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IVANA KUZMANOVIĆ NOVOVIĆ
College of Serbian Orthodox Church for arts and conservation, Belgrade
novovic.ivana1@gmail.com

MARKO A. JANKOVIĆ*
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy,
Department of Archaeology, Archaeological Collection
marko.jankovic@f.bg.ac.rs

VESNA MANOJLOVIĆ NIKOLIĆ**
University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of History
vesna.manojlovic.nikolic@ff.uns.ac.rs

BATHING IN THE ROMAN PROVINCE: LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BATHS IN MOESIA SUPERIOR

Abstract: There are approximately 40 Roman baths dating from the 1st to 4th century AD that have been discovered in the territory of Moesia Superior. Most of them were systematically investigated, while some were only indirectly confirmed, either by means of surveys or through epigraphic monuments. The presence and layout of the rooms in these baths points to the conclusion that most activities in the baths of Moesia Superior were similar to those in other parts of the Empire. However, the baths from this territory also show some peculiarities, setting them apart from other parts of the Roman Empire. Although insufficiently investigated and reported on, the portable archaeological finds point to a whole host of activities that were not connected with the bath’s essential function – hygiene and health. Musical instruments, styluses, board game accessories and spindle discs are just some of the objects that illustrate the activities in baths, suggesting that it is not enough to interpret these objects as places for maintaining hygiene, but as centres of social life, or, in the case of private baths, as places for rest and leisure.

Keywords: Roman baths, Moesia Superior, hygiene and health, social activities, consumers.

There are few examples within Roman archaeology that can be observed from as many different vantage points as is the case with Roman baths. Researchers have so far examined various issues related to the architecture of the baths, their functions, the manner in which the interiors were decorated, the distribution of portable finds, but also

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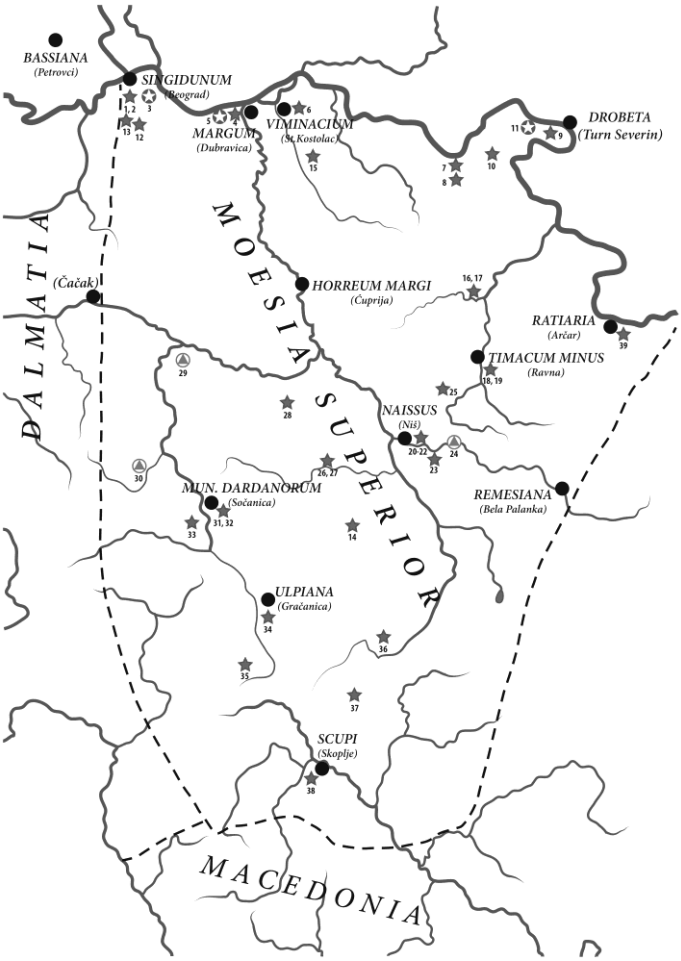
their importance in the wider social contexts of the Roman world.[1] Apart from the archaeological material, of great importance for the study of Roman baths are also literary and epigraphic sources which provide an abundance of information on the economics of the baths, the visitors and their activities therein. However, one must not lose sight of some of the basic issues with respect to the interpretation of the archaeological materials and texts which can easily lead one astray. Archaeological results, classical texts and epigraphic monuments, each on their own, have limitations within which conclusions can or cannot be made. Although there is a large number of explored Roman baths in the territory of the Empire (around 1000), it should be noted that the territory in question was large, spanning from the Atlantic to the Black Sea, and from the Rivers Rhine and Danube on the northern border, to Sahara in the south.[2] The popularity of the thermae in the Roman Empire is illustrated further by how numerous they were: during the reign of Agrippa in 33 BC there were around 170 thermae in the city of Rome itself, with a significant increase in their number a century later, with two censuses from the second half of the 4th century recording as many as 856 private baths and 10-11 large, luxury baths.[3]

On the other hand, the period connected with baths spans almost eight hundred years. The architecture of the baths is certainly important for the issues related to the manner of construction, the location in which they were built, but also to fashion and tastes of the people who used them, but the analysis of architectural complexes in itself does not offer answers to a large number of questions related to their visitors. Only after the analysis is set within a wider social, economic, geographical or chronological context can we investigate these objects and start looking for answers to important questions. The analyses of portable materials, from formal characteristics to their distribution within the objects, can provide us with landmarks for a possible identification of certain social groups, like women, children, slaves, soldiers etc. These and similar cases, however, almost exclusively amount to individual cases and cannot be generalized across space and time.

On the other hand, classical texts proved problematic since they were, first of all, created in different chronological and geographical contexts, for different purposes and different audiences.[4] They often provide contradictory information and are, ultimately, rarely related to the archaeologically investigated baths, lacking the coherence of archaeological and historiographic data. Epigraphic monuments are, for the most part, connected with individual cases, clearly framed by contexts within which they were made.[5] The data at our disposal often provide insight into the possibilities, rather than clear and undisputable information. The results obtained by means of the analysis of the material and texts from a certain area of the Empire cannot simply be transferred to other areas. The baths in Moesia Superior have so far not been reported on systematically. The largest number of publications refer to individual cases[6] or to the field reports.[7] This paper is an attempt to

1 Nielsen 1993; 1999; Yegül 1992; Fagan 1999a.
2 DeLaine 1988.
3 Fagan 1999a: 41–42; Yegül 2010: 2–3; Kontokosta 2019: 46.
4 cf. Hingley 2005.
5 e.g. Kondić 1987: 38; Markovich 1984: 236; Mirković 1986: 103.
6 e.g. Vasić i Milošević 2000.
7 Veličković 1957; Bojović 1977; Petrović 1987, et al.

outline certain features of the baths in Moesia Superior and point to their importance in the life of the provincial society.



