

Bathing and Spa Music as a Space of Reflection for a *Different Aesthetics*

Abstract

Bathing in the early modern period is integrated into a wide circle of social, historical, and regional contexts. Bathing practices are therefore reflected in a broad corpus of sources. This includes medical and dietetic journals, bathing and cultural magazines, local bathing regulations and ordinances, and ecclesiastical sermons that used physical cleansing within the discourse of spiritual purity. There are also encyclopedias and dictionaries, reports on bathing trips, diaries and letters, historiographica and calendars, biographies and autobiographies, as well as genuinely literary texts. Bathing is reflected in paintings, woodcuts, copperplate engravings, or etchings and exemplified in sacred and secular bath songs. Many of these historical testimonies and art forms reveal insights into musicobalneological processes. Music for bathing and health resorts is primarily oriented towards its effect on visitors. Used during and outside of the actual moment of bathing, sometimes also practiced by bathers themselves, bathing music operates within a nexus of social performance (acts and actors), aesthetically autonomous art production (artefacts), and reflective consciousness (discourses). A praxeological approach to bathing culture and music addresses the dynamic interaction between these forces. In the interplay between heterological and autological references, we can unfold the aesthetic potential of the associative field around the practice, terminology, and word “bath.”

Keywords

Early Modern Period, Bath, Music Therapy, Dietary, Purity, Sanity, Affects, Balneology

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In his poem *Brunnenpromenade*¹ (Fountain Promenade), written in 1890 toward the end of the classic era of the health spa and with his typical distanced observations and ironical undertones, the novelist Theodor Fontane captured impressions that today are still generally associated with the music played at spas: the idyllic natural surroundings; the participants more or less involved in the action; the subtle, healthful effect of nature, music, and ceremonial idleness; the random repertoire of musical numbers; their positively offhanded scoring; the mood of the musicians; and last but not least, the music's effect on its intended audience. And although Fontane is describing a spa culture institutionalized during the 18th century in the wake of changing forms of public life and social interaction,² he also captures general phenomena and concrete examples of a *different aesthetics* that also apply to spa music in the early modern period.

“Nul bain pendant mille ans”³ – a thousand medieval years without a spa culture? In this case, Jules Michelet was mistaken: “N'en déplaie à Michelet, l'hommes du Moyen Âge se baignaient.”⁴ Even in the Middle Ages, people went to baths. The ancient Greek and Roman bathing traditions – both private (*balnea*) and public (*thermae*)⁵ – continued not just in the Byzantine Empire and Muslim Spain. In the West as well, beginning in 8th-century Italy, there was a revival of bathing in hot mineral springs (the Phlegraean Fields west of Naples are an early example).⁶ In the 12th and 13th centuries, these practices spread to urban populations in Germany and Britain as well. Around 1200, Petrus de Ebulo composed his *De balneis Puteolanis*, with an epigram for each of the thirty-five mineral springs around Pozzuoli.⁷ A miniature in the Codex Manesse from the early 14th century, entitled *Herr Jakob von Warte*, shows a springtime bath with a wreath of fresh

- 1 Fontane: *Brunnenpromenade*; Salmen 1997, pp. 217–219: “Kurmusiker – In den Residenzen des Glücks”.
- 2 Apart from cursory insights (Salmen 1994; Salmen 1999), the few music-historical discussions of this field treat it only from the mid-18th century forward (cf. especially the works of Christian Storch: Storch 2014a; Storch 2014b; Storch 2015). The encyclopedic *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* has no entry on spa music and provides only scattered references to *Kurmusik* in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- 3 Jules Michelet: *La Sorcière*, Brussels 1853, pp. 1–16; quoted from Boisseuil 2002, p. 5.
- 4 Boisseuil 2002, p. 5.
- 5 For Rome in the year 330 CE, Křížek 1990, p. 5 (without a source), names 860 baths and eleven *thermae*. The literature on this subject is vast, cf. Manderscheid 1988; some examples: Heinz 1983; Gros 1996; widely distributed but also often questioned: Brödner 1983.
- 6 Braunstein 1985; Braunstein 1986; Duerr 1988/1992; Squatriti 1998; Boisseuil 2002; Boisseuil/Wulfram 2012.
- 7 Petrus de Eboli: *De balneis Puteolanis*; 13 of the 28 surviving manuscripts are illustrated (beginning in the 14th century), and there are also printed versions since the 15th century; on the manuscripts, translations, and editions, see *Geschichtsquellen des deutschen Mittelalters*. Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften: <http://www.geschichtsquellen.de/werk/3957> (last accessed: October 30, 2024).

herbs, rose petals, clover, a lush tree with heart-shaped leaves, and twittering birds.⁸ In the same way, European bathing culture was renewed (and also aesthetically reflected) in the 15th century.⁹

In 1416, Gian Francesco Poggio Bracciolini described the bath as a space of action, communication, and reflection in his often-quoted epistle from Baden im Aargau (*Epistola ex Balneis apud Thuregum*).¹⁰ Returning from the Council of Constance, the Florentine humanist reported to his friend, the merchant and manuscript collector Niccolò Niccoli, about the topographical, climatic, and architectural features of a spa town north of the Alps and what one saw and heard while taking the waters.¹¹ Although Poggio Bracciolini reported directly from Baden – where he hoped to cure a pain in his wrist – his letter can be read less as a primary historical source than as the typological outline of a place of longing. Nevertheless, like Fontane’s poem, his report imaginatively captures and summarizes central components of activities at a spa: a cultivated “locus amoenus” (pleasance)¹² close to nature, often originating at a remote spring, provides the venue for a lived reality which, although with a clear functional purpose, is removed from everyday concerns and correspondingly aesthetically embellished and idyllically elevated. The cult of the body and conversation, the pleasures of food and wine, floral arrangements and finery structure the daily routine along with music and round dancing. Singing and playing instruments, mentioned in several places in the letter, are seamlessly integrated into the course of the day and are part of bathing itself, where music develops its harmonious effects. Conversely, it is not least an aesthetic potential that structures the spa as a space for communication and action and characterizes its functionality. Poggio Bracciolini does not hesitate to compare it to paradise.

Bathing and taking the waters occur in a wide variety of historical and regional cultures in the early modern era,¹³ interwoven with a wide circle of social contexts

8 Masters of the Codes Manesse, followup painter I; C: Große Heidelberger Liederhandschrift (Codex Manesse). Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, Cod. Pal. germ. 848, fol. 46^v (Zurich, c. 1300 to 1340). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.2222> (last accessed: October 30, 2024).

9 A cursory overview of the iconography and architecture in Vassallo 1992.

10 Bracciolini: *Epistola*, letter no. 46; for a critical interpretation, cf. Duerr 1988/1992, pp. 59–73.

11 Schweizer 2016, p. 118.

12 Curtius 2013, pp. 195–200.

13 The diversity of bathing practices and cultures is put into practice via flowing water and springs; fountains; swimming pools; thermal, mineral, and sulfur baths; mud and moor baths; sweat and steam baths; institutionalized in acratotherms, thermal baths, or water baths in public health spas; in open-air swimming pools or bath houses; in health spas with formalized infrastructure or in private bath halls with tubs; also in drinking cures; and finally as a *fons salutis* in courtly society, as the entertaining ritual of a *balneum nuptiale* (in the widely reproduced copper engraving from the life of a woman by Wenzel Hollar in the 17th century), or in a metaphorical sense in the topos of the Fountain of Youth.

and their associated praxeological “technologies of the body.”¹⁴ Bathing practices are reflected in a correspondingly broad corpus of sources, including medicinal-dietetic journals,¹⁵ local bathing laws and regulations, rules of behavior with socio-moral undertones, penitential sermons that are part of a convoluted discourse on bodily hygiene, dictionaries and encyclopedias, reports of journeying to spas – so-called *badenfahrten* – diaries and letters, historical accounts, calendars, biographies and autobiographies, as well as fictional texts. Bathing practices are depicted in paintings, woodcuts, copper engravings, and etchings and were the subject of songs both sacred and secular. Many of these historical documents and artworks portray musico-balneological communicative processes that are often an integral part of spa culture and throw light on texts and images, as well as notes and texts, whose effect and evaluation are intertwined.

