of the stomach, was to be treated with natural baths: nitrous, aluminous and sulphurous waters were deemed especially appropriate.<sup>573</sup>

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<sup>564</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 18; Galen, *De loc. aff.*, 3, 11; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 6, 26; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 8, 14.

<sup>565</sup> Hippocrates, *Aphorismi*, esp. 6, 51, in: *Hippocrates*, vol. 4, LCL, transl. W. H. S. Jones, ed. E. H. Warmington, London, Cambridge-Massachusetts 1967.

<sup>566</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 41.

<sup>567</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 45.

<sup>568</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 35. F. Adams notes that this section was copied by Paul from Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 11, 27.

<sup>569</sup> Hippocrates, *Int.*, 24.

<sup>570</sup> Hippocrates, *Int.*, 14-17.

<sup>571</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 44. F. Adams tracks Paul's sources to be Aetius and Oribasius, who relied on Galen's advice; *The seven books...*, vol. 1, p. 540.

<sup>572</sup> Hippocrates, *Aff.*, 21; *Int.*, 44-46; *Morb. III*, 14.

<sup>573</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 47. Adams identifies Paul's source to be Aetius, who used Archigenes; their treatment included purges, exercise and baths; *The seven books...*, vol. 1, p. 569.

A full oedema, after initial therapy of diuretics and general measures aimed at removing excess of humidity from the organism, was to be treated with natural baths or sand-baths (but only these; other types of bathing were not to be used). The patients were advised to sprinkle their bodies with powdered nitre, salts, mustard, and lime and similarly desiccative substances before going into a bath; these could also be rubbed in dry, or mixed with oil.<sup>574</sup> This is a good example of bathing performed to “dry” the patient – a straightforward thing to do if appropriate additives were used and precautions were taken. Illness described as erysipelas of the lung, however, was to be treated, among other measures, with bathing in cold water.<sup>575</sup> This should not be surprising, as the logical approach in such case would be to remove the excess of heat.

The treatment for jaundice, as described by Paul, depends on a number of factors. If it occurs suddenly in a febrile disease, it diminishes the fever, and is a sign of crisis, and can therefore be quickly removed by baths and friction, but doesn’t otherwise require intervention. In more serious cases, bathing is not mentioned specifically. When jaundice arises from warm intemperament, then gentle friction, moderate exercises, unction and bathing are suggested. Should the bile be lodged in the vessels of the face and eyes, an injection of *Ecballium elaterium* (squirting cucumber, a purgative) is suggested, mixed with a woman’s milk, into the nose while the patient is in the bath. Following that, the patient should immediately immerse himself in the water, with the exception of his head; and after the bath, further therapy should follow.<sup>576</sup> A comment by F. Adams identifies Paul’s source to be Galen’s work, followed quite closely here, and that other authors, including Celsus and Aetius, suggested bathing both as one of the main modes of treatment, and as means of increasing effectiveness of laxatives and diuretics.<sup>577</sup> Hippocratic treatment for jaundice also included bathing, along with high-fat diet, for the period of three days, after which it should be stopped and purgatives and diuretics were to be employed; the patient could also be washed in water with an infusion of the root of the squirting cucumber.<sup>578</sup> The use of this plant seems to have remained equally popular for treatment of jaundices since the time when the Hippocratic corpus was written. More

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<sup>574</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 48.

<sup>575</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb II*, 55.

<sup>576</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 50; Galen: *De med. sec. loc.* 9; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 10; 18.

<sup>577</sup> *The seven books...*, vol. 1, pp. 583-585.

<sup>578</sup> Hippocrates, *Locis in homine (Loc.)*, 40.

severe cases were possible to be treated with hot baths, as long as the patient was not at risk of dying.<sup>579</sup>

Patients suffering from elephantiasis, in its earliest stages, may be helped by a complex, active regimen, which includes bathing, whilst the patient is anointed with either juice of fenugreek, ptisan or small amount of ammoniac (gum resin of *Dorema ammoniacum*) dissolved in vinegar. In the bath, substances like decoction of beet, of fenugreek with aphronitrum (calcium nitrate), or soap or myrobolan (variety of gooseberry, *Phyllanthus emblica*, or *Emblica officinalis*) may be used as ointments, and depilatories may be applied as well.<sup>580</sup>

For patients suffering from pruritus (itching), Paul advises bathing before all meals, and occasionally also after the meal; this is due to the disease's nature, which makes it difficult to moisten the patient's skin. In addition, rubbing with various decoctions and applications is advised. Baths are recommended also for cases where the illness is protracted. Aetius added that sulphurous baths are especially good.<sup>581</sup>

Patients who consumed sardonian herb (*Ranunculus sardous*, or hairy buttercup) that was described as causing disorder of intellect and contraction of lips (giving patients an appearance of laughter) were to be treated as follows. Therapy involved inducing vomiting, giving honeyed water with milk, rubbing and warming measures, hot baths of oil and water and rubbing and anointing after the bath. Apart from this, the poisoning was to be treated as other convulsions.<sup>582</sup>

### ***Conditions in which bathing was allowed under specific circumstances***

Aside from diseases and conditions in which bathing was generally desirable, there were some in which bathing was considered useful, if sometimes risky. In this section I am going to explore the advice related to such ailments, making note of the particular restrictions that were to be applied to bathing.

A condition described as ulcerous lassitude was identified separately from other types of lassitude, and was to be treated differently; in the more serious cases the patient was to rest, drink moderate amounts of wine, eat light foods and take a

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<sup>579</sup> Hippocrates, *Int.*, 36-38.

<sup>580</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 4, 1. Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 12, 120 gives similar treatment.

<sup>581</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 4, 4; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 14, 20.

<sup>582</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 50. A recent article discusses the chemical properties of the herb: G. Appendino. F. Pollastro. L. Verotta. M. Ballero. A. Romano. P. Wyrembek. K. Szczuraszek. J. W. Mozrzyms and O. Taglialatela-Scafati, "Polyacetylenes from Sardinian *Oenanthe fistulosa*: A Molecular Clue to risus sardonius", *Journal of Natural Products*, 72 (5), pp. 962-965.

tepid bath in the evening. If the ailment was even more severe, bathing was prohibited, and bloodletting ought to be employed, unless the patient was too weak for that. This treatment is advised by Galen,<sup>583</sup> and repeated by Oribasius,<sup>584</sup> Aetius<sup>585</sup> and Paul.<sup>586</sup>

For fevers, while hot baths were generally discouraged by physicians (following both humoral theory and common sense approach), in some cases they were deemed beneficial. If the fever was caused by fatigue, the patient was to be rubbed softly with oil and bathed. If it was caused by dryness (*xerotes*), the treatment was similar, though it involved more bathing and less rubbing. For fevers caused by cares, watchfulness, grief or anger, bathing should remain the same as the patient was used to; treatment consisted of rubbing the affected person with large amounts of tepid oil. Fevers arising from external heat are best treated by various cooling means, including more frequent bathing. Oiling and friction should be limited, and the best oils to use are the rose oil or cold oil from unripe olives, without addition of any salts. Bathing should only take place after the worst part of fever has already passed, and baths should be similarly employed after frostbite (κρυοπάγημα). For fevers combined with catarrh, bathing should only occur after concoction took place, unless the fever was caused by heat.<sup>587</sup>

F. Adams comments<sup>588</sup> on Galen's interest in providing treatments for various types of fevers. Venesection (phlebotomy, cutting of vein) is approved for fevers caused by constriction, unless the patient is very young or old; for other fevers, various types of bathing are suggested. For fevers caused by depression, rubbing or frequent bathing are discouraged, and pouring tepid oil over the patient's body is advised instead. Fevers caused by exposure to heat are best treated by pouring cold (chilled with ice) water over the patient's head, and by putting him in a cold bath, while forceful massages and using much oil should be avoided. Adams also makes a note of how Alexander of Tralles criticized Galen for prescribing certain heating measures, such as hot foods and warm application to the stomach, and for not suggesting the dilution of the rubbing oil with water. He also notes that both Oribasius

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<sup>583</sup> Galen, *San. Tu.*, 4.

<sup>584</sup> Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 5, 21.

<sup>585</sup> Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 4, 41.

<sup>586</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 22.

<sup>587</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 16.

<sup>588</sup> *The seven books...*, vol. 1, p. 231; for example, Galen, *Meth. med.*, 8-9; *De diff. febr.*; *Ad Glauconem.*; *De crisis*, 2, 13.

and Aetius offered similar advice about ephemeral fevers. As can be seen, Paul's work follows the earlier prescriptions quite closely.

For fevers characterised by faint and irregular pulse, very high body temperature, and poor digestion, it was advised to promote secretions from the body (urine, sweat etc.);<sup>589</sup> for that purpose, using tepid baths of drinking water was deemed helpful, and advised. However, in accordance to the general rule, if the fever was too high, the baths should be avoided, unless the signs of concoction were already visible, and the patient was of hot and dry constitution to begin with – in which case he might have been thrown into a cold bath. With only moderate fever and signs of concoction visible, the use of baths was allowed, as well as drinking of wine and unctions “of a rarefying nature”.<sup>590</sup>

For tertian fevers (diseases with fevers recurring in 48-hour cycles, such as, for example, certain strains of malaria), characterized by agitated yellow bile and stiffening of the body in the early stages of the illness, the prescribed bathing was to take place in warm water, without the addition of salts, nitre or mustard. Two, or even more baths per day were allowed (providing that the signs of concoction appeared), if the patient was fond of them. Paul makes a note that this treatment was effective prior to his times, but that in modern days the daily regimen has changed, and the bile becomes mixed with phlegm, due to poor diet and little exercise, and the therapy needs to take this into account; bathing should therefore only be used after concoction.<sup>591</sup>

The so-called spurious tertians were to be treated with tepid baths, but only after signs of concoction became visible. Galen noted that these spurious (or bastard) tertians were connected with diseases of the spleen, and recommended venesection and warming of the body; this advice was repeated by the later authors.<sup>592</sup>

In cases of quartan fever (attributed to the excess of black bile), as well as quotidian, continual and hepialus (intermittent) fever, bathing is not specifically mentioned.<sup>593</sup> The semi-tertian fever, which are a mixture of tertians and quotidians,

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<sup>589</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 17.

<sup>590</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 18.

<sup>591</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 20.

<sup>592</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 21; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 5, 81; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 6, 11.

<sup>593</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 22-27.

is treated in a similar way; there is a warning here that the symptoms of this fever, apart from shivering, may vary, due to its nature.<sup>594</sup>

In case of a synochous (continuous) fever, accompanied by effervescence of blood, Galen's advice was to abstain from bathing, while Aetius allowed bathing on the fourth day (presumably the time when the inflammation was expected to pass).<sup>595</sup>

In case of ardent fevers, characterized by blackened, dry tongue, watchfulness and pale excrements, the cure involved evacuating the bilious humours, and bathing was allowed only for the patients who did not suffer from inflammation or swelling caused by erysipelas (skin infection). Cooling the patient through washing with a sponge and pouring cold water on the patient, and cold drinks and applications was generally recommended.<sup>596</sup>

For strictly erysipelalous fevers, bathing was strongly discouraged, although at the fever's peak, the patient was supposed to be given very cold applications, and if that was insufficient, internal cooling was to be used as well.<sup>597</sup>

The hectic (recurrent) fevers, as Paul describes them, are seated in the fluids, spirits and solid parts, and therefore the affected might not even recognize that they have a fever, as all of the body parts are equally heated.<sup>598</sup>

Curing such fevers involved primarily a moistening diet, when inflammation was present. External cooling applications could be used in more extreme cases, and bathing was an appropriate measure at all times.<sup>599</sup> F. Adams remarks that Galen was an ardent supporter of cold baths used for treating hectic fevers, though the ancient physician also noted that inflammatory or erysipelalous symptoms of vital organs and an excess of crude and putrid humours in the body may compel patients to abstain from bathing. In all other cases of hectic fever, however, Galen saw bathing as the only real cure. In addition, cold drinks and applications to the affected parts and internal cooling (such as giving the patient lettuce) were recommended. Adams comments that Aetius has similarly recommended baths, unless putrefaction of humours or inflammation of a vital organ was present;<sup>600</sup> he then gave minute

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<sup>594</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 34.

<sup>595</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 28.

<sup>596</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 29-30; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 5, 28

<sup>597</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 31; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 6, 20; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 5, 88.

<sup>598</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 32; Paul of Aegina follows Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 6, 21 and Galen, *De diff. febr.*, 1, 11. Similar remarks are to be found in Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 5, 92.

<sup>599</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome* 2, 33; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 6, 22, in turn taken from Galen - *Meth. med.* X.

