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Cover illustration from Mattia D'Acri & Fredrik Tobin-Dodd in this volume, pp. 105 and 108, figs 10–11 and 17. Photographs by Jonas Tobin.

make an authentic ancient Etruscan mirror more desirable and interesting, presumably to fetch a higher price, sometimes an Etruscan-style engraving was etched on its back, should such be missing. By making comparisons with motifs on ancient coins as well as art from the 17th to the 19th centuries, Purup has been able to conclude that some of these mirrors are forgeries.

The volume's final contribution is also dedicated to Thorvaldsen and 19th-century collectionism. In particular, the author Kristine Bøggild Johannsen reviews Thorvaldsen's passion for Etruscan artefacts, and his acquaintances with archaeologists and connections to archaeological societies operating in Italy. This fascination of Thorvaldsen's is essential in interpreting his choices of motifs for his own work.

This volume represents an interesting contribution to the discipline of Etruscology, with a wide range of different themes that cover many angles of approach. All contributions are well-written and stimulating. However, contrary to most similar volumes, the present one does not follow any specific theme. What I find particularly lacking here is some kind of coherence. The wide thematic range is unfortunately both a strength and a weakness. An overarching theme would have been welcome, or perhaps a concluding chapter by the editors to sum up the different themes presented in the volume. This, I believe, would have contributed to a more comprehensive reading of the various chapters. That said, I would like to conclude by adding that the present work is a refreshing contribution to the discipline, which will add to research in general, and hopefully stimulate scholars to pose new questions to the material record, whether it be archaeological, historical, art historical or philological.

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S. Maréchal, *Bathing at the edge of the Roman Empire. Baths and bathing habits in the north-western corner of continental Europe* (The Archaeology of Northern Europe 2), Turnhout: Brepols 2023. 302 pp. ISBN: 978-2-503-60066-6. <https://doi.org/10.1484/m.tane-eb.5.129940>

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Sadi Maréchal's book *Bathing at the edge of the Roman Empire* explores the Roman baths in *civitates Menapiorum*, *Nerviorum* and *Tungrorum* (in modern Belgium, the Netherlands, France and Germany), in order to study socio-cultural transformation and societal change in the area. Following the introduction, three chapters present an overview of Roman

bathing (ch. 1), the geographical spread of the baths in the area (ch. 2), and previous research (ch. 3). This is followed by three chapters on technical matters, including architecture (ch. 4), technology (ch. 5), as well as building materials and decorations (ch. 6). Finally, one chapter deals with the link between bathing and society (ch. 7). The study is finished by a chapter with the heading 'Conclusions'. The book also includes an excellent catalogue of 145 baths in the study area, collecting, in practice, all available data, as well as several appendices listing various features of the baths, an up-to-date bibliography and an index.

The volume begins with an 'Introduction' (pp. 19–24), which is both direct and admirably to the point. The aims of the study are clearly stated in the first sentence, leaving the reader with no doubt regarding the author's intentions (see above). This is followed by brief but important notes on aspects such as methodology, the geographical and chronological framework, as well as terminology. Chapter 1 ('Communal baths—a Roman phenomenon?', pp. 25–32) continues by providing a crucial backdrop, by discussing how the Roman practice of communal bathing was established, why baths were popular in Roman society and how the habit spread throughout the Empire. Largely based on previous research, it provides a useful overview, in particular for those less familiar with the topic. The introductory section then continues with chapter 2 ('Earlier research on Roman bathing in the north-west', pp. 33–38) providing a background to the excavation of baths in the area, how they have been treated in general studies of Roman baths and also in works on baths in the specific region. The following chapter (ch. 3, 'The Roman continental north-west, a blank spot for baths?', pp. 39–47) ties into the discussion in chapter 2 by outlining the distribution of Roman baths in the study area. Here it is shown that the number of baths is closely linked to the number of rural villas in these *civitates*, and argued that the distribution of these villas was largely determined by the local soil being suited, or not, for agriculture. This gives the discussion, both here and later, a distinct flavour of natural determinism.

