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Sommario

Pilgrimages to mineral springs between Antiquity and the Middle Ages

Maddalena Bassani

Introduction

On the sidelines of the issues developed by the rurAllure European project (for the presentation of which see the contribution of Martín López Nores and Alessia Mariotti), it may be interesting to propose some data on the traces of ancient and post-ancient pilgrimage at sacred contexts that arose near curative springs and geothermal events in Ancient Italy.

The study of votive bequests by pilgrims and travelers at places of worship or otherwise where salutary water flowed has long been the focus of various publications that have sometimes investigated general aspects, inferable from literary and epigraphic sources (Marasco 2001; Dvorjetski 2007; Basso 2013 and 2014, with bibliography; on the Modern age, Clay Large [2015] 2019), in other cases to the material evidence (among which Bassani 2017; on sacred contexts at thermal mineral stations, Bassani 2014a; Bassani 2014b). To the springs capable of resolving illnesses that today can be classified as trivial afflictions, but at the time potentially lethal in the absence of specific medical treatment, individuals or groups of worshippers went not only in Roman times but also in the Medieval and Modern ages, with significant lingering in contemporary times. The fame of the well-being derived from 'curative pilgrimage' to the springs, as well as the sacred aura implied in them, continued over time: some Roman sites intended for treatment through mineral waters were included in the European pilgrimage routes, which were consolidated in Medieval and Modern times into today's three Romee, namely the Via Romea Francigena, the Via Romea Strata and the Via Romea Germanica [Fig. 1]. Along such routes, hundreds of thousands of people from different states of Europe have crossed Italy and some of its regions. If the Francigena from the west and the Strata from the east join in Tuscany proceeding toward Latium, the Germanica, coming from the north, intersects the Strata in the Euganean area, then continuing southward; only in the vicinity of Lake Bolsena do the three Romee head together toward the final destination, which is the city of Rome.

However, one would make the mistake of thinking that the phenomenon of the 'healing journey' often coinciding with the 'spiritual journey' has remained unchanged over the centuries passing through the same routes and the same ways. The history of studies on 'water cults' is extremely rich but tends to flatten very different phenomena from one another in the name of a kind of universality of the human approach to water and using comparative methods that are not always agreeable (Eliade [1970] 1974). Conversely, as outlined for the phenomenon

of cults at mineral sources (Bassani 2013; Scheid 2015), each case makes its own history, although common aspects can be inferred from different contexts for both the Roman and post-antique periods.

In fact, when looking at [Fig. 1] we can see that, compared to the mapping of thermo-mineral sites of ancient times indicated with dots, where there was pilgrimage both locally and from very distant places, there is a partial proximity of these modern routes to Roman health resorts: in some cases, the routes directly touch the ancient sites, in other cases they are several tens (sometimes hundreds) of kilometers away from them. This discrepancy can be explained in several ways. On the one hand by the fact that ancient healing facilities did not always continue to be maintained and exploited after the fall of the Western Roman Empire and thus no longer constituted a valid reason for making a healing/faith stop at those springs. On the other hand, because post-antique pilgrimage routes were able to intercept routes closer to other newly formed centers, e.g. churches and monasteries: the latter were managed by new authorities in the territory and maintained in efficient condition, i.e. free from the uncontrolled proliferation of vegetation that always has the upper hand in the absence of man. Finally, the sacredness of the water inherent in each spring, including those that are oligo-mineral and thus intended only for drinking or hygiene, may have suggested to the wayfarer alternative routes near landscapes evocative of apparitions of the Madonna or Saints, thus conveying new expectations of well-being and faith and promoting other walking routes (Nicoud 2015). On the other hand, the topic of the *interpretatio christiana* of gods and pagan cults to healing springs has not had an adequate analysis so far. Hence, given a only partial continuity of the frequentation of therapeutic springs concerning the three Romee routes, this paper will present two contexts located near the two routes later traveled respectively by Francigena and Strata, which continued to be travel destinations over the centuries precisely because of the presence of springs that have both a curative potential but are also charged with sacredness. These are clearly illustrative cases of broad and multifaceted phenomena found in many other Italian and European settings, for which specific in-depth studies will be necessary.