Spa music should be seen primarily in the context of its intended use. Depending on the situation – whether integral or peripheral to the primary activity of the spa, and even as music made by the guests themselves – it is integrated into a force field of social performance (acts and actors), the inherent logic of production (artifacts), and reflective consciousness (discourses). A praxeological approach to spa culture and spa music addresses these three interconnected levels that have dynamic influence on one another. In the interplay between heterological and autological connections, the field of associations called “baths” unfolds its aesthetic potential. Here it realizes its unique institutionalized space of action and interaction that emerges as a “heterotopia” in Foucault’s sense. The heterotopic space “bath” is not just a physical but also an “effectively enacted”¹⁶ location in which acts, actors, artifacts, and discourses meet. Established by and within society, it proves to be locally shielded, often achieved only after a long development, temporally limited by its expected curative effect – whether in the sense of a utopian sense of well-being or a religious healing. In this “system of opening and closing,”¹⁷ a musico-balneological aesthetics develops in the intertwining of sensation and effect.

1. The Aestheticizing Space

Baths are “spaces of imagination and the concentration of urban society.”¹⁸ As a space of action and communication, they at the same time implicate practices that gener-

14 Mauss 1936/1979 (originally in a lecture in 1934).

15 Fürbeth 1995 lists 69 titles; further historically oriented treatments in Bäumer 1903; Martin 1906 or more recently in Probst 1971; Rudolph 1982; Bitz 1989; Lins 1995; Loleit 2008; Büchner, R. 2014; after the first funding phase (2019 to 2023), the database of Project A4 in Collaborative Research Center (CRC) 1391 contains over 400 titles from the 15th to the beginning of the 18th century.

16 Foucault 1967/1986, p. 24.

17 Foucault 1967/1986, p. 26.

18 Schober 2019.

ate their own “acoustical and musical aura.”¹⁹ Here subtly therapeutic and redemptive sounds are subject to medical, dietetic, hygienic, sanitary, cleansing, or simply restful and entertaining standards, but also to social, moral, and religious contemplation and reflection. Phenomena of the acoustic environment are integrated into the space itself as well as into social rituals, compositional style, norms, and context. Space is the ordering concept, whose sense function can be seen as its primary and determining factor, while spatial structure remains a secondary, dependent factor.²⁰ The sense function takes shape by way of the aestheticizing of the bath as an experiential space. Its essential features as a *locus amoenus* include acoustic references that enrich the beauties of the landscape belonging to this topos – trees and meadows, springs and brooks, bird-song, flowers, and gentle breezes.²¹

Acoustic phenomena can be systematized hierarchically, from the sounds of water and animals to sounds metaphorically comparable to – or actual perceptions of – human voices or instrumental sounds. In the process, direct dietetic-medicinal effects emerge; in the spa environment, the “sweet concertizing of the little birds” chases away “all melancholic fancies”²² and the “music of water between the stone walls”²³ banishes the pains and heavy thoughts of the spa guests. Due to the variety of sources and the variables of author, time, place, and genre, it is not easy to decide whether such descriptions are accurate reflections of the acoustic environment, exaggerations, or topoi. Nevertheless, some aspects can be systematically singled out. For instance, a clear dichotomy in the descriptions of the noise of water emerges: on the one hand lovely, soothing sounds, and on the other, an unpleasant roaring. There is a direct transition from one to the other in Johann Kolweck’s description of the Pfeffersbad. The stream and its inflow make

such a great racket and roar [...] that the people who come there to recover their health, on their first entrance into the mountain gorge, think they hear the melody or song of a music composed of human voices and all sorts of instruments. Then, however, their ears become so overburdened with the constant noise that what seemed to them at first a lovely music becomes an unpleasant annoyance. Others, however, for whom the roar at first seems like a drum or some other loud instrument or the turbulence of a millwheel, find it in the end unendurable.²⁴

In spa texts from the early modern era, birdsong too should be regarded primarily as a topos, especially when the nightingale sings a spa poet to sleep or its “loveliness”

19 Salmen 1994, p. 14.

20 Cf. Cassirer 1969, p. 10.

21 Curtius 2013, p. 195; cf. Salmen 2006; Kremer 2012.

22 Jaser: *Thermologia Wemdingana*, pp. 4f.

23 Schmuz: *Neue Wunder beschreibung*, p. 18.

24 Kolweck: *Tractat*, p. 67.

helps the guests in their regimen.²⁵ The instruments described in these sources are often associated with descriptions of nature and are called “hautboen,” the classical instrument of bucolics.²⁶ But there are also more specific descriptions – for instance, of water that sounds like it is “played on a clarion or quiet trumpet.”²⁷ Thus the spa environment and its associated acoustic activity are reflected on the one hand in topoi or metaphors, but on the other hand, a free space opens up for acoustic perceptions and comprehends a highly differentiated and individualized “acoustic aura.”²⁸ The early modern balneological sources, however, leave open the actual – i.e., not metaphorically exaggerated – acoustics of the physical rooms and architectural specifics of the spas.²⁹ Descriptions of volume, echoes, or similar acoustic effects can be found at most in connection with individual performers. By their nature, actual acoustic conditions differ widely according to the size of the bathing space and the number of bathers.

Graphic art also provides specific information about bathing activity in the early modern era and configures the bath as a space of activity and communication. The pen-and-ink sketch for a wall fountain (Fig. 1) – but possibly only for a wall decoration – by the Nuremburg architect, sculptor, goldsmith, and graphic artist Peter Flötner (c. 1530/1540)³⁰ is an idealized and highly artificial scene of a forest spring. Besides the rugged rocks and sparse vegetation, three tiny mountain goats indicate a (more aspirational than representational) mountainous environment. The construction of the bathing pool is also clearly articulated, with a back wall of smoothly chiseled stone and a knee-high cordon in front. Water pours into the pool from two putti heads (that are anything but natural), exits through the head of a satyr, and flows toward the viewer across the lower edge of the picture frame. Music enters the scene by way of a fiddler. He stands in an acoustically advantageous niche, somewhat in the background but directly participating in the bathing activity. Indeed, the entire group of figures on the left – including the putti head – gazes at him.

Lucas van Valckenborch’s painting *Emperor Rudolf II Taking the Waters* (c. 1593)³¹ embeds the scene in a universal landscape already well established by the end of the

25 Wasserbach: *Perpetuum Mobile*, p. 8.

26 In spa music, many more instruments were used, but it is notable that when associated with descriptions of nature, it is mainly instruments typical of pastoral poetry that appear.

27 J.J.A.M.L. u. P.: *Kurtze doch ausführliche Beschreibung*, p. 21.

28 Salmen 2006, p. 114.

29 Only isolated examples of descriptions of acoustic conditions in acratotherms exist, e.g., in Johann Daniel Gohl’s *Ausführungen über den Freyenwalder Gesundbrunnen*. He mentions a “triple echo, where very pleasant music can be heard.” See Gohl: *Gantz Generale Instruction*, pp. 38f.

30 Peter Flötner: *Sketch for a wall fountain* (c. 1530/1540), pen-and-ink drawing in black with green, brown, and blue watercolor tints.

31 Lucas I. van Valckenborch: *Emperor Rudolf II Taking the Waters* (c. 1593), oil on oak panel, 25.3 × 40.2 cm, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, 5655; <https://www.khm.at/de/object/2000/> (last accessed: October 30, 2024).



Fig. 1. Peter Flötner: Sketch for a wall fountain, c. 1530–1540, pen and ink in black, green, brown and blue watercolor, 378 × 309 mm. Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, Ident. No. KdZ 1263.

16th century (Fig. 2). The sunken pool is smoothly integrated into the rising cliff, while in the valley below, an idyllic landscape with traditional elements such as a winding river and massive rock formations stretches to the distant horizon. The group of visitors taking the waters stands on a plateau enclosed by a wall. Despite variously occupied individuals and groups, the scene exudes a peaceful harmony. In the center of activity stands the court lutenist in contemporary dress and holding his instrument – depicted in great detail – in playing position. Music rounds off the idyll evoked by the location via the old topos of a harmoniously tuned lute. It aestheticizes the act of taking the waters, thereby perfecting the curative experience and guaranteeing its positive outcome.

2. Dietetic Practice

The elaboration of spa culture happens casually. To begin with, the wish for health and healing is at the center of the visit to the spa. The Middle Ages reflected on the path to a healthy life via the *sex res non naturales*, adopted from ancient dietetic practice. In contrast to the *res naturales* – the natural givens of one's wellbeing (the four elements, the four humors, the organs, etc.) – there are things that man himself is obligated to regulate. In the balance of these *res non naturales*,³² the *affectus animi* (emotions) have a central role and influence all the others. And according to Pythagorean and Platonic conceptions, the regulation of the emotions is in turn intimately related to music. The parallelism between a world order founded on numbers (*musica mundana*), the body and soul of man (*musica humana*), and actual musical sounds (*musica instrumentalis*) aims for harmonious interaction and begins a long tradition of describing the *effectus musicae*, the effects – or better, characteristics of music. Many early modern authors describe music as *gubernatrix* of the affects.³³ Music not only stimulates the emotions, but through them also affects physical relations, an idea still present in the 17th century in the works of René Descartes and Athanasius Kircher.