<sup>600</sup> *The seven books...*, vol. 1, p. 269.

directions to the application of baths, including a note that under certain circumstances it is best to use a tepid bath before the cold one. In all cases, rubbing the body with oil before entering the bath, and with towels after exiting it, was advised.

Similarly varied to treatment of fevers, the treatment of fainting varied significantly, depending on the identified causes; in some cases, bathing was discouraged altogether (which will be discussed later in the text). If the fainting was accompanied by cholera (interestingly, cholera seems to be a secondary problem here), with diarrhoea or vomiting, the physician was to further encourage vomiting; bathing the patient's stomach with warm or hot water was to help during defluxions. However, caution was needed, as bathing would also aggravate any haemorrhages and sweating present. Similarly, the bathing was best avoided if the patient was fainting from plethora (defined as an excess of blood, or sanguine humour). If the fainting was caused by the heat, bathing was advised. Should the fainting be a result of a prolonged stay in a bath, though, the advice was to sprinkle the affected person with cold water.<sup>601</sup> If the fever was caused by exposure to cold, the body should be moderately warmed, and the head should be washed in the oil of iris and of nard. If the skin becomes constricted during the fever, bathing the patient in fresh, tepid water, along with rubbing, were advised. For fevers arising from hunger, the patient should be bathed after the first paroxysm had passed, and then a lot of tepid oil should be poured on the patient, which should be accompanied by gentle rubbing. The patient should then keep soaking in the warm bath.<sup>602</sup>

For lethargy in general, which was described as arising from cold and humid phlegm affecting the brain, the Roman authors considered bathing beneficial during convalescence.<sup>603</sup> A Hippocratic *caveat* seems to have been omitted, though: even washing of the patient was discouraged for patients suffering from a particular form of lethargy which resulted in patient's death after seven days.<sup>604</sup> Potential reasons for this omission may include lesser emphasis on case studies, or the anecdotal character of the Hippocratic remark; or it may have simply been left out for the sake of brevity.

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<sup>601</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 60; Galen, *Ad Glauconem.*, 1; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 5, 101ff. In addition, Aetius characterizes syncope as a form of fainting that can also take place in the sleep, and that is always accompanied by sweating.

<sup>602</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 28; Galen, *De med. sec. loc.*, 7.

<sup>603</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 9; Galen, *Meth. med.*, 13, Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 8, 1; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 6, 3.

<sup>604</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 65.



If cholera was identified, and the patient was suffering from pains and nausea after eating, he should be bathed only after he finished digesting. The patient could then be put into a bath whole when the disease is receding.<sup>605</sup> Galen's additional suggestion was to bathe the patient in cold water, but only if the patients is strong.

In some cases when bathing was allowed by Hippocratic texts, it was to exclude washing of the head: for example, in the deadly "illness with hiccups"<sup>606</sup> that is described as killing many patients on the seventh day from the onset of the symptoms; similarly for patients suffering from tenesmus,<sup>607</sup> and for cholera, where Hippocratic advice was to soften the body with medications and hot baths – but again, without washing the head.<sup>608</sup> Similarly, in case of high fever that might develop into pneumonia and can be potentially fatal, the patient ought to be bathed in hot water twice a day, but without the head – and not during crises or cleaning (which could involve either emetics, laxatives or both).<sup>609</sup>

An illness with symptoms described as inflammation within the windpipe that caused a risk of suffocation (possibly croup), was to be treated in a following manner: if bloodletting did not bring immediate relief, then, among other things, physicians were advised to pour hot water on the feet of the patient. Only when the disease was in decline were exercises and bathing allowed.<sup>610</sup> Paul included in the same chapter advice for treating strangulation - it is interesting to note that the Hippocratic aphorism<sup>611</sup> suggesting the physician to refrain from attempts of saving the patient once part of the signs of life stop and foam appears at the mouth was brought up here, and the advice was repeated in a more direct way than in the original text.

Hippocratic advice stated that for patients suffering from consumption, bathing is either to be avoided completely<sup>612</sup> or to be very rare and gentle – only warm, not hot, water ought to be used, and the head should not be washed at all.<sup>613</sup> In *Internal affections*, however, part of the treatment of a long-lasting consumption involved washing the patient every morning with a larger amount of hot water, and

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<sup>605</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 39; *De med. sec. loc.*, 8; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 9, 12.

<sup>606</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 64.

<sup>607</sup> Hippocrates, *Aff.*, 24.

<sup>608</sup> Hippocrates, *Aff.*, 27.

<sup>609</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb.*, 3, 4

<sup>610</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 27; Galen, *Meth. med. sec. loc* 6; *idem*, *De loc. aff.*, 4; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 8, 4.

<sup>611</sup> Hippocrates, *Aphorismi*, 2, 43.

<sup>612</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 48.

<sup>613</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 50.

ensuring he will remain warm directly afterwards, for the first month of the treatment.<sup>614</sup>

Paul's advice on the treatment of gout and arthritis varied, depending on the humour that was believed to have caused the affliction: when it was from bilious humour, baths in drinking water were suggested, unless there were reasons other than defluxions to avoid bathing in general. Pains caused by sanguineous humour were to be helped by immersion in hot water. If cold was the cause, frequent bathing should be avoided, and the patient should be rubbed with nitre and other unguents after the bath.<sup>615</sup> Galen suggested abstaining from warm baths, since while they provide temporary relief, they tend to exacerbate the disease in the long run.<sup>616</sup>

Paul states strongly that while for the majority of cases of inflammation bathing in warm water is beneficial, it should be avoided when tendons are affected, and proposes bathing the affected place with thin, tepid and non-astringent oil. If the tendon was exposed, using oil should be avoided, and instead the area ought to be kept dry with soft wool wrapped around a probe. Applications of oil should still be made to nearby areas (e.g. armpits, head, neck, or groin area if a leg was affected). Bathing should be avoided for as long as the inflammation was present, but if the patient strongly desired to bathe, the affected body part should be prevented from coming in direct contact with water (cold even more so than hot). If the area was impossible to be kept dry during the bath, it should be protected by means of a thick, oiled compress and plasters; these multiple, protective layers should once again be coated in oil before the patient entered the bath. For injuries of tendons in which the skin was not damaged, the affected body part was to be washed with warming oils.<sup>617</sup>

Paul devoted a separate chapter to the treatment of patients suffering from poisoning with cantharides (or, to use more correct terminology, *Lytta vesicatoria*, the Spanish fly). After the patient's stomach and the bowels have been evacuated, he may be bathed in fresh water – but only at the later stages of the treatment, as bathing may be harmful earlier on.<sup>618</sup> As with almost all advice in his fifth book, Paul took this information from Dioscorides.

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<sup>614</sup> Hippocrates, *Int.*, 12.

<sup>615</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 78.

<sup>616</sup> Galen, *Ad Glauconem.*, 2.

<sup>617</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 4, 54.

<sup>618</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 30.

### ***Bathing that should be done on specific days or stages of the treatment***

In some specific cases, the treatment was to follow strict timing – appropriate procedures were to be performed at specific times of day, or stages of the illness. This was also relevant for bathing. Such approach increased the effectiveness of treatment and minimised unwanted side effects, and often indicated considerable experience (or thorough training) on the part of physicians.

In Paul's work, the general guidelines for bathing patients suffering from looseness of bowels caused by fevers were fairly simple: if the discharges were acrid, bathing was considered to be good, but only after the concoction (crisis, a turning point, usually a sudden one, in the course of a disease) took place. For patients with watery discharges, consisting of 'phlegm' abstaining from baths was deemed better, unless their use was important for other reasons.<sup>619</sup>

Epilepsy was to be treated with, among other things, purges, followed by bathing; the patient, however, was advised to avoid frequent baths. In certain cases the patient ought to avoid drinking strong or undiluted wines after taking a bath and avoid remaining in the bath for a long time.<sup>620</sup> Epilepsy might deserve additional attention here, as this disease received a lot of attention in the ancient medical texts, especially in the Hippocratic corpus. The author complained about various charlatans who, discussing the so-called "sacred disease" (the name given to epilepsy and similar illnesses), would hide their ignorance of its nature and call the disease sacred, attributing it to the gods, and forbid, among other things, bathing the patients.<sup>621</sup> For all it was worth, the extra caution when it came to bathing patients suffering from epilepsy seems to have survived until at least Late Antiquity, if in a milder form.

Strokes and losses of consciousness were among the afflictions for which the timing of the patient's bathing was important.<sup>622</sup>

Taking baths was advised in pleurisy (pleuritis), but only when the symptomatic inflammation was already in decline. Cold baths were to be avoided.<sup>623</sup>

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<sup>619</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 58.

<sup>620</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 13.

<sup>621</sup> Hippocrates, *De morbo sacro*, 2.

<sup>622</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 18.

<sup>623</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 33; Galen, *De. med. sec. loc.*, 7 (et. al.); Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 8, 76; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 9, 7-8.

There is no distinction made here between the possible causes of the inflammation of the pleura; it is treated as a separate condition.

In the Hippocratic texts, bathing is always treated as part of a more complex regimen, which usually consists of proper diet, exercises, rest and purging. In *Ancient Medicine*<sup>624</sup> it is mentioned that a bath taken at the wrong time (*λουτρόν ακαίροζ*) might be a cause of illness; one such example is given in *Regimen III*:<sup>625</sup> here the patient mistakes symptoms of excessive eating for those of excessive fatigue. He adopts a regimen contrary to the one he would benefit from and, among other things, takes many hot baths.

Bathing was also discouraged in typhus, during its early stages, though after about three and half weeks<sup>626</sup>, the patient was to start receiving more nourishing food and take baths to strengthen the body. A malignant disease, bearing some semblance to typhus, was described in another Hippocratic work – after the initial treatment, and only after fever and pain have disappeared, the patient was to be bathed in plentiful hot water<sup>627</sup>

Post-operation treatment of an abscess of the womb included hip-baths, of warm oil, water, or decoction of mallows; the patient should be put into such a bath on the third day after the operation.<sup>628</sup>

Before surgical removal of leg varices, Paul suggests, the patient should be washed, and after ligatures have been tied on to the legs, he should be made to walk, so that the affected veins would become more prominent.<sup>629</sup> Almost identical treatment is given by Aetius, with a note on the possibility of the use of cautery.<sup>630</sup>

Paul notes that occasionally fractured bones will not grow together properly, and as one of the causes for this he gives overly frequent bathing of the limb, or various other disturbances; the treatment, which was also to counteract emaciation, involved nourishing food, warming of the affected limb and bathing of the whole body.<sup>631</sup>

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<sup>624</sup> Hippocrates, *De prisca medicina*, 21.

<sup>625</sup> Hippocrates, *Diaeta III*, 57.

<sup>626</sup> Hippocrates, *Aff.*, 39.

<sup>627</sup> *Morb.*, 2, 67.

<sup>628</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 73.

<sup>629</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 82.

<sup>630</sup> Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 14, 84.

<sup>631</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 110.

### *Conditions treated by washing a part of the body*

In some cases, washing or bathing only a specific part of the body was deemed to be advantageous from medical perspective. In some of these conditions, bathing in general was not otherwise forbidden; in others, it was to be limited to the affected area. I discuss such cases below, following the earlier separation of bathing in pure water and in mineral waters and water with added substances.

#### *In pure water*

For patients affected by catarrh with coryza, caused by hot intemperaments, the cure is the same as for headaches rising from the same humours – bathing and pouring large amounts of hot water over the head. In addition, Galen’s advice is to breathe the fumes of acrid medicines.<sup>632</sup>

An ailment described by Paul of Aegina as erysipelas in the brain was to be treated by cold applications (and bloodletting).<sup>633</sup>

The protrusion of bowels ought to be treated with applications, which should be applied only after the intestine was reduced and washed in cold water; Paul notes that this condition occurs most often in children. Numerous possible applications are listed, one of them specifically for the adults, and they were to be used unless the disease had already lasted for a long period of time. A precaution is added that the patients should abstain from frequent bathing, certain foods and significant effort.<sup>634</sup>

It is interesting that neither Oribasius<sup>635</sup> nor Paul<sup>636</sup> mention bathing as part of the treatment of injuries caused by cold; the Mediterranean climate did not offer many opportunities to study such cases, or to treat them. The following sections of both of their works, however, do mention washing the face, legs and hands in cold water when the patients have been too long in the sun.

A Hippocratic text mentions that washing in warm water should help for various pains in the head,<sup>637</sup> ears,<sup>638</sup> and the body.<sup>639</sup> Hot baths should also help in

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<sup>632</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 28; Galen, *De med. sec. loc.*, 7.

<sup>633</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 8.

<sup>634</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 53; taken mostly from Aetius, *Libri*, 14, 22.

<sup>635</sup> Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 5, 36.