I. Along the Via Francigena: the case of the shrine of Minerva Medica at Caverzago (Piacenza)

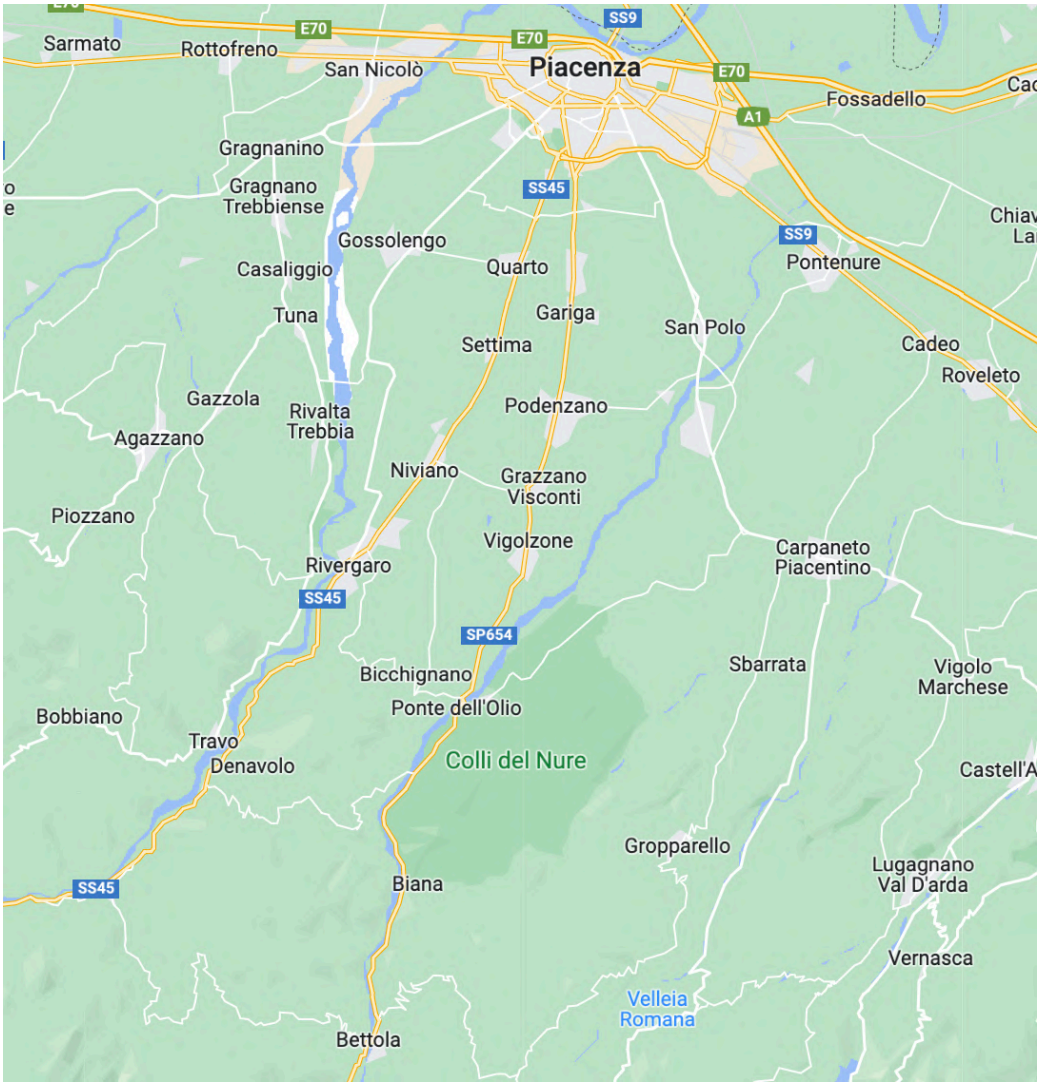
In the first section of the Via Francigena in Italy, between Piemonte and western Emilia-Romagna, the geographical context in the locality of Travo and Caverzago, between Velleia and Piacenza, is about 22 km southwest of the route [Fig. 2]. Here should be placed an important place of worship that arose in the middle valley of the Trebbia River, whose main building (perhaps a temple or a structure articulated in halls and open spaces) is not known for the time being, but only for some related cult artifacts and some of its construction parts, including blocks of Istrian stone reused in the church of S. Antonino, near Travo, and S. Maria, in Caverzago *(Minerva Medica 2008).* Moreover, it is plausible that in addition to the sanctuary, there were various outbuildings for the priestly component, intended to help devotees not only in ritual practices but also to interpret any oracular responses – whose existence seems to have been very likely. Neither should there have been a shortage of *mansione*s and facilities

1 | Map with thermo-mineral Roman sites (light blue dots) and the three Romee routes: the Via Romea Francigena from the west (dark red line), the Via Romea Germanica from the north (orange line), and the Via Romea Strata from the east (red line) (reworking the map of Roman thermo-mineral sites by A. Meleri, realized between 2010 and 2014 by the team of the University of Padua).

to accommodate many pilgrims who came to the sanctuary, nor even productive buildings to meet the needs of the faithful. The pilgrims from the nearest roads, including the *Via Aemilia* from Piacenza, could deviate from the journey by following a route identified downstream: from here it was then possible to reach the sanctuary, dedicated to the goddess Minerva (Carini 2008). As for the location of the ancient sacred structure, today it tends to rule out the hypothesis that it was near Travo since it seems more likely that the sacred complex stood at a spring at the foot of the Caverzago hill: here the church dedicated to St. Stefano Protomartire was erected in the XVII century, on an earlier building named in a manuscript of 1346 (Carini 2008; Marchetti 2008).

I.1. The springs, the shrine and the devotees in Roman times

Several mineralized cold springs, particularly at the Dorba stream and the Argà brook, are known to exist here, rich in sodium sulfate decahydrate also known as 'Glauber's salt': they are considered effective in the case of digestive system problems and to treat ulcers and wounds. In Roman times the main deity here was Minerva, worshipped with the epithets of



2 | Map showing locations connected to the shrine of *Minerva Medica* between Travo and Caverzago in Val Trebbia, Piacenza (Google Maps).

Medica Memor Cabardiacenis (Scheid 2008; Buonopane, Petraccia 2014). She was recognized with multiple powers, including curative abilities – as is well made clear by the first epithet of the goddess, *Medica* – and through her priests, she prescribed the cures to be practiced through those special springs. However, her second appellation, *Memor*-Mindful, hints at oracular powers: while some ancient etymological sources traced the name Minerva to the verb *memini*, 'to remember' (Arnob. 3, 31; Fest. P. 222), Minerva's implicit connection with strategies for enhancing memory, that is, with knowledge through learning, was embodied in

her being the patroness of the arts, ingenuity, and military strategies. Minerva could thus be asked to formulate advice and predictions, because she was a deity who, mindful of many things, knew how to forecast the future (see Weinreich 1968; Scheid 2008).

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that among the faithful there were people of various social ranks: aristocrats, artisans, and people of servile status all left a gift to the deity for a fulfilled or formulated ex votos, coming from neighboring areas or more distant locations. Minerva's third epithet, *Cabardiacensis*, introduces the theme of the goddess' territorial domain, which extended over a geographical area corresponding to the *fundus Cabardiacus*, hence Caverzago. The territorial area is to be located between Piacenza and Veleia and is mentioned in the *tabula alimentaria* of Velleia, which reports data on loans granted to landowners in the area; from those interests, the Roman State then drew quotas devolved to minor and destitute boys and girls (Criniti 1991; Soricelli 2002).