Map 1. Baths in Moesia Superior

Archaeologically investigated baths: 1. Singidunum – Academic Park; 2. Singidunum – Academic Plato; 4. Margum; 6. Viminacium; 7. Taliata; 8. Porečka reka; 9.Pontes; 10. Egeta; 12. Pruten; 13. Lisovići; 14. Mansio Idimum; 15. Mansio municipio; 16. Felix Romuliana – Baths in SE part of the settlement; 17. Felix Romuliana – Palace Baths; 18. Timacum Minus – Baths I; 19.Timacum Minus – Baths II; 20. Naissus – Baths beside the Ottoman Fortress walls; 21. Naissus – Baths inside the Ottoman Fortress; 22. Naissus – Sokolana baths; 23. Mediana; 25. Niševac; 26. Hammeum; 27. Bace; 28. Pleš; 31. Municipium D.D. – Forum baths; 32. Municipium D. D. – Sočanica – Small baths; 33. Banjska; 34. Ulpiana; 35. Nerodimlje; 36. Davidovac; 37. Žujince; 38. Scupi; 39. Ratiaria. **Baths confirmed through epigraphic evidence**: 3. Singidunum – Episcopal Church (?); 5. Smederevo; 11. Diana. **Roman springs and spa**: 24. Niška banja; 29. Vrnjačka banja; 30. Novopazarska banja.)

(Map designed by Jelena Premović, National Museum Belgrade.)

1. The origin of the baths

The baths, as one of the emblematic structures of the Roman world, represents an elaborate architectural complex which, by means of its facilities, also had an important socio-cultural role, unique in the ancient times. Baths were erected in cities (*urbes*), towns and smaller settlements (*vici, pagi*), inns (*mansiones*), military fortifications (*castra, castella, burgi*); they are also found as parts of the city (*villa urbana*) or country (*villa rustica*) villas, imperial or gubernatorial palaces (*palatium*).[8]

What preceded the monumental and luxurious Roman thermae of the imperial period were more simply constructed baths of ancient Greece (βαλανεῖον). Their oldest archaeological remains, dated from the middle of the second millennium BC, were discovered in the complex of a palace at Knossos in Crete, as well as in Akrotiri on Santorini. Later, during the Homeric Age, there are mentions of hot water bathing, pouring water over oneself in a baths, not just for maintaining personal hygiene, but also to refresh oneself after a journey or to recuperate after a fight.[9] We know about the appearance of Greek baths from the preserved remains of the baths from Olympia (with developmental phases from the 5th to around the 1st century BC), as well as from the representations of these buildings in the black-figure vases.[10] Unlike the privileged heroes mentioned by Homer, most Greeks bathed in order to maintain personal hygiene, which is why the rooms were simple, small and modestly decorated. Athletic exercises and recreation were performed in specially constructed buildings – gymnasiums (γυμνάσιον). The Romans, however, adapted these Greek models to new demands, which is why large baths were created by combining these two facilities with different functions.[11]

The oldest Roman baths started to appear already in the mid 3rd century BC, first in the rich and prosperous Campania due to numerous hot water springs, more specifically in the private houses in Pompeii (Villa of the Mysteries, House of the Faun), whereas common, public baths, such as Stabian Baths and Forum Bath can be found somewhat later, in the 2nd century BC.[12] It is believed that the baths in the region of Latium may have been the model for the baths in Rome.[13] A rise in the popularity of baths, especially during the period of the Empire, is attributed to the fact that, besides their basic purpose, they also served as places of gathering and socialization. Intended for the use of all social classes, they were designed to

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8 Jeremić, Gojgić 2012: 29.

9 Brödner 1983: 4–5; Yegul 1992: 6; Grethlein 2007: 43.

10 Kähler 1966: 715–716.

11 The Latin term *thermae* is a translation of the Greek word *θερμός*, meaning hot. *Balneum* is also a translation of the Greek word *βαλανεῖον*, denoting a hot bathroom. The issues with the terms of *thermae* and *balneum* were examined by numerous researchers. Taking into account ancient sources, principally Martial, modern researchers believe that the main difference between the two is in their respective luxurious décor and size (Yegül 1992: 43; Fagan 1999a: 14–19; Maréchal 2012: 145–146). Nielsen, on the other hand, points out that the difference lies in the existence of a palaestra – if there is one, then it is a thermae (Nielsen 1993: 3, 113), whereas Gros cautions as to the generalized use of the word thermae which neglects the diversity of Roman baths facilities (Gros 1996: 388). For these reasons, the authors of this paper propose the use of the term "baths", as it is least loaded in meaning.

12 Fagan 1999a: 44; *Id*. 2001: 421–424.

13 Yegül 2010: 66.

provide a setting for different social events and activities. The details of this are provided in classical texts and epigraphic monuments dated from the period when the culture of bathing in private baths had already been established in Roman life; they report on the construction and the use of baths from the end of the 2nd century BC onwards, but also emphasize that the habits related to the use of baths as places of relaxation had already been established.[14]

Baths, as public facilities, can be viewed as the hubs of hygienic-recreational and cultural-leisurely life in the Roman Empire.[15] Emperors and the elite/aristocracy, judges, senators, respectable individuals gave large amounts of money to build, repair or maintain bathing facilities in the entire territory of the Empire.[16] In some cases this was a kind of spontaneous euergetism, while in others it may have been a legal, or moral obligation.[17]