<sup>636</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 39.

<sup>637</sup> Hippocrates, *Aff.*, 2.

<sup>638</sup> Hippocrates, *Aff.*, 4.

<sup>639</sup> Hippocrates, *Aff.*, 16.

certain diseases, some of them serious, where pain of the head is present.<sup>640</sup> In a disease where one of the symptoms is ulcerated skin of the head, the treatment involves washing it in hot water and then avoiding bathing for the next three days. When the ulcers actually do appear on the head, hot baths and application of ointment is advised.<sup>641</sup> Ulcers that have not yet suppurred were to be helped by applications and having tepid water poured over them.<sup>642</sup> In another disease, attacking mainly ears, hot baths are advised as well, but only when the fever and pain remit.<sup>643</sup>

Relating advice for getting rid of the parasite *dracunculus* (or Guinea worm, *Dracunculus medinensis*) taken from his sources, Paul lists washing skin with warm water as means of drawing the parasite to the surface of the body, from where it could be pulled out over a longer time<sup>644</sup> (the latter method is still the most common treatment nowadays).<sup>645</sup> Immersing the ulcer caused by the parasite in water, however, could cause contamination of the water with parasite larvae, although the ancient texts do not address this; it is difficult, however, to ascertain whether the suggested therapy would have contributed to spreading the disease further.

Discussing treatment of rabies, Paul suggests washing the afflicted (bitten) body part; the sore resulting from applying escharotics, should also be washed in a decoction of camomile and the root of wild dock (most likely that of *Rumex crispus*).<sup>646</sup>

For poisonous spider (φαλαγγίον) bites, frequent baths, are advised, as they relieve the pain. The bitten areas in particular should be washed with hot seawater; various decoctions should be administered orally as well.<sup>647</sup>

Mushroom poisoning was to be treated by inducing vomiting, and administering medicines; in addition to emetics, a hot hip-bath and barley flour applied to the abdomen were deemed beneficial for cases when there was a risk that

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<sup>640</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb II*, 21; *Morb II.*, 25.

<sup>641</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb II*, 13.

<sup>642</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 4, 39.

<sup>643</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb II*, 14.

<sup>644</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 4, 59. Other authors discussed dracunculiasis as well, e.g. Galen, *De loc. aff.* 4. 23; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 14, 85.

<sup>645</sup> It is worth noting that dracunculiasis appears to be nearly eradicated, with no new cases reported, for the first time since record keeping started, in January 2013. “Monthly report on dracunculiasis cases, January 2013 – first month with zero cases”, *Weekly Epidemiological Report* (WHO), 15 March 2013, year 88, vol. 11, p. 128.

<sup>646</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 3.

<sup>647</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 6; similar treatment is given by Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 13, 16.

the mushrooms might cause internal ulceration.<sup>648</sup> This treatment is reminiscent of the Hippocratic case study, when bathing and sweating seem to have helped a girl suffering from mushroom poisoning: while she was taking a bath, she vomited the mushroom and, subsequently, sweated before recovering.<sup>649</sup>

Discussing burning of the eyelids with medicines, Paul notes that it should be avoided, but in case it is necessary, the resulting eschar (slough) should be carefully washed off.<sup>650</sup> Similarly, in cases when separating the eyelid from the eye by incision was necessary, the area should be washed after the incision is made.<sup>651</sup> In a similar vein, describing the operation for cataract, Paul mentions washing the eye with water right after the perforator is removed.<sup>652</sup>

Discussing fractures of the arm, Paul mentions Hippocratic advice<sup>653</sup> to only bathe the limb with tepid water and use bandages for seven days before using splints. Should complications, such as inflammation, arise, the arm should be gently rubbed with oil and bathed in warm oil daily, until the problem subsides.<sup>654</sup>

### ***In water with added ingredients or in other substances***

One of the treatments for paleness, given by Oribasius<sup>655</sup> and copied by Paul<sup>656</sup> is boiling almond fruit in water and washing with it.

Sleeplessness caused by fevers was discussed separately from cases affecting patients without other symptoms, and the treatment was quite different: rather than using relaxing baths, washing the patient's forehead with a decoction from black poppies was advised, at the time when the paroxysms caused by the fever subsided.<sup>657</sup>

Describing how to deal with excessive sweating, Paul mentions a treatment proposed by Archigenes, that is, bathing the patient's abdomen in the juice of plantain, coriander, purslane or cabbage, as they were believed to have antiperspirant properties.<sup>658</sup>

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<sup>648</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 54.

<sup>649</sup> Hippocrates, *Epid.*, 7, 101.

<sup>650</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 9.

<sup>651</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 15; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 7, 66.

<sup>652</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 21; similarly in Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 7, 53.

<sup>653</sup> Hippocrates, *De fracturis*, 8.

<sup>654</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 99.

<sup>655</sup> Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 5, 25.

<sup>656</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 27.

<sup>657</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 42.

<sup>658</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 47.

While various pains were generally treated with washing or bathing in water, pain caused by an injury to the head was to be treated with washing it in sweet oil.<sup>659</sup>

Paul's text characterizes phrenitis (possibly meningitis) as an inflammation of the membranes (of the brain), caused by the excess of blood, of yellow bile, or by the yellow bile turning black (which was supposed to be the worst case).<sup>660</sup> Phrenitis is accompanied by watchfulness, and the treatment should include anointing the head with oils, occasionally with hot fomentations, but the patient should not be given hot water to drink. Further treatment included binding the patient with ligatures after bathing and friction. If the body was squalid and hot, then the patient should be bathed in fresh water even if the fever remained, and he should be treated with anointing and given weak wine to drink. The general Hippocratic advice was to wash patients suffering from phrenitis with warm water.<sup>661</sup>

Convulsions (spasms) were believed to arise either from plethora, or from depletion; the one caused by depletion was deemed more dangerous. If there were no reasons to prevent the patient from bathing, a tepid hip-bath with added oil was suggested, along with gentle friction.<sup>662</sup>

Some of the notes on the treatment of tetanus include the following advice: if the attack continues for a long time, the patient needs to be put in a hip-bath of oil, twice a day, but for a short period of time, as of all the possible measures, oil baths were considered to be the most weakening.<sup>663</sup> Two case studies from *Epidemics* mention tetanus: first one describes how a man who suffered from a sprained thumb, after the inflammation ceased, went to work in the field. When he was going home, he felt pain in the lower back and then he bathed; his jaws became fixed together in the evening and he died on the third day.<sup>664</sup> The same case is described again in a later book,<sup>665</sup> and only here is the disease named: it was tetanus. In both cases bathing is merely mentioned among the actions of the ill person and the link between bathing and the worsening of health and death of the patient is uncertain.

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<sup>659</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 4.

<sup>660</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 6; Galen, *Meth. med.*, 13; *De loc. aff.*, 5, 4; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 6, 2. F. Adams notes that Alexander of Tralles favoured tepid baths for treating phrenitis.

<sup>661</sup> Hippocrates, *Aff.*, 10.

<sup>662</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 19; F. Adams' commentary also points to: Galen, *De loc. aff.*, 3, *Meth. med.*, 12; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 6, 38; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 8, 16.

<sup>663</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 20.

<sup>664</sup> Hippocrates, *Epid.*, 5, 75. Presumably, the infection occurred when the man sustained the original injury.

<sup>665</sup> Hippocrates, *Epid.*, 7, 36.



For patients suffering from dysentery, in cases when the intemperament is very hot, after the initial treatment bathing in fresh water may be allowed. If the bathing causes flux, bread or sponges soaked in Ascalonian wine, or other astringents should be applied to abdomen, and the patient should take his baths with the applications.<sup>666</sup> One of the case studies in the Hippocratic *Epidemics* describes how bathing might have helped a man who was suffering from a long bout of dysentery; on the seventieth day from the start of his disease, he took a bath towards the night and sweated afterwards. Since the description of the case ends almost right after this remark, without the mention of either death or curing the patient, it seems plausible to assume that the patient lived. Sweating, most probably caused by the bath, should then be seen in this case as positive and leading to health.<sup>667</sup>

Paul's compendium contains a rather detailed course of treatment for colic afflictions: if the pain is persistent, the patient should be made to sit in a hip-bath of the decoction of fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*), marshmallows (*Althaea officinalis*), chamomile, mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), dill, bay and similar plants. Alternatively, they may sit in a hip-bath of warm oil or in oil and water. If the pain still does not subside, natural baths should be employed, but bathing in drinking water should be avoided, unless the pain (and, presumably, the lack of nearby mineral springs) make using it necessary. Enemas should be followed by bathing; also, fomentations should be made in the baths, because of their heat.<sup>668</sup> F. Adams adds that Alexander of Tralles specified that if the illness was caused by cold humours, baths should only be taken in sulphurous water, or hip-baths of decoction of parsley, anise and oil; if it was caused by hot and bilious humour, ordinary baths should be used, but if the problems were caused by an inflammation, then baths should only be employed after venesection.<sup>669</sup>

Various genital problems were also to be treated with washing: testicular *aphthae* (ulcers), for instance, were to be helped by applications of Cimelian earth with water, which, after drying up, should be washed off with warm water (prior to applying a cataplasm). Pruritus (itching) of the scrotum was to be helped by anointing it with a finely ground nitre, stavesacre (*Delphinium staphisagria*), dried figs and

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<sup>666</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 42; similarly Galen, *Comment. De med. sec. loc.*, 9; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 9, 43; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 9, 14; *De loc. affect.*, 4, 88.

<sup>667</sup> *Epid.*, 7, 3.

<sup>668</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 43; Galen, *De med. sec. loc.*, 9; *De loc. aff.*, 6, 2; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 9, 29.

<sup>669</sup> *The seven books...*, vol. 1, pp. 535-536.

moist alum mixed in vinegar and rose oil, which should be rubbed in the bath; following the bath, the area was to be rubbed with an egg white mixed with honey.<sup>670</sup>

Gonorrhoea (described, with the state of knowledge, as involuntary discharge of semen; usually, discharges do not contain semen) may be cured by hip-baths of the decoction of lentisk, bramble and similar plants in wine or water.<sup>671</sup> F. Adams notes that for such complaints both Celsus and Caelius Aurelianus suggested cooling (by pouring water) and baths.<sup>672</sup>

A number of other ailments relating to the genital and excretory organs could also be treated with washing and bathing. Swelling of the penis was to be treated by bathing it with cold sea-water; one of the cures for haemorrhoids (for patients suffering from copious discharges) involved making a compound medicine, with which the area was to be washed seven times a day, for a period of three or four days. Similarly *prociencia ani* (rectal prolapse) was to be helped by washing with young wine, before applying astringent medicines. In addition, washing the area with the patient's still warm urine was to be beneficial.<sup>673</sup>

Chapters 60 to 73 of the third book of Paul's work are mostly concerned with gynaecological conditions, for which various hip-baths are among the chief suggested cures.<sup>674</sup>

Suggested treatment of chilblains (also known as perniosis, ulcerous affections forming on toes and fingers caused by cold and humidity) was to wash the affected area in tepid sea-water or the decoction of beet, or lentil, of bitter vetch or of the root of King's Spear (*Asphodelus luteus*); this was to precede further applications.<sup>675</sup>

Paronychia (occasionally, though erroneously, called whitlow), an abscess forming at the foot of the nail, according to Paul should be treated by removal of the fluid after suppuration and applying a sponge soaked in water to the damaged area afterwards. This remedy is followed by two suggested treatments for affliction called pterygium of the digits (flesh grown over part of the nail), caused by whitlow or

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<sup>670</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 54. Adams also refers to Galen, *De med. lec. loc.*, 9, *De loc. aff.*, 6, 6; and Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 11, 32.

<sup>671</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 55.

<sup>672</sup> *The seven books...*, vol. 1, p. 594.

<sup>673</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 59. Information taken from Galen's *De sec. loc.*, 9 and from Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 14. F. Adams also notes that for most of these afflictions, Celsus' advice included washing and bathing that was to precede applying medicines.

<sup>674</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 60-73.

<sup>675</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 79; F. Adams links this passage to Oribasius, *Morb. curat.*, 3, 56, Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 14, 76 and Celsus, *De medicina*, 5, 28, who also recommends bathing the affected area in hot water in which rapes or vervain were previously boiled.

similar conditions; one of them consists of bathing the digits in decoction of thickening substances to harden the flesh, which can be subsequently removed.<sup>676</sup>

A brief advice from Hippocrates states that bleeding lesions (specifically, resulting from treatment of ulcers) ought not be moistened, but washed with vinegar instead.<sup>677</sup>

Erysipelas, Paul advises, should be treated with cooling measures; applications should be kept wet, for example by cleansing with wet sponges. Should the skin become livid, incisions should be made, and subsequently treated with applications of either fresh water, seawater, or brine. Galen suggests fomentations of hot water, which may include salt or vinegar, should the skin become livid after initial cooling applications. F. Adams remarks that Aetius followed Galen's advice, and notes similarities between Oribasius' and Paul's treatments.<sup>678</sup>

For sprains and contusions, Paul advised using various applications, administered with the aid of either unwashed wool, or through a sponge. In addition, pouring of fresh or hot sea water over the affected body part was advised. After both pain and inflammation subsided, rubbing could be used.<sup>679</sup> Oribasius was the earlier source suggesting pouring water, as it is not mentioned in Aetius' work.

