

servant.
the baths
of bath!
Corpus

2

POPULARITY OF ROMAN BATHING CULTURE

Both beginners and specialists in ancient studies often ask why bathing was so important to Roman society – why were there so many baths in town and country? What accounts for the obvious delight Romans had in their baths and the intense popularity of public bathing? There are no easy and definite answers to these deceptively simple questions. Like certain sports that are intensely popular with certain groups and not others (such as American football in the United States and soccer in virtually all the rest of the world), because of their deep roots in a culture, baths were popular with Romans because bathing had become a daily habit – and the more they liked it the more likable it became; the effect fortified the cause. Bathing had become a significant part of their lives, an institution rooted in the rhythm and structure of their day, ensconced in the very concept of time. The Roman day normally reserved the afternoon for leisure. Already, by the end of the Republic, spending the latter part of the afternoon, after a light lunch and siesta, in the public baths had become a tradition, a comforting part of urban life and national identity.

Still, why did bathing become a daily habit in the first place? Roman writers, such as Martial and Seneca, though profuse in their admiration and detailed in their description of the baths, do

not furnish a specific answer – nor should we expect them to state what to them was obvious. Instead of seeking for specific reasons for such complex cultural phenomena, it may be more profitable to consider a multitude of factors all together.

The first and most important is the pleasure factor. At its most basic, bathing is a physically and psychologically satisfying, pleasurable activity. Warm, moist air and water relax the body and mollify the mind. The experience itself – warm, clean water, shiny, smooth marble surfaces, steamy, cosseting atmosphere, the aroma of perfumed unguents, the intimacy of massage – invoked the awakening of the senses, a state of enjoyment Romans called *voluptas*. Nowhere do we sense the sheer enjoyment and material delight of bathing more than in the historical re-creations of the world of Roman baths of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1836–1912) – here depicting, for example, playful young women in the gleaming marble pool of an imaginary women's bath (see Figure 1). The sense of warmth alone must have been an extremely powerful stimulant to the creation of a feeling of relaxation, comfort, and well-being. A freshly bathed person felt light and optimistic. Suetonius, a first-century C.E. writer and chronicler of emperors' lives, reports that the best time to ask Vespasian for favors was immediately after his bath (Suet., *Vesp.*, 21). A dedicatory inscription from a late fifth-century C.E. bath in Syria is typical in announcing that the bath could bring "pleasure and happiness" to the entire community. Indeed, there are a group of inscriptions and epigrams, especially from the late Roman period, that allude to the strange and wondrous ability of baths to deliver the bather from pain and worry and create a sense of delight. Along with the natural springs, the baths are considered as the dwelling places of Nymphs and Graces (in Greek, *χάριτες*).

If bathing could confer pleasure and happiness on a whole community, it was naturally a socially satisfying experience. The cozy warmth of the baths and their apparent world of classless nudity encouraged friendship and intimacy. For several hours a day, at least, baths took the individual out of his shell and gave him a place among others. Sharing a sensory experience with others, especially in a situation in which men and women were mixed (which was the case during significant portions of Roman history, it appears; see the following discussion), contributed to a larger sense of well-being and belonging to a group.



1. Sir Lawrence
Alma-Tadema, *A
Favorite Custom*.
Opus CCCXCI, 1909.
Photo: Tate Gallery,
London/Art Resource,
New York.

Enhancing this sense of delight and pleasure was, of course, the sumptuous material world created by public baths. Roman baths, especially the imperial *thermae*, were well known for the luxury of their interiors. Glowing descriptions of their interiors – fine polychromatic marbles, intricate mosaics, stucco ornament, gleaming bronze hardware, and decorative statuary, all under lofty, well-lighted vaults and domes – constitute almost an independent