2. Baths of Moesia Superior

There are around 40 discovered and investigated baths in the territory of the province of Moesia Superior, whereas some were confirmed with the aid of epigraphic monuments or by means of different surveying methods.[18] The greatest number of baths was largely systematically investigated with comprehensively documented architecture and construction techniques. However, what remain missing are the processed portable materials from these facilities, which could provide answers to numerous questions relating to the visitors and users of the baths. The first baths in Moesia Superior had already been built in the 1st century BC, with the largest number built in the 3rd and the 4th centuries AD.[19] Some of them (like Nerodimlje near Uroševac)[20] were used even later, in the 5th century. With the increase in the number of baths in the late ancient period, there was also an increase in the number of baths built on private estates, which can be considered private baths, unlike the large facilities in Viminacium and Singidunum. On the other hand, there are also records of luxurious baths within imperial palaces, suburban villas and summer houses (Felix Romuliana, Mediana). The largest number of common bath facilities was recorded in Moesia Superior, including *frigidariums*, *tepydariums*, *caldariums*, *sudatoriums*, *apodyteriums* and others, together with a large number of facilities of "unknown purpose". These rooms do not have "apparent" features like the swimming pools, the hydrostatic mortar or the hypocaust, which is why the authors of this paper assume that it were precisely these rooms that served for the so-called secondary activities like relaxation, reading, enjoying board games or even for the organization of meals and other social events. The

14 Fagan 1999a: 45–55; *Id*. 2001, 419–421.

15 Nielsen 1993; Fagan 1999a, 2001; DeLaine 1999; Yegul 1992; 2010.

16 Fagan 1999a: 165–170.

17 *Ibid*.: 170.

18 In 2009 one of the authors defended their master's thesis at the Department of Archaeology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade on the topic of "The Roman baths in Moesia Superior", Janković 2009. At that time, a number of 35 buildings – baths, springs, spas were established. However, a decade later, several more baths were discovered and located in the same territory – Davidovac (Petković 2016), Niševac (Petrović & Filipović 2015), Pleš (Marić 2017).

19 Janković 2009; 2012.

20 Lazić 2001.

analysis of portable finds, which is not present in most cases, could provide an answer to the question of the purpose and use of these rooms.

With respect to the complexity of their architecture, simple types of baths in a row (e.g. Bace near Prokuplje) and complex types with a large number of rooms and corridors such as baths in Žujinac, Mansio Idimum, Singidunum, Viminacium and other places were found in the territory of Moesia Superior.[21] Based on the analyses of architecture and the layout of the rooms, we cannot speak of separate spaces for women and men, as was the case with some other baths in the Empire. We can only assume that if there was gender segregation, it was probably related to the different times of day in which women and men bathed, similar to the example from Vipaska.[22]

In a large number of examples, baths were built in the vicinity of geothermal sources (e.g. Niška Banja, Novopazarska Banja, Vrnjačka Banja, Banjska, Bace) as they were used for the supply of water. In these cases, it is possible to address the aspect of the connection between healing and medicine on the one hand and baths on the other. In classical texts there are numerous reports of going to baths with geothermal water for the purpose of curing a number of illnesses. One of the most famous and probably the oldest centres was Baiae near the present-day Naples in which an entire complex of baths and temples dedicated to the deities of healing was discovered and preserved.[23]

A special category among the baths of Moesia Superior, with its set of issues regarding interpretation, are those built in the Danubian Limes. None of the baths were built inside fortifications and camps, but in locations which were, although close, nonetheless outside the ramparts. In one case, (the mouth of the Porečka River), one of the towers was used and transformed into a part of the bath in phases after the fort had been abandoned.[24] Even though in other parts of the Limes, from Britain to Germany, there were numerous recorded instances of military sites where baths or special laconicums were built within the walls of the fortification, the baths of the Limes of Moesia Superior deviate from such practices.

3. The Architecture of Baths

One of the basic characteristics of Roman baths was that they were heated by hot air – by means of floor heating, a hypocaust system or wall heating.[25] Based on the data saved by Pliny the Elder, some researchers believe that the genesis of the Roman baths coincides with the emergence of the hypocaust system invented by a certain Sergius Orata, an oyster cultivator, at the beginning of the 1st century AD.[26] Archaeological investigations, however, show that baths with a heating system had already been built from the 5th century BC onwards in the wider Mediterranean area. One of the oldest examples are the baths from the Greek colony of Gela in Sicily from the 4th century BC with a system of furnaces and canals

[21] Janković 2009; 2012.
[22] Fagan 1999a: 325.
[23] Yegül 1996: 137.
[24] Petrović 1984: 288, see Vasić i Petrović 1996.
[25] Ring 1996: 717–724; Yegül 1992: 356–389.
[26] Nielsen 1993: 20–22.

for the circulation of hot air.[27] From a later period spanning the 2nd century BC, archaeological research identified the hypocaust systems in the baths in Olympia and Pompeii (Stabian Baths).[28]

In this paper we will briefly focus on the functional aspects of baths and their basic facilities.[29] The changing room (*apoditerium*) was a larger room that contained benches and shelves for storing clothes. The apoditerium was not heated and was often decorated with floor mosaics and wall frescos. It was mostly connected with the cold baths or sometimes with the palaestra, while in the northern, cold parts of the empire, the apoditerium was connected directly to the sudatorium or the laconicum.[30] Otherwise, it should be emphasized that there were differences in the construction of baths built in the temperate continental climate and those in the tropical regions of Africa and Asia Minor.[31] In the territory of Moesia Superior, most of the baths that were systematically explored had an apoditerium, most often tiled with bricks and lime mortar, while in exceptional cases the floor may have been covered with marble or mosaic tiles (Mediana and Gamzigrad).[32] At the site of Bace near Prokuplje, there are indications that even the apoditerium was heated.[33]

The frigidarium usually had several pools, the *piscinae*, at the ends of the room and it could also have a swimming pool – the *natatio*. Typically, the frigidarium was the largest room in baths, with a vaulted or domed ceiling and confirmed large windows that likely used the heat of the sun to naturally heat the room, such was the case with the baths in Viminacium.[34] Due to its dimensions, the frigidarium was frequently used for other social activities and was often decorated with a large number of statues,[35] while the walls may have been decorated with frescos as in the case of the baths from Mansio Idimum near Medveđa.[36] In most cases a narrow door connected the frigidarium to the tepidarium, an acclimation room located between the cold and warm blocks. The tepidarium was used to adjust the body to hot baths; as the smallest room it could take on the role of a changing room or *unclarium*, the room in which the body was covered with fragrant oils. The *caldarium* was usually rectangular in shape, with one, two or three apses in which pools were placed. The pool/tub (*alveus*) represented a special area for shared bathing, located on the narrow side of the caldarium, where there was often a marble or bronze watering dish – *labrum*.[37] Concerning the premises that were heated (the tepidarium and the caldarium), the situation in Moesia Superior is problematic because there are no clear criteria by which the authors determined the purpose of the rooms. The rooms that had only hypocaust were generally designated as tepidariums, while those that had their own furnace were designated