Kircher describes the relation between music and the emotions in great detail. He identifies eight general emotions³⁴ and explains music's various effects on the body

32 Breathing (*aer*), nourishment (*cibus et potus*), movement (*motus et quies*), sleep (*somnus et vigilia*), excretion (*repletio et evacuatio*), and emotions (*accidentia animi*); Schmitt 1995/2003; Schipperges, H. 1985; Schipperges, H. 2003.

33 Finck: *Practica Musica* [p. 13, unpaginated]: “[...] *quod ea [musica] est gubernatrix affectuum, Potest enim anxias curas discutere & omnes affectus optime temperare & regere, ut ex tristibus laeti, ex iratis sedati efficiantur.*” “[...] because this [music] is the ruler of the emotions. Namely, it can shake off anxious fears and excellently moderate and control all affects, so that happy [affects] can be produced from sad ones and tranquil [affects] from angry ones.”

34 Kircher asserts that music influences only the eight general emotions, but not affects of love or hate. However, the general emotions can also induce further affects; Kircher: *Neue Hall- und Thonkunst*, p. 127; Kircher: *Musurgia universalis*, pp. 158f.



Fig. 2. Lucas I. van Valckenborch: *Emperor Rudolf II Taking the Waters*, shortly after 1593, oil on oak, 25.3 × 40.2 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, Inv. No. 5655.

and the spirit from several perspectives. He assumes that the *affectiones* or *passiones* in man have “physical conditions”: “Because the affectiones or passionnes [...] occur in the appetitu sensitivo corporeo & materiali, they must necessarily also have physical conditions.”³⁵ In anger, for example, the gall bladder emits “hot vapors,” but under pleasant circumstances, the liver emits “sweet vapors.”³⁶ Thus, music activates the motions of the organism. External movements of air (sound) are initiated and excite “the inner air or spirit,” which “drives the imagination” and thus activates the affects and “vapores.”³⁷ As a consequence, whoever comprehends this connection between outward and inner conditions – i.e., the interplay of the physical and psychological – “would be able with only his voice to move any person in all emotions.”³⁸ But although Kircher ascribes to music almost universal healing powers on the emotions, he also points out that music can heal only those illnesses which “flow directly from black and yellow bile.”³⁹ For the excitation and effect of the emotions, he considers four aspects to be central: 1) the “diverse and artificial mixture of tones and voices,” 2) the “definite number of verses or pieces occurring in a certain sequence,” 3) the “song text,” and 4) the condition and “suitable disposition” of the listener.⁴⁰ However, music does not move the emotions of all listeners in the same way, since “the subjecta are not the same” and do not have “the same temperament.”⁴¹ Kircher identifies three sorts of “music-cure”: 1) a “supernatural” cure (theological miracles), 2) “the artful work of the evil spirit,” and 3) a “natural” cure, in which he concentrates on the natural music-cure.⁴²

René Descartes has a unique approach: he defines the emotions as perceptions or feelings of the soul, which they maintain and strengthen by a certain movement of the spirits.⁴³ With its varying tempi, music can evoke different emotions: slow music

35 Kircher: *Musurgia universalis*, p. 138. In addition, Kircher, on p. 318 of *Musurgia universalis*, asserts that based on the physical and psychological context, the affects can be identified “ex pulsibus.”

36 Kircher: *Musurgia universalis*, p. 138.

37 Kircher: *Musurgia universalis*, p. 139. On p. 171 of *Musurgia universalis*, Kircher adds: “We assume that there is present not only an external but also an internal air of everything, which moves according to the sono [...].”

38 Kircher: *Musurgia universalis*, p. 153f.

39 Kircher: *Musurgia universalis*, p. 172.

40 Kircher: *Neue Hall- und Thonkunst*, pp. 128 and 153. Thus, according to Kircher’s ideas, both the composer and the interpreter, as well as the listener, are required to produce the best possible excitation and effect of the affects.

41 Kircher: *Musurgia universalis*, p. 152. Kircher also mentions on pp. 156f. of his *Musurgia universalis* an attempt to compare the way different composers generate certain affects in order to see how the compositions are distinct from one another. According to his report, however, this experiment was not carried out.

42 Kircher: *Neue Hall- und Thonkunst*, p. 138.

43 Descartes: *Passions de l’Ame*, p. 38.

elicits quieter feelings (weariness, sadness, etc.), faster music more fervid feelings such as joy.⁴⁴

Well into the 18th century, evaluative judgments of music's effects constituted a standard component of treatise prefaces, or had their own chapter.⁴⁵ They were arranged in an exemplary system of twenty aspects in Johannes Tinctoris's *Complexus effectuum musices* (c. 1470/1480)⁴⁶ and understood as negatively evaluative paradoxes in Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim's discourse *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum et atrium* (1530).⁴⁷ Reflection on these effects and characteristics of music belongs to the traditional frame of reference for spa music. Balneological sources offer frequent and characteristic examples for the ambivalent effects of music.⁴⁸

In his treatise *Pyrmontisches Curioses Brunnen-Gespräch* (Curious Fountain Conversation in Pyrmont),⁴⁹ Desiderius Gottfried describes on the one hand music's concrete, positive effects on depressed or melancholy spa guests. On the other hand, additional attention is given to material ranging from the biblical stories of Saul and David to historical examples and anecdotes. In the *Amusements Des Eaux De Cleve*,⁵⁰ the description of a morning song while the guests are taking the waters leads to a discussion of music's effects: Besides driving out harmful feelings of melancholy as well as healing physical ailments such as gout, etc., it also refers to both music's powerful benefits and the harm resulting from its misuse. Detrimental consequences come above all from singing in the bath, which, according to barber-surgeons, fills the head, makes it "weak and fluid"⁵¹ and generally weakens the spa guest. Of the beneficial effects for health, the strengthening of positive emotions in the psycho-physical interrelation is especially emphasized. Music enlivens the disposition and strengthens the *spiritus*, so that "they are dispersed everywhere" and "could be purged through all parts."⁵² During the course of the cure, all sadness, concern, anxiety, and fear must be set aside, and the spa guests should "be

44 Descartes: *Musicae compendium*, p. 10: "Quod autem attinet ad varios affectus, quos varia mensura Musica potest excitare, generaliter dico, tardiores lentiores etiam in nobis motus excitare, quales sunt languor, tristitia, metus, superbia &c: celeriores vero etiam celeriores affectus, qualis est letitia &c." 'But as for the various affects that music can evoke through different tempi, I say in general that a slow [tempo] causes quieter feelings in us, e.g., weariness, sadness, fear, pride, etc., a faster one faster affects, e.g., gaiety, etc.'

45 E.g., Affligemensis: *De musica*, um 1100.

46 Tinctoris: *Complexus*.

47 See Schipperges, Th. 2003; Schmidt-Beste 1999/2016.

48 Schipperges, Th. 2003.

49 Gottfried: *Pyrmontisches Curioses Brunnen-Gespräch*.

50 *Amusements Des Eaux De Cleve*.

51 Pansa: *Kurtze Beschreibung*, p. 107 (Part 2).

52 Geiger: *Fontigraphia*, pp. 134f.

diverted and enjoy the *musica vocali & instrumentali*.”⁵³ The voice too can be improved by drinking the mineral water, as long as singing and calling out in the baths are not practiced to an excessive degree. Taking the waters also has an additional positive effect on the senses: drizzling water on the head and into the ears strengthens the sense of hearing so important for music reception. Various remarks by barber-surgeons suggest that active performance of vocal music could impair the curative process, while no sources claim adverse effects from active instrumental performance.⁵⁴ All sources seem to agree, however, that receptive listening to music is good for health.

“This idea [...] not only remained alive in the literature, but from the beginning had direct, practical consequences:”⁵⁵ *musica aegrotos sanat* – music heals the sick. In describing his *quartus decimus effectus*, Tinctoris names Asclepius of Bithynia, Galen, and Avicenna, all of whom are repeatedly quoted as authorities in medical spa literature and popular guides to health.⁵⁶ Music in the communicative and interactive space of public baths exists in the dynamic interplay of *curare* and *delectare*. Thus dietetics in the baths must be understood as a process that brings together autological-creative and heterological-functional aspects and is thereby a paradigm for a praxeological understanding of the aesthetic that the Collaborative Research Center advocates.