genre in ancient literature. Martial, a first-century C.E. poet and master of social satire, referred a friend to the Baths of Etruscus, a small luxury establishment in Rome, in glowing terms: "If you do not bathe in the *thermulae* (small baths) of Etruscus, you will die unbathed, Oppianus!" (Martial, 6.42). He admired the mildness of its waters and the serenity of its interiors, but most of all the richness of its multicolored marbles originating from distant lands. Statius, a contemporary poet, was more florid in his praise of the same baths: "Toil and care, depart! I sing of the baths that sparkle with bright marbles! . . . Come, then, ye nymphs of the waters, turn your clean faces and bind up your glass-green hair with tender wine shoots, your naked bodies as you emerge from the deep springs, and torture your satyr-lovers with the sight!" (Statius, *Silvae*, 1.5). The nymphs Statius was admiring were not the usual sexual sirens of Roman society; they were mythic creatures of natural springs that dwelt on the Seven Hills of Rome and mingled in the waters of its famous aqueducts, especially the two that served the Baths of Etruscus – the pure Aqua Virgo, excellent for swimming in, and the chilly Aqua Marcia, born in the snowy hills north of the city.

Naturally, there is some exaggeration in these poetic architectural encomia. Among the hundreds of small urban baths of Rome, especially those located in poorer neighborhood, some no doubt were ill-designed and ill-kept and offered few luxuries of the kind sung by poets. Still, ample archaeological evidence bears out that praises of bath luxuries, in general, were well founded. After all, the taste for private and public luxury and extravagant display of wealth (and the critical concern with it) was a growing characteristic in late Republican and Imperial Roman culture. This was the period when rich Romans were intent on decorating their theaters, basilicas, and homes with rare, imported marble columns, and on acquiring, sometimes plundering if they could, priceless objects of art and sculpture from Greece to display in their dwellings as symbols of social exclusivity and power. Public baths, dubbed "people's palaces" by modern critics, were only a particular reflection of this general trend.

But there was also a significant difference. The wealth of private life was for the eyes of a few; public baths brought this bounty to the masses. The luxurious and pleasurable world of baths afforded the greater urban populations a welcome opportunity to escape their overcrowded and cramped living conditions and the dusty

streets for a few hours a day and bathe in style; moreover, for many, it was their only opportunity to bathe at all. Except for the houses and villas of the very wealthy, accommodations for ordinary Romans had surprisingly sparse bathing facilities – often a small chamber next to the kitchen, sharing the kitchen stove – or none at all. This was especially true for the multistory tenements (*insulae*) that housed the greater portions of urban populations in the larger cities. Thus, we should remember that along with their variety of social niceties, an important factor in baths' popularity was that they served the functional and hygienic needs of washing for many and made available for them an urban luxury most could not privately afford.

Another factor that helps account for the popularity of baths is the well-entrenched belief in the ancient world that baths were good for health. Bathing, from its earliest history, was considered a serious therapeutic measure and received full support and authority from ancient medicine. A fairly detailed regimen of bathing in hot, cold, and lukewarm waters for the treatment of a variety of ailments had been worked out by Greek and Roman doctors and health specialists. Taking a cure at natural hot springs or thermomineral baths was considered particularly efficacious. Some of the most popular resorts in the Roman world centered on such thermal sources. In a world where effective ways of combating disease were still limited and primitive and the average life expectancy was rarely more than 30–35 years, the remedial and preventive potential of baths was highly regarded. Furthermore, light forms of physical exercise, rooted in ancient Greek gymnastics but almost always accompanying bathing, were a simple and effective daily method of keeping fit and healthy for all age groups.

Finally, there is also a hard economic explanation. Baths were built in such large numbers because running a public bath was a sensible and lucrative business proposition. Advances in building technology (as well as water supply systems), especially the widespread use of Roman concrete, the primary material for the typically vaulted construction of baths, made building even large and complex bath structures relatively easy and cheap. These advantages, economic and technical, encouraged the popular establishment of small, neighborhood baths (*balneae*) across the dense fabric of cities, or even in far away rural contexts (see the following chapter for a discussion of *balneae* versus *thermae*). And all this made it

extremely convenient for bathers to choose a bath (unless it was vexing because there were so many to choose from, as Aristides comments about his Smyrna). Like a convenient corner grocery store, wherever one happened to be in a city, there was a bath nearby, although some might have preferred to walk farther to patronize their favorite establishments. Furthermore, even though baths mainly operated for profit, entrance fees were so low that even the poorest were not deterred; and there were always some establishments subsidized by wealthy community leaders, such as government and imperial officials seeking popularity, that were free of charge.