Although most of the worshippers came primarily from the area surrounding Travo and Caverzago, from the remaining epigraphic sources, dated between the I and III centuries AD, we learn that people came to the shrine after covering far longer distances (Carini 2008; De Cazanove 2009, 366-367; Buonopane, Petraccia 2014, 225-226). From Cremona came a certain *Caius Domitius Alendus* [Fig. 3], who had dedicated a votive stele in green stone to Minerva: *C(aius) Domi[tius] / Alendu[s] / Cremon(ensis) / Minervae / v(otum) s(olvit) [l(ibens)] m(erito)*: CIL XI, 1298; Criniti 2012, 3).

From Milan *Lucius Caelius Agathopus, Marcus Atilius Masculus, and Caius Domitius Priscus* came to Minerva for help: *Caelius* had offered a white marble memorial stone asking for mercy for Celia Marcellina, *Atilius* left a votive stele in green stone, and *Domitius* a small white marble altar (respectively: *M(inervae) m(emori) / sanctiss(imae) / L(ucius) Coelius / Agathopus / Mediol(anensis) pro / Coelia / Marcellina / l(ibenti) [a(nimo)] v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*: CIL XI 1296; Criniti 2012, 2; *Minervae / v(otum) s(olvit) / M(arcus) Atilius / Masculus / Mediol(anensis)*: CIL XI, 1294 = AE 2007, 150 = AE 2008, 537; Criniti 2012, 2; *M(inervae) M(emori) / C(aius) Domitius / Priscus / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*: CIL XI, 1299 = AE 2007, 150 = AE 2008, 537; Criniti 2012, 3).

From Vercelli, however, was Valeria Sammonia *(Minervae / Medicae / Cardabiac(ensis) / Valeria / Sammonia / Vercellens(is) / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*: CIL XI 1306 = ILS 3137; Bollini 1969, 349; Criniti 2012, 4), while from Brescello, in Emilia, came *Lucius Callidius Primus*. He recalled in his dedication to the goddess that he donated two pounds of silver and a pair of silver ears, which have not come down to us but were perhaps placed above the base *(Minervae Aug(ustae) / L(ucius) Callidius Primus / Brixellanus ex arg(ento) / lib(ras) II item L(ucius) Callidius / Primus aures argenteas / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*: CIL XI, 1295 = ILS 3136; Criniti 2012, 2).

This last inscription introduces us to the questions around the diseases that affected the pilgrims who turned to *Minerva Medica Memor Cabardiacensis*: *Lucius Callidius Priscus* may

have donated silver ears because he had been cured by Minerva's medicinal waters for ear problems, such as persistent otitis and/or momentary deafness. Conversely, a certain Celia Giuliana dedicated a marble altar because she had been cured of a debilitating disease: *Minervae / Memori / Coelia Iuliana / indulgentia / medicinarum / eius infirmitate / gravi liberatam (!) / d(onum) p(osuit)*: CIL XI, 1297 = ILS 3134 = AE 2007, 150 = AE 2008, 537; Bollini 1969, 349; Criniti 2012, 3 ("To Minerva Mindful. Celia Giuliana placed as a gift for being freed from a serious illness through the efficacy of her medicines"). In this case, we do not know what Celia was suffering from, but thanks to the goddess' medicines (*medicinarum eius*) she fully recovered (*liberata*).

More precise information comes from a further epigraphic text engraved on a marble pedestal and dedicated by another woman, which specifies her illness: *Minervae / Memori / Tullia / Superiana / restitutione / facta sibi / capillorum / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*: CIL XI 1305 = ILS 3135 = AE 2007, 150 = AE 2008, 537; Bollini 1969, 349; De Cazanove 2009, 366; Criniti 2012, 3 ("To Minerva Mindful, Tullia Superiana willingly and deservedly dissolved her vow because her hair was restored").

So, the waters and the cures, thanks to Minerva quoted here as an oracular deity (*Memor*), were able to restore Tullia's lost hair. We do not know what the therapy might have been, but a clue comes from similar evidence discovered at the springs of Ischia, protected by Apollo and the Nitrodi Nymphs (at the beginning of the I century AD): the thermal waters were able to give beautiful hair to Capellina (*nomen omen*!), who dedicated an inscribed Grechetto marble slab, where she had herself portrayed during the therapy [Fig. 4]. She is seen naked and bent over before two Nymphs, with her head reclined to wash her hair in a circular basin held by one of the Nymphs, while the other poured water from a pitcher. On the opposite side of the scene, Apollo with a lyre observes the healing practice near a tree, reiterating the therapeutic power conveyed by himself: *Capellina v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) Nymphis* (CIL X, 6793; Basso, Petraccia, Tramunto 2011, 191, with bibliography).

Not even for the case of the Ischian baths was known the actual site of the pilgrimage, however, thanks to the image preserved on the relief, we came aware of part of the therapy: after being washed with miraculous waters, both ladies, grateful to the goddess, left memories of a recovered baldness and regain of a harmonious appearance.

To conclude, it is worth mentioning one last dedication that amplifies the power of the goddess from primarily therapeutic to that of a tutelary deity in a much broader sense. A certain *Lucius Nevius Verus Roscianus*, in his capacity as prefect of a cohort of *equites* of the Gauls, dedicated a slab to Minerva as a thanking gift for bringing him back safely from military exploits in Britain: *L. Naevius Verus Roscianus praef(ectus) coh(ortis) II / Gall(orum) eq(uitate) votum ex Britannia rettulit l(ibens) m(erito)* (CIL XI 1301 = ILS 2603 = Epigraphica 1989, 250 = AE 1989, 318 = AE 2007, 150 = AE 2008, 537; 2013, 248-249, with previous bibliography).