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27 Yegül 1992: 49.
28 Yegül 1992: 379; Fagan 1996: 56–66; *Id*. 2001: 404–405.
29 Given the topic, this paper only briefly discusses the facilities of baths. For further detail see Yegül 1992:146–162.
30 Nielsen 1993:153.
31 Benoit 1925: 217.
32 Latković et al. 1979: 14; Ružić 2003.
33 Jordović 1999: 198.
34 Milovanović 2005: 53.
35 Nielsen 1993: 154.
36 Vasić i Milošević 2000: 55.
37 Karkopino 214–219; Brödner 1983: 108.

as caldariums or sudatoriums.[38] The basic problem is that the existence of a hypocaust does not necessarily imply the existence of a tepidarium. A number of different rooms used for activities that need not have been solely related to maintaining one's hygiene could have been heated by the hypocaust system. Another smaller room, the sweat room (the *sudatorium*), was connected to a warm baths so that they could be heated with the same furnace.[39] All of the investigated baths in Moesia Superior had one furnace (*praefurnium*), while in some cases two (Ravna, Mansio Idimum) or even four furnaces (Viminacium) were confirmed. The furnace was located on the outside, from where hot air was channelled through the duct system to different parts of the baths. In addition to floor heating, a system of wall heating of the premises with the help of a *tubuli* (Singidunum – the Academic Park, Mansio Idimum, Municipium DD, Scupi) or a *tegula mammata* (Singidunum – the Academic Park) was also noted. The bathing areas were always located south or west to avoid wind gusts and to use the heat of the sun.[40]

Within the bathroom, of particular importance was the *palaestra*, a rectangular area for physical activities. Before entering the baths and conducting the act of bathing itself some of the physical activities such as discus throwing, weight lifting, wrestling, running, etc. were practiced. The only room in the Province of Moesia Superior that was confirmed as a palaestra is a room on the site of Nerodimlje near Uroševac, though from a later period, built in the 6th century AD.[41] From the period when the baths were used in the 3rd and 4th centuries there is no confirmation of the existence of such a room. Interestingly, researchers leave the possibility that room 9 from the Mansio Idimum site could have been used as a changing room or a gymnasium.[42]

Baths were also often luxuriously decorated. Among the most lavish are certainly the Baths of Caracalla in Rome, with dozens of columns of various sizes in marble brought from all over the Empire. The floors and walls were covered with multi-coloured stone and marble, including mosaics on some. Sculptures and masterpieces of ancient Hellenistic art stood in numerous niches. The most famous were the Farnese Bull, the Farnese Hercules, the Belvedere Torso, as well as the head of the colossal gilded statue of Asclepius.[43] The smaller, simpler baths, though not as luxurious, were also decorated with mosaics, frescos and marble statues.

4. The Use of Baths and their Role in Social Life

Like other public buildings in the Empire, the operation of baths was maintained by a number of people. The baths were, above all, in the charge of *the conductor balnei* or the *balneator*. The relationship between the baths owner and the conductor was governed by an

38 Petrović 1984: 289. The baths in Porečka River in which four rooms are designated as tepidariums, whereas two as frigidariums.

39 About the complex structure of private and public baths, their maintenance and heat, see Jeremić, Gojgić 2012: 28–36 with references.

40 Ring 1996: 717.

41 Lazić 2001.

42 Vasić i Milošević 2000: 55.

43 Fagan 1999a: 88–89, 178–179; Marvin 1983: 347–384; DeLaine 1997: 69–84.

appropriate contract that clearly outlined mutual obligations. The conductor was tasked with taking care of everything related to maintaining the baths, cleaning it, heating it up, etc. He paid the owner or a third party who rented the baths a certain amount of money as a fee and the baths users paid him money for bathing (*balneaticum*).[44] It is known that in 33 BC, as an aedile, Agrippa supervised public baths and that he took over paying the tickets for all the users. In addition, Agrippa was also responsible for the care of heating, the control of the cleaning of baths and the implementation of regulations. When in 25 BC he built his own baths, admission was free.[45] Agrippa left his baths to the citizens of Rome for free use with it becoming, after his death in 12 BC, the first public baths. This is considered to be the year when the private complex of Agrippa's baths evolved into the first public baths in Rome.[46] This is also ascertained by the classical texts which testify that, prior to this date, Agrippa's baths was private and that it was housed in a large, lavish garden with sculptures, among which was Lysippos's Apoxyomenos.[47]

Baths were used by both men and women, but they mostly bathed separately. Yegül states that, according to Varro, in the era of the Republic, there were two connected bathing facilities for men and women with two separate entrances, which is visible on the remains of the Stabian Baths and the Forum Baths in Pompeii.[48] They also exemplify the application of Vitruvius's rules[49] which stipulated that women's and men's baths should be adjacent to each other, located in the same part of the building, so that both could be heated by the same furnace.[50] In the later period of the Empire, the bathing of men and women was sometimes separated by schedules; women bathed in the morning and men in the afternoon. Special baths of smaller size for women (*balneae*) were also used by women from higher social classes.[51] It is possible that some of the smaller baths (*balneae*) had the function similar to today's modern private clubs, that is, that they were intended for a particular status group.[52] Such baths were most often part of private homes, but could also exist on their own. Women who did not want to bathe with men could use the baths intended for exclusive use by women. However, many women were known to enjoy sports activities that preceded bathing in shared baths, even at the cost of compromising their reputation.[53] Nielsen states that ancient writers and rhetoricians – Pliny, Quintilianus, Martial describes certain situations when men and women bathed together.[54] Martial's epigrams from 84-96 AD indicate that men and women

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44 Wissemann 1984: 80–89; Yegül 1992: 46–47.

45 Karkopino 1981: 256; Kontokosta 2019: 45–77.

46 Kontokosta 2019: 59.

47 Yegül 1992: 133–137; Kontokosta 2019: 59.

48 Yegül 1992: 32–33.

49 The treatise on architecture in the ten books of Vitruvius's *De architectura* is a significant source for the interpretation and study of the architecture of ancient Rome, including its baths; he proposes rules for the construction of baths, relating to their position, size, arrangement of rooms and their illumination, and especially to the appearance of the laconicum, the position of the caldarium (position in the south or the west of the complex), the construction of vaults, the flow of water, and so on.