The civilized setting of the Roman city was essentially one in which physical, social, and mental pleasures – the sensual awareness that forms the very core of our existence – were sought after, welcomed, savored, and shared. Although conservative writers and philosophers, such as Seneca (who lived during the first century C.E.), disapproved of the soft and sensuous world of baths and the growing taste for luxury in all aspects of life, most Romans appreciated the privileges of their material culture; and the dream world created by public baths was primary among these enjoyments and entitlements. In the sumptuous setting of the imperial *thermae*, even the poorest could share the Empire's wealth and, perhaps, ideology. Baths gave the Romans the world they wanted, a world in which it was pleasant to linger.

3

BATHING RITUALS AND ACTIVITIES

TIME OF BATHING

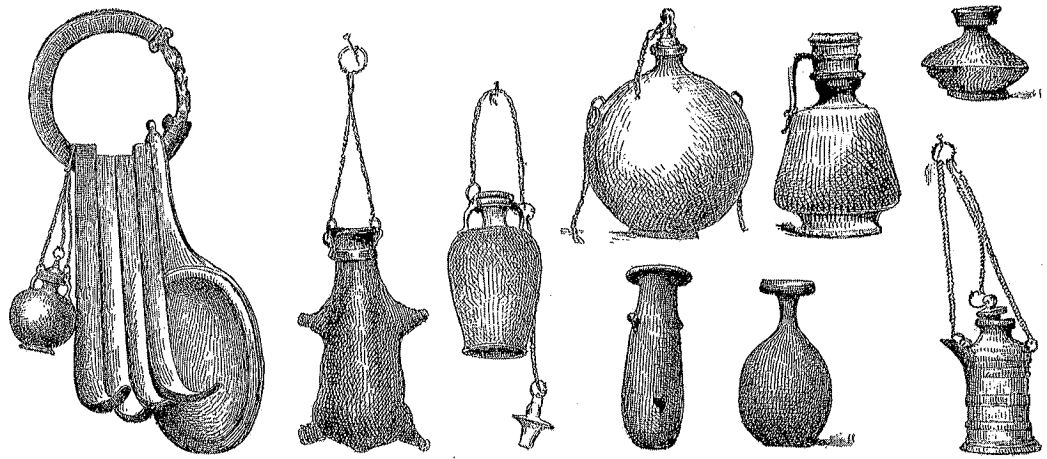
What were the pleasurable activities that constituted a distinctive culture of bathing for the Romans? And what was the orderly bathing ritual that occupied such a significant part of the afternoon? To answer these questions, we should consider bathing in the larger context of the Roman day. The Roman workday started early and was confined mainly to the morning hours. By noon, or soon after, the business of the day was finished. After a light lunch, and perhaps a short siesta, men went to the baths and stayed there for several hours (mixed bathing is discussed in Chapter 4). Martial recommended the "eighth hour" as the best time to bathe, as "This hour tempers the warm baths . . ." (Martial, 10.48). Because the Roman day was divided into twelve hours from sunrise to sunset, the length of an hour varied from season to season. Still, the eighth hour corresponds roughly to two or three o'clock in the afternoon. A very busy person might be forced to postpone his bath till a very late hour. In a letter to Tiberius, Augustus invoked his friend's sympathy for having to sacrifice his meal and delay his bath until the first hour of the night (c. 6 P.M.) because of his pressing duties.