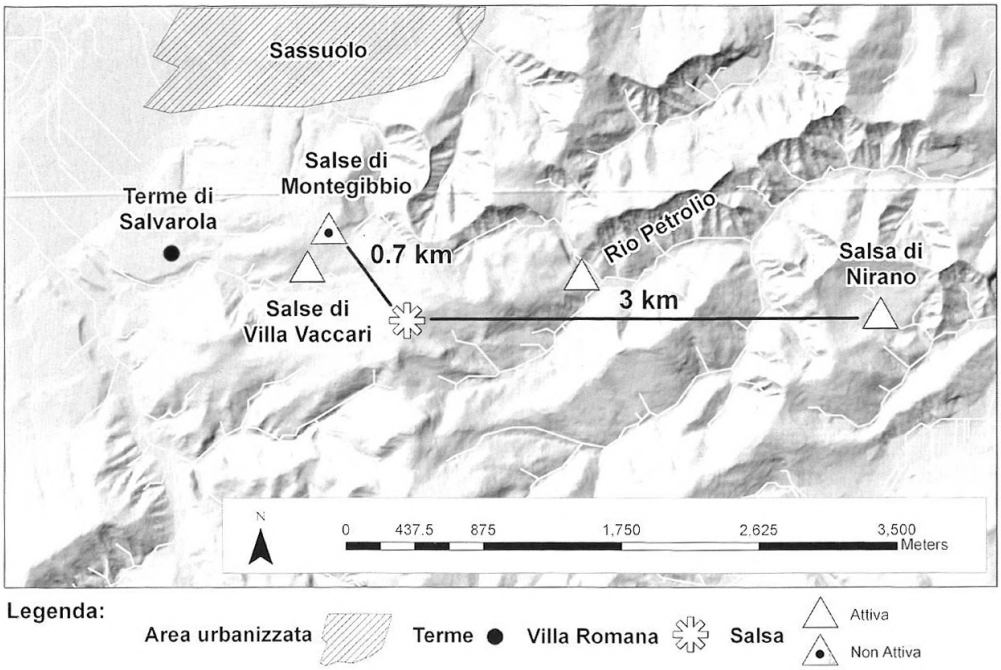
3 | Piacenza, Musei Civici. Marble altar with dedication to *Minerva Memor* by *Domitius Alendus* (CIL XI, 1298; from Carini 2008, 25, fig. 19).
4 | Napoli, Museo Archeologico Nazionale. Relief from Ischia with dedication to the Nimphs Nitrodi by Capellina (CIL X, 6793; from Adamo Muscettola 2002, 13, fig. 19).

The inscription dates to the reign of *Antoninus Pius* and represents a sample of ex votos for the happy return home of soldiers, who often made a vow to deities before departing to ask for salvation while on a mission (on this subject see Buonopane 2013). In this case, we do not know Rosciano's city of origin, but it is significant that he took the trouble to arrive in Travo-Caverzago to donate the artifact to a goddess whose fame transcended the boundaries of the sanctuary and protected those who turned to her for broad protection – and not only related to spa therapy.

I.2. Minerva water cults and post-antique therapeutic traditions in Emilia

Minerva Cabardiacensis expanded her healing and tutelary influence beyond the Travo-Caverzago site, reaching a much wider geographic area. And indeed, in the Emilia-Romagna region other water cults are traced back to Minerva, including those at the 'salse' (muds) located southeast of Caverzago, in the Modena area [Fig. 5]: this is a still active phenomenon involving the outflow from the subsoil of clays very rich in salt, due to the marine origin of the groundwater from which they are generated, crossing clay rock layers.

Specifically, in Montegibbio (Sassuolo), near the largest mud volcano in Italy that has been dormant for about two centuries, a Roman shrine dedicated to *Minerva Medica Memor* was discovered, which was connected to mud used for healing purposes (*L'insediamento di Montegibbio* 2010; *Minerva Medica* 2015). The sanctuary, dating as early as the III-II century BC, underwent several renovations due to landslides caused by mud eruptions and, presum-

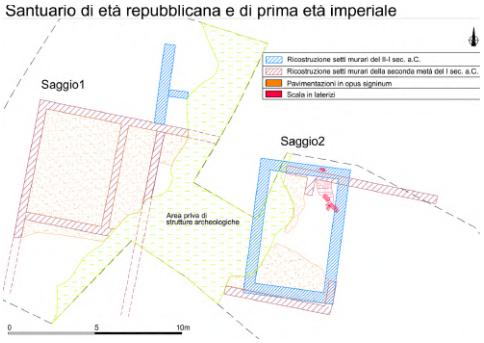


5 | Map showing the 'Salse of Nirano' area and the sites related to Minerva near Sassuolo (from Borgatti *et alii* 2010, 104, fig. 11).

ably, earthquakes [Fig. 6a]. Initially there must have been a rectangular enclosure (5x7 m) bordering the 'mud of Minerva', and later (from the I century BC) a number of rooms surrounding a courtyard were built, of which only portions of 'signino' floors and fragments of plaster on the walls, with polychrome hues, remain. The salsa/mud was accessed by a staircase outside the rooms, and there was also a kiln for the production of cult artifacts, to be sold to the faithful who came to honor Minerva. Few ceramic artifacts dated between the III-I centuries BC are preserved of these objects, among which there is a fragment of a bowl that qualifies, as was often the case in ancient times, as itself sacred to the goddess: *(Eg)o Miner(vae) sum* [Fig. 6b]. The sanctuary was then abandoned due to a new eruption in the II century AD, and, in the following century, a farmhouse was built on it, which was in use until the late period.