In the Middle Ages and early modern era, an entire, extensive literary genre dealt with the regulation of a healthy life, the *Regimen sanitatis*. To this genre belongs a widely-read compilation of tables pertaining to health education by the 11th-century Christian Arab physician Ibn Butlān.⁵⁷ It was translated into Latin as *Tacuinum sanitates* and in 1533 into German by the Strasbourg municipal physician Michael Herr as *Schachtafel der Gesuntheit* (Chess Boards of Health). Music constitutes a paradigm of this dietetics, borrowed by Arab physicians from ancient ethical instruction.⁵⁸ While the richly illustrated *Tacuinum* manuscripts depict precious objects⁵⁹ from the last quarter of the 14th century, popular calendars are a frequent source for medicinal dietetics.⁶⁰

53 Sebizius: Beschreibung, pp. 106f.

54 This could suggest that during bathing, guests themselves sang, but did not play musical instruments.

55 Kümmel 1977, p. 91.

56 Tinctoris: Complexus; cf. Schmid 1986; Schipperges, Th. 2003.

57 Butlān: Taqwīm aṣṣiḥḥa (Tabular Overview of Health) by Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Muḥṭār ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Abdūn ibn Sa'-dūn ibn Buṭlān.

58 Abert 1968; Kümmel 1977, pp. 245–257.

59 E.g., the so-called Housebook of the Cerruti, c. 1390; music is represented by organ and string playing (Organare cantu vel sonare) as well as dance music with an alta-capella (Sonare et balare).

60 The first serially issued German popular calendars go back to a manuscript by Johannes Wissbier von Gmünd (not to be confused with that of the Viennese mathematician, astronomer, and humanist Johannes von Gmunden); see Zinner 1925, pp. 806–808; Zinner 1952, pp. 46–50; Brévar 1988. A comprehensive examination of this genre was recently published by Kiening 2020; on the Roman tradition, cf. Wolkenhauer 2011.

In addition to the days of the year and their saints, such calendars and almanacs⁶¹ contain illustrations of the zodiac signs and the planets and brief essays on the humors and temperaments or health remedies of the time, such as bloodletting, cupping, and bathing.

Music's connection to spa culture is especially reflected in the typical woodcuts that often illustrate the calendars and almanacs.⁶² To cite just one example, three of the hundred woodcuts in Johann Blaubirer's often reissued Augsburg calendar (Fig. 3) of 1481⁶³ have spa themes that show the medicinal-dietetic acts of cupping and bloodletting. In the course of the year, May was the classic month in which to address the theme of spas since in May, the mineral water was supposed to have especially curative properties.⁶⁴ Moreover, the notion of the "merry month of May" exemplifies the popular connection between hygiene and erotic adventures at the spa.

In Blaubirer's calendar as well, the month of May brings good living into the spa activities: "In disem Monat man auch baden sol / Tantzen, singen, springen und leben wol" (In this month one should take the waters / Dance, sing, leap, and live well).⁶⁵ The accompanying woodcut⁶⁶ shows a male musician – either a beau of the woman in the bath or a professional musician – dressed in a simple, collarless doublet, leggings, and crakows (the latter cut off by the edge of the print and only suggested). He stands by the wooden tub, playing the lute for the female bather and perhaps singing as well. In this image, which should not be thought of as a realistic picture, music underlines the harmonious feelings of the bath. That this is so artfully conveyed by verse, image, and the depiction of music emphasizes the cultivated conception of the bathing process.

The depiction of music and its effects extends into the treatises on bathing as well, especially those that treat bathing in natural thermal and mineral springs rather than in enclosed bath houses or Turkish baths. In the title-page woodcut of Gallus Etschenreutter's *Aller heilsamen Bäder und Brunnen Natur / krafft / tugendt / und würckung* (The

61 On the terminology, see Kiening 2020, pp. 25f.

62 Amelung 1980.

63 *Deutscher Kalender*, Augsburg: Blaubirer 1481: Text begins: "Es spricht der Meyster Almensor," BSB Shelf mark: 4 Inc.c.a. 190 I, pp. 130f.

64 This is reflected, for example, in the *Meinauer Naturlehre* (Meinau Natural Lore, c. 1300) and was a popular belief widely spread in the calendars of the 15th and 16th centuries and also in the often quoted song "Man sagt wol: in dem meien / da sind die brünlein gsund" (It's said in May the springs are healthful). The first mention in the sources is in Johann Fischart, called Mentzer: *Af-fentheurlich Naupengeheurliche Geschichtklitterung*, 1575, the eighth chapter, p. 118: "Man sagt wol inn dem Meyen: da sind die Prünlein gsund"; without attribution identified as "strophes 1 and 2 of a broadsheet, Nuremberg c. 1530"; from a *Kommersbuch* (a songbook from a student fraternity); other sources from the 15th century: Scandello: *Deutsche Liedlein*, no. 3; Eccard: *Neue deutsche Lieder*, no. 22.

65 *Deutscher Kalender*, Augsburg: Blaubirer 1481, p. 16.

66 *Deutscher Kalender*, Augsburg: Blaubirer 1481, p. 17.

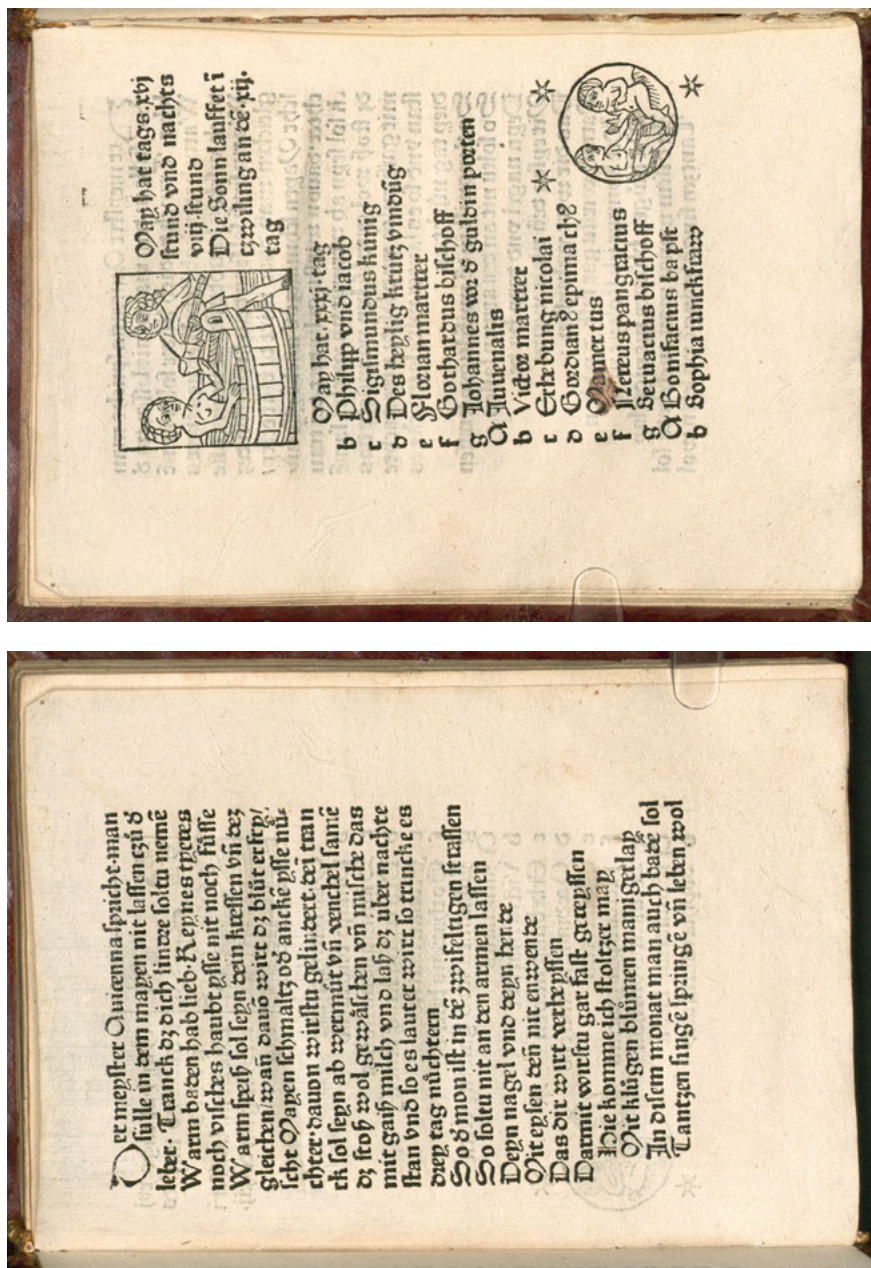


Fig. 3. Calendar: Iatromathematisches Hausbuch, Augsburg: Johann Blauberer, 1481, fol. 7^r and 7^v. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Sign. 4 Inc. ca. 190 l.