There are occasional references to artificial lighting of baths, and oil lamps have been found in many bath excavations. Night bathing was rare, however, especially in public establishments. Patrons liked to enjoy bathing under copious daylight, and well-lighted baths with large windows were especially admired. Even sunbathing appears to have been part of the ritual in some establishments. Normally, public baths were closed by imperial (or municipal) order before daylight faded. Exceptions seem to reinforce the rule. Emperor Alexander Severus (212–35 C.E.) “donated oil for the lighting of the baths, which had been previously closed before sunset,” according to a late Roman history of the emperors (SHA, *Alex. Sev.*, 24.6). This early closing hour was reinstated by the emperor Tacitus (late third century C.E.) to avoid possible nighttime disturbances (SHA, *Tacitus*, 10).

ROUTINE OF BATHING

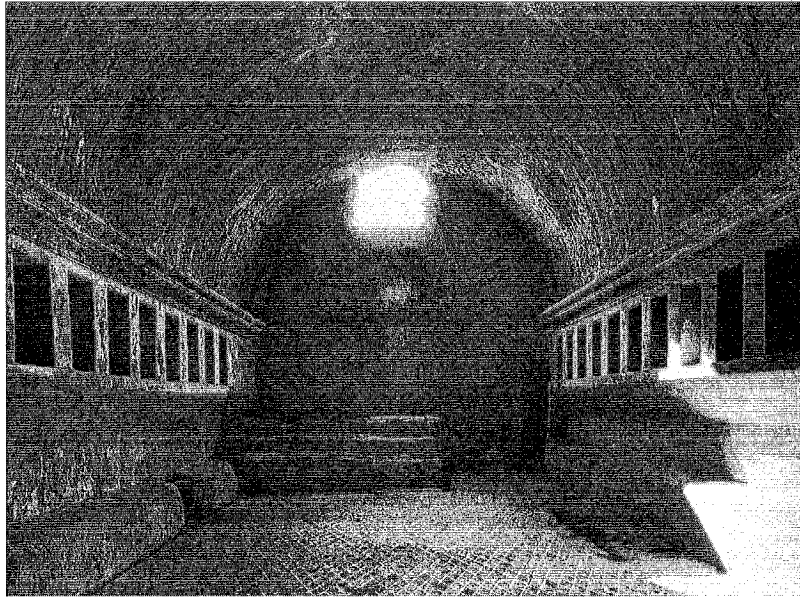
The essentials of the bathing routine as stated by Pliny the Younger were simple: “I am oiled, I take my exercise, I have my bath” (Pliny, *Letters*, 9.36). In the previously mentioned schoolbooks, the bathing sequence is given with equal simplicity: the schoolboy arrives at the baths, preferably with a servant or slave carrying his bathing gear and garments; he pays the bath fee, undresses, stores his clothes, has his body oiled and anointed, and takes a sweat bath followed by full immersion in the hot tub; then he goes (outside?) to the cold pool and swims in it, has his body dried thoroughly with a towel by an attendant, dresses (“Go, dress yourself elegantly and well!”), and concludes his bath by wishing well to others and thanking the bath master for a good bath (“Bathe well and may it all go well with you! I give thanks to the bath master; he washes warmly, farewell master!”).

A well-to-do Roman was accompanied to the baths by his slaves carrying his bathing paraphernalia: exercise and bathing garments, sandals, towels, and his *cista* or toilet kit – the last was a metal box, often cylindrical, that contained oils and perfumes in flasks, several strigils (curved metal blades like spoons to scrape the excess oil from the body), and a sponge (Figure 2). A poor person carried his own bundle; it was a declaration of ostentatious wealth and status to go to and return from the baths attended by an army of well-groomed slaves, carried on a sedan chair. Upon arriving at



the baths and before taking some form of exercise, one undressed, usually in the apodyterium, a special room for this purpose. These rooms must have contained wooden cabinets, chests, and benches for storing personal effects and clothes. Some baths, such as the Stabian Baths in Pompeii, had niches, shelves, cubbyholes, and benches all in masonry, and hence well preserved; in the smaller and poorer establishments, wooden pegs on the wall might have sufficed (Figures 3 and 4).