In many ways the heart of the study starts with chapter 4 ('The architecture of the baths', pp. 49–64) which discusses the structures by type of bath (military, private and public), their size, and the spaces room by room. Here Maréchal shows that simple linear row or block types dominated, with no baths of the more elaborate type ("Imperial baths") seen in other areas of the Empire from the time of Hadrian onwards. This is a detailed and well-written chapter, although it has a tendency towards listing examples, creating a dense and occasionally heavy text to read. In many ways, this is simply a drawback of the careful and well-executed inventory of the material by the author. Chapter 5 ('Technology of the baths', pp. 65–73) takes a similar approach, examining various technological aspects of bathhouses, for example, how the furnaces and hypocausts

were constructed, in which ways water was provided (almost always aqueducts, but probably also wells in some cases) and drainage. The next chapter (ch. 6, 'Building material and decoration', pp. 75–84) is a natural continuation, following the same disposition. Here the author focuses on several different themes, including stones used as well as wood and timber. In particular the later is interesting as the natural conditions in the study area allow these materials to be preserved to a greater degree than in most other regions of the Roman Empire. Notably, the author shows that wood was used occasionally in, for example, flooring, roofs and perhaps even in parts of the walls. Maréchal also treats ceramic building materials, although only types used specifically for baths (i.e., hypocaust tiles, *tubuli* and *tegulae mammatae*, not common *lateres*, *tegulae* and *imbrices*). The discussion on decorations is perhaps the most enlightening here as it shows significant deviations from trends in the rest of the Empire. Mosaics and expensive stones such as marble were uncommon, in contrast to wall-painting which is widely attested. Here it is interesting that the paintings were almost entirely limited to geometric patterns and floral motifs, avoiding figurative scenes, suggesting a continuation of pre-Roman iconographic practices.

The final chapter (ch. 7, 'Bathing and society', pp. 85–98) is by far the most analytic in the book, driving to the core of its aims (socio-cultural transformation and societal change) by exploring how we can interpret the introduction of baths in the north-west of the Empire. Here the author argues, convincingly, that the (mostly private) baths in the study suggest that many of them were constructed by natives who adopted some aspects of Roman culture, but adapted these to their own preferences and needs.

Following the main text, the catalogue list 145 baths. This is a marvellous resource, and it is difficult to imagine how it will not be a standard reference point for anyone studying baths in the northern areas of the Roman Empire, if not all of it. The author has done an impressive job collecting and presenting the material, following largely the models of previous scholars dealing with baths. Furthermore, Maréchal has not only redrawn all the plans of the baths, following an easy to use system, but also adapted all of them to the same scale, making it simple to compare the structures. All in all, the catalogue is both relatively compact and easy to use.

There are, however, some drawbacks to the organization of the catalogue. Firstly, the baths are listed alphabetically after location (modern site name), not by their assigned ID number. This is done in order to ensure that new baths can be added without changing the structure of the catalogue, a well-made and important point. This type of organization is also useful if you are (very) familiar with the region, and know what to look for, and it makes it relatively easy to remember individual buildings. However, it also has two significant drawbacks. One is that the most important maps (nos 1, 3–5) in the book use ID

numbers, not site names, requiring the reader to look through all 145 baths to find which one is which. Another is that listing baths with a certain feature, which the author does frequently, is done by using the site names. This results in many lists of 20–30 place names in a row (e.g., pp. 52, 57, 62). Overall, this not a major issue, but it could easily have been avoided with the help of a concordance which is sadly (and surprisingly considering the many informative tables in the volume) lacking.

The largest deficit of this book is probably its brevity. While I generally support focusing on the matter at hand and avoiding an overly verbose style, most chapters in the present volume are so short that it is difficult to see how the analysis could not have been expanded in numerous and important ways. Several more aspects could also have been investigated, e.g., the baths (or a selection of them) in relation to their context, more detailed GIS analysis (e.g., density, relation to settlements, roads, etc. in a systematic fashion), or something as simple as a space-syntax analysis to systematically discuss potential movement patterns in the baths—and does this differ from the situation in other parts of the Empire? Overall, there is much room to expand the analysis of the collected material.

In the end the book is well written and genuinely enjoyable to read. There are few typographical errors, and the volume is packed with interesting information. As such the book is useful both in order to provide an overview of Roman bathing habits in a concise form, as well as for the specific area in focus. The catalogue ensures that it will be useful, if not critical, for all scholars studying Roman baths, in particularly in the northern parts of the Empire. I can only hope that we will see more on the topic from the author in the coming years.

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D. De Gianni, *Iuvenius Evangeliorum Liber Quartus. Introduzione, testo criticamente riveduto, traduzione e commento* (Klassische Philologie Palingenesia 123), Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2020, 509 pp. ISBN 978-3-515-12844-5 (print), ISBN 978-3-515-12848-3 (e-book).  
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Iuvenius (fl. c. AD 330) is an influential Late Latin poet, the first in a series of authors of biblical epics in Latin. His work has been dealt with from various points of view in a number of studies, many of which are relatively recent and among these