The pervasiveness of Minerva's power in the Modena area is also indirectly attested in the vicinity of Nirano, where a votive stone arula still dedicated to Minerva was recovered in the valley at the bottom of the 'Salse' or mud volcanoes – although it cannot be traced back to a precise place of worship (Susini 1959, n. 5, 88; Guandalini 2006, 276; *Atlante dei Beni Archeologici* 2009, 229-230, nn. 92 e 96).

Minerva was therefore evoked and worshipped as the one who presided over these unusual geothermal manifestations, and indeed the peculiarity of this phenomenon was well known to



6a | Plan of the shrine dedicated to *Minerva Medica* at Montegibbio near Sassuolo, Modena (from *Minerva Medica* 2015, 6, fig. 1).
6b | The dish with inscription to Minerva (from *Minerva Medica* 2015, 3, fig. 3).

the Romans, and it was brought back to the supernatural. Pliny the Older recalled an event that occurred in 91 BC, according to which in the Modena region two mountains had collided and the collision had given off enormous flashes of fire:

> Factum est semel, quod equidem in Etruscae disciplinae voluminis invenio, ingens terrarum portentum L. Marcio Sexto Iulio cos. in agro Mutinensi. Namque montes duo inter se concurrerunt crepitu maximo adsultantes recedentesque, inter eos flamma fumoque in caelum exeunte interdiu, spectante e via Aemilia magna equitum Romanorum familiarumque et viatorum moltitudine. Eo concursu villae omnes elisae, animalia permulta, quae intra fuerant, exanimata sunt, anno ante sociale bello, quod haud scio an funestius terrae ipsi Italiae fuerit quam civilia (Plin. *nat*. 2, 199).

> There occurred once only – as I personally find in the texts of the Etruscan discipline – an enormous prodigy of lands in the region of Modena, under the consulship of *Lucius Marcius* and *Sextus Iulius*: that is, two mountains collided with a great roar, leaping forward and backward, and between them, flames and smoke rose to the sky in broad daylight; attended, from the Via Emilia, by a great crowd of Roman horsemen, with their retinue, and travelers. By the crash, all the houses in that countryside were crushed, and a great many beasts, which were in the midst, were killed: this was a year before the Social War, which I might call more fatal for this land of Italy even than the civil wars.

The extraordinariness of the phenomenon, to be located between Montegibbio and Nirano, should be traced back to the geothermal instability of the area, which caused (as it still does today) strong earthquakes and eruptions of muds and salts, as well as the outbreak of large fires due to the release of hydrocarbons and flammable gases. Pliny's account, therefore, fits into the series of *mirabilia*, but the reference to his source, the *volumina Etruscae disciplinae*, indicates that such geothermal manifestations were nonetheless attributed to specific deities, who alone could have been at the origin of such prodigies, in front of which, as Pliny recalls, military personnel and wayfarers on the Via Emilia stopped in amazement.

The muds could be used for the treatment of various afflictions, including those of the skin (such as scabies, sores, and wounds), and it is no coincidence that knowledge of the healing properties of these muds did not end with the ancient epoch: archival documents show that as early as 1276 one: "*Hospitale in loco ubi dicitur le Salse in ecclesia Sancti Petri in Insula cepit edificare ad honorem dicte Beate Marie Virginis*" and that this building was designed "*ad substentionem et receptionem omnium confluentium pauperum peregrinorum ad hospitale praedictum*" (Malmusi 1858, 144, footnote 13). It was, in essence, a place of shelter and care for pilgrims and poor people, which was built in an out-of-the-way location but accessible from the main route between Piacenza and Modena – namely the *Via Aemilia*, on which the Via Francigena later partly overlapped. The cures were handed down over the centuries, as is evident from other documents from the XVI century and beyond, so much so that they were well known even to the Benedictine monks: they prepared the 'St. Catherine's Oil' in the monastery of St. Peter in Modena (or 'petrolio delle Salse/olio del Sasso' (Gerali 2011-2012), which was employed as a soothing and balm for various afflictions. We also know that where the Salvarola Baths – whose place name is spoken today and uses saline-bromine-iodine waters – are located, the muds were harvested for preparations useful in combating lice, ulcers and burns, as well as stomach and childbirth pains, and for treating rabies and injuries to animal joints, as well as for lighting (Guandalini 2006, 275-278).

In conclusion, the Roman water cults linked to Minerva both in Caverzago and in the Modenese area should be traced back, on the one hand, to the proven therapeutic efficacy of the waters and its by-products such as muds, and on the other hand, to the eccentricity of the geothermal phenomena themselves, that occurred in the area and are still present today. The latter attracted thousands of people over time, and in the Nirano Nature Reserve (Fiorano Modenese), covering more than 200 hectares, it is possible to see them 'in action' [Fig. 7]: seething mud volcanoes, due to the presence of liquid (petroleum) and gaseous (methane) hydrocarbons, erupt huge quantities of clays/salts: solidified in the air, they create inverted cones of different sizes. These phenomena impress today's visitors, but especially the imaginations of the ancients, who over the millennia stopped at Minerva's sacred places and then at the churches and hospitals, that became pilgrimage sites in Medieval and Modern times.

II. Along the Via Romea Strata: the thermo-mineral context at the *Fons Timavi* (Monfalcone)

Remaining still in Northern Italy but shifting attention eastward, runs the Via Romea Strata that spans across the regions of Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia, partly coinciding with the Roman consular road Via Annia. The ancient settlements in the Euganean area close to this route are numerous and we refer to previously published works for a detailed examination of them (*Aquae Patavinae* 2011-2012; *Aquae salutiferae* 2013; *Guida del Museo del Termalismo antico* 2021) and here to the contributions of P. Zanovello and A. Meleri. Conversely, the proximity of the road to the thermo-mineral area linked to the *Fons Timavi* shrine, near Monfalcone, which appears to be only 5 km away from the modern pilgrimage route, has not been considered so far.