2. A strigil, left; oil and perfume flasks used in baths, right. Naples Archaeological Museum.



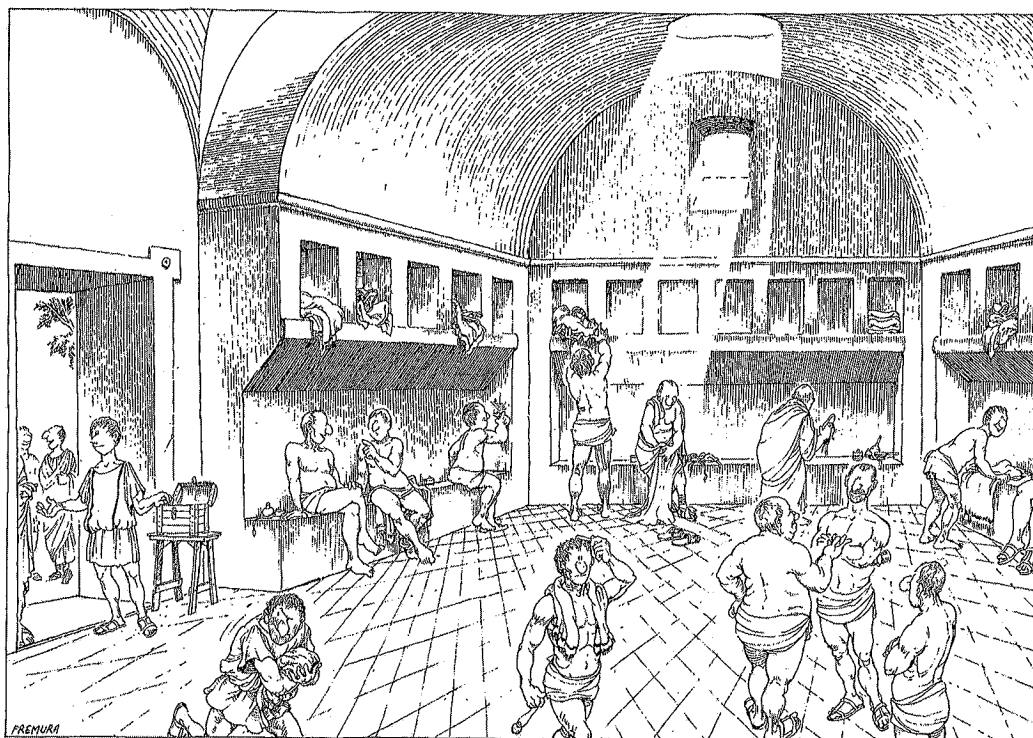
3. Women's apodyterium, Stabian baths, Pompeii. Compare the cubbyholes for clothes to those seen in *A Favorite Custom*, Fig. 1. Fototeca Unione, American Academy in Rome.

A perennial problem in public baths was the stealing of bathers' clothes. Many inscriptions allude to this much-despised nuisance and ways to prevent it. Most interesting are the curse tablets that place all manners of maledictions on thieves and call for supernatural assistance. Some were even willing to donate the stolen items to a deity in return for divine retribution. One tablet from the thermal baths at Aquae Sulis (Bath, England) is typical: "Solinus to the goddess Minerva: I give your divinity my bathing tunic and cloak. Do not allow sleep or health to him who has done me wrong, whether man or woman, whether slave or free, unless he reveals himself and returns those goods to your temple" (Fagan 1999, 37; *Tab. Sulis*, 32). Sometimes these injunctions might have helped, but to have one's servant guard over one's belongings was far more effective and quite common. In the small, luxurious baths described by Lucian (second century C.E.), there was even a special room in which the slaves could wait while the master bathed.

BATHING, EXERCISE, AND GAMES

Engaging in some form of athletic activity prior to bathing was considered a healthy thing to do; a modest amount of exercise and games, perhaps just enough to raise a sweat, was the proper preamble to bathing. Ordinarily, public baths had indoor and outdoor amenities for exercise. Inspired by the Greek gymnasium, most of these spaces were designed as outdoor courtyards, often colonnaded, usually called *palaestrae*. The visitor, entering a bath complex, first changed his or her street clothes for some form of light exercise tunic.