Nature, Power, Virtue, and Effect of All Healthful Baths and Springs, 1571),⁶⁷ a fiddler accompanies a group of bathers in a fountain pool in a natural setting. The musician stands a bit in the background but is naked like the others, i.e., is himself part of the bathing activity. At the same time, from his slightly raised outsider perspective, he stands for the healing “power, virtue, and effect” of music.⁶⁸

3. Spiritual Bathing

In almost all religions, purification commandments and regulations reflect the nexus of water, healing, and salvation. As exemplified by the Jewish mikvah and the Muslim hammam, such religiously motivated systems of order go beyond mere hygiene; their established rules extend into culture and society.⁶⁹ The purity of spirit and soul stand above physical health.

Based on ancient Jewish traditions,⁷⁰ Christian baptism is also a lustration ritual.⁷¹ John the Baptist’s “baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Mark 1:4)⁷² in the Jordan River – intended as a one-time event and typologically anticipated by the healing of the leprous Aramean Naaman in the Jordan (Second Kings 5)⁷³ – occurs against the background of the impending Judgment Day.

In this context, depictions such as the 25 woodcuts (after his own templates) from Thomas Murner’s *Ein andechtig geistliche Badenfahrt* (A Devoutly Spiritual Journey to a Spa, 1514)⁷⁴ gain heterological and autological relevance. In accord with accompanying verses, the titlepage woodcut alludes to the heavenly origin of the purifying spa water: “Wer sich in disem bade reint / Und wie ich schreib mit got vereint / der west in einem bad zumol / Leib / und seel / als er dan sol” (Whoever washes in this bath / And as I write unites with God / he dwells especially in a bath / Body / and Soul / as he should).⁷⁵ The Franciscan Murner himself is the spa guest and Christ the “barber-surgeon who

67 Etschenreutter: *Aller heilsamen Bäder und Brunnen Natur*.

68 The fact that the artist apparently borrowed from the arrangement of figures in Dürer’s woodcut *The Men’s Bath*, with its depiction of the four temperaments and the five senses, possibly gives the woodcut a further dimension; see Mentzel 2013.

69 Douglas 1966; Şahin 2017.

70 On the origin of Christian baptism in the baptism of John and the distinction between the one-time ritual and regular immersion baths of the Essenes, cf. Avemarie 2011; Gnlika 1961 provides insight into older, partly divergent opinions of other investigators (while having his own assessment of a relevant sacerdotal component to the baptism of John).

71 Alles 2011.

72 Here and throughout in the King James translation.

73 In the Septuagint translated as βαπτίζειν (*baptizein*); on parallels in art, cf. Koenen 2018.

74 Murner: *Ein andechtig geistliche Badenfahrt*.

75 Murner: *Ein andechtig geistliche Badenfahrt*, p. 6.

came from heaven.”⁷⁶ He “publicly” invites “everyone” to the act of “baptism,” “as God himself bids us to bathe.” The signal that the baths were open was traditionally a trumpet blast (“in’s Bädli blasen”).⁷⁷ In Murner’s account, God is the spa herald: “God himself trumpeted us to the bath” (“Got hat uns selbst ins bad geblasen”).⁷⁸

A woodcut⁷⁹ depicts an apparently one-piece instrument to blow fanfares and signals, with a long, cylindrical resonating tube and a slightly flared bell. Known as a *buisine*, this instrument had been used by military heralds since the 11th century. The Hebrew Bible mentions such an horn, with both secular and sacred connotations, as a *ḥăṣōṣrā* (חֲצוֹצְרָא).⁸⁰ In the Septuagint it is a *salpinx* (σάλπιγξ) and in the Vulgate, a *tuba*. Luther calls it both a *Trompete* (trumpet) and a *Posaune* (trombone), like the “Posaune Gottes” (trump of God: First Thessalonians 4:16, Revelation 1:10, i.a.) of the Last Judgment.

In the visual arts, an angel playing the *tuba* or *Posaune* is an iconographic topos, especially in the context of the Ascension and the Apocalypse⁸¹ and as a watchman on capitals or church roofs. An eschatological orientation⁸² also characterizes Murner’s purification ritual. The sere plant just below the instrument’s bell may be an implicit *memento mori*, well before the entrance to the bathhouse visible in the background. Thus in this woodcut, the praxeological model of a *different aesthetics* is doubly reflected: On the one hand, the allegorical level of purification from sin is superimposed on the traditional bathing process in the dietetic context of a *regimina sanitates*. On the other hand,

76 Murner: Ein andechtig geistliche Badenart, pp. 9f.

77 Martin 1906, p. 14; Salmen 1994, p. 14; Křížek 1990, p. 67: “After the morning heating of the bath hall, the attendants gave a horn signal or a trumpet blast, or banged a pan or drum to announce that the bath was warm enough and the people could come.”

78 Murner: Ein andechtig geistliche Badenart, p. 14.

79 Murner: Ein andechtig geistliche Badenart, p. 13; <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/view/bsb00083105?page=12,13> (last accessed: October 30, 2024).

80 Braun 1994/2016.

81 In contrast to the predominant choruses of singing angels in a liturgical setting or, beginning in the 13th century, angels with stringed instruments such as lute, vielle, rebec, mandora, psaltery, lira da braccio, and sometimes quiet wind instruments such as recorders; also angels playing musical instruments, e.g., in depictions of the Nativity and images of Mary or the saints, among them the topos of the *Sacra Conversazione*. Cf. Walter/Jaschinski/Winternitz 1995/2016; also in Stefan Lochner’s *Last Judgment* as apocalyptic instruments of the devil (c. 1435, Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum); Hammerstein 1962/2000; Hammerstein 1959/2000. Georg Wolfgang Panzer mentions a “cow horn” (Annalen, p. 273); and in fact, early on there are depictions of angels holding curved horns (e.g., Apocalypse, Trier, Stadtbibliothek, Hs. 31, fol. 135^v, 8th/9th century; depictions of the Last Judgment from the Pericopes of Henry II, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4452, fol. 202^r, beginning of the 11th century, cf. Hammerstein 1962/1990, figs. 26 and 31).

82 While here Christ holds the instrument with his right hand on the mouthpiece and his left on the tube, the hand positions are reversed in the depiction of two angels standing by the enthroned St. Francis and holding similar straight military trumpets on a fresco in the church of San Francesco in Pistoia (school of Giotto, mid-14th century).

there is the autological-artistic communicative form in verse, graphic art, and the sonic association of a concrete musical instrument. Art imparts to the powerful existential message a “conceptual form”⁸³ intentionally homiletic in the best sense of the word.

Early modern spa literature repeatedly refers to the triune God who, as creator of water, makes possible spa healing in the first place. Multifarious references in balneological discourse to water as a basic element of the creation offer points of contact that reach from biblical stories of healing to miracles in the local spa. Devotions and various other religious exercises in the daily spa routine are also described. On one hand, there is quiet, personal prayer that dispenses with audible singing or music making altogether – in harmony with the Pauline and Augustinian doctrine of *non voce sed corde*. In Kolweck’s description of the Pfeffersbad, spa guests – in recollection of the sins they have committed – are encouraged to sing a “little spiritual song of contrition, sorrow, and consolation sotto voce” (“Geistlichs / Rew / Leyd / und Trostliedle / in stiller Stimme”)⁸⁴ in the course of the day. On the other hand, there are references to worship services in which guests sang hymns together. The pastor of Wolckenstein comes to the spa regularly on Sundays and holidays and invites guests “to a spa-service pleasing to God, with singing, preaching, and prayer.”⁸⁵ This corresponds to Johann Christian Schwedler’s recommendation that “pious” spa guests sing Christian hymns together and, while praying and singing, think about baptism as a water cure.⁸⁶ To be sure, hymns were not necessarily sung only during services; spiritual repertoire could also be struck up as entertainment during bathing activities. In his account of the acratotherm in Weltzen, Johann Rummelin writes that the spa guests sang a “lovely hymn and spiritual song” to patiently pass their time in the bath.⁸⁷ In addition, there are references to the typical procedure if a guest died at the spa; in preparation for the death, music was played and there were quiet devotions, while angelic music was played after the patient died. One should also not underestimate the role of religious differences among the guests. The singing of hymns with German texts was forbidden at the (Catholic) Pfeffersbad,⁸⁸ while in a description of the spa in Cleve,⁸⁹ there is a discussion of church

83 Büchner, F. 1974, p. 105.

84 Kolweck: Tractat, pp. 68f.

85 Müller: Thermae volccensteinenses, p. 273.

86 Schwedler: Der Gottseelige Bade-Gast, pp. 76f.

87 Rummelin: Ferinae VVeltzheimenses, p. 39.

88 These prohibitions on singing are codified, for example, in the bathing regulations of the Pfeffersbad in 1568 and 1619, which state that singing German psalms is forbidden, especially “when one [wants to] sing so boisterously in defiance of the Catholics.” Quoted from Martin 1906, p. 350.