7 | The 'Salse of Nirano' Nature Reserve (Modena). A solidified 'salsa' in the shape of a volcano (©wikicommns).

The area is now totally urbanized and subject to heavy geo-environmental alterations due to anthropogenic intervention, but in pre-Roman and Roman times it corresponded to the *caput Adriae* and must have covered large inhabited and cultivated areas. In this sense there are interesting indications not only of a sacred area surrounded by woods but also of a 'spa' and resting station close to the coast, as well as a boat; thus a varied settlement in which to place the movements of pilgrims both along the land route of the future Via Strata and probably also by sea.

II.1. The sources, the *thermae* and the *mansio*

Just across the Adriatic Sea, recent studies (*La voce dell'acqua* 2011; Ventura, Casari 2011) have traced the Lisert Plain to ancient island outcrops, in which were three hills now completely flattened [Fig. 8, letters A-C]: these are the Hill of St. Anthony and the 'Collina della Punta'/Hill of the Tip, to which a third hill called the Hill of St. John is added. The Lisert Plain is considered a recent geological formation, traceable to the beginning of the I millennium BC where springs both hot (40-41°C) and cold, but with a considerable concentration of hydrogen sulfide, carbonate, carbonic acid, and magnesium sulfate, must have bubbled up close to the sea, from about 2 km depth. At least one must have been present at St. Anthony's, and another was at the foot of the Hill of the Tip, on the side facing the mountains. We know from Pliny the Elder that a strange phenomenon occurred here, one that caused the flow of mineral

8 | Monfalcone, site of the *Fons Timavi*. The location of the three hills: A, Hill of St. Anthony; B, Hill of the Tip/'Collina della Punta', and C, Hill of St. John, described by Plinius the Older (*La voce dell'acqua* 2011, 16).

water to vary twice a day depending on the tide, with a slight alteration in the average temperature of the water: "(...) In the stretch of sea in front of the *Timavus* there is a small island, with hot water springs, which, conforming to the tides, increases or decreases their flow" (Plin. *nat*. II, 103, 229: ...*Timavum amnem insula parva in mari est cum fontibus calidis, qui pariter cum aestu maris crescunt minuunturque*).

Currently, this type of water is used for the healing treatments of wounds, dermatological problems, gynecological and rheumatic diseases, and it is important to note that in the XIX century a building was constructed for curative purposes, which largely destroyed the ancient remains. The latter, discovered on several occasions between the XVI and XXI centuries, coincide with portions of the Roman curative facility on St. Anthony's Hill and a *villa-mansio* on the Collina della Punta, to which was added a *mithraeum* located not far from the *mansio*. The complexes were served by roads, including the Via Flavia and the Gemina, which also partially intercepted much older routes, such as the protohistoric Amber Road (the precious resin that came from the Baltic to northern Italy to be processed and traded: see *Roma sul Danubio* 2002; Bietti Sestieri *et alii* 2015; *The Amber Roads* 2016).

On the curative facility, in a recent examination (Ventura, Casari 2011, with previous bibliography), some rooms paved in terracotta with plastered walls (3x5 m each) were brought to light; these were flanked by other rooms (of 3x4 m) with water apparatuses defined as 'wash basins' by the first excavators. While not excluding their curative function, they could be used

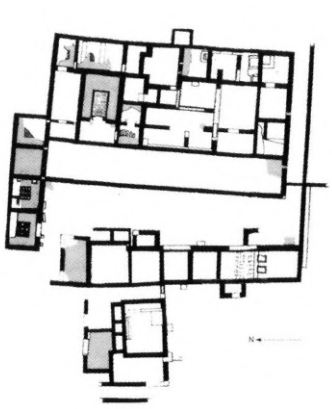
for productive purposes or as places of residence for pilgrims and ills. In this same complex, a pool with marble-covered steps, a peristyle with exedras (possibly an open space for a gym or other activities) and a concrete pool next to a courtyard were also discovered. Part of a statuette of a sleeping erote was recovered from one of the rooms, and it should be interpreted as part of the sculptural materials that decorated the health resort. Overall, and based on the materials and building techniques, the attendance dates between the I century BC and the III century AD.

On the other Hill known as 'Collina della Punta', where the cold springs were, part of a large building of a semi-private nature has emerged instead [Fig. 9]: it could be a *villa* but it is more likely to be a mansio where travelers might have been hosted. The complex in an early phase (early I century BC) had some small rooms with 'cocciopesto' floors; in order to secure the context, layers of material were spread to reclaim and level the area, but from the Augustan age the structure was restored and greatly enlarged: about 40 rooms aligned along an elongated and central open area, with access from the north and southeast, date back to this phase. The rooms were provided with floor coverings with black-and-white and geometrically patterned mosaics, in one case with crenellated wall decoration. Later, in the Trajan-Adrian age, the *mansio* was equipped with heating systems by means of *praefurnia*, and only in late Antiquity (III-IV century AD) some rooms were used as facilities.

That the complex might have been a hotel for wayfarers and pilgrims, is evidenced not only by the building's proximity to a road section but especially by the recovery of a large wooden boat found on the slopes of the high ground [Fig. 10] (Marchiori 1982; see *Lacus Timavi* website). The boat was found in 1972 and brought to Aquileia for a restoration that lasted almost ten years (but it is no longer on display due to its precarious condition); it is made of load-bearing planking using different timbers (oak, fir, walnut, hornbeam), and it is characterized as a vessel intended for transportation. It is preserved for a length of 11 meters and a width of 3,8 m and dates back to the same settlement phase as the *mansio* (I century BC-II century AD). The boat carried objects as well as peoples: ceramic vessels, a wicker basket and a vessel with traces of grapes inside were found during the excavation. Goods necessary for the sustenance of holiday-makers had to arrive at the *mansio*, but it is also possible that there were plots of land and stretches of coastline around the stopping station intended for productive activities from which further income could be derived. The clientele might have been accommodated in this 'hotel' and then used the baths or went to pray on the other hill: they found all kinds of comforts here, leaving in these lands current money but also personal experiences, testimonies of life and spirituality – as can be gleaned from the texts of the inscriptions recovered in the vicinity and about which we shall discuss below.

