

Les thermes romains. Actes de la Table ronde organisée par l'École Française de Rome (Rome, 11–12 novembre 1988). Mit Beiträgen von R. Rebuffat, G. De Vita-Évrard, M. L. Conforto, H. Manderscheid, H. Broise, V. Jolivet, X. Lafon, P. Bargellini, A. Cassatella, Y. Thébert, E. Lenoir, J. Boersma, G. Gazzetti, P. Aupert und J. Scheid. Collection de l'École Française de Rome, Band 142. École Française de Rome, Rom 1991. 221 Seiten, zahlreiche Abbildungen.

The publication of this 'table ronde' consists of 16 articles by the participants (pp. 1–216), preceded by a

preface by M. LENOIR (pp. VII–VIII), and followed by a conclusion by R. REBUFFAT (p. 217–219). At the end the book is furnished with summaries of the contributions. Strange as it may seem this round table is the first seminar on Roman baths held for a very long time. The subject has been severely neglected for many years, and we have to thank the French School in Rome for this initiative, which has now resulted in a copious publication of the communications.

The subject is a large one, and the policy of the organizers seems to have been to concentrate partly on subjects related to Italy, partly on subjects on which French scholars have been working and in which the École Française in Rome has been involved, including both geographical and thematical studies. This is done at the cost of a unifying theme, and the publication certainly gives an impression of a rather haphazard selection of themes concerning Roman baths. This is reflected in the planning of the volume, where there is, as far as I can see, no system whatsoever in the placement of the various articles. The only exception is the first article, by R. Rebuffat, on the central problem of the terminology used in relation to Roman baths. For that reason there is no point in treating the articles in the sequence in which they are placed in the volume; rather I have chosen to divide this review into two parts, of which one will treat the articles with a predominantly general theme on various aspects of Roman baths, and the other the articles concerned with single baths or with baths limited to a certain area.

To the first group belong articles by R. Rebuffat, on the terminology, by H. Broise, on windows in Roman baths, and by P. Aupert and J. Scheid, both treating cultic aspects of the baths. In the following, I shall concentrate primarily on some of the most conspicuous communications, beginning with that of R. REBUFFAT, *Vocabulaire thermal. Documents sur le bain romain* (pp. 1–34, including an appendix on the word 'paganicum' [pp. 33–34]). R. takes up a crucial and very debated problem concerning Roman baths, namely the terminology used by modern scholars. Basing himself on the written sources, he makes a suggestion for a tool which should make life easier for future publishers of Roman baths. I have, however, some doubts as to the usefulness of his system. One of the reasons is his use of the former research on the subject. Thus he concentrates almost completely on French research, neglecting to an astonishing degree the very important German research on the subject, even *the* book on Roman baths by D. KRENCKER/E. KRÜGER/H. LEHMANN/H. WACHTLER, *Die Trierer Kaiserthermen*, from 1929, which R. not even mentions except briefly in connection with his collection of sources, let alone discusses. This is so much more worrying since Krencker was the first to suggest a convincing typology of the baths, including suggestions for a terminology for the various rooms, based on a collection of written sources made by Wachtler at the end of the volume. Without going into details, I find R.'s basis for suggesting a terminology rather insufficient and his use of both the written sources and the former research haphazard; in my opinion he does not take sufficiently into account neither the date of the sources (although they are placed chronologically in the collection, p. 7–28), nor the character of them, e.g. whether medical or not, or whether concerning public or private baths, nor finally the geographical location of the source, all crucial elements where an estimation of a given source is concerned. To mention but a few examples, one misses a discussion of equivocal words like *propnigeion/leum*, and *sudatorium*, for reading R. one gets the impression that his interpretation of the first is the only possible one, and that the second is non-existent. Also, he underestimates in my opinion the importance of a second tepidarium after the hot bath (p. 5), even if its presence in most baths denotes its indispensability, and although it is of crucial importance for the understanding of one of the main characteristics of the Roman baths, namely the graduating temperatures. All that said, I find his proposal for a circuit of the baths convincing, and not differing perceptibly from that of Krencker's. As does R. himself, I prefer his French version of the designations of the rooms (p. 5) to his Latin one (p. 6, where I miss discussions of most of the terms), and I can only applaud his warning of using Latin words without defining them first. The collection of sources with a French translation and the indices connected with it may certainly be useful. In general, though, I find not much new in his treatment when comparing with Krencker's, and I find it depressing that the nationality of the scholars rather than the value of their research should even today direct a scholar working on a subject as international as the Roman baths.

In his article on "Vitrages et volets des fenêtres thermales à l'époque impériale" (pp. 61–78, 36 figs.), H. BROISE takes up a much neglected theme in bath research. Although the position and construction of windows had great importance for the functioning of the baths, they are seldom treated in the publications. Basing himself primarily on the new French investigations in the South Baths of Bosra, B. shows partly that double windows were used in the heated rooms at least from the third quarter of the 1st century AD, and

partly that the system with wooden frames was gradually replaced by frames built up in masonry, which dominated in Late Antiquity. Also, he stresses the importance of shutters in the baths, used both for protection and insulation. Like many scholars before him, the author rejects E. A. Thatcher's tenacious theory of pane-less windows in the Forum Baths of Ostia.

Two articles concern the cultic aspect of the baths. P. AUPERT writes about "Les thermes comme lieux de culte" (pp. 185–192, 4 figs.). That cults were closely connected to thermal baths, often related to sanctuaries, is well known, and the author cites many examples, primarily from Gallia. What interests the author is to find evidence for proper sanctuaries or at least ex-votos and dedications indicating that function, not only in therapeutic baths but in normal public baths. As far as the last group is concerned the author mentions many examples of the finds of statues of gods, sometimes placed in niches in the baths; but, as he freely admits, the presence of statues alone is far from being a proof of the existence of a cult. Studying the epigraphical material he concludes rightly that the god or rather goddess most often mentioned in a cultic context in connection with baths is Fortuna, in her many disguises. However, only very seldom is a room or a niche identified for this purpose, while the finds of altars are only little more frequent.

J. SCHEID elaborates on this subject in "Sanctuaires et thermes sous l'Empire" (pp. 205–214), treating the baths built in the suburban or extraurban sanctuaries. The author treats the very important problem, all too often neglected in bath research, of distinguishing between medical and normal public baths, and their respective relations to the curative cults. Also, one has to distinguish between natural water and manipulated water, i.e. from cisterns, tubes, etc. His conclusion that not all baths built in a sanctuary were connected with a healing cult is important and ought to be a well established fact. The function of these baths were primarily to clean the pilgrims and priests before entering the temple or sanctuary, a custom known from many written sources. Also, many sanctuaries were furnished with *hospitalia*, and baths were necessary for the guests staying there as well. In the towns, where baths were close at hand, only fountains were needed for this purpose. In an appendix (pp. 215–216), the author treats the baths found in the sanctuary of Diana at Nemi, arguing convincingly for their being baths used for ablutions before the rituals.

The second group, in which I have chosen to divide the articles, is by far the largest. It includes partly articles of a rather general kind, but with a geographical limitation: H. Broise and V. Jolivet, on Etruscan baths in the Hellenistic period, X. Lafon, on private baths in Italy in the same period, Y. Thébert, on problems concerning circulation in North African baths, E. Lenoir, on Roman baths in Mauretania Tingitana, and Y. Thébert again, on *sodalitates* in the North African baths. Partly, this group includes articles on single baths by G. Di Vita-Évrard (terminology elucidated from the Hadrianic baths of Leptis Magna), M. L. Conforto and H. Manderscheid (baths of Caracalla), P. Bargellini (Central baths of Pompeii), A. Cassatella and I. Jacopi (small baths on the Palatine), J. Boersma (baths at Valesio), and G. Gazzetti (baths in a *mansio* at *Ad Vacenas*).

H. BROISE and V. JOLIVET, "Le bain en Étrurie à l'époque hellénistique" (pp. 79–95, 19 figs.), throw light on the bath-situation in a neglected area in a neglected period. All too often the various regions of Italy (except Latium and Campania) are treated together in this period, but in reality they all developed and received foreign inspiration in their own way during this period of hellenization. We do not know much about baths in Etruria, but what we know, the two authors have collected. They reach the very interesting and in my view highly probable conclusion that the hellenization (before the Social War), symbolized by 'modern' baths, mostly private but also a few public ones, was not propagated through Rome, via the colonies or the *villae* of the Roman land owners, but reached Etruria directly if not from the Hellenistic kingdoms, at least from the Hellenistic stronghold Campania. In fact the private baths built by the Roman colonists at Cosa in this period were old-fashioned *lavatrinae*, rather than modern *balnea*. The article throws in relief how much work there is still to be done in the various regions of Italy in the Hellenistic period, and what fruitful results a comparison between them eventually are likely to furnish us with.

In fact, the interesting article by X. LAFON on "Les bains privés dans l'Italie romaine au IIe siècle av. J.-C." (pp. 97–114, 19 figs.) is an illustration of the possibilities inherent in this method. After good introductory notes on the well known written sources relating to or preceding the period in question, he bases his elucidation of the rather little known private baths on the Campanian Villa Prato in Sperlonga, excavated by the French School. This villa had a short life (from the third quarter of the 2nd century – 60/40 BC), and its bath-suite, or *balneum*, was not touched during that period. Very interesting is the presence of a *labrum* in

the first of the two rooms, probably for washing before entering the hot bath tubs. It might well have been taken over from the Greek domestic baths, where this basin had a long history, as seen e.g. from the vase paintings. Also the strange "baignoire botte", constituting probably but a parenthesis in the history of bathing life, is worth noting. A close similarity with a *balneum* in a villa found in Ciampino near Rome warns us that the lack of luxurious domestic baths in Roman houses in Etruria is not necessarily an indication that the inhabitants in Rome itself kept a distance to Greek-flavoured bathrooms. At least this was not the case when they stayed in their Campanian villas.

Proceeding to North Africa, Y. THÉBERT in his article on "Problèmes de circulation dans les thermes d'Afrique du Nord" (pp. 139–149, 10 figs.) addresses an important issue in bath research. He bases himself on Krencker's very useful typology (at least where North African baths are concerned), and interprets this scholar's nominal designations for the heated rooms between the *apodyterium* and the *caldarium*, I, II, III, as *tepidarium*, *destrictarium* and *laconicum*, respectively. He thus follows A. Lézine's controversial identification of the *destrictarium* as a heated room integrated in the bath circuit. I do not find this theory convincing, since the word *destrictarium* occurs but very seldom in the written sources, and since the *destrictarium* in its essence is a room connected with the activities in the *palaestra*, used as it was for scraping dirt and oil from the body before entering the fine floors of the baths. Surely it must have been a cold room opening directly to the *palaestra*, as is the case with the only identified example, namely the one north of the *laconicum* in the Stabian baths of Pompeii. The examples cited are destined to show the connection between this room and the covered 'palaestrae' in the baths, here called *gymnasia*, but the kind of sports practised here were light ones such as ball games and strolling, and the players were not covered by dust, only by sweat, so that no special room was needed, the *tepidarium* with its facilities for washing sufficing for the purpose of provisional cleaning. All in all the author in my opinion overestimates the role of major sports activities in the Roman baths of North Africa. Thus, while room III was certainly a sweating room, room II, in my opinion and following the normal procedure in the baths, should generally be identified with a *tepidarium*, while room I, often heated only indirectly, if at all, may be identified as a *tepidarium*, an *unctorium*, a heated *apodyterium*, etc. The author brings forward many other issues of interest, but due to limited space I shall only mention one, namely his theory that a *palaestra* was the central element distinguishing Summer- and Winter baths (n. 7). One of the few safely identified Summer baths, that at Madaurus, however, had no *palaestra*, the same might well have been the case with the Summer baths of Thurburbo Maius.

A kind of continuation of this article, which does not include baths in Mauretania Tingitana, is that of E. LENOIR, "Thermes romains de Maurétanie Tingitane" (pp. 151–160, 10 figs.). The study is a supplement to the collection of baths in Tingitana included in Rebuffat's fine publication of the baths of Thamusida and is based on detailed studies of several Moroccan baths. The author argues convincingly for the baths of this province creating a special group of Roman baths, to be distinguished from the other North African baths. They are rather early in relation to the baths of this area, comparatively small, rather simple, and mostly of the axial row type. They are rather comparable to 1st century AD baths in Italy, especially Campania, in France and in Spain. However, I find the author's identification of one of the pools in the *caldarium* as a *labrum*, even if an immersion pool is concerned, misleading, for a *labrum* was essentially used for ablutions before entering the communal pool. Also, the author is in error when she claims (p. 158) that *tepidaria* were not present in the early baths (i.e. before the mid-1st century AD), even citing as examples the Stabian baths and the Forum baths in Pompeii and the Augustan baths of Conimbriga, all furnished with *tepidaria*.

Y. THÉBERT, "Les sodalités dans les thermes d'Afrique du Nord" (pp. 193–204) transfers our attention to one of the social functions of the baths. The *sodales* were members of minor associations occupied with the funerals of the members as well as the worship of common gods, especially Dionysus. At least some of the members were wealthy and the *collegia* had economic functions as well. The study is primarily based on investigations in the baths of Julia Memmia at Bulla Regia, excavated by the author, where graphic symbols of the various *collegia* are found in the *frigidarium*. They belong to the original building, from late Severan times, at which period these associations played an important role in city life, e.g. as donors of shows, especially *venationes*. The main problem posed is how one should interpret the presence of these signs in baths undoubtedly open to the public. After collecting the few examples of *sodalitates* connected with the public baths, the private ones and the privately owned ones not presenting any serious problems of interpretation, he concludes convincingly that these baths on account of their size and popularity were very well suited for meetings of these societies.

Turning to articles concerned with single baths, G. DI VITA-ÉVRARD, "Lepcis Magna: contribution à la terminologie des thermes" (pp. 35–42, 7 figs.) concentrates on the inscription mentioning a restoration of the Hadrianic baths during the reign of Septimius Severus. An enigmatic fragmented word . . ry . . is convincingly suggested to be restored as *crypta*, and as denoting the characteristic corridor surrounding the *frigidarium*. Since the author searches in vain for parallels for such corridors in North Africa, I would recommend her to search for them in Asia Minor instead, primarily in Ephesos.

Both the article of M. L. CONFORTO, "Terme di Caracalla. Dati acquisiti ed ipotesi di ricerca" (pp. 43–48, 7 figs.), and of H. MANDERSCHIED, "La gestione idrica delle Terme di Caracalla: alcune osservazioni" (pp. 49–60, 14 figs.), have as a main theme the water system of the baths of Caracalla in Rome. A clarification of this system in these large *thermae* will not only be useful in itself, but also help to elucidate water systems in other baths, thus helping to develop one of the most neglected fields in bath research. Conforto, who gives a situation rapport of the ongoing work of the Soprintendenza in the baths of Caracalla, presents new plans and sections of the building. Weight is laid on tracing the building methods and the organization of the work. The lack of holes in the walls of the main building induces the author to propose a use of earthen fill instead of the traditional scaffolding. As far as the intriguing covering of the *caldarium* is concerned, a proposal of a cross vault built in wood and metal would certainly also give meaning to the interpretation of this hall as the famous 'cella soliaris'. On the basis of the placement of the vertical drains from the roofs the intriguing 'palaestrae' as well as the *natatio* are considered unroofed.

Manderscheid is currently working on a large project on the water systems of Roman baths, of which his investigations in the baths of Caracalla is but a part, albeit a very important one. He stresses three main issues: the water supply, the use of the water in the baths, and the removal of waste water. One of the most debated questions is how often and in what way the water was changed. Calculating the amount of water reaching the cisterns per day versus the capacity of the pools of the baths and adding other uses, he argues convincingly for the water of the pools being changed continually at least in the baths of Caracalla. The author's reinterpretation of the *stadium* in front of the cisterns in the southern precinct wall as a large and water-consuming nymphaeum, also mentioned by Conforto, is interesting and throws new light on this part of the structure.

A. CASSATELLA and I. IACOPI, "Il balneum presso le Scalae Caci sul Palatino" (pp. 129–138, 16 figs.) treat a coeval, but much more modest bath-building in Rome. It is one of the few public *balnea* in the Regio Palatinum, and was built into earlier structures just below the temple of Cybele in the Severan period. A rebuilding in the 4th century meant a reduction of the heated rooms of this row type building, and it thus constitutes a typical example of the development in Late Antiquity towards smaller heated sections.

In her communication "Le Terme Centrali di Pompei" (pp. 115–128, 10 figs.) P. BARGELLINI takes up a well known bath-building, giving a general description and treatment of the Central baths of Pompeii. She argues convincingly for a dating of this building to 70–79 AD, i.e. the period of renewed imperial benevolence towards this area during the reign of Vespasian. I shall not go into details but only correct two errors: firstly, the tubulature was an invention not of the 1st century AD (p. 118) but of the last third of the 1st century BC. Secondly, concerning the typological placement of the baths: they were, certainly, a good representative of Krencker's axial row type, but this type was never, as stated by the author (p. 123), overtaken by the imperial type; the row type always remained the most popular type in bath-architecture.

Going further southwards in Italy, J. BOERSMA, "Le terme tardoromane di Valesio (Salento)" (pp. 161–173, 17 figs.) describes the well preserved (as far as the plan is concerned) baths found during the Dutch excavations at Valesio, one of the few Roman baths found in this region. He describes the method of construction and gives a convincing reconstruction of the whole building (fig. 17). The locality is to be identified with the road station Mutatio Valentia/Balantium. It was deserted during the 5th century AD.

The same function had the not yet fully excavated baths described by G. CAZZETTI, "Il complesso termale della *mansio* di *Ad Vacanas*" (pp. 175–183, 13 figs.), by the via Cassia, abandoned also in the 5th century AD. The baths were built in Augustan times and enlarged and restored several times (five phases may be distinguished) reaching its greatest extent in the last phase, around 400 AD. The description of the development of the baths would have been facilitated if the letters designating the rooms referred to in the text were also to be found on the plans.

In his "Conclusion en forme de promenade" (pp. 217–219), R. REBUFFAT stresses the fundamental importance of method, terminology and typology when treating Roman baths. He is right, and the heterogeneous mosaic presented in this book certainly shows both the strong and the weak sides in scholarly research of this central Roman building. Also, the large span in topics relating to the baths is illustrated, although, as mentioned, the weight has been laid very much on the geographical and thematic areas treated by the French School. The only very marginal inclusion of the eastern part of the Roman Empire, including the Greek written sources, all too often neglected in bath research, is also very conspicuous in this book. All this may be remedied in the future, however; the important thing is that the research on Roman baths has now at last taken a firm hold of the scholars, and many more round tables will undoubtedly follow this laudable French initiative.

Kopenhagen

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