Spreading and putrid ulcers were to be washed with vinegar and oxycrate, or astringent wine, cold water, sea water, or decoction of lentil, pomegranate rind, flowers of wild pomegranate, lentisk (mastic resin from *Pistacia lentiscus*), myrtles, Egyptian thorn, or another astringent or desiccant medicine. In addition, depending on the particular type of ulcer, a variety of applications was available.<sup>680</sup>

For ulcers that developed in the joints, use of desiccative medicines and bathing in sea water and brine was suggested by Paul; this advice appears to have been taken from Oribasius.<sup>681</sup>

Treatment of ankylosis (here described as contraction of joints arising from impacted humours or nervous tension, thus defined differently to the modern usage of the term) involved washing the afflicted body part with water and a previously boiled

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<sup>676</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 81.

<sup>677</sup> Hippocrates, *De ulceribus*, transl. Paul Potter, in: *Hippocrates*, vol. 8, ed. G. P. Goold, London, Cambridge-Massachusetts 1995, 27.

<sup>678</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 4, 21; Galen, *Meth. med.*, 14; *Ad Glauconem.*, 2.

<sup>679</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 4, 29; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 14, 71; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 7, 14.

<sup>680</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 4, 44.

<sup>681</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 4, 51; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 7, 19.

mixture of oil, in which were mixed linseed, fenugreek, marshmallows, bay, the root of the wild cucumber and Sicyonian oil. This was to precede further applications.<sup>682</sup>

For scolopendra bites, Paul advised applications, and washing the bite with brine and vinegar.<sup>683</sup> A similar treatment was prescribed for shrew mouse bites (the brine used for washing should be warm).<sup>684</sup> Reptile bites, in a like manner, ought to be treated with applications, and baths in general.<sup>685</sup>

Viper bites ought to be treated somewhat differently, the treatment should begin with washing of the bitten area with a decoction of trefoil or of pennyroyal or with brine mixed with vinegar. After a blister is formed, it should be drained, and subsequently washed in copious amounts of water.<sup>686</sup>

Paul advises that wounds caused by ‘sea dragons’ (animals that F. Adams identifies as *Trachinus Draco*, L.), should be washed with human urine, and the patient given medicines orally. Modern first aid treatment involves putting the affected body part in hot water, something Paul does not mention.<sup>687</sup>

A general treatment for poisoning proposed by Paul consisted, as first measure to be used immediately, primarily of vomiting, and giving the patient to drink oil, water with oil, pure water or water with herbal mix; this would both help evacuate the stomach, and reduce the harm caused by the poisons by loosening it.<sup>688</sup> F. Adams’ commentary adds that this was an abbreviation from Aetius, who gives a more complex treatment, including hip-baths of water, oil and herbs, for poisons that might be especially harmful to the bladder, and to those applied to the skin; the translator assumed that these measures were to promote the evacuation of the poison through the pores in the skin.<sup>689</sup>

Washing of the operated area with oil and wine is mentioned as an anti-inflammatory measure in the description of hypospathismus, that is, surgical removal of copious and hot defluxions from the eyes (name of the procedure was derived from the instrument used to perform it). The washing should take place on the day

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<sup>682</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 4, 55.

<sup>683</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 9.

<sup>684</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 11.

<sup>685</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 15.

<sup>686</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 12.

<sup>687</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 20; *The seven books...*, vol. 2 p. 191.

<sup>688</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 28.

<sup>689</sup> *The seven books...*, vol. 2, p. 198.

following the operation, with more copious pouring suggested for the third day after the procedure.<sup>690</sup>

Another operation involving the washing of the area with oil and wine was perysciphismus, which involved cutting the skin on the head.<sup>691</sup>

Surgical treatment of ankyloglossia (tongue-tie), as many others, was to be followed by washing of the area, in this case with cold water or oxycrate.<sup>692</sup>

Discussing treatment of abscesses, Paul noted that if the operated area is heavily bleeding, applications of oil and water or cold wine and water should be used, and on the second day after the operation, the area should be washed again with the same liquids.<sup>693</sup> F. Adams comments that Galen gives a full treatment for abscesses, and that Aetius also provides a treatment, although not as detailed as Paul's.<sup>694</sup>

One of the methods of treatment of phimosis, involving making incisions of the foreskin (in cases when adhesion has not taken place), was to be followed by washing the operated area with tepid oil, to further help with drawing out the prepuce.<sup>695</sup>

If the patient was suffering from bleeding after kidney stone removal, compresses of oxycrate or of water and rose oil were to be applied; the patient should be allowed to recline, and the operated area should be frequently washed.<sup>696</sup>

Washing was also an important part of post-operation treatment for hydrocele (accumulation of fluid in a body cavity, in Paul's work specifically near the scrotum). After surgically removing the liquid and inserting a pledget into the wound, compresses were to be applied for the following days, and the operated area was to be washed with warm oil for three days. After the area begins to heal over, it should be washed again before the pledget was removed.<sup>697</sup>

Describing treatment for enterocele (intestinal hernia), Paul notes that some surgeons would bathe their patients after the operation in hot water, and would repeat

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<sup>690</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 6. This operation is also mentioned by Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 7, 92, but is much briefer than in Paul's work.

<sup>691</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 7.

<sup>692</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 29.

<sup>693</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 34.

<sup>694</sup> *The seven books...*, vol. 2, p. 306. The mentioned Galen's work is *Ad Glauconem*.

<sup>695</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 56.

<sup>696</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 60. F. Adams comments (*The seven books...*, vol. 2, p. 359) that Paul's description of the procedure and the following treatment was more detailed than those of Aetius and others

<sup>697</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 62. F. Adams' commentary mentions that both Celsus and Aetius (*Libri*, 14, 22) provided description of the therapy, although that of Aetius was more general. Aetius proposed using astringent and desiccative applications rather than surgery.

this for a week, five times per day (also during the night) at regular intervals. This measure, Paul observed, was extremely beneficial, as it prevented inflammation from occurring and speeded up the healing processes. Oil embrocations were used between the baths.<sup>698</sup>

Discussing severe head trauma, in which a fracture makes surgical intervention necessary (with removal of part of the skull), the exposed area should be treated, very gently, with anti-inflammatory and anti-fever measures; bathing in rose oil should be performed frequently. Should inflammation occur despite the treatment, the area should be treated with warm embrocations of rose oil, and be washed in a decoction of marshmallows, fenugreek, linseed, camomile and other plants with similar properties. Not only the affected area, but the whole body should be treated thoroughly, with warm baths and anointing.<sup>699</sup> This is one of the rare occasions on which the idea of a 'holistic' therapy is so clearly expressed; the role of bathing in recuperation is reasserted once more in this passage.

#### ***Other procedures associated with bath-houses***

There are a few procedures which, while they did not involve bathing, were advised to be performed in a bath-house; others involved activities similar to those normally performed in a bath-house, and which could have easily taken place there. Many of these procedures were of cosmetic nature, or were designed to help with skin conditions.

A treatment aimed at reducing livid spots was to include rubbing them in a bath-house with salts, and applying sponges soaked in decoction of radish and wormwood.<sup>700</sup>

For a number of affections of the face, the patients were advised to use ointments and mixtures, which were to be applied to face and subsequently washed off.<sup>701</sup>

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<sup>698</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 65. Aetius considered this operation to be very dangerous; *Libri*, 14, 23.

<sup>699</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 90. F. Adams points out that on multiple occasions, Hippocratic texts forbade liquid applications, especially including wine, in cases of head wounds. *The seven books...*, vol. 2 p. 434.

<sup>700</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 27; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 5, 24.

<sup>701</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 25; F. Adams comments that this section was taken mostly from Oribasius, *De loc. affect.*, 4, who likely used Galen's *De med. sec. loc.*, 5.

Headaches accompanying fevers should be treated with anointing; the used substances, during the summer, and especially in ardent cases, may be cold, but should be warm or even hot during winter, unless the fever is particularly high.<sup>702</sup>

A remark in the course of treatment for jaundice states that while the patient is seated in a bath, drawing into nostrils acrid vinegar and compressing nostrils for a short time will very effectively clear up the sinuses.<sup>703</sup>

Almost all cures prescribed for baldness involved rubbing various mixtures or oils into the scalp, which would have most commonly be done in baths, but one cure specifically was to be used there: rubbing the head with the seed of marshmallow was said to preserve the hair and promote their growth.<sup>704</sup> In a similar manner, dyeing of the hair black was to be best done in the following way: after anointing the head with three different mixtures, the hair should be covered with leaves of beet, and when these were secured, washing in the bath-house was advised. Other hair dyes were to be washed off with soap and warm water.<sup>705</sup>

A rather general remark in a Hippocratic text<sup>706</sup> states that the people who do not benefit from bathing ought to be anointed every other day with warm wine and oil, and then wiped dry. This indicated the importance of keeping the patient clean, even if he could not be washed as usual, and the later authors generally followed this principle.

Ear diseases were to be treated with fomentations, flushing and injections into the ear; all of the applications ought to be moderately warm. While baths or bathing were not specifically mentioned in Paul's text here, many such treatments would take place in bath-houses, as the warm and humid environment would be seen as beneficial in most of ear diseases and afflictions.<sup>707</sup>

For patients suffering from leprosy or psoriasis, anointing is advised, and the application should be removed with cold water before a new portion is administered.<sup>708</sup> In a somewhat similar vein, patients affected by lichen, or at an

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<sup>702</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 44.

<sup>703</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 50.

<sup>704</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 1; cures for baldness were also discussed by Galen, *De med. sec. loc.*, 1; *Meth. med.*, 14, 18.; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 6, 65; and Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 8, 22; Galen, *Meth. med.*, 4, 5.

<sup>705</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 2; also see: Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 6, 58.

<sup>706</sup> Hippocrates, *Aff.*, 42.

<sup>707</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 23; Galen, *De med. sec. loc.*, 3; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 6, 74ff.

<sup>708</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 4, 2; Galen, *Meth. med.*, 14; *De causis differentiis*, 3, 6; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 13, 134.

earlier stage of psoriasis, should be treated with a desiccative therapy. Among the suggested applications one was, again, to be washed away with cold water.<sup>709</sup>

Description of the treatment of the so-called black cicatrices (scars) included a number of possible applications, one of which was required to be scrubbed on the patient's skin in the bath.<sup>710</sup>

Treatments for scorpion stings involved various applications, all of which, Paul states, increased in effectiveness if combined with frequent bathing of the patient, making him sweat and drink wine.<sup>711</sup> This is another case of bathing used primarily as means of increasing effectiveness of other cures, rather than as a cure on its own.

For teeth-related inflammations, Paul advised his patients to inhale steam from the seed of henbane (*Hyoscamus niger*) through a small funnel.<sup>712</sup>

In diseases with symptoms similar to those of typhus, anointing with wine or oil (or vapour baths) were advised.<sup>713</sup> These would have been an alternative to bathing, which was discouraged during the earlier stages of the disease.

### ***Conditions in which bathing was discouraged***

In certain ailments, bathing was deemed highly undesirable, typically due to the usual physiological effects of bathing being discordant with what was considered best for the patient. It needs to be noted that such ailments were relatively rare; as was already discussed, the general opinion was that the beneficial effects of bathing could outweigh some of its contraindications. In some cases, only a certain type of bathing was considered harmful. Nonetheless, there were a few situations in which abstention from bathing was deemed necessary.

For those whose problems lay in sleeping too much, and too heavily, Paul advised abstention from bathing and using cooling unguents, as an excess of cold and moist humours was blamed for excessive sleepiness.<sup>714</sup>

Hippocratic *Ancient medicine*<sup>715</sup> mentions that a bath taken at the wrong time (λουτρὸν ακαίριος) might be a cause of illness; one such example is given in *Regimen*

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<sup>709</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 4, 3.

<sup>710</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 4, 47.

<sup>711</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 7.

<sup>712</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 26.

<sup>713</sup> Hippocrates, *Int.*, 40; 41.

<sup>714</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 99.