II.2. The places of the sacred at *Fons Timavi*, between hope and devotion

As for sacred contexts, the sources remind us of the presence of several places of worship at *Timavus*, which appear connected to the salutary function only indirectly; structural attestations of them are lacking but several written testimonies have come down to us.



9 | Monfalcone, Hill of the Tip. Plan of the Roman *mansio* (*La voce dell'acqua* 2011, 37).
10 | Monfalcone, View of the Roman boat found near the *mansio* (Marchiori 1982).

It is Strabo who informs us of the existence of a sanctuary in honor of Diomedes at the *Timavus*: "In the same recess of the Adriatic there is a sanctuary of Diomedes, worthy of note, the *Timavus*:

> ἐν αὐτῷ δὲ τῷ μυχῷ τοῦ Ἀδρίου καὶ ἱερὸν τοῦ Διομήδους ἐστὶν ἄξιον μνήμης, τὸ Τίμαυον· λιμένα γὰρ ἔχει καὶ ἄλσος ἐκπρεπὲς καὶ πηγὰς ἑπτὰ ποταμίου ὕδατος εὐθὺς εἰς τὴν θάλατταν ἐκπίπτοντος, πλατεῖ καὶ βαθεῖ ποταμῷ (Strabo V, 1, 8).
>
> For it has a harbor, a sacred forest out of the ordinary, and seven springs of river water that immediately flow into the sea, through a wide and deep course.

In another passage in the same chapter, the writer attests that not only here but in the Veneto region in general, sacrifices were bestowed to the Greek hero at two sacred groves, which he shared with *Hera* and *Artemis*:

> τῷ δὲ Διομήδει παρὰ τοῖς Ἑνετοῖς ἀποδεδειγμέναι τινὲς ἱστοροῦνται τιμαί· καὶ γὰρ θύεται λευκὸς ἵππος αὐτῷ, καὶ δύο ἄλση τὸ μὲν Ἥρας Ἀργείας δείκνυται τὸ δ' Ἀρτέμιδος Αἰτωλίδος (Strabo V, 1, 9).
>
> It is said that honors were bestowed to Diomedes by *Enetoi*: in fact, a white horse was sacrificed to him and two sacred groves were pointed out, one dedicated to *Hera Argiva*, the other to *Artemis Aetolia*.

A number of studies have already been presented on Diomede in the Adriatic (Braccesi 2021, 51-54, with previous bibliography) and although there is a lack of structural traces of the cult site in the Lisert Plain, it is believed that in Archaic times at the *Fons Timavi* there was an open area – an enclosure – with a sacred grove traceable to the cult of the Greek hero, to which an actual *sacellum* would later be added or substituted in the Augustan age when Strabo wrote. In the late Republican and Imperial periods, the archaic heroic cult for Diomedes

could be joined, thanks to Roman construction skills, by the curative practice through the exploitation of the springs, which enhanced the economic growth prospects of the place without exhausting the devotion to the deities worshipped there. This is evidenced by three inscriptions recovered in the area.

One, dated as early as the I century BC, was drawn on St. John's Hill and bears the dedication to *Timavus* [Fig. 11]: "To *Timavus* for fulfilling the vow" *(Temavo / voto / [(suscepto)*]: CIL I, 2647 = I.It X, 4, 318 = I.Aq. 1, 19 = AE 1926, 104 = ILLRP 261; Cuscito 1976, 59). Two inscriptions come instead from finds on St. Anthony's Hill, both from the I century AD: a certain *Quintus Titatius Maximus* had dedicated a marble altar because his vow had been fulfilled by *Fons*, which is almost certainly the source of *Timavus*: "*Quintus Titatius Maximus* willingly and deservedly dissolved his vow to the (goddess) Fons" *(Quintus Tita[cius] / Maxi[mus] / [F]onti votum / [s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*]: AE 1921, 71b = I.It. X, 4, 321; Arnaldi 2000, 52; Cuscito 1976, 49). Similarly, one such Poblicio Statuto had placed another marble altar to *Fons* as a vow for an unspoken request: "Sacred to the (goddess) Fountain, Poblicio Statuto has dissolved the vow" (*[Font]i sacr(um) / [-P]oblicius / Statutus / v(otum) s(olvit)*: AE 1921, 71b = I.It. X, 4, 320; Arnaldi 2000, 52; Cuscito 1976, 49).

However, other deities must also have been worshipped on St. Anthony's Hill: this is attested by not a few sometimes-inscribed ex votos, which refer to *Hercules Augustus* and *Spes Augusta*, as well as *Dionysus* and *Timavus* himself. For example, a marble altar (I century AD) had been offered by an inhabitant of Oderzo who had come here either for treatment or for work: "Sacred to *Hercules Augustus*, *Caius Curius Quintianus*, of Oderzo, has dissolved the vow" (*Hercul[i] / Aug(usto) / sac(rum) / C(aius) Curiu[s] / Quintianu[s] / Opiterginu[s] / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*: I.It X, 4, 322 = I.Aq. 1, 217 = AE 1926, 106; Cuscito 1976, 51).