89 Protestant church music is central to the discourse in the *Amusements Des Eaux De Cleve*. There is reference to the table talk of Martin Luther in which music is called a “present and gift of God” and occupies “the next *locum* after theology and the highest honor.” *Amusements Des Eaux De Cleve*, pp. 235f.

music inspired by Luther's thoughts on the subject. On one hand is the normative duty to purify the body and, above all, the soul; on the other, the prohibition of lewd songs and other immoral behavior.⁹⁰

For in the context of healing for body and soul, the significance of sensuously experienced music can be ambiguous. Thus Johannes Pharamund Rhumelius appends to *Nymphographia* (1632), his treatise describing the spa in Gastein,⁹¹ an apocalyptic story as a "magic prophecy."⁹² Besides the physical and spiritual aspects of purification, it introduces the categories "white" and "black" for the purity of the Temple versus impure wantonness, symbolized by a larger-than-life minstrel's fiddle:

[...] die Drachen tanzeten vorher ein jeder in seiner ordnung deme folget ein jedes häufflein in seiner ordnung / vnd wie der Drach sich in geberden vnd tanzten erzeiget / also erzeigete sich das nach folgende häufflein der schwartzen Leut / die Spielleut hatten eine so grosse Geigen / daß sie solche von keiner stell tragen möchten / die Drachen waren so schrecklich vnd jämmerlichen an zusehen / daß mir grauet dieselbe[n] zu beschreiben.⁹³

[...] the dragons danced first, each in its turn, followed by little groups [of people], each in their turn / and just as each dragon showed itself in gestures and dances / the following group of black people showed themselves / the minstrels had such a large fiddle / that they could not move it from its place / the dragons were so terrifying and dismal to look at / that I shudder to describe them.

Musically as well as functionally in relation to purifying salvation, the secular order of the dragons and minstrels differs from divine order; whoever surrenders to the wild, wicked dance music of that giant fiddle will be destroyed and cannot participate in the lovely music and joys of the temple.

4. Ambivalences

Simone Loleit entitled her book about the semantics of spas in 16th-century German-language literature *Wahrheit, Lüge, Fiktion* (Truth, Lie, Fiction),⁹⁴ three concepts in fact not always easy to distinguish from one another. That goes especially for the erotic and sexual connotations that for centuries have been part of the semantic field of "baths"

90 Peter Leonhard Monquetin asserts that Christian spiritual songs may be sung in the baths, but "courting songs and shameful words" must not be used and will be punished. Monquetin: *Thermologia Badauino-Austriaca*, p. 80.

91 Rhumel: *NYMPHOGRAPHIA*.

92 Rhumel: *NYMPHOGRAPHIA*, fol. D2^v.

93 Rhumel: *NYMPHOGRAPHIA*, fol. E1^r.

94 Loleit 2008.

and have their place in every cultural history of taking the waters at spas. This theme also plays a central role in the controversy – now somewhat in abeyance – around Norbert Elias's *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation* (*The Civilizing Process*)⁹⁵ and Hans Peter Duerr's ethnological-empirical and less evolutionary-historical view in *Der Mythos vom Zivilisationsprozess* (*The Myth of the Civilizing Process*).⁹⁶ Duerr devotes four chapters to “nudity and shame” (the title of his first volume) in their connection to life in the spa in medieval and early modern civilization. It is no accident that his book cover bears an often-reproduced⁹⁷ Burgundian bathing scene, a miniature by the so-called Master of Anthony of Burgundy in a manuscript from Bruges (c. 1470) of Valerius Maximus's *Facta et dicta memorabilia*.⁹⁸

The artistically appealing miniature scenes of licentious pleasures in ancient Rome, translated into 15th-century costume, show a crowd of naked banqueters in a bathing trough on the right and public sex acts in progress on the left, while in the background of the noble setting, princes and clergy observe the immoral goings-on. In the foreground, a professional minstrel plays the lute, while the presence of a dog suggests moral condemnation. We agree with Duerr, however, that like Poggio's epistle from the Aargau, this image of uninhibited sexuality must not be taken as typical of spa life. Such images, always very similar to one another, represent extreme exceptions (if not masculine wish fulfillments) to the upstanding bathhouse with separate facilities for men and women and compulsory bathing costumes. Of course, we concur with Duerr that both spa brothels and respectable bath halls existed. At any rate, he is undoubtedly correct to state “that for practically every era [...] one can adduce eyewitness accounts to support one thesis or its opposite.”⁹⁹ It is difficult to keep contemporary attitudes and individual ideas about morality out of the discussion. Moreover, there is an inherent double semantic level to the term “baths.” For one thing, eroticized and sexualized activity can be depicted both in actual goings-on at spas as well as in activity that can be interpreted metaphorically.¹⁰⁰ For another, the “bath” operates as a metaphor in unrelated discourses or visual motifs, such as that of *Venuskinder* (children of Venus, representing the influence of the planet) in books about the seven planets as well as in

95 Elias 1994/2000.

96 Five volumes, 1988–2002; vol. 1: Duerr 1988/1992.

97 Büchner, R. 2014, p. 151, footnote 169 provides an extensive list of illustrations from the secondary literature on bathing (illustration and explanation in Büchner, R. 2014, pp. 43–45).

98 Faits et dits mémorables des romains, copy in the Staatsbibliothek Berlin, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Depot Breslau 2, vol. 2, fol. 244; tempera and gold on parchment.

99 Duerr 1988/1992, p. 65.

100 For instance, Hans Bock the Elder copied a central female figure from his *Venustanz* in his so-called *Bad zu Leuk*: *Venustanz* (Fountain of Youth Setting) (c. 1570/1580), mixed media on canvas; 60 × 80 cm, Frankfurt a. M., Städel Museum; *Das Bad zu Leuk* (1597), oil on canvas; 78.4 × 109.6 cm, Kunstmuseum Basel.

popular calendars. All this makes evaluation of written and graphic sources a slippery and hard-to-calculate business.

On the one hand, the motif of music in the context of dietetic regulation guarantees a specific enhancement of one's positive emotional life. On the other, it is precisely this enhancement – well-being with bath and music – that again and again puts in motion a negative connotation as well. The fool is a symbol for this. A timeless metaphor for all sorts of secular vanity and misery, he is often associated with the baths, specifically in the guise of the fool as minstrel.

One example is the gallantly depicted bathhouse with a garden of love and a fountain in the Housebook of Wolfegg Castle near Ravensburg (Fig. 4, after 1480), in which the fool with his lute is supplemented by animal symbols of sin – monkey, dog, and bird.¹⁰¹ Another is the fiddling fool on the titlepage (Fig. 5) of the *Tractat der Wildbeder nature / wirckung und eigenschafft* (Treatise on the Nature / Effect and Characteristic of Acratotherms) by the Alsatian physician and astrologer Lorenz Fries (1519).¹⁰²

The musical fool is also a traditional iconographic motif in the allegory of the Fountain of Youth, with a theological interpretation of the sinful bath of rejuvenation, as in a copper engraving of the so-called Master with the Banderoles (mid-15th century, with a fool playing the bagpipes)¹⁰³ or a woodcut by Sebald Beham (1531, with several musicians in the entourage of a fool on the roof balustrade).¹⁰⁴

5. An Overview of the Musical Repertoire

A discussion of the autological creation of spa music in the early modern era must include an overview of its repertoire. Although both instrumental and vocal music were heard in the spas, the sources provide much clearer information about the latter.

101 Hausbuch Schloss Wolfegg, fol. 18^v–19^r; the bathing scene on the Venus-page of the Housebook (fol. 15, with references to music in text and image) was one of the main points of contention between Duerr and Elias.

102 Fries: Tractat; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4 M.med. 295,16, <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/view/bsb10164505?page=4,5> (last accessed: October 30, 2024).