III.<sup>716</sup> Beside this example – of a man who started to use hot baths due to a wrong assumption as to the cause of his problems (he suspected general fatigue, while they were due to overeating), a short list of conditions in which bathing might be harmful is listed in the *Regimen in the acute diseases*.<sup>717</sup>

A particular example of what the Hippocratic author considered to be a bad use of hot baths is mentioned in the *Epidemics*. One of the “quacks”, a certain Herodicus, is said to have killed some of his patients who were suffering from fever by having them run, wrestle and take hot baths.<sup>718</sup> The author felt it necessary to make an additional comment that such unsuitable treatments were harmful.

Treatment of fainting varied significantly, depending on the causes; syncope believed to be arising from crude humours was identified by the following symptoms: the mouth of patient’s stomach was disordered, hypochondrium (upper part of the abdomen caudal) distended with flatulence, the stomach swollen, complexion either white and watery, or becoming black. Such symptoms were believed to indicate thick humours, and bathing was considered very harmful to patients suffering from them – an observation that was derived from Galen’s texts.<sup>719</sup>

One was advised to avoid bathing when the bowels are too loose,<sup>720</sup> or too costive (constipation), at least prior to defecation. It should be noted, however, that Paul suggested bathing as a relaxing measure for patients who are to be treated with an enema; in contrast, Hippocratic texts tend to advise laxatives rather than enemas. Bathing was also deemed ill-advised when the patient was nauseous, vomiting or when he had a more serious haemorrhage. Further conditions when bathing should be avoided are mentioned in the Hippocratic *Diseases II*:<sup>721</sup> the patient should not bathe if he suffers from “fluid on the brain”<sup>722</sup> when his “brain suffers from bile” and it causes him pain;<sup>723</sup> when he is vomiting blood or has haemorrhage from the nose.<sup>724</sup>

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<sup>715</sup> Hippocrates, *De prisca medicina*, 21.

<sup>716</sup> Hippocrates, *Diaeta III*, 57.

<sup>717</sup> Hippocrates, *De diaeta in morbis acutis*, 67.

<sup>718</sup> Hippocrates, *Epidemics*, 6, 3, 18.

<sup>719</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 37; Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 6, 27; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 5, 97; the advice most likely taken from Galen’s *Meth. med.*, 12, 5 and *Ad Glauconem.*, 1.

<sup>720</sup> Compare with Paul’s advice conditionally allowing bathing for patients with loose bowels, but only after the crisis took place (Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 58).

<sup>721</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb.*, 2, 2.

<sup>722</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 15.

<sup>723</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 19.

<sup>724</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 20.

To this list, later authors added that patients who are spitting blood should avoid frequent bathing, but otherwise followed the old advice closely.<sup>725</sup>

In cases when patients had noticeable shivers, caused by a fever, they should avoid cold baths even after the fever abated.<sup>726</sup> Bathing was also considered best avoided in cases of angina; application of sponges soaked with hot water to the jaws was, however, encouraged.<sup>727</sup> Similarly, bathing should be avoided during various inflammatory kidney affections, at least until the condition loses its intensity.<sup>728</sup>

For afflictions of the mouth, such as staphylitis (inflammation of uvula or tongue), and swellings within the mouth in general, bathing was similarly discouraged.<sup>729</sup> This Hippocratic advice, beside a general notion that presence of swelling of any kind was a signal to abstain from bathing, was not repeated by Paul, suggesting that it was not deemed important enough on its own to be included in the later works of Roman authors.

Caution was to be taken in the so-called dark diseases, characterised, among other symptoms, by vomiting of dark material or bile, and the sphacelous disease (here, possibly a gastric ulcer): when treating these diseases bathing should be scarce, especially in hot water, and exposure to sun should be avoided.<sup>730</sup>

Treatment of exanthemata (a rash), or minor ulcerations (which could be a symptom of the plague), called for calefacient applications. Since ulcers were involved, bathing would likely have been avoided; however, bathing was not mentioned here specifically.<sup>731</sup> Exomphalos, a prolapse, or protrusion, of the navel is said by Paul to have a variety of possible causes, and in many cases bathing could have made the affliction worse.<sup>732</sup>

### ***Other cases***

I am now going to discuss some of the more interesting cases that do not clearly fit specifically into any of the earlier categories. In one of his books, Paul

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<sup>725</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 31; Galen, *Meth.med.*, 5; *De med. sec. loc.*, 6 and 7; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 8, 65; Orbasius, *Synopsis*, 9, 2.

<sup>726</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 21; Galen, *De tremore, palp. et rigore*.

<sup>727</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 26-27.

<sup>728</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 35.

<sup>729</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 29, 31.

<sup>730</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb. II*, 73-75.

<sup>731</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 4, 8.

<sup>732</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 51.

discusses various types of pain accompanied by fevers.<sup>733</sup> One of the paragraphs specifies that if the pain was caused by thick and viscid humours, then heating measures, both internal and external, should be used. Bathing is not mentioned here specifically, but it is safe to assume that as long as the symptoms indicating that bathing should be avoided were not particularly pronounced, it would be one of the potential measures that could be utilized to help the patient: still, rubbing with oil would likely have been the preferred method here.

Treatment of patients suffering from the loss of memory and reason, *carus* (deep lethargy or coma) and *catalepsy* (loss of muscle control, slowed down bodily functions) was based on the perceived causes of the affliction, namely, an exciting intemperament. The cure was based on removing the imbalance (by heating, cooling, moistening or drying the patient). Specific measures are not listed here, but the inclusion of bathing in such therapy seems rather obvious.<sup>734</sup>

In consumption, Hippocratic medicine suggests that bathing is either to be avoided completely<sup>735</sup> or to be very rare and gentle – only warm, not hot, water ought to be used, and the head should not be washed at all;<sup>736</sup> in *Internal affections*, however, part of the treatment of a long-lasting consumption involved washing the patient every morning with a larger amount of hot water, and ensuring that he will remain warm directly afterwards, for the first month of the treatment.<sup>737</sup> This discrepancy could be explained if one were to assume that the passages refer to different stages of the disease.

Inflammations, mostly glandular, referred to as *phyma*, *bubo* and *phygetlon*, were to be treated with cooling measures, but bathing was not mentioned among those. This could possibly be due to the general caution in regard to prescribing bathing when it came to treating inflammations.<sup>738</sup>

Drinking of wine, must or cold water after a bath was to be avoided, as it was considered to be harmful; therefore bathing prior to drinking could be considered untimely.<sup>739</sup> This is discussed again later, when detrimental effects of drinking large

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<sup>733</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 2, 40. Much of the content here is taken from Galen's *Meth. med.*, 12, 8 and *De loc. aff.*, 2.

<sup>734</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 3, 11; Galen, on curing memory loss: *De loc. aff.*, 3, 5.

<sup>735</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb.* II, 48.

<sup>736</sup> Hippocrates, *Morb.* II, 50.

<sup>737</sup> Hippocrates, *Int.*, 12.

<sup>738</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 4, 22; most likely after Galen, *Ad Glauconem*.

<sup>739</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 29.

amounts of cold water or sweet wine after bathing or forceful exercise are said to cause pains and shortness of breath. The treatment involved venesection and clysters.<sup>740</sup>

For removing accidentally swallowed leeches, one of Paul's advices (aside from swallowing substances like vinegar or brine) is to put the patient in a warm hip-bath and to give him cold water to hold in the mouth, as the leeches were supposed to move towards the cold.<sup>741</sup>

Paul's description of surgically correcting trichiasis (eyelashes growing toward the eye) involved washing off the clotted blood during the operation. While not common, the mention of using the sponge to aid with washing areas requiring extreme caution or delicacy suggests that it might have been the preferred mode of cleaning such areas.<sup>742</sup> An article by E. Voultziadou discusses the importance of sponges for medicine and hygiene in earlier antiquity, mentioning among other information, exactly 100 appearances of sponges in Hippocratic texts. Sponges had a wide range of uses, allowing cleansing, making applications, they were used for curing inflammation of the mouth, as an aid in removing polyps, as a plug while an enema was taking effect (during which time the patient would be sitting in hot water), in wound treatment, for treating fistulae, pain relief, as an aid in treating various gynaecological complaints and more.<sup>743</sup>

One of the types of castration, applicable to young boys, involved bathing the testicles in hot water and then squeezing them. Paul notes that performing a castration goes against what the physicians should be doing: instead of bringing the patient back to his natural state, castration brings about the opposite. Nonetheless, Paul further states that physicians are occasionally compelled against their will to operate, and thus he included description of this procedure in his text.<sup>744</sup>

Advising on the extraction of a dead foetus, Paul cautioned that if inflammation was present, use of force should be avoided. Instead, the cervix was to

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<sup>740</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 65.

<sup>741</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 5, 36.

<sup>742</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 8. F. Adams' commentary points, i.a., to the Hippocratic *De victu acutorum*, 66 and to Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 7, 71-72, which is very similar to Paul's.

<sup>743</sup> E. Voultziadou, "Sponges: an historical survey of their knowledge in Greek antiquity", in: *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom*, (2007), 87, pp. 1757-1763 Cambridge University Press (here: pp. 1758, 1761).

<sup>744</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 68. The subject of castration in antiquity and beyond has been explored by S. Tougher in *The eunuch in Byzantine history and society*, Routledge 2008; the mentioned here passage from Paul is discussed on p. 30.

be lubricated, cataplasms and embrocation should be employed, and the patient should use hip baths, all as preparatory measures intended to make the extraction easier.<sup>745</sup> F. Adams adds that Soranus included the fullest account of such operations, and that Aetius' work copied from him, although with less detail.<sup>746</sup>

Finally, it might be worth mentioning that overusing hot baths has been linked with impotence<sup>747</sup> – this has not, however, been explicitly stated in the sources I have examined.

### *Non-medical authors on medicine*

I am now going to examine remarks on medicinal uses of bathing written by authors who were not medical authors or practitioners themselves. I will devote some attention to the reasons that moved these authors to discuss matters of medicine and healing; the main purpose of this section, however, is to provide an indication of the extent to which the scientific knowledge of medicine was widespread within wider society (or at least its well-educated elite); this, in turn, should allow for concluding about the extent to which the textbook advice was used in practice.

The Roman appreciation for hot springs and their curative properties has a long history;<sup>748</sup> the most famous were the springs near Baiae, in southern Italy; they remained a popular destination at least until the late fifth century. Apart from medical works, which were discussed earlier in the text, numerous authors made references to the curative properties of taking baths, and especially to bathing in hot springs. The nature of these references is quite varied: some of them are genuine advice and show evidence of the author's medical knowledge; others are more of an excuse for a dilettante's attempt at impressing the intended audience with a display of supposed learning and literary style. There can be little doubt that a man who wanted to be considered learned (or thought himself such) would necessarily have had at least the most rudimentary knowledge of medicine, in addition to the more commonly expected familiarity with rhetoric, mythology or history. Some of the examples of how this knowledge was communicated are discussed below.

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<sup>745</sup> Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 6, 74.

<sup>746</sup> *The seven books...*, vol. 2 p. 391.

<sup>747</sup> B. Ward-Perkins, *The fall...*, p. 33.

<sup>748</sup> R. Jackson, "Waters and spas in the classical world", *Medical History*, supplement No. 10, 1990, pp. 1-13.

One very clear example can be found in the opening sentence of an epistle written in the early 470s. Sidonius Apollinaris asks his friend if he is staying at Baiae; in that very question, he conveys an image of the place: a sunny resort with hot, sulphurous springs that bring relief to those suffering from lung or liver illnesses.<sup>749</sup> Sidonius fully uses the opportunity to display both his geographical and medical knowledge (although, based only on this description, their depth might be considered somewhat questionable). The remarks included by Sidonius are both correct and stereotypical, and can tell little of the authors' genuine medical knowledge – a good possibility exists that he simply relied on someone else's description. Nonetheless, his interest in at least signalling familiarity with contemporary balneology is worth noting.

A significant testimony to the high value attached to springs in Late Antiquity can be found in the writings of Gregory of Nazianzus: “[...] *running beneath the earth, and flowing under caverns, are then forced out by a violent blast, and repelled, and then filled with heat by this violence of strife and repulsion, burst out by little and little wherever they get a chance, and hence supply our need of hot baths in many parts of the earth, and in conjunction with the cold [water] give us a healing which is without cost and spontaneous*”.<sup>750</sup> Gregory's rhetorical praise of the thermal waters (he writes, for example, how hot and cold water, when used together provide free and effective healing) is strongly based in the actual application of the natural springs: physicians highly appreciated their beneficial effects and often prescribed their use.<sup>751</sup> Gregory explains the natural heat of water with unspecified forces to which the water is exposed underground; he does not mention any type of volcanic activity specifically, so it is difficult to ascertain to what extent his comment might reflect actual scientific knowledge. The springs described here are, of course, presented as merely one of the many of God's wondrous creations, but being named as such indicates their usefulness and importance for the people. Such compromise, between acknowledging medicinal value of natural phenomena, but attributing their efficacy to God, is not an uncommon approach from a Christian author, and is in line with the older, pagan religious views that attributed 'wondrous' healing powers to divine

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<sup>749</sup> Sidonius Apollinaris, *Poems and Letters*, book 5, 14, 1.