Unlike the Greeks in their gymnasia, the Romans did not think it proper to exercise in the nude, nor did they consider it correct to enter the *palaestrae* or hot rooms of their favorite bathing establishments in street clothes or shoes. Information on the kind of tunics they wore for exercise is scanty. These probably varied according to season, climate, and regional customs. Trimalchio (the comical hero in Petronius' *Satyricon*) wore a light dress while playing ball. Martial mentions one Phialenis who took her exercises in a skimpy garment like a bikini. There was also the *endromis*, a wrap of rough texture worn over lighter clothing, probably to protect the sweaty body from cold after exercise (Martial, 7.67 and 4.19); this might have been popular in colder northern European provinces. Martial



also mentions a small, tight-fitting cap called the *galericulum* worn by fashionable youth in the palaestra to protect their hair from oil (Martial, 14.50).

In the palaestra, engaging in some form of athletic activity prior to hot bathing was considered the healthy thing to do. It would be a mistake, however, to imagine that the average Roman engaged in strenuous exercises, like the young athletes of the Greek gymnasium. Roman gymnastics in this context was merely a prelude to bathing, a form of recreation, not serious training for competition. Galen, a famed physician practicing in Rome in the mid-second century, who recommended milder forms of exercise in conjunction to bathing, is typical of current medical opinion. In his essay on "Exercise with a Small Ball" (*De parvae pilae exercitu*), he prefers light ball games to other, more strenuous sports in the palaestra. Ball games developed all parts of the body in a balanced way and appealed to all age groups. Martial mentions five kinds of ball games played in the baths: handball (*pilae*), feather-ball (*pila paganica*), bladder-ball (*follies*), scuffle-ball (*harpastum*), and triple-ball (*pila trigonalis*). The last mentioned, as the name

4. Cartoon view of an apodyterium from a bath in Pompeii. Courtesy of A. Fremura.

implies, was a game for three: the opponents stood roughly at the three points of a triangle and tried to mislead and confuse each other as they passed several balls back and forth. Unlike solo exercises, ball games had the advantage of being good spectator sports (Figure 5).

Among other palaestral sports, running, boxing, wrestling, and fencing are mentioned, although their practice was not limited to the palaestra; many of the larger baths had special halls that could be used for indoor athletics. Women did participate in these sports and games, though they probably preferred (or it was expected of them to prefer) the lighter variety. Juvenal, writing in the mid-second century C.E., mocked society women who worked out with weights and dumbbells for infringing upon a heavier branch of sports that was obviously considered more appropriate for men. Swimming or rolling a metal hoop with a hooked stick (*trochus*) might have been thought more suitable. Swimming was a popular sport among the Romans, but it is unlikely that any serious swimming was done at the baths (although the "schoolboy" lists swimming among his bath activities in *Hermeneumata Ps Dositheana*; see Chapter 1). Baths often had pools large enough to swim in, but even the largest of these, the *natatio* of imperial *thermae*, barely reached a depth of 1-1.2 m. Few are known to have included a deep end for diving. Although one could swim (or float) in amazingly shallow waters, swimming in these pools must have been limited to a few easy strokes, with most of the bathers enjoying leisurely wading and splashing. Competition swimming was done in the sea or rivers, or in special gymnasia serving exclusively for athletic training. The early imperial palaestra or gymnasium at Herculaneum boasts a well-preserved, simple, serious lap pool deep enough for diving.

Following the Greek athletic procedure, bathers ordinarily covered their bodies with oils and dusted with cosmetic powders during exercise or sunbathing. The sweaty mixture of oil and dust (and plain muck, given that the exercise ground was unpaved) had to be washed off and scraped off with the strigil, also like Greek athletes. Many baths provided special rooms for massage with warm oil, spaces variably called *aleipterion*, *destrictorium*, or *unctorium*. It was also customary to terminate hot bathing by anointing the body with specially prepared, and often expensive, cosmetics, oils, and perfumed unguents.