50 Vitr. *De Arch*. V, 10.

51 Karkopino 1981: 259.

52 Yegül 1979: 113; *Id.* 1992: 32.

53 Karkopino 1981: 259.

54 Nielsen 1993: 195–203.

bathed together, that this was common to all social classes, and that women could accept, reject, or simply ignore the male presence.[55] Discussing the concept of morality in the era of the Empire and the interpretations of modern researchers, Ward cites Martial's epigrams that do not show that the women to whom he was referring were of easy morals or prostitutes. According to Ward, this can be seen as the sexual freedom of Roman women, which is also argued by other researchers.[56] Pliny notes that both men and women bathed naked, based on which some authors claim that these women were from a lower class and of low morals.[57]

Also interesting is the interpretation of the attire in baths, i.e. the nudity. The word *nudus*, which is used to denote a person without clothing, does not imply absolute nudity, but may also refer to scarcely dressed bathers without conventional attire.[58] Still, particular attention should be paid to how nudity is interpreted. Some ancient texts mention bathing clothes worn in palaestras or on the way home, not in the bathing facility itself. Therefore, inappropriate attire and the presence of nudity in baths can be related to the prohibition and customs that did not allow relatives bathing together – father and son at puberty or son-in-law and father-in-law.[59] The joint bathing of men and women in baths opened the possibility of various sexual activities; with Ovid, we find that many baths in Rome during Augustus were favourite meeting places for young lovers, while Ulpian refers to baths as one of the places where adultery could take place.[60] With respect to the question of whether men and women bathed at the same or different times, it can be concluded that both were observed, depending on the period in question.[61] Regarding shared male and female bathing and different interpretations and disagreements of researchers, it is considered that this was a matter of personal preference of bathers.[62] Due to various excesses, Emperor Hadrian (117-138) passed a decree known from the *Historia Augusta* separating the bathing of men and women.[63] A schedule was made according to which baths opened at the fifth morning hour (11 o'clock); first, women bathed from the sixth hour and then men from the eighth and ninth hours; a gong strike marked the entrance to the baths.[64] We learn about the schedules and the best times for bathing from Martial and other ancient authors.[65] Vitruvius indicates that the best time for bathing was from noon to evening.[66] The Romans used to bathe before the main meal, dinner, and the baths supposedly closed at sunset. However, a large number of oil lamps discovered in baths indicate that bathing also took place at night.[67] In the area of Moesia Superior, lamps were discovered in the baths at Singidunum, Felix Romuliana and Viminacium, whereas for most other baths we have no published data.

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55 Ward 1992: 136–137.
56 Cantarella 1987: 140–141; Ward 1992: 134–137.
57 Balsdon 1963: 269; Brödner 1983: 115.
58 Fagan 1999a: 24–25.
59 *Ibid*.: 25.
60 Fagan 1999a: 34.
61 Yegül 2010: 11–12.
62 Fagan 1999a: 26–29.
63 Karkopino 1981: 259; Nielsen 1993: 147; Yegül 1992: 33.
64 Karkopino 1981: 258–259.
65 Yegül 1992: 33.
66 Vitr. De Arch. V, 10.
67 Yegül 1992: 33; Nielsen 1993: 136, cites that in only one baths in Pompeii 1500 lamps were discovered.

The second question that contemporary Roman baths researchers ask is which social groups used the baths and how. Some of the authors who have dealt with this issue support the thesis of egalitarianism within baths.[68] Namely, nudity is presented as a means of achieving equality, so that everyone, regardless of social and economic status, is actually naked and therefore equal. However, this thesis is problematic because of the many other ways in which the representation of status in the baths could have been achieved. Members of the social elites could certainly have had preferential treatment in the baths, so that the equipment they carried with them, the slaves and servants who accompanied them, the company they went to the baths with, may have separated them from other users of the baths. It was especially prestigious to arrive to the baths in an enclosed litter escorted by formally dressed slaves.[69] Ordinary citizens used large baths in which class divisions only seemingly did not exist, unlike in theatres and arenas where the lower classes were separated by seating areas. With respect to social diversity, particular attention can be drawn to the presence of slaves in the baths, either as their masters' escorts or as staff in the baths.[70] Whether and to what degree they could use the baths depended on the practice of the baths itself and, above all, on the restrictions on the movement of slaves as companions and on their tasks. Slaves generally could bathe for free, whether or not they were on duty, although there were numerous situations that allowed or prohibited this.[71]

As mentioned earlier, the baths had a number of other rooms in addition to the main ones that were used for various activities. Particular importance was attached to physical activities that took place in multiple rooms. The palaestra was a place where exercises and various athletic disciplines were practiced. In the baths various ball games were played, including three-participant games – *trigons* and *harpastumums* – games in which players caught a ball filled with sand (*harpasta*) or feathers (*paganica*). In addition, running after a metal hoop (*trochus*) was a sporting discipline that women especially liked.[72] Taking part in sports activities also required appropriate clothing. Men and women wore tunics or jerseys, while in the wrestling room (*praestra*) they were naked, oiled and waxed, with a layer of dust on top.[73] Unfortunately, in the territory of Moesia Superior, there are no clearly defined spaces that could be interpreted as palaestras except in the examples already cited where this is left more as a possibility.

In addition to the palaestra and the space for various ball games, there were also rooms for entertaining, reading and learning, meetings, walks. These were libraries, showrooms, galleries, meeting rooms, audience chambers, gardens with running water, covered porches for walks, exedras for dining, etc. After various physical activities and bathing visitors were able to satisfy some of their other needs – in libraries, on walks in covered porches, as well as in exhibition spaces decorated with sculptures and mosaics. The libraries, which were at that time temples of culture and education, owned books in Latin and Greek. In Caracalla's Baths, for example, a library was identified which had a

[68] cf. Fagan 1999a: 218.
[69] Yegül 1992: 34.
[70] Yegül 1992: 33–34; *Id*. 2010: 36, Fagan 1999a: 199–206.
[71] Fagan 1999 b: 25–34.
[72] Karkopino 1981: 260–261; Brödner 1983: 92–93.
[73] Karkopino 1981: 261.

rectangular niche with recesses in the walls that contained wooden chests (*plutei*) for books.[74]

Many of the public baths had meeting rooms and audience chambers in which, in addition to people gathering, private and business meetings could be held and business arrangements made. They were also the site of various discussions and debates of a political nature. The question is how many such activities were present in the informal context of the baths or if baths were considered inappropriate places, of which there are only indications in some ancient sources.[75]

The baths were also a significant gathering place for the upcoming dinner, given that it was known to be the main meal. There is also the practice of individuals going to the baths in order to receive a dinner invitation. Fagan cites an interesting example of the persistence of a certain Menogenes, described satirically by Martial:

> *… He will grab at the warm trigon-ball with right and left so that he can often score a point to you for the balls he catches. He'll collect from the dust and bring back the loose follis-ball, even if he has already bathed and already put on his slippers. If you take your towels, he'll say they are whiter than snow... He'll praise everything, admire everything, until after enduring a thousand annoyances you say: "Come to dinner".* (trans. adapted Fagan 1999a: 23).

