

Szilvia Horváth, Magdolna Kiss: Pannoniai fürdőkalauz. Rippl Rónai Múzeum – Genianet, 2019. Printed ISBN 978-615-5687-02-0

Abstract

The book review presents the Roman baths in the province of Pannonia. The book was written by Szilvia Horváth, who is an archaeologist in the museum of Rippl-Rónai in Kaposvár and Magdolna Kiss, who is also an archaeologist and the manager of GeniaNet Book Publishing Company. Hungary is rich in thermal water. The book presents the use and typology of Roman baths.

Keywords: Roman baths, Pannonia, public baths, military baths, private baths

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Introduction

The book examines the Roman bathing culture at the province of Pannonia. On the territory of the Roman Empire baths were built for public, military and private purposes. Public, military and private baths from Pannonia were put on display here. The book was written by Szilvia Horváth, who is an archaeologist in the museum of Rippl-Rónai in Kaposvár and Magdolna Kiss, who is also an archaeologist and the manager of GeniaNet Book Publishing Company. This book was originally the idea of István Tóth, the famous Ancient Historian and the book was dedicate to him. Hungary is rich in thermal water and thermal waters were used in the Roman Age.

This book has nine chapters. There is an introduction about the history of the province of Pannonia in the Roman Empire. The first chapter is about aqueducts. In the Roman times the water was brought with aqueducts to houses and baths. The heating system, in Latin called “praefurnium” had 3 parts: an external praefurnium, an up-heating system with suspensura (piers of square bricks, the floor above a hypocaust) and a hollow wall. The heating room, the tepidarium and the warm water room, the caldarium were heated with this heating system.

The second chapter is about Roman baths and bathing culture. In Latin the big bath was called “therma”, the small bath was called “balneum”, the fountain was called “nymphaeum”, and the toilette was called “latrina”. In the 4th century in Rome there were: 19 aqueducts, 15 fountains and 1352 wells. There were also 11 big baths, 856 small baths, and 144 toilettes. In Aquincum (today Óbuda) there were 5 big baths during the Roman period. The Ancient architect, Vitruvius has written about the architecture of the Roman baths. All of the baths had apodyterium, (-a changing room), frigidarium, (-a cold water room), tepidarium, (-a heating room) and caldarium, (-a warm water room). They also had tipology, an order or classification to be used. There were row-type baths, where the rooms follow each other in a row, and there were ring-type baths where rooms follow each other in a round shape. There was also a double-row-type, meaning, the baths were used together with men and women; because Roman baths were typically used separate by men and women.

In some cases for example the caldarium was doubled in size to serve more bathers. There was a symmetrical ring type, which was a mixture the double row-type and the ring type. There was also a small

emperor type, which was a mixture the row-type and the symmetrical ring-type baths. The large emperor type, this was the same as the small emperor type, but more services. The baths had laconicum or sudatorium, steam baths and palaestra, an exercise room. The baths also had, natatio, an outside bath. There were thermal baths, too. The Roman people went to baths every day. People had to pay to use the baths. Bathing was a social activity. The young Plinius wrote that the bathing began with oiling the body and exercising with sports. Rich people brought their servants with them, to looking after their clothes. The strigil was a tool for cleansing the body by scraping away dirt, perspiration, and the oil that was applied before bathing in Roman cultures. There were other tools; that were used for baths.

The third chapter is about classification the Roman baths at Pannonia. There were purity baths and thermal baths. Both could be public baths and private baths. The public baths were managed by the state or a conductor, called a tenant. The public baths were bigger baths called “thermae”, and smaller baths, called “balnea”. The bigger public baths were used by civilian citizens by cities and villages; the smaller baths were used by mansio (station by Roman roads) and villa publica (state holding). The soldiers also had baths. The bigger military baths were used by legionary and auxiliary camps. The smaller military baths were used by burgus and interior forts. The private baths were independent and remained in the tenement. Private baths were in tenement, palaces and deversorium, which were called hostels and a separate group known as villa baths. Roman villas were built in the country and all the villas have baths. The laconicum was the dry sweating room of the Roman thermae. The laconicum was independent.

In the fourth chapter Szilvia Horváth and Magdolna Kiss discuss the researching the thermal baths in Pannonia. The authors research is important, because it tells us Roman people understood the benefit of spring and thermal water. The Roman people knew that the thermal water could be good for overall health. The authors used books about spring waters and thermal waters in Hungary from the 19th century. In this chapter there are maps about “karst” and thermal waters in Dunántúl and in Europe. The research also identifies archeological sources. In Brigetio (Ószöny) spring waters from Tata were used, which is 20-21 kilometer far from this location. If we don't know the source of the spring water we can use the aqueduct or other Roman finds. Roman baths were built for public, military and private

purposes. Every Roman camp and villa had a bath. In the legionary camps the baths were built inside the walls and in the auxiliary camps outside the walls.

There were bigger pools with thermal water by the Roman thermal baths. The Roman thermal baths also had benches and mosaic floors. The written sources are the epigraphical relics and the ancient writers. There were healing gods in Pannonia: Aesculapius, Hygeia, Apollo, Tele(s)phorus, Apollo Grannus, Sirona, Bona Fortuna, Bona Valetudo, Nymphas (Nymphae salutare, Nymphae perennes), Silvanus (Silvanus and Silvanae), Fortuna balnearis, Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Salutaris, Salus, Hercules Salutaris and Iuppiter Depulsor. The research also identified useful archival sources. There are archival sources from the Roman baths from the Middle Age to the 20th century. There are written sources from the Early Modern Age and Modern Age, such as maps with the old name of places and oral history. In the oral history people could reminiscence about where the water was located.

In the fifth chapter there are the architecture drawings about Roman thermal baths in Pannonia. There are maps and plans about Roman baths. From the baths I will discuss the double-row type bath from Aquincum. This bath was used together by men and women. The bath had another name: "Atiliae Firmae téglabélyegű fürdő". The bath was built in the second century. Near the bath were an aqueduct, and a mithraeum, which needed a lot of water. The bath was 500 m². There were apodyterium, frigidarium, solium (a cold water pool) and a natatio (a swimming pool). It is unknown if it was a thermal bath.

Chapter 6 is about Roman health tourism. The emperors supported the baths. The tourist could stay in villa publica, mansio, deversorium and centenaria. The owners rented rooms to tourists. The thermal baths had gods. The people erected votive altars for their healing. Aquae Iasae, today in Varaždinske Toplice, in Croatia, was a big bath complex in Pannonia.

Chapter 7 is about the end the Roman bathing culture. Many baths perished in the 4-5th century during the Migration period, but some survived into the 6th century. In Keszthely-Fenekpuszta the bath was used as a cemetery. In the 18-19th century baths were still used, which are comprised of Roman ruins. Today we have many baths which have Roman origin. At the end of the book there is a bibliography with sources, a list of Roman emperors, a chronology of the Roman Age in Pannonia and Latin terms.

There is also a good summary about Roman baths in Pannonia. There are many plans, photos and maps about Roman baths.

Acknowledgments

None.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares there is no conflict of interest.