103 Master with the Banderoles: The Fountain of Youth (c. 1450/1470), copper engraving, 23.1 × 31.5 cm (Graphische Sammlung, Albertina, Vienna).

104 Hans Sebald Beham: Fountain of Youth and Bathhouse (1531), woodcut in four blocks, first state, 37.8 × 119.3 cm (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Kupferstich-Kabinett); see Mentzel 2015. In Cranach's depiction of the Fountain of Youth, there is a typical ensemble of the time – flute and drum – in the middle of the scene (Lucas Cranach the Elder: The Fountain of Youth, 1546, oil on limewood panel, 120.6 × 186.1 cm; Berlin, Gemäldegalerie).

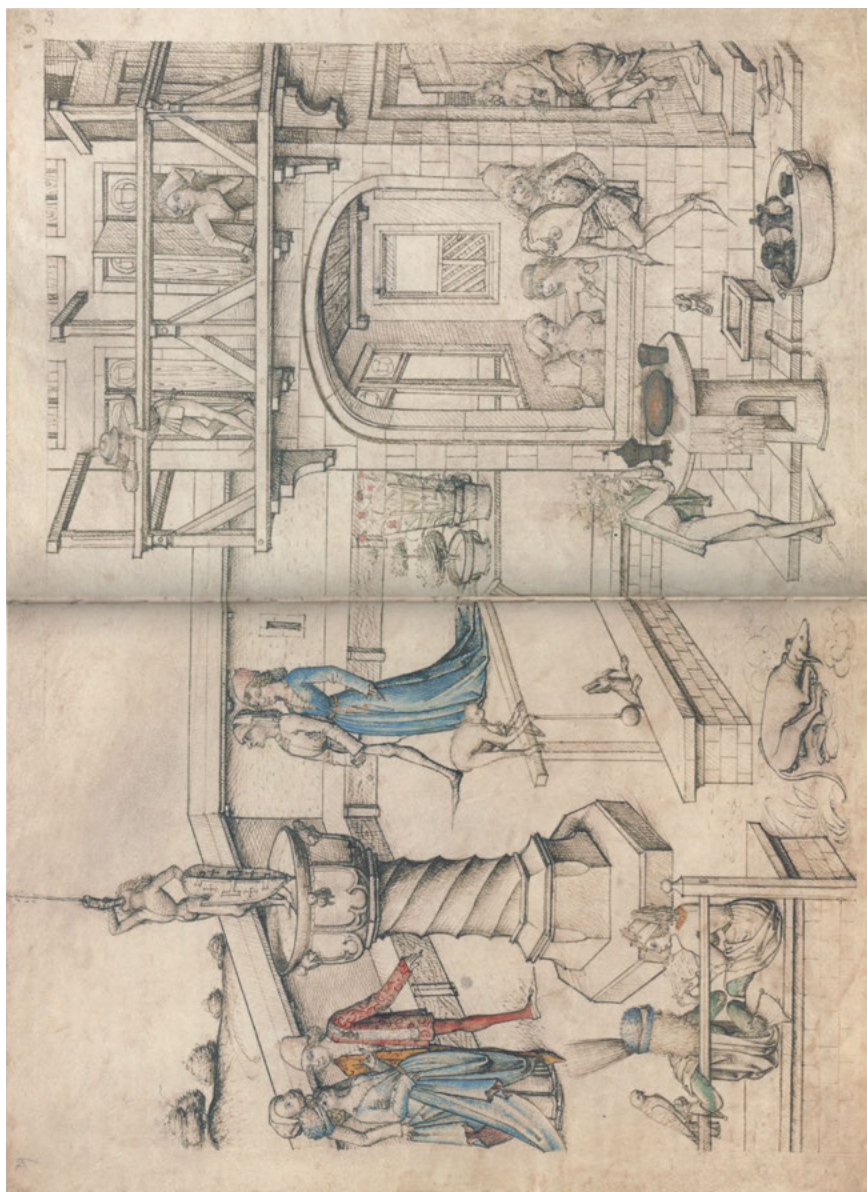


Fig. 4. Master of the house book: The bathhouse, c. 1482, partially colored pen drawing on vellum, 250 × 150 mm (book), in: Hausbuch Schloss Wolfegg, fol. 18^v-19^r, private collection.

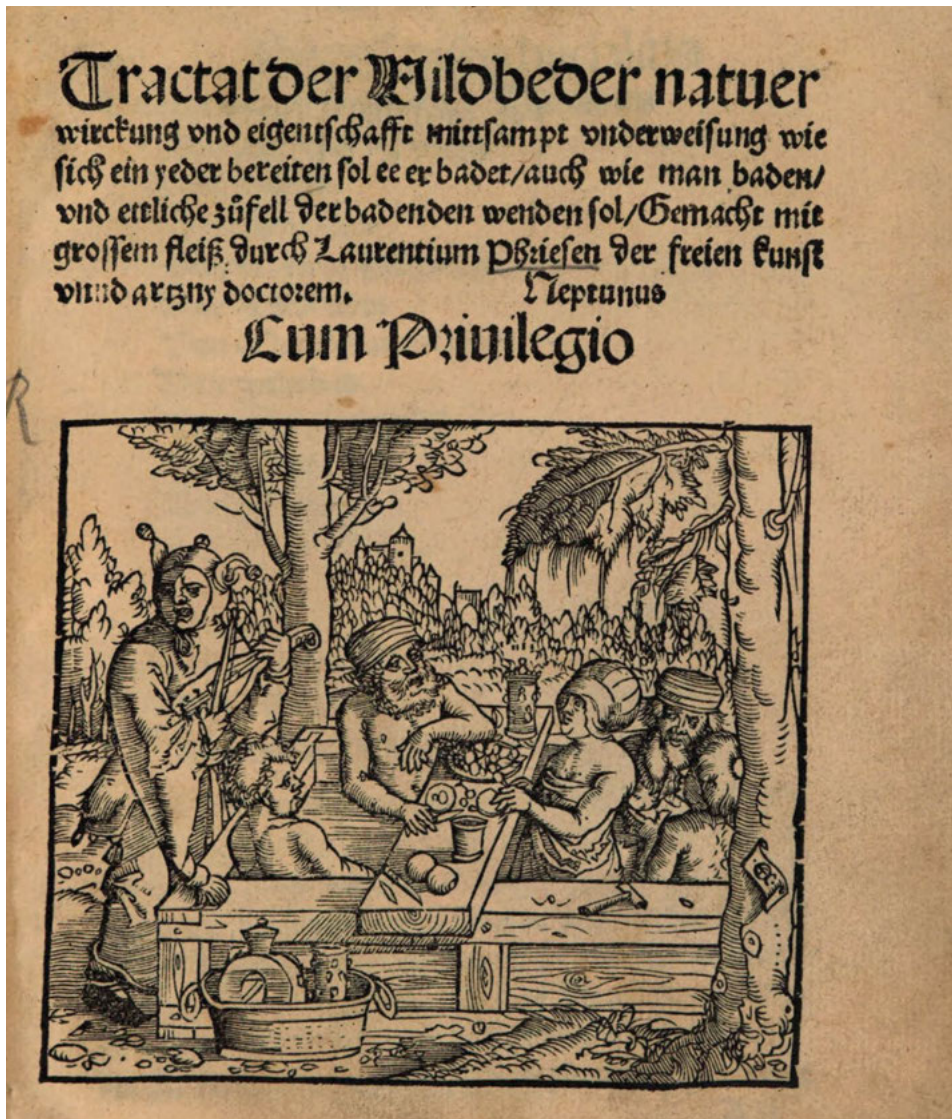


Fig. 5. Lorenz Fries: Tractat der Wildbeder natuer wirckung vnd eigentschafft [...], Strasbourg: Grieninger, 1519, title page with woodcut. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Sign. 4 M.med. 295,16.



Fig. 6. Ludwig Senfl: Im Bad wöl' wir recht frölich sein, in: *Der dritte teyl, schöner, lieblicher, alter, und newer teutscher Liedlein [...]*, Nuremberg: Johann vom Berg / Ulrich Newber, 1549, No. XXIII. London, British Library, Sign. Music Collections DRT Digital Store K.3.g.6.

Compositions like the song “Im Bad wöl' wir recht frölich sein” (In the bath we'll be quite merry; Fig. 6) by Ludwig Senfl¹⁰⁵ prove that some music was written specifically for the entertainment of spa guests. The texts even include elements such as spa illnesses¹⁰⁶ or the advantages of local bathing establishments.¹⁰⁷ Religious spa songs, on the other hand, emphasize the moral regulation of the bathing routine and the spiritual purity of the guests and sometimes show evidence of the potential for confessional conflicts.¹⁰⁸ Sometimes already available religious vocal music was performed as is, but texts specifically written for spas were also set to familiar hymn melodies.