In baths themselves it was possible to consume snack foods available at certain places in the facility. One of the proofs of this is the graffiti next to the vestibule from Suburban Baths in Herculaneum with the prices of bread, sausages, drinks, etc.[76] Many aspects of the availability of food and drink in relation to who could sell such products in baths remain unclear. It is possible that this was the owner of the baths, but certainly there were also vendors coming from outside the establishment. Since admission prices were low, it is assumed that shops and other services were the most lucrative part of the owner's business. In the vicinity of the baths there were often accompanying food and drink establishments that were also intended for the poorer bathers and the slaves – shops, inns (*cauponae*), taverns and wine bars (*popinae*). It is in this segment that basic analyses of ceramic and other portable materials, as well as physicochemical analyses of their composition could provide adequate answers to the question of the consumption of food and drink within the baths. Unfortunately, such analyses for the area of Moesia Superior so far have not been performed.

Visitors to some of the baths were also able to meet their sexual needs. The fact that baths had certain rooms that could offer enjoyment of this kind can be observed in the frescoes with erotic content as well as in the graffiti discovered in the baths of Pompeii.[77] Early Christian writers, on the other hand, protest the vibrant sexual freedoms of the baths guests with respect to the joint bathing of men and women, but also to the sexual practices within the objects themselves.[78]

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74 Brödner 1983: 91.
75 Fagan 1999a: 218.
76 Fagan 1999a: 33.
77 Jacobelli 1995: 97.
78 Ward 1992: 143.

Baths were one of the most visited and favourite places where visitors could be at the centre of social events, which is why they were also visited by the emperors Hadrian, Caracalla, Severus Alexander.[79] These buildings were an intersection of diverse individuals, from the poorest to the richest, from the semi-educated to the highly intellectual, and even the noise that dominated the baths was the product of the multitude of users who could visit them at the same time. The most picturesque description of the lively atmosphere in the baths, as well as the noise spread not only by visitors, but also by vendors, was presented by Seneca in *Epistulae Morales*. A few sentences evoke the authentic situations he witnessed. He describes the noise coming from the baths (in Baiae): the clamour of baths users, the yelling of vendors selling sausages, sweets and other products.[80]

In addition to what has been discussed so far, in the end we will look at one equally important segment, namely the use of baths for medical purposes. Bath facilities are known to have been built near thermal springs, indicating that they had a hygienic and healing role. Thermo-mineral waters were believed to be beneficial against muscle pain, rheumatism or arthritis.

The importance of baths and therapeutic bathing has been noted in written sources. The ancient authors Asclepiades, Celsus, and Galen, who practiced medicine, pointed out the medicinal properties and benefits of using the baths for health purposes. Their numerous writings put forth recommendations for the use of hot and cold baths as a cure for various ailments. Particularly prominent is the role of Asclepiades of Bithynia, who was among the first to emphasize the role of the baths in human health. Upon his arrival to Rome in the late 2nd and early 1st century BC, he particularly contributed to the popularity of using baths for health benefits.[81] Celsus and Galen suggest different therapeutic hydrotherapies and provide a detailed bathing plan for the treatment of certain diseases and various disorders.[82] Among other things, the Celsus's "programme" for a healthy body, which were exercises combined with bathing, was accepted by those involved in athletic disciplines.[83] Galen's extensive corpus of medical writings also contains recommendations for the use of a warm bath after physical activities.[84] We have already emphasized that some of the baths in Moesia Superior were built in the locations of geothermal sources, so the possibility that they were also used for medical purposes is more than likely, especially in the spa regions (Niška Banja, Vrnjačka Banja, Novopozarska Banja, Bace, etc.).

5. Secondary Activities in the Baths of Moesia Superior

With respect to the identification of various social groups within the baths of Moesia Superior, the problem here is more than apparent. Namely, unlike other parts of the Empire, for the area of Moesia there are no preserved classical texts nor images on murals and mosaics that could attest to the presence of women, slaves, soldiers or other groups. The

79 Yegül 1992: 32; Fagan 1999a: 190.
80 Sen. *Ep*. LXVI, 1.
81 Fagan 1999a: 93–103.
82 Henderson 2007: 7.
83 Yegül 1992: 35.
84 Yegül 1992: 37; Fagan 1999a: 86–87.

only manner in which we can recognize their presence is by means of the analysis of portable material goods. Although the authors are aware of the risk of such a characterization of portable archeological finds, our goal was to present a spectrum of possibilities, rather than definitive answers. If we are to turn to the presence of women inside the baths, we must assume that in the area of Moesia Superior they either visited the baths together with the men or their visits (as well as the visits of men) were separated by a fixed schedule. The architecture of baths does not indicate separate rooms or "double" rooms, which also supports the aforementioned assumption. A large number of earrings and bracelets was discovered in the apoditerium of the baths in Viminacium, while similar findings were confirmed to a lesser extent at Romuliana, Mansio Idimum and the baths at the Academic Park in Singidunum. As a special category of "female" presence, it is worth mentioning the discovery of a spindle disc in the Mansio Idimum baths near Medveđa. The interpretation of this type of find as "female" is already known from the works of other authors who traced the presence of women in military fortifications in this manner.[85] Although the author allows the option that weaving was also possible for men, she uses this type of material to detect the presence of women in the world of soldiers.