Instead, four inscriptions dating between the Augustan age and the III century AD refer to *Spes Augusta*, which seems traceable to requests for health or more general protection. In one case the ex voto says nothing about the dedicator (it is a marble altar dated to the Augustan age: *Spei / Aug(ustae) sac(rum) / [p]ro sa[lute - - -*]: "Sacred to *Spes Augusta*, for salvation–––": AE 1926, 107 = I.It. X 4, 327), while in two cases these are votives left by military personnel, who invoked the protection of Spes for themselves or their relatives. *Sacchonius Varro* left writing: "To *Spes Augusta*, *Caius Sacchonius Varro*, tribune of the I *militia* cohort of Dalmatians, dissolved the vow" *(Spei Aug(ustae) / C(aius) Saccon/ius Varr/o trib(unus) co/h(ortis) I mil(I)ia/riae Del/mataru/m v(otum) s(olvit)*: III century AD, CIL V, 707 = I.It X, 4, 326; Cuscito 1976, 50). *Auconius Optatus*, a native perhaps of a small town in *Noricum* (*Aguntum*), dedicated a votive gift for his son, who had been initiated into a military career: "To *Spes Augusta*, *Auconius Optatus*, awarded the public horse, decurion and *duovir* of Claudia of *Aguntum*, for the salvation of his son *Titus Auconius Optatus*, a Roman knight, has willingly dissolved his vow" *(Spei Aug(ustae)/ [- - -] Auconius / Optatus eq(uo) p(ublico) / dec(urio) et IIvir Cl(audiae)*

Ag(unti) / pro salute / T(iti) Auconi Optati / fili(i) sui equit(is) Rom(ani) / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito): II century AD, CIL V, 708 = I.It X, 4, 325 = EQNoricum A, 3; Cuscito 1976, 50).

Instead, a final ex voto was dedicated by a woman, a certain *Iulia Stratonicia*, to a worker in service of the imperial household and another personage: "Sacred to *Spes Augusta*, for the salvation of *Aquilinus*, factor of the two *Augusti and Tiberius Iulius Aquilinus, Iulia Stratonicia* has dissolved the vow" *(Spei Aug(ustae) / s(acrum) pro sal(ute) / Aquilini vilici Aug(ustorum duorum) / et Ti(berii) Iuli / Aquilini / Iulia Stratonic(e) / v(otum) s(olvit)*: second half of the II cent AD, CIL V, 706 = I.It X, 4, 324 = = I.Aq. 1, 358; Cuscito 1976, 49).

Then, the votives found at the *Timavus* confirm a frequentation by worshippers over a very extended period, in the various settlement dynamics during the I millennium until the Late Age. But the fame of the waters of the *Timavus* likely continued beyond that, as seems to be evidenced by more than just epigraphic and literary clues. In fact, an ex voto was found dedicated to entities with an oracular and ill-defined profile, namely the Fata. It reads: *Fatis Octavia / Sperata votum / solvit lib(ens) / m[erito] MVN*, so "*Octavia Sperata* willingly and deservedly melted the vote to the *Fata* MVN" (CIL V, 705 = I.It X, 4, 319 = I.Aq. 1, 195; Cuscito 1976, 59-60). It is possible that the inscription came from one of the caves that speleologist Ettore Boegan reported in the XX century on St. Anthony's Hill and in particular from a cavern significantly called the 'Cave of Fairies'. What deities were these? Roman religion knows the *Tria Fata*, personifications of fate often connected with the *Parcae* (*Moirae*) and the oracles (Enciclopedia Treccani, under entry *Fata*; Ferrari 1999, under entry *Fato*). Thanks to Varro (Varro, *l.l.* VI, 7, 51) and to Tertullianus, we know that they were called upon after the first week of an infant's life to spin its fate, that is, to define its afterlife at the hour of passing away (Tert. *anim*. 39, 2: *dum ultima die Fata Scribunda advocantur)*.

The etymology of *Fata* from the verb *fari*, 'to speak', recalls the ability to say what was intended for one person, and therefore the mantic function of the *Fata* is implicit in the various manifestations of the cult. Some artifacts are explanatory in this regard: in the Forum of Rome, at the *Rostri*, there were three statues of the *Parcae*-Sibyls (Plin. *nat.* XXXIV, 22); while on three memorial stones, dating from the early Republican period and found at a place of worship in Tor Tignosa (Pomezia-Rome, where sulfur springs are known), appears the dedication to the three *Fata* (*Parca Maurtia*, *Neuna*, *Neuna Fata*) in addition to *Lar* (Granino Cecere 1992; La Regina 2014; Bassani 2014a, 166). In this case, these were entities related to *Faunus* and *Albunea*, who could well patronize those waters with their raw smell and unusual color.

In the Imperial age, *Fata* also appears in funerary contexts and is mentioned on inscriptions (for instance in CIL III, 4151) or is depicted on frescoes within tombs, especially late antique ones, in which pagan and Christian creeds and related iconographies could contaminate each other. Such is the case with a painting in the hypogeum of *Vincentius* and his wife *Vibia* located along the Appian Way in Rome (in front of the Catacombs of St. Callisto), which is dated to the mid-IV century AD [Fig. 12] (Wilpert 1903, 362, tav. 132.2; Ferrua 1971 e 1973). In one of the two arcosoli were buried spouses, and in the sub-arch were painted two scenes, with the

11 | Monfalcone, the altar dedicated to *Timavus* (*La voce dell'acqua* 2011, 47).
12 | Rome, Appian Way, Hypogeum of *Vincentius* and *Vibia*. The painting in the sepulchral room: on the bottom, *Virbia* attendant the verdict by the *Fata Divina*; on the upper part, *Vibia* is admitted to the heavenly banquet (Wilpert 1903, 362, tav. 132).

names of the characters painted in red above each figure. In the lower scene, from the right, appeared Alcestis and Vibia, both with veiled heads, preceded by *Mercurius Nuntius*, awaiting the judgment of *Dis Pater* (*Pluto*) and *Aeracura* (*Proserpina*) presented on a high podium in the center and seated on a throne; the final judgment, however, was bound