105 Senfl: Im Bad wöl' wir recht frölich sein, pp. 46f. On Senfl, see <https://senflonline.com/> (last accessed: October 30, 2024).

106 A song from the 17th century (printed with three melodies) ironically takes up the pain of a spa rash; cf. Martin 1906, p. 339.

107 For example, the 17th-century Zurich poet Johann Wilhelm Simler celebrates local spas; cf. Martin 1906, p. 339.

108 Cf. Pietschmann 2006.

We can classify the surviving repertoire of spiritual and secular vocal music according to the type of its source. For one thing, there are single compositions such as song broadsheets (e.g., *Ein nüw Lied* by Meliora Muchheimin von Uri, prioress of the Convent of Hermetschwil in the Aargau),¹⁰⁹ south German tablatures, and songs composed specifically for use in spas.¹¹⁰ However, most spa songs survive in comprehensive collections or as an appendix to medical-balneological works.¹¹¹ Traditional chorales, hymns, and folk-songs often betray where they were used by such notes as “im [...] Bade gesungen” (sung at the bath).¹¹² The surviving spa songs can be divided into three categories: 1) notes and text, 2) texts with reference to a corresponding melody, and 3) texts without notes. *Ein nüw Lied* (Fig. 7) has both notes and text and presents a complete picture of a separately preserved religious spa song. In many appendices to medical-balneological treatises, only the song text is printed with the note “im Thon von” or “in der Weise” (to the melody of), so that the tune can be found in other sources.¹¹³ The melodies of spa songs that survive only as a text are of course unknowable. There is very little evidence about the ratio of monophonic to polyphonic compositions. Polyphonic pieces like Senfl’s “Im Bad wöl’ wir recht frölich sein” or a “Bader-Gesang” for four voices in Simler’s collection *Teutscher Getichten* (German poems)¹¹⁴ are rare, and in the case of many other surviving compositions, it is hard to know for sure whether they were performed in spas mono- or polyphonically.¹¹⁵ However, graphic works often show singing guests or spa personnel holding polyphonic scores.¹¹⁶ Many graphic works as well as sources such as Desiderius Gottfried’s *Pyrmontisches Curioses Brunnen-Gespräch*¹¹⁷ reveal – especially in the context

109 Melchiora Muchheimin von Uri: *Ein nüw Lied*; cf. Martin 1906, Fig. 146, p. 339; Salmen 1994, p. 17.

110 As an example, the composition of funeral music that goes back to the 1589 spa visit of the Tübingen professor of Greek Martin Crusius and the Stuttgart court musician Wolfgang Rhau to the Wildbad.

111 E.g., Heinrich Georg Neuß: *Brunnenlieder denen gottseel. Brunnen-Gästen, 1706* or as an appendix to Hellmund: *Thermographia Paraenetica*.

112 *Vier schoen neue Weltliche Lieder*; Salmen 1994, p. 18.

113 In the anonymous treatise *Neu-entsprungener Heil-Gesundheit- und Wunder-Bronnen* (1677), for example, a song is appended to achieve “God’s helpful blessing and providential addition to use of the curative spring,” with the additional note that this song is to be sung “in the melody of Zion laments with fear, etc.”

114 Simler: *Teutsche Getichte*.

115 Pero Tafur gives an early report of polyphony in a spa: “The people there can all sing well, including even the commoners, and sing artfully in three voices like practiced artists”; cf. Fuhrmann 2014, p. 85.

116 As examples: by a Lombard master (perhaps Christopher de Predis), [Garden of Love]: illustration for Planet Venus from *Sphaerae coelestis et planetarum descriptio* [*De Sphaera*] (c. 1450/1470), tempera and gold on parchment, 24.5 × 16.5 cm, Bibl. Estense Modena alfa.x.2.14 (Lat. 209), fol. 9^v; [depictions of the planet] Venus, in: *Eyn nyge Kalender recht holende*, Lübeck: Steffen Arndes, 1519 (reproduced in Martin 1906, Fig. 10, p. 13; on this calendar: Warburg 1908/1932).

117 Gottfried: *Pyrmontisches Curioses Brunnen-Gespräch*, p. 66.

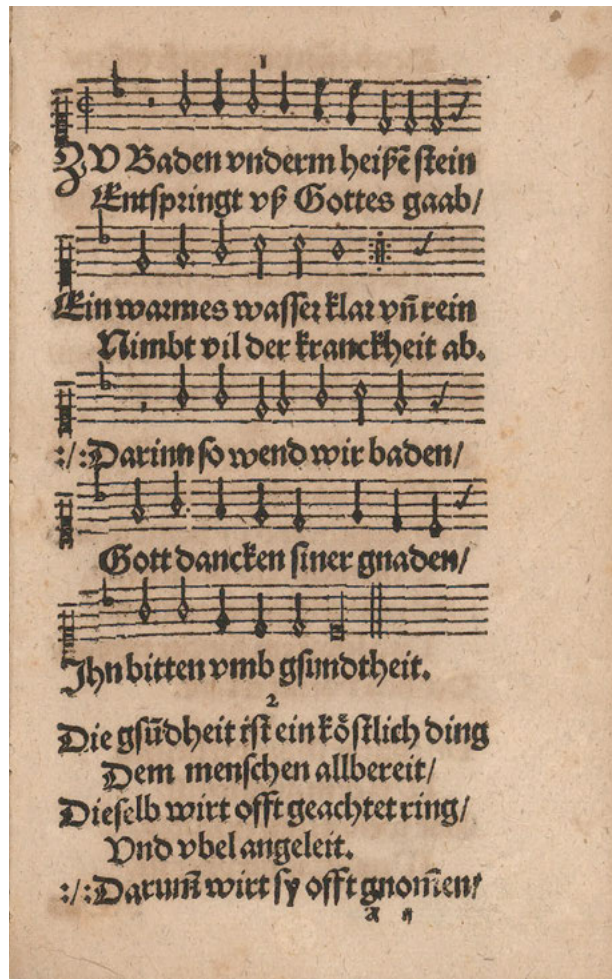


Fig. 7. Meliora Muchheim: Ein nūw Lied in Badenfaerten lustig zezingen, Zurich (?): Bodmer (?), 1617, first page of music. Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, Sign. 18.2016,17.

of other musical practices of the time – that singing at the spas was accompanied by instruments and that all sorts of instruments were also played solo or in ensembles.¹¹⁸ Pantaleon's *Wahrhaftige und fleissige Beschreibung der Uralten Statt und Graveschafft Baden*

¹¹⁸ Actual instrumental compositions relating to bathing, however, are only documented beginning in the 18th century, e.g., Georg Philipp Telemann's *Pyrmonter Kurwoche: Scherzi Melodichi*, per divertimento di coloro, che prendono l'Acque minerali in Pirmonte, including "Ariette semplici e facili a Violino, Viola e Fondamento" arranged in weekly cycles (1734).

(True and Painsstaking Description of the Ancient City and County of Baden, 1578) mentions “drums, fifes, harps”¹¹⁹ and later “drums, fifes, fiddles.”¹²⁰ Some descriptions even mention musical genres. Hörnigk’s description of the mineral springs and spas in Langenschwalbach, for instance, says that “from other locations, instruments – harps, lutes, fiddles, etc.” were brought to the spa, and the guests were entertained “with various lovely musical pieces such as pavaues, intradas, courantes, ballets, arias, vilanelles, etc.”¹²¹

6. Conclusion

Spa music of the early modern period is intimately involved in the enactment of social performances and in discursive relations to lived reality. In it, the functional-pragmatic and the creative-artistic levels are intertwined and together constitute its specific aesthetic structure. For precisely that reason, the spa as a location of musical production, distribution, and reception can become a space of reflection on a praxeological aesthetics.¹²²

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119 Pantaleon: Wahrhafftige und fleissige Beschreibung, p. 55.

120 Pantaleon: Wahrhafftige und fleissige Beschreibung, p. 89.

121 Hörnigk: Langen Schwalbacher Saurbrunnen, p. 277.

122 As Fuhrmann remarks, a musical work is always the “result of the workings [...] of human (and sometimes all too human) activity”; this simultaneous material and cultural activity produces the “often overlooked nexus between composed music and the rest of the world” (Fuhrmann 2018, p. 151).

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