Time spent in the palaestra with its games was pleasant, but the delights waiting inside the baths were pleasanter still. Few were so engrossed in their exercise as not to drop everything and hurry inside with the first sounding of the *tintinnabulum*, the bell that announced the opening of the hot baths.

5. Cartoon view of games and sports in a palaestra (shown as the palaestra of the Stabian Baths in Pompeii). Courtesy of A. Fremura.

BATHING ORDER

Inside the baths, the order of bathing required a movement from warm to hot through a number of intercommunicating rooms at varying temperature; the primary stations in the sequence can be identified as the tepidarium (medium heat room) and caldarium (hot room). Bathing terminated with a cold plunge in one of the very large unheated pools of the frigidarium (cold room). The last two, caldarium and frigidarium, were usually the most architecturally imposing and luxurious spaces in Roman baths. Most bathers perceived benefits from spending some time in one of the special sweating rooms, called the laconicum, for dry heat, or sudatorium, for steamy, wet heat.

Some of the larger baths boasted special sunrooms (*heliocaminus*) for the sensual pleasures and benefits of sunbathing. In two of the establishments in Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli – the Large Baths and the Baths-with-Heliocaminus – there are large, round rooms with immense, unglazed windows oriented to the west and south. The floors of these special sunrooms were unpaved, furnished with sand like the beach. The public by and large enjoyed the copious illumination of the newer, imperial-era baths made possible by concrete, high vaulted ceilings, and large, arched windows filling up almost the entire area under the curving vault. There are even references in ancient literature to the enjoyment of broad views across land and sea while sunbathing or immersed in a pool – reminding one of the so-called “infinity pools” of fancy modern estates.

The order of bathing and body care outlined above was not a fixed routine, but only a general framework that received its inspiration from the medical traditions of antiquity and mere habit. The size, layout, and luxury of a bath – that is, its architecture – must have also affected the preferred order or routine of bathing. Anywhere along the recommended course, deviations, omissions, or repetitions were possible. One bathed as one wished.

ENTERTAINMENT IN BATHS

Bathers spent most of their time in the caldarium and the frigidarium, the main halls for hot and cold bathing, to wash, to leisurely soak in large pools, to get a massage or even depilation, and to converse and gossip with fellow bathers all along. But these well-lighted, spacious halls were also used for a variety of social and recreational activities and even performances. Poetry reading, music, and singing – professional as well as the unsolicited amateur kind – were common. A mosaic panel at the entrance of a bath in Antioch shows three jugglers and, perched on the left arm of one, a monkey-like animal. Public baths with unencumbered large spaces, palaestrae, and gardens – and an enthusiastic audience – seem to have served as ideal stages for traveling shows, performers, gymnasts, conjurers, jesters, mimes, and musicians. An inscription may be about a popular artist named Ursus, who lived during Hadrian's reign (117–38 C.E.), famous for performing a game with glass balls for large crowds in four great thermae of Rome (*CIL*, 6, no. 9797). Ursus composed his own epitaph and hoped to preserve the

memory of his unusual skill for posterity; his wish seems to have been granted in a modest and (because whether this inscription really referred to a real *Ursus* is debated among scholars) peculiar way!

EATING AND DRINKING IN BATHS

Eating and drinking would have infused merriment into any group and augmented the enjoyment of any recreational activity, and the visitors of public baths were no exception. Food and drink were available in establishments just outside the baths or actually from vendors inside. A price list scribbled on the wall from a room in the Suburban Baths in Herculaneum includes "nuts, drinks, hog's fat, bread, meat, and sausage," each item with its price (*CIL* 4, no. 10674). An inscription of Hadrianic date from Magnesia-on-the-Meander, in Asia Minor, mentions a restaurant and a grocery concern actually annexed to the baths selling cheese, barley, oil, olives, wine, fish, and vegetables. Of particular interest was a "lyre-shaped" pretzel, probably quite similar to the ring-shaped, sesame-encrusted bagel (*simit*) very popular in Turkey today. Some bath excavations yielded cups, plates, and jugs, as well as bones of animals, such as pigs, sheep, and chickens. For most patrons, eating at the baths meant light refreshment or a snack as a prelude to a proper dinner; others, however, made a meal of it. As Martial humorously informs us, Aemilius ate lettuce, eggs, and eels and tried to excuse his appetite by saying that he did not take dinner at home – hardly to be believed. And one Philostratus, drunk on wine, fell down a long flight of steps to his death on his way from a party at the thermal baths in Sinuessa, famed for its curative waters: "He would not have incurred such great danger, ye Nymphs, if he had drunk your waters instead," Martial sagely comments (*Martial*, 12.19, 11.82).