Another interesting find from the baths near Medveđa is the discovery of gaming tokens. Items used for playing games are common in different archeological contexts throughout the territory of Moesia Superior.[86] They were used to play a large number of games popular across the Empire, such as the Mercenary Game (*Ludus Latrunculorum*), the Game of Twelve Inscriptions (*Duodecim Scripta*), or Draughts, as well as probably many more local games whose names have not been preserved to date.[87] Gaming tokens are significant because they depict activities that are not related to the act of maintaining hygiene, but rather provide an illustration of activities related to leisure and fun. Similar finds were discovered in the Sirmium baths, making them most closely analogous to those from Medveđa.[88]

At the site of Terme II in Ravna, there was a unique find related to the baths of Moesia Superior. Namely, a fragmented bone flute was discovered; however, the exact context of this discovery within the baths is unfortunately unknown.[89] Nevertheless, this information represents another confirmation of the secondary activities, in this case of music, whether it refers to the entertainers in baths or visitors who played.

The most illustrative examples of activities from the provinces come from the Mansio Idimum site, owing to fully processed and published findings. The find of tools that were probably used for maintaining the baths (a pick, scissors, knives) should also be mentioned here, but also a stylus finding that could also have been used for a range of activities.[90]

The builders of the baths in Moesia Superior tried their best to make the visitors' stay as pleasant as possible, so they often decorated the interior with frescos, mosaics and statues of marble and other materials. As of yet, no regularity has been observed when it comes to rooms that are decorated in this manner, whereas the choice of motifs is usually

85 Allison 2006: 6.
86 Janković 2010; 2018.
87 Janković 2018.
88 Šaranović-Svetek 1980.
89 Petrović, Jovanović 1997: 99.
90 Vasić, Milošević 2000.

reduced to geometric and floral shapes, fringed with borders or arranged in fields. The only exception is a fresco featuring a bird in a thicket found in baths in Municipium DD. Discoveries also include fragments of a marble woman's head in the baths in Ulpiana and Lisovići,[91] a sandstone torso in Egeta[92] and part of a marble sculpture that probably represents Dionysus and Satire in Mediana,[93] which again testifies to the variety of materials and depictions used for the interior decoration of baths.

Lastly, the medical and religious aspect of the baths in Moesia Superior should also be addressed. Roman presence has been reported in numerous spas, but these sites are often under-explored and the results rarely reported. Based on circumstantial evidence, a link can be drawn between certain deities and healing in baths. At the Mediana site, where baths were discovered as part of a luxury villa, a group find of marble sculptures depicting a group of deities such as Aesculapius, Hygeia, Dionysus and Heracles was discovered in the 1970s, whereas during recent research, after 2000, new pieces of sculptures were discovered, as well as a bronze fence with herms depicting Aesculapius, Hygeia, Sol and Luna. Researchers assume that at one point in Mediana there was a temple dedicated to Iatric deities, most notably Aesculapius, which housed sculptures and fences.[94] Specifically, the authors believe that part of the villa with a peristyle in Mediana was, during a brief period of time, transformed into an *asclepeion*.[95] It can only be assumed, with the proximity of geothermal springs, that the temple was associated with healing by water. One of the most prominent cults associated with springs and baths is the cult of Heracles, whose temple was confirmed in Prokuplje in the immediate vicinity of the baths from the same period.[96] Heracles is linked to springs and baths by means of his iatric-soterological aspects, as a fighter against the chthonic forces, a saviour and protector of souls.[97] Two more temples are known from Novi Pazar, though it is still uncertain which cult was worshiped in them. An icon of a Thracian horseman, which is often linked to Aesculapius through similar iconographic elements, was also discovered in Mediana. Also known are the depictions in which these two deities are shown together.[98] Other depictions of deities include Mercury (Ulpiana, Mediana), who is frequently depicted in numerous sites in Moesia Superior.[99]

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We cannot even speculate about simple, wooden bath-like objects from the period before the Roman conquest, given a complete lack of archeological, epigraphic or literary material on the subject. Roman baths are a type of object that represents a novelty at the time of their construction in Moesia Superior. Prior to the arrival of the Roman army and

91 Parović-Pešikan 1981: 65; Veličković 1957.
92 Petrović 1987.
93 Gavrilović 2017.
94 Vasić *et al*. 2015: 53–54; Vasić 2018.
95 Vasić 2018: 93.
96 Petrović 1983: 59; Milošević 1999: 166.
97 A group depiction of Heracles and the Thracian horseman was confirmed on the monument from Čepigovo in Northern Macedonica, Cermanović-Kuzmanović 1965: 116. For more on Heracles's aspects related to springs, spas and baths see Gavrilović 2014: 14.
98 Cermanović-Kuzmanović 1965.
99 Gavrilović 2014.

administration, public or private facilities built from permanent materials, with glass windows and decorated interiors, where visitors could maintain hygiene and enjoy a range of other activities were simply unknown.

As we have seen, baths were not places intended only for the maintenance of one's hygiene, but they also included many "secondary" activities that played an important role in the social lives of the inhabitants of the province. On the other hand, the baths, as a symbol of the Roman way of life, could, on some occasions, also denote a place where different local identities were negotiated, confirmed and maintained, both individual and collective – from the social and economic status of the visitor, to one's membership of the Roman society.

When referring to the provinces, in our case the area of Moesia Superior, it is important to emphasize that some of the practices and activities known from classical texts, mainly in relation to major cities, primarily in the Apennine Peninsula, cannot be recognized in the material culture of this province. The texts that are preserved relate to specific objects and to the specific time in which they were observed and described. The classical texts only sporadically mention Moesia Superior, usually in cases of military conflicts, while there is almost no information about life in the province, which is why any conclusions about baths can be drawn almost exclusively on the basis of the results of archaeological research. Still, the baths of Moesia Superior, in the state in which they are at the moment investigated and reported on, exhibit some features that can be characterized as basic. First of all, it is necessary to emphasize the absence of palaestras and open spaces that could be used for physical exercise or other physical activities. The baths in the upper Moesian Limes, unlike similar baths in other parts of the Empire, were built outside the walls of fortifications and military installations. Here, perhaps, it may be necessary to leave room for the assumption of the shared use of baths, i.e. that baths outside military fortifications were used both by soldiers and by civilians who lived in the immediate vicinity. The involvement of the local population should also be assumed when it comes to supplying and maintaining the baths.