<sup>750</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orationes*, 28, 26., transl. C. G. Browne, J. E. Swallow, in: P. Schaff, H. Wace (eds.), NPNF, vol. 7; Gregory of Nazianzus, *De theologia* (orat. 28), 26, in: J. Barbel (ed.), *Die fünf theologischen Reden*, Düsseldorf, 1963.

<sup>751</sup> E.g. Oribasius, *Synopsis*, 1, 29; *Med. coll.*, 10, 3; Aetius of Amida, *Libri*, 3, 167; Paul of Aegina, *Epitome*, 1, 52.

intervention; indeed, the concept of the healing properties of the various elements of the natural world being provided by the divine was not uncommon among pagan authors, and can be found in Galen as well. Combining the praise of God with extolling the virtues of natural waters might also suggest that the knowledge of the latter was already very widespread among the addressees of Gregory's oration. Motivated by desire to ensure that due glory was given to God for his creation, the preacher must have been certain of his listeners' appreciation of the benefits of hot springs in the first place. Gregory seems to have possessed at least a rudimentary knowledge of how baths were applied for medical purposes, as at one point he found himself using the thermal waters within the baths of Xanxaris (Xantharis) monastery.<sup>752</sup> He mentions this in two of his letters, in order to explain why he was unable to make certain requests in person.<sup>753</sup> The treatment of baths was prescribed by medics, and Gregory readily listened to the advice. In Gregory's case, the treatment had to last for a while, as the illness apparently returned after an initial remission. It can be hardly surprising that a patient would be familiar with the treatment prescribed for his complaints; however, the fact that this knowledge is then shared in a letter is telling. On the other hand, the text does not suggest a deeper medical knowledge and the remarks might simply be an amalgamation of the earlier literary models and personal experience. Even so, an appeal for understanding accompanied by an explanation that included medical information allows to assume that the addressee would have shared at least such basic knowledge of medicine.

Perhaps the most prominent person to seek cure in bathing during the discussed period was Constantine I. Eusebius related that when illness struck Constantine near the end of his life, the emperor resorted to using hot baths, first at Constantinople itself, and subsequently at Helenopolis in Bithynia.<sup>754</sup> Sozomen includes this information as well: Constantine went to Helenopolis to use the mineral spring water there to bathe in an attempt to cure his illness.<sup>755</sup> This, however, was not sufficient, and the emperor decided to depart for Nicomedia, where he soon died (after receiving baptism). The remark on bathing is brief and general here, and cannot

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<sup>752</sup> The mention of a place of this or a similar name does not seem to appear anywhere else; I have not been able to pinpoint it with any degree of certainty, aside from locating it someplace in Cappadocia. Perhaps it is known better under other name, but if this is the case, then I have not been able to make the connection.

<sup>753</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistulae*, 125, 126.

<sup>754</sup> Eusebius Pamphilus, *Life of Constantine*, 4, 61.

<sup>755</sup> Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 2, 34.

be used to gauge the extent to which either of the authors may have been familiar with medicine; combined with the previous passage, however, and the fact that the stay at hot springs is mentioned at all, it is clear that the remarks about the emperor's stay at the resort were not accidental.

Bithynia and Southern Italy were not the only places famed for their hot springs. Ammianus, who was interested in geography, makes a mention that Palestine was abundant in mineral springs, which were used for medical purposes.<sup>756</sup> Similarly, Arabia Felix had “natural hot springs of remarkable curative powers” and “abundance of brooks and rivers, and a very salubrious climate”.<sup>757</sup> Springs were also present in a large number in the Mæotic Gulf area (near the Azov Sea).<sup>758</sup> Other places, notable for the curative springs, included Abarne, a village near Amida, known for the healing properties of the hot waters that were found there.<sup>759</sup> In Amida itself there was a spring of drinkable water, though the hot vapours sometimes made it smell unpleasantly, strongly hinting at the presence of another hot spring, although no mention is made of its use for medicinal purposes. Ammianus' focus shifted to Amida once again when he was describing the city's siege, during which he himself was confined within the walls; the spring was clearly not sufficient for even the normal needs of the city, as an underground channel was constructed to deliver additional water. This channel was used during the siege by a group of Persian soldiers to infiltrate the city, but ultimately, they were not able to accomplish much.<sup>760</sup> When a plague struck the temporarily overpopulated city, it lasted for ten days, until light rain finally put an end to it.<sup>761</sup> Ammianus lists three possible causes of the disease: climate (endemic); pollution of air and water, mainly by corpses (epidemic); or heavy vapours from earth (pestilential). The author states that during the siege there was no way to get rid of the bodies, possibly indicating the cause he thought to be most probable. After the city fell to the Persians, Ammianus and his few companions, during their flight, encountered more of the hot sulphurous springs; the water was apparently not suitable for drinking; they quenched their thirst only after finding a deep well.<sup>762</sup>

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<sup>756</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 14, 8, 12.

<sup>757</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 23, 6, 36.

<sup>758</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 22, 8, 30.

<sup>759</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 18, 9, 2.

<sup>760</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 19, 5, 4-5.

<sup>761</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 19, 4.

<sup>762</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 19, 8, 7.



The remarks on hot springs were not the only account from Ammianus related to the natural world: mountains were thought to be beneficial for curing various ailments, as people living there, Ammianus remarks, are known for their health and strength; thanks to the diet, hot baths, good air and because of the “purer” sunlight, not yet “tainted” by humans.<sup>763</sup> Similarly, in two unrelated passages, Procopius underlines the health benefits, of the area near Mt. Vesuvius, in particular: the air there was considered to be very light and especially good for people suffering from consumption,<sup>764</sup> and at the base of the volcano there were numerous springs, with water suitable for drinking.<sup>765</sup>

Comments on the salubriousness of ‘uncivilised’ environment were not accidental: elsewhere, Ammianus provides an interesting account of the care of the fourth century Roman upper class for hygiene, which at the same time contains strong criticism of the effects of urban environment on health.<sup>766</sup> As a precaution, when servants of an influential citizen of Rome went to enquire about the health of ill acquaintances, they had to take a bath before they were admitted back into their master’s house. The fear of diseases was strong; while modern hygiene has much to say about the practicality of such an arrangement, Ammianus makes a point that the severity of illnesses was greater in the capital than anywhere else, to such an extent that medicine was not able to even ease the suffering of the ill people (much less to cure it); Ammianus calls the greater power of illnesses “natural” to the “world’s capital”. This fear of disease is then contrasted with behaviour motivated by greed: some people, even when severely ill, did not care at all about their health when they had an opportunity to, for example, receive some gold at a wedding, where it would be distributed as a gift to the guests. The criticism included in the sarcastic remark is clear.

While discussing the medical uses of bathing, it is important to remember that many of them relied on the properties of spring water used in the bath – as the passages discussed above show, the ancient authors were well aware of that. Procopius mentions that mid-way between Dara and Nisibis (located about 16 kilometres from each other) there were many springs.<sup>767</sup> The area, however, was a

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<sup>763</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 27, 4, 14.

<sup>764</sup> Procopius, *History*, 4, 4, 30.

<sup>765</sup> Procopius, *History*, 8, 35, 7.

<sup>766</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, 14, 6, 23ff.

<sup>767</sup> Procopius, *History*, 2, 18, 2.

border zone, and the springs were not utilised in any organized manner; the hot spring Procopius mentions in *Buildings*, located in Pythia (Bithynia), on the other hand, is said to have been used for a long time, as it was originally associated with Apollo (it was famed for its healing properties); Justinian built a bath-house that used the thermal waters.<sup>768</sup> This is an interesting example of how the hot springs could be utilised: while the place in which the bath-house was built was already famous for its curative properties, it now had a structure constructed over it, which allowed ‘proper’ bathing to take place. Furthermore, the bath-house had a steady and, perhaps even more importantly, free, source of excellent hot water. A much earlier example that mentions similar usage of natural springs comes from the *Carus, Carinus and Numerian* section of the *Historia Augusta*. Carinus is said to have enjoyed cold baths, and even had his *frigidarium* further cooled with snow; when he once bathed in a pool that was supplied with water from a rather tepid stream, he complained that the water was good for a woman.<sup>769</sup> While the text describing Carinus’ penchant for cold baths is highly unreliable, it is quite clear that the practices described were not considered proper; this is somewhat surprising, as taking the cold baths would signify at least a degree of ‘manliness’ and endurance (and this is further attested by Carinus’ own comment). Perhaps the Caesar’s comments and the pride he took from his bathing practices, as any actions perceived as excessive, were considered to be inappropriate by the Romans. Carinus’ behaviour is otherwise portrayed, quite literally, as royally extravagant. The account, apart from showing the imperial son dissatisfied with both naturally warm water and ordinary baths, provides another example of utilising springs in a bath-house environment.

Appealing to the popular knowledge, John Chrysostom, not surprisingly, uses bathing as an example of a “pleasant” measure employed by the doctors to cure their patients. The argument likens the preacher to a doctor, who is praised when he leads the patient to the baths and prescribes him other pleasant treatments – but who still remains the good doctor when he needs to cauterise wounds or cause other suffering to the patient, for the patient’s own good. Similarly, the preacher sometimes finds himself in need of using altogether unpleasant measures to cure his churchgoers of

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<sup>768</sup> Procopius, *Buildings*, 5, 3. In an earlier period, this place of healing was associated with Apollo; Christians linked it with the Archangel Michael – which shows how important the spring was; it was not only used for medical purposes, but also had a religious importance.

<sup>769</sup> *HA, Carus, Carinus and Numerian*, 17.

their spiritual illnesses.<sup>770</sup> Such comparisons appear again, sometimes placing God as the best – and most loving – doctor, but again the baths appear as the inseparable means of curing the patient in a pleasant way.<sup>771</sup> It attests to the common character of using baths in curing various ailments and the churchgoers’ familiarity with such practices – without it, the homily’s message would hardly have been convincing. More important, perhaps, is the fact that Chrysostom was not particularly original in the use of medical similes to make a point; already Seneca the Younger likened a philosopher to a doctor, in that they both provide advice on how to live a better life. With the advent of Christianity, the happier life became the godlier life, but the figure of the doctor in the simile remained unchanged.

The imagery of the bath and the doctor appears in another homily, this time aiding in restoring strength to a withered hand; Chrysostom finds himself forced to explain why he cannot desist from forceful attempts to lead his flock in the right direction, even if that is not to their liking. If he was a doctor, he writes, and they his patients, they would be asking him to finish the therapy, and if he stopped curing them, they would accuse him of leaving them prematurely. The withered hand, treated with bathing until it fully regains its dexterity, is an example of how any therapy – physical or spiritual – should look like.<sup>772</sup> The real-life situation presented to the listeners indicates Chrysostom’s – at least minimal – knowledge of medical uses of the baths, as washing and massaging a weakened limb was a typical treatment. The passage further indicates their place in social consciousness as an element of the medical craft. Temkin remarks that, in general, Christian views on the matter of suffering were that it could bring the sufferer closer to God. The immortal soul mattered most, not the temporary suffering. He continues that Christianity had both positive views on the body (secular Christians) and negative (ascetics). He also mentions that the *Apostolic Constitutions*<sup>773</sup> likened the bishop to a doctor – likely an inspiration for Chrysostom’s own rhetoric, and one drawing from earlier sources as well.<sup>774</sup>

Moving on briefly to the West, one can find a rather personal remark on a curative use of bathing in Augustine’s *Confessions*, describing the author’s state of

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<sup>770</sup> John Chrysostom, *De diabolo tentatore (homiliae 1-3)*, 1, 5.

<sup>771</sup> John Chrysostom, *In paralyticum demissum per tectum*, 2.

<sup>772</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Matthaem (homiliae 1-90)*, 88.

<sup>773</sup> *Apostolic Constitutions*, 2, 3, 20, ANF, vol. 7. The relevant passage is also quoting Matt. 9:12 and Luke 19:10.

<sup>774</sup> O. Temkin, *Hippocrates...*, p. 138.

mind after the burial of his mother: “It then occurred to me that it would be a good thing to go and bathe, for I had heard that the word for, bath, *balneum*, took its name from the Greek *balaneion* (βαλανεῖον), because it washes anxiety from the mind.”<sup>775</sup> Augustine continues to say that bathing did not ease his mind, as the worries coming from the heart were not possible to sweat out. This almost accidental reference to bathing shows that Augustine must have been familiar with at least some of the basic ideas behind contemporary medicine. This does not necessarily imply its deeper understanding, however, as the presented knowledge is fairly generic. Indeed, the whole passage appears quite in line with the traditional consolatory texts. The passage bears all the hallmarks of a *consolatio*, in this case addressed primarily to the author himself, but written also with the thought of potential readers. Here, Augustine is not merely expressing his distress caused by bereavement, or pitying himself; he mentions his mother, Monica, died well, and that he prayed a lot then. He attempted to assuage his grief by bathing after Monica’s burial and noted its inefficacy. Eventually, Augustine found consolation in religious texts and contemplating his mother’s pious life; presence of God in Augustine’s life had a considerable and positive effect on his ability to cope with the loss.<sup>776</sup> Taken together, Augustine’s account may be read as showing the great value of prayer and piety compared to the more mundane and material methods of seeking peace of mind. That is not to say that in Augustine’s opinion bathing as means of dealing with grief was to be rejected altogether; it was simply inadequate in his circumstances, and inferior to faith and peace of mind that faith can bring.

Only a few years after Augustine finished writing his *Confessions*, Chrysostom in one of his last texts, a letter written to Olympias during his exile, lists the hardships that have befallen him during the long journey: trying to console his addressee, he assures her that he is in fine health, even given the difficult climate and circumstances. One of the hardships he has to bear is the lack of bathing. He goes on to describe how the daily deprivations have, in fact, improved his health; having been unable to use the luxury of bathing for a long time, Chrysostom assures Olympias that

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<sup>775</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, 9, 12, 32, in: A. C. Outler (transl. and ed.), *Confessions and Enchiridion*, Philadelphia 1955.

<sup>776</sup> The cited passage is discussed by J. Lössl in “Augustine’s *Confessions* as a *consolation of philosophy*”, pp. 63-64 in: J. A. van den Berg, A. Kotzé, T. Niclas, M. Scopello. (eds.), *In search of Truth’: Augustine, Manichaeism and other Gnosticism. Studies for Johannes van Oort at sixty*, Leiden, Boston 2011, pp. 47-74. The same text also discusses the way in which God is called a ‘doctor’, the best source of spiritual healing (*ibid.*, p. 67).

he no longer feels the need for the relief that it offers. The lack of bathing is then listed together with insufficient supply of food, unskilful doctors and being held in one room, without possibility to move freely, as one of the hardships Chrysostom no longer finds intolerable.<sup>777</sup> The letter makes it clear that the bishop himself enjoyed bathing prior to his exile – for its beneficial effect on health, if nothing else. It would be hardly surprising if Chrysostom’s assurances were nothing more than that – remarks aimed at convincing Olympias of his wellbeing; or, equally possible, attempts by the preacher to convince himself of the advantages of living in such poor conditions, perhaps along the lines of what is known in psychology as the ‘sweet lemon’ coping tactic. That the conditions in which Chrysostom was staying were indeed not favourable might be convincingly argued from the fact of his demise only a few months later. Nonetheless, examining together the latter two accounts reveals a shared conviction of the therapeutic efficacy of bathing: only dramatic circumstances have caused the authors to reconsider their views. Augustine noted that bathing was simply insufficient to alleviate his emotional distress; Chrysostom tried to convince Olympias (and perhaps himself) that he was better off without bathing. One can only assume that the majority of Romans living at that time would not have had the reason or need to reevaluate their own opinions on the curative properties of bathing.

The *Life of St. Anthony*,<sup>778</sup> traditionally ascribed to Athanasius, discussing the daily life of Anthony of Egypt, mentions that one of the ascetic practices in which the saint engaged was refraining from oiling his body. Sozomen repeats the information and expands on it in his *Church History*,<sup>779</sup> adding to the list abstaining from bathing and other, undefined more closely, ways in which the body might be loosened with moisture. The passages provide an interesting example of reasoning behind the refusal to engage in oiling (and bathing): apart from modesty (which was also mentioned), the relief from stress and tension was seen as undesirable from the ascetics’ perspective, as not only was the bathing seen as luxurious, but it also made attaining mastery over one’s body more difficult. The ascetic’s goal was, as far as the state of the body was concerned, exactly the opposite to the one sought by physicians who prescribed bathing; the reasoning behind abstaining from bathing implies at the very least a good understanding of physiological effects of oiling the body and bathing –

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<sup>777</sup> John Chrysostom, *Epistulae ad Olympiadem* (epist. 1-17), 2, 4.

<sup>778</sup> Athanasius, *Life of St. Anthony*, 7 in: P. Schaff, H. Wace (eds.), NPNF, vol. 4.

<sup>779</sup> Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 1, 13.

although whether such understanding was Anthony's, or his biographers' own, might be debatable. I find it far more likely that the explanation provided by the authors writing about Anthony was along the lines of what their intended audience would have expected to hear, and tailored their tale accordingly.

Regarding construction of a bath-house that may have been intended for medicinal uses, Malalas mentions that Domitian built a bath called Medeia in Antioch; it was named after the statue that the emperor placed inside it. The building was located by the mountain, near the *monomacheion* (on the acropolis), near the temple of Aphrodite. A temple of Asclepius was constructed in the same place, indicating that the bath-house may have been extensively used by the ill people seeking treatment at the temple.<sup>780</sup> Unfortunately, the chronicler did not provide more direct evidence for such activity.

Only the bath-house is specifically named by Chrysostom, as one of the many places, where the rich can obtain what they desire, mainly food, with ease. At the same time, however, the bishop notices that such abundance of food only leads to more diseases, and that the poor are generally more healthy.<sup>781</sup> This trope is very similar to the one presented by Ammianus, and was supported in the longevity of the ascetics, who renounced the worldly pleasures and excesses. Still, bathing itself was very rarely rejected purely on the grounds of physical health.

In a rare example mentioning a medical procedure, Procopius relates that, during the Vandalic wars, Gelimer found himself besieged on Mt. Papua by the Byzantine commander Pharas. The Vandal king made a request, asking for a loaf of bread, a cithara and a sponge.<sup>782</sup> The unusual message piqued the curiosity of the besieging force's commander: regarding the sponge, the messenger explained that Gelimer's eyes have become swollen, and that he needed the sponge to properly wash them. The request was granted. The fragment indicates the importance of the suitable bathing accessories for proper treatment; a sponge was apparently deemed necessary for washing the eyes even in such dramatic circumstances.

Finally, some medical procedures were also recorded in the 7<sup>th</sup> century *Miracles of St. Artemios*; aside from the examples discussed in the previous chapter,

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<sup>780</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 10, 50.

<sup>781</sup> John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ii ad Corinthios (homiliae 1-30)*, 12, 5.

<sup>782</sup> Procopius, *History*, 5, 6, 31. Gelimer's other requests were related to the fact that ever since he had had withdrawn to the mountain, he had not been able to eat proper bread, and to his desire to compose a poem about the woeful situation in which he found himself.

two more cases can be examined. The third miracle describes a certain man from Amastris, who was spending his time in the church, hoping for a cure – the saint cut the boil the man had on his testicles with a scalpel; the author noted that this was followed by a great stench, and that the carers who were present washed the effluvium off, with warm water and sponges.<sup>783</sup> The description, sadly, lacks details of the circumstances in which this happened (how did the saint appear in the church, or how was he recognized as such). Another miracle which, again, resembles a standard medical procedure more than anything else, tells of a man who was suffering from ulcers on the tip of his penis; as the man was sleeping, he saw in a dream the saint, who applied a smooth cloth soaked in vinegar with salt to the affected organ. The man was cured after two days; the “miraculous” cure has later proved to be effective on other patients as well.<sup>784</sup> It is not difficult to notice that Artemios’ appearance in the dream does not differ much from the divine visitations of Asclepius described by earlier pagan authors;<sup>785</sup> another example of adopting certain literary models for the Christian discourse.

### *Conclusions*

For ancient physicians, bathing was usually treated as part of regimen the patient should adopt to get back to health. In some cases it was used as one of the key elements of a regimen (or was itself the key), in others it only supported the therapy. The general attitude to bathing was positive; in cases when there were no clear signs that the patient should not bathe, or when possible benefits (which included soothing of pain in the sides, chest and back, concocting and bringing up sputum, easing respiration, removing fatigue, softening the joints and the skin, relieving heaviness of the head and moistening of the nostrils) from bathing would be greater than possible harm, the patient should bathe. In cases when bathing could be harmful, particularly in fevers, the patient could still be kept clean by being anointed with warm oil with wine and then being wiped dry. Apart from case-specific symptoms and general state of the patient, also the frequency of bathing and the way in which the patient prefers

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<sup>783</sup> *The miracles of St. Artemios...*, m. 3.

<sup>784</sup> *The miracles of St. Artemios...*, m. 20.

<sup>785</sup> E.g. Aelius Aristides, *Orationes*, 47.57, later in 48.20-21. This example is particularly relevant, as the text describes how Asclepius advises Aelius in a dream to bathe in a river. Following that, Aelius recovered.

to bathe should be taken into consideration when the physician is to decide about changes in bathing regimen.

It would be tempting to find in the medical writings a broader concept of cleanness, one that would link bodily purity to the patient's health in general, in a similar way to that in which hygiene is understood in the modern day. The continuous presence of bathing – and also the “internal” cleaning with the help of purges and emetics – appear to support such conclusions; numerous remarks on physical effects of the means used, their general practicality and lack of “mystical” thinking associated with the vast majority of medical procedures described in the relevant sources make such ideas rather plausible. While bathing is important, the “purity” it provides does not, apparently, stretch beyond the tangible effects – medical authors, generally speaking, do not tend to concern themselves with mystical concepts or divine aid (which, in turn, often makes the more rationally and scientifically minded doctors a target of ridicule and mockery on the part of religious authors – in particular the authors of the various lives of saints associated with healing). In addition, it is interesting to notice how the concept of cleanliness applies to the whole body, not only its surface. While bathing contributed to keeping the patient clean on the outside, from a medical point of view in most cases its importance came from supplementing internal purging of the body, usually by loosening it, and allowing the medicine to work better, in addition to overall relaxing and heating or cooling effects. Keeping the patient clean was, very clearly, considered important for a number of reasons; there were suggestions on how to achieve this without resorting to actually bathing the patient in situations where a bathing was deemed detrimental to the patient's health. Despite that, it may be argued that cleanness itself, while highly desirable, was only of secondary importance, when compared to the various other effects bathing had on the patient's body. Indeed, the original ideas on healthy, ‘hygienic’ life (with the term ‘hygiene’ encompassing a much wider scope of concepts than the word possesses in the common, modern-day usage) had relatively little to do with bodily cleanliness, and denoted primarily the way of conducting oneself in such a manner as to achieve the balance between the various humours; these basic guidelines changed relatively little over time (regardless of whether humoral theory was being discussed or not), and while bathing appears in all of the texts dealing with the matter, there is little to indicate that they were important specifically because of their cleaning effects.



## ***Final conclusions***

During the time period which I have been examining the Roman Empire underwent manifold changes and transformations, up to and including its partial collapse. These changes greatly affected the lives of the Empire's inhabitants; in some cases, they were effected by the new social, religious and intellectual developments. Ultimately, the whole process could be described as a complex arrangement of overlapping feedback loops between the various parts of the state's government and army, its social and religious groups (the dividing line between them often blurry at best), its economic processes and the external influences, pressures and threats from the neighbouring tribes and states. On a local community level, these processes would often have been perceptible only in a limited and specific way. In my research I have examined how such vicissitudes influenced the development of bathing habits among the Roman populace and, to a lesser extent, of bathing arrangements.

Bathing arrangements were dictated, first and foremost, by the available bathing facilities or lack thereof (in some cases, evidence of improvisation is present). At the beginning of the discussed period, the grand *thermae* were still being built, renovated and maintained; by its end, few of them remained, many fell into disuse or underwent considerable transformation. Gymnasia, still present within some of the bathing establishments in the fourth century, quickly disappear during the fourth century as well. Smaller and less luxurious bath-houses gradually replaced many of the larger establishments. Despite these changes, bathing remained a public and social activity, even with the increasing popularity of individual bath-tubs.

The factors that determined changes in bathing facilities, bathing culture and customs were manifold. Economic ones included the availability of sufficient water for bathing, especially for maintaining the flow of water in pools. As aqueducts, often built for the express purpose of providing baths with sufficiently clean, plentiful water, fell into disrepair, bathing establishments that relied on them had to adapt to the more limited supply of water from wells or cisterns. Perhaps an even more important factor was the cost of fuel necessary to heat up not only a sufficient amount of water, but also the baths themselves; limiting both the size of bath-houses and the amount of hot water necessary for bathing could go a long way to create savings.

One of the other factors that determined one's bathing habits and experiences was individual wealth – for the rich, a personal retinue served both to attend their master's or mistress' needs as well as protection; bather's own, often valuable bathing implements also served to indicate his wealth and status. Together with suitably expensive clothes and jewelry worn on the way to the bath-house, such displays of wealth could have made the bathers' status clear even when they were nude, and the retinue's presence could effectively prevent any unwanted socialising from occurring. There is little evidence to indicate the extent to which personal modesty might have limited such displays of status; existing evidence indicates that the company of one's trusted men in a bath-house, at least, was common.

There were few laws regulating bathing specifically; relevant secular laws mentioning bathing focused chiefly on preserving social norms and values, but the implemented measures do not exceed in their scope or severity regulations pertaining to other aspects of day-to-day life. Similarly, Church laws mentioning bathing were design to curb excesses, but were not either more damning nor severe than canons aimed at improving morality in other areas of life.

Regarding the question of whether men and women kept bathing together throughout Late Antiquity, the most likely answer would be yes; the few scant remarks addressing the issue, not least in the legal texts, appear to confirm that this trend continued, at least to a certain extent.

From the perspective of literary sources, little can be said about day-to-day running of bath-houses. It is clear that at least some of the establishments had full-time caretakers who managed them – and that such caretakers could live on the premises of the bathing complex. Baths would normally be open from early morning until evening, but bathing at night, if it happened, was rare; both the rhythm of daily life in Late Antiquity and the high cost of keeping a bath-house lit and running after dark would have made night-time bathing unusual and expensive; the fact that some of the bath-houses served as shelters for the homeless during the night further suggests night-time bathing would have been rare at best. The extent to which employing slaves as bathing attendants may have continued throughout Late Antiquity is difficult, even impossible, to trace, due to scarcity of available evidence.

It is clear that bath-houses were seen as means of gaining prestige as well as profits. Naming a bath-house after its sponsor was common, both among private and imperial benefactors. A trend of increasing reliance on imperial patronage can be

easily traced throughout Late Antiquity, particularly when it comes to large-scale endeavours, such as restoration of a city's public buildings after disasters; bath-houses commonly feature on the lists of rebuilt structures. Indeed, bath-houses seemed to be kept in working order whenever possible – some became less luxurious than before, but keeping these establishments open appears to have remained a priority task for the locals. Over time, a number of factors contributed to the change in bathing arrangements even in the major cities. Whether the causes were financial, cultural or a mixture of both, the classic *thermae* with their spacious, communal swimming pools (kept relatively clean by the constant flow of water, now often no longer sustainable due to decaying water infrastructure) were replaced by smaller establishments with individual, bucket-filled bath-tubs where the bathers could now also, as a side effect, enjoy a greater degree of privacy than before. This can, however, be also viewed as a shift in the nature of communality of bathing towards a less convivial atmosphere – in so far as the number of individuals who could share it at the same time diminished.

Bath-houses occasionally served functions different to those for which they were built; designed to be a social space, baths could serve as adequate meeting places, shelters for the homeless at night or temporary quarters for soldiers. They also offered room for conducting official business; presumably, also for dealing with private matters.

Accidents, death and violence, whilst rare, did occasionally happen in bath-houses. Bodyguards, in the form of one's retinue, offered some protection; Romans were well aware of the vulnerability accompanying bathing. Nonetheless, an accidental slip or a determined assailant could both prove equally deadly. Kidnapping or capture was also a risk for those who had sufficiently powerful enemies, and bath-houses on more than one occasion proved to be suitable places for arranging an ambush.

Regarding the impact of Christianity on bathing customs, it can be argued that it was limited; Christian moralists in many cases adopted the arguments of Stoics, and warned against the dangers of bathing, but did not oppose the practice itself. Those few who did oppose bathing were themselves outside of the main body of the Christian community – ascetics and some of the monks, rejecting life in society as whole; while often admired, and their example was not closely followed. An 'average' Christian was exhorted to avoid living in luxury and pleasure, fame and wealth were not to be sought, but any riches that were available were to be spent on

good works. As a consequence, bathing was recommended only for those who needed its medicinal or hygienic benefits; bathing for pleasure was to be avoided. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that majority of Christians kept enjoying bathing to a far greater extent than the preachers would deem acceptable.

On the other hand, the impact of bathing on the developing Christian discourse was considerable. Church authors writing about baptism often found themselves using language associated with bathing – explaining the mystery of baptism by using familiar words and expressions, and drawing outright parallels with everyday washing. In such comparisons, unsurprisingly, baptism was invariably presented as far superior to mundane ablutions – nonetheless, for the great majority of Christians bathing remained a common activity even after they received their baptism. Bathing was seen as beneficial to health, and eventually came to be incorporated into charitable Christian activities: those too poor or too ill to bathe on their own could, at least in the larger cities, count on the assistance of others.

Bathing appears on several occasions in martyrdom narratives, serving either as a backcloth to the story, or as a device in its telling. When bathing plays an important role, its associations with health and well-being can be subverted: since martyrdom is presented as the greatest good, anything that could prevent it is designated as undesirable and wrong.

Miraculous healing, a recurring topic in pagan literature dealing with the supernatural, remained a common theme in Christian narratives as well; Christian authors, however, sought to replace the traditional healing deities with acceptable alternatives – saints and angels. Sites of sacred springs and healing sanctuaries were gradually Christianised, and what was deemed miraculous healing continued, although under a different brand.

The Jewish population of the Empire made use of Roman bath-houses; bathing was necessary for ritual ablutions. While the Roman baths were occasionally viewed with suspicion (due to the presence of statues and risks of moral nature), they were still deemed suitable for both everyday and ritual use.

In the context of secular medical practice, bathing occupied a major role in the everyday regime for the healthy – at least for those concerned with the matters of health who had a ready access to baths. Properties of various types of water were known to those engaged in medical profession, and to – at least – part of the educated elite. Bathing and washing were among the most common elements of treatments;

most often used to complement a therapy, though occasionally on their own, depending on the patient's general condition and ailments. Authors of medical treatises prescribed a great variety of bathing procedures, tailored to the needs of the patient. Such attention to detail and minute distinctions are indicative of a great deal of practical experience of the practitioners and authors of medical treatises. Aspects of bathing such as the type of water used, type of bathing itself, its frequency, length, temperature of water, time of day during which the bathing should be performed, whether the bath should take place before or after a meal and the substances to be used in the water were all addressed. Much attention to details of washing and bathing procedures is evident even from the medical compendia that often abbreviated their source material, further indicating the perceived importance of bathing in medicine.

The great majority of ailments were believed to be eased or cured with baths, and the cases in which bathing could have been harmful were carefully noted. In general, bathing was deemed beneficial to the patient's health even when not specifically part of the therapy, and it can be safely assumed that the patients would continue with their usual bathing habits unless specifically told to adjust them (or to stop bathing altogether) by their physician. The relaxing and 'loosening' effect of bathing was very well understood and utilised in aiding pharmacotherapy, in particular when the administered drugs, such as powerful purgatives or diuretics, could cause major disruption in the functioning of the patient's body. Bathing could both increase the effectiveness of certain drugs and reduce their unwanted side effects.

One should also not forget about the most obvious effect of bathing, that is, cleanliness of the patient. Patients' feeling of well-being benefited from subjecting the body to the familiar routines, and there is little need to add that caring for a clean and well-kept patient must have been preferable to physicians to the opposite. While hygiene, in the modern popular understanding of the word, did not feature prominently in the texts (though it was mentioned occasionally), most of its underlying principles were in place during Late Antiquity, encompassed by the contemporary concept of hygiene as healthy living in general. A patient following advice taken from the medical works of the time would nearly always remain as clean as usual, if not more so. Furthermore, some of the procedures described in medical treatises had more to do with cosmetic than medicinal practices, strongly suggesting

that performing many of such services was expected of physicians. The texts often advise performing them in a bath-house.

Numerous non-medical authors made references to medicinal uses of bathing in their texts. These included both incidental remarks and passages focusing specifically on health and medicine. It is clear from them that the appreciation of the curative value of hot springs was widespread, as was the deep-seated conviction of the health benefits offered by bathing. Occasional remarks on the favourable impact of the lack of bathing (or inefficacy of bathing) create an impression that such observations were perceived even by their own authors as something unusual or unexpected. Occasional remarks or appeals to the addressee or the intended audience made by the authors indicate an expectation of at least superficial understanding of medicinal uses of bathing on the part of the reader.

The development of, and changes in, bathing during Late Antiquity are relatively well documented in primary sources despite few deliberate attempts at dealing with the subject. This period, both in the Roman East and West was one of transformation and change, in many cases results of which led to a decline in the standard of living. Despite this, the wealth of evidence, incidental remarks and anecdotal evidence relevant to bathing is such that it can only be explained by the continued popularity of this activity. Much effort and resources was put into ensuring that this traditional part of daily life was preserved as much as was practical. In this, perhaps, one can find parallels with the contemporary scientific culture: abbreviated and compiled treatises found new life in encyclopaedias; bath-houses, though often smaller and less luxurious, remained. Of all the secular customs of Roman society in Late Antiquity it was perhaps bathing, deeply rooted in tradition and everyday practice, that the Romans held on to the most.

## Appendix – list of bath-houses

Name	Founder	Location	Date built	Major renovation	Other information
Achilles (of)		Constantinople		432-433 AD	pre-Constantinian
Agrippa (of)	Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa	Rome	25BC	After fire of 80AD	the first grand <i>thermae</i> . Out of use by 7 <sup>th</sup> century
Alexander (of)		Constantinople, hospice of Euboulos	Early 4 <sup>th</sup> century (?)		Burned down during riots of 532
Anastasian	Constantine	Constantinople	Early 4 <sup>th</sup> century	Valens' reign (?)	Served as military quarters in 365
Antoninus (of)	Antoninus Pius	Carthage	mid-2 <sup>nd</sup> century AD	389AD	
Caracalla (of)	Caracalla	Rome	212-216		Operational until 6 <sup>th</sup> century
Carosian	Valens	Constantinople	375AD		
Centenarium	Marcus Aurelius (renovator)	Antioch		late 2 <sup>nd</sup> century	destroyed in 115AD
Commodium	Commodus	Antioch	late 2 <sup>nd</sup> century		
Constantinianae	Constantine	Rome	Before 315AD	ca. 440AD	Damaged during sack of Rome in 410AD
Constantianae/ Constantinianae	Constantine/ Constantius	Constantinople	Constructed along with the Church of the Holy Apostles		
Dagistheos (in the quarter of)	Anastasius/ Justinian	Constantinople	Early 5 <sup>th</sup> century		
Dara (at)	Anastasius	Dara	Early 6 <sup>th</sup> century		fortress baths
Diocletianum	Diocletian	Antioch	Late 3 <sup>rd</sup> century		
Etruscus (of)	Claudius Etruscus	Rome	2 <sup>nd</sup> half of 1 <sup>st</sup> century AD		
Gadara (at)		Jordan			
Gargilius (of)		Carthage			

Gortyn (at)		Crete	1 <sup>st</sup> century AD	late 4 <sup>th</sup> century	
Healing	Public works	Alexandria	ca. 466AD		
Health	Public works	Alexandria	ca. 466AD		
Helenianai (at)		Constantinople			
Hunting Baths		Leptis Magna	2 <sup>nd</sup> century (?)		
Livianum	Septimius Severus	Antioch	Early 3 <sup>rd</sup> century		Built on imperial order from unused funds for bath fuel
Plentiful water ( <i>dapsiles hydor</i> )	Clearchus, prefect	Constantinople	late 4 <sup>th</sup> century		
Medeia	Domitian	Antioch	late 1 <sup>st</sup> century		Named for the famous statue
Scholastica (of)	Scholastica (renovator)	Ephesus	1 <sup>st</sup> century AD	4 <sup>th</sup> century	
Senatorial	Diocletian	Antioch	late 3 <sup>rd</sup> century		
Severus (of)	Septimius Severus	Antioch Alexandria	Late 2 <sup>nd</sup> century		
Silvanus (of)		Campania, Italy			
Stabian baths		Pompeii	4 <sup>th</sup> century BC	1 <sup>st</sup> century BC	
Suburbane		Pompeii	end of 1 <sup>st</sup> century BC		known for its preserved paintings
Zeuxippus (of)	Septimius Severus/ Constantine (major reconstruction)	Constantinople	Late 1 <sup>st</sup> /early 2 <sup>nd</sup> century; 11 <sup>th</sup> of May 330 (rededication)	After 532	Statue collection assembled in L.A. Connected to the imperial palace.



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