A good bath called for a good dinner. "It is little consolation to bathe in luxury and perish in starvation," observed Martial with satirical exaggeration and proceeded to sharpen his lively wit on the subject of dinner, the *cena*, as the culmination of the bath and the Roman day, in no less than eight short poems or epigrams, his preferred method of social commentary. Martial himself was a cordial host who strove to arrange a perfect time for his friends: "You will dine nicely, Julius Cerialius, at my house. You will be

able to observe the eighth hour; we will bathe together: you know how near Stephanus' baths are to me. First there will be . . . lettuce useful for relaxing the bowels, and shoots from tender leeks . . ." followed with a long list of delectables his friend could enjoy in his after-bath dinner (Martial, 11.52). It seems that in Roman culture, to dine alone was something of a social failure for some, and an outright disaster for spongers who hoped to feast sumptuously at the expense of a rich acquaintance. Sometimes it was very hard to free oneself from the clutches of an obsequious flatterer such as Menogenes, who would not leave until he obtained a reluctant invitation: "To escape Menogenes at the warm baths is not possible no matter how hard you try. He will grab the warm hand-ball with right and left so that he can score a point for you. He will pick up the flaccid bladder-ball from the dust for you even if he has already bathed. He'll say your towels are whiter than snow although they may be dirtier than a baby's bib. As you comb your thinning hair he'll say that you have arranged your locks like Achilles. . . . He'll praise everything, he'll admire everything, until totally exasperated, you will succumb: Come to dinner" (Martial, 12.82). On the other hand, there was Dento, who had found a wealthier dinner patron and started to spurn the poet's invitations (5.44.1); and Cotta required such serious courting that even Martial (who obviously liked this Cotta!) had drawn a blank on him: "If you wish to feast at Cotta's table, the baths offer the best chance to get an invitation. I never yet dined with him though; my naked charms, I imagine, do not excite his admiration" (Martial, 1.23, free translation).

SENECA'S DESCRIPTION OF PUBLIC BATHS

Perhaps the best description of the crowded, noisy, vibrant world of the public bath, a world that is both delightful and distasteful – at any event strangely irresistible to both the stoic and the hedonist alike – is Seneca's charmingly satirical account of the various activities and noises coming from a small, urban bath:

I have lodgings right over a bathing establishment. So, picture yourself the assortment of sounds, which are strong enough to make me hate my very powers of hearing! When your strenuous gentleman, for example, is exercising himself by flourishing leaden weights; when he is working hard, or else pretends to be working hard, I can hear him grunt; and

whenever he releases his imprisoned breath, I can hear him panting in wheezy and high-pitched tones. Or, perhaps, I notice some lazy fellow, content with a cheap rub-down, and hear the crack of the pummeling hand on his shoulder, varying in sound according as the hand is laid on flat or hollow. Then perhaps, a professional comes along, shouting out the score [of a ball game]; that is the finishing touch. Add to this the arresting of an occasional thief or pickpocket, the racket of the man who always likes his own voice in the bathroom, or the enthusiast who plunges into the swimming pool with unconscionable noise and splashing. Besides all those voices, if nothing else are good, imagine the hair-plucker with his penetrating, shrill voice – for purposes of advertisement – continually giving vent and never holding his tongue except when he is plucking the armpits and making his victims yell instead. Then the cake-seller, with his varied cries, the sausageman, the candy-seller, and the vendors of food hawking their goods, each with his distinctive intonation. (*Letters*, 56, trans. R. M. Gummere)