It is certainly important to keep in mind the chronology, or the dating of the baths, which may lead us to further conclusions. Namely, the smallest number of baths originates from the 1st century AD, while most of them were renovated and built in the 3rd and 4th centuries, which indicates the acceptance and increasing popularity of this type of facilities in provincial society. This kind of information can be important given that cultural transformations (e.g. the traditional concept of Romanization) are often interpreted as rapid and effective changes across a range of aspects.

With respect to baths users in this territory, we can only talk about them in general terms. The architecture and layout of the rooms do not indicate that the baths were spatially separated for the use of men and women, so we assume shared bathing was practiced, which was not inconceivable in the Roman world, or that visits were separated according to a schedule. Some of the finds, which may be interpreted as female, certainly testify to their presence, but not to the organization of time and space in baths.

A large number of objects was discovered near healing and hot springs, along with monuments dedicated to the deities related to healing and salvation. Considering the recommendations made by ancient physicians (such as Galen and Celsius), these facilities are interpreted as important in the lives of the province's residents in maintaining health

and hygiene. In addition to being able to enjoy the benefits of the baths as places of health and hygiene, the residents of Moesia Superior were also able to enjoy a diverse social life in the baths. This was where visitors could make new acquaintances, hold and attend meetings, make business deals, and, by means of a number of various paraphernalia, affirm their social status and enjoy activities such as listening to music, reading, playing board games or enjoying a meal and a drink.

Unfortunately, the state of exploration of the portable finds (distribution, type of findings, or physical-chemical analysis) greatly limits the conclusions about the organization of everyday life inside the baths. It is important to emphasize that Roman baths should not only be seen as places where hygiene is maintained, but rather as a type of a social club accessible to different classes with a repertoire of different activities.

In recent decades a large number of works have been published on baths highlighting their importance in Roman society.[100] They particularly emphasize the importance of bathing among the Romans and assert that baths had over time become an instrument of cultural hegemony and an important factor in the spread of Roman imperial ideology in the provinces. In conquered cities and newly formed provinces, baths were buildings that were built and that became easily accessible to the locals, thus creating one of the hubs of Roman influence.[101]

The phenomenon of cultural hegemony as well as the relationship between Rome and the provinces can be seen through the prism of Gramsci's[102] theory of cultural hegemony, as observed by Diana Davis.[103] Gramsci's theory attempts to explain why the subordinate group embraces the ideology of the dominant group that focuses not only on the lower class but also on the rest of the elite. Davis further explores the political implications of embracing Roman goods during times of social changes in the provinces of the Roman Empire,[104] arguing that an elite that shares political, economic, military and ideological power actually maintains cultural hegemony over the entire Roman world by "convincing" it that their rule is legitimate and beneficial. On the other hand, social groups in the provinces that embrace Roman customs and material culture (including bathing and baths) actually agree to the rules of the game, thus giving legitimacy to the existing state of society.

Furthermore, it should be noted that, although going to baths was considered typically Roman, this activity was in fact accessible to different social groups and in different contexts. On the one hand, visits to baths and participation in various activities could serve to construct the "Roman" identities of the inhabitants of the province, or to maintain their social status in the circumstances in which they lived. The acceptance of Roman customs, practices, and material goods may have provided instruments for maintaining relationships within the society. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that baths were also places where one could enjoy oneself intellectually and physically and that their popularity may also be explained by this phenomenon previously unknown in this

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100 Nielsen 1993; Fagan 1999a, 2001; DeLaine 1999; Yegül 1992, 2010.

101 Nielsen 1993: 60; *Id*. 1992: 35.

102 Antonio Gramsci (1891–1934) was an Italian social activist and Marxist theoretician. Gramsci's idea of cultural hegemony is part of the Marxist preoccupation with conflicts between classes so he proposes the method based on which dominant groups avoid class confrontation (Davis 2015: 22–23).

103 Davis 2015.

104 Davis 2015: 21, 62.

area. Practices and activities related to baths could serve to create different tastes, as seen by Pierre Bourdieu[105] in his work *Distinction: A Social Critique of Judgment of Taste*.[106] Bourdieu argues that cultural differences between classes actually play a significant role in the tensions between them and that the development of specific "tastes" within classes causes them to separate and differentiate from one another. The tastes, according to Bourdieu, are never natural, but constructed, with the intention of creating a clear difference.[107] These tastes can relate to material goods (clothing, food, tools ...), but also to different types of practices (such as going to the theatre, or in our case, the baths). In this direction, bathing in Moesia Superior can be seen as a practice whereby certain positions in society were achieved and maintained, while also being fun and beneficial at the same time.

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[105] Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) was a French sociologist, philosopher and anthropologist. His idea of tastes as a means of differentiation and self-construction of classes proved to be of manifold importance in archaeological work (e.g. Janković 2018).

[106] Bourdieu 1984.

[107] Bourdieu 1984.

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ИВАНА КУЗМАНОВИЋ НОВОВИЋ
Висока школа Српске православне цркве за уметност и консервацију, Београд

МАРКО А. ЈАНКОВИЋ
Универзитет у Београду, Филозофски факултет
Одељење за археологију, Археолошка збирка

ВЕСНА МАНОЈЛОВИЋ НИКОЛИЋ
Универзитет у Новом Саду, Филозофски факултет
Одсек за историју

КУПАЊЕ У РИМСКОЈ ПРОВИНЦИЈИ: ЛОКАЛНЕ СПЕЦИФИЧНОСТИ КУПАТИЛА ГОРЊЕ МЕЗИЈЕ

Резиме

На територији Горње Мезије откривено је око 40 римских купатила који потичу из периода од I до IV века н.е. Већина њих је систематски истражена, док су нека установљена посредно, било рекогносцирањима било епиграфским споменицима. Присуство и распоред просторија у њима наводи нас на закључак да је већина активности у горњомезијским купатилима слична као и у другим деловима Царства. Ипак, купатила са ове територије показују и неке специфичности, којима се разликују од других. Иако недовољно обрађени и публиковани, покретни археолошки налази упућују на читав низ активности у купатилима која нису имала везе са основном функцијом – хигијеном и здрављем. Музички инструменти, стилуси, жетони за игру и пршљенци за вретено само су неки од предмета који илуструју активности у купатилима, тако да ове објекте није довољно тумачити само као места за одржавање хигијене, већ као средишта друштвеног живота, односно места за одмор и доколицу у приватним купатилима.

Кључне речи: римска купатила, Moesia Superior, хигијена и здравље, друштвене активности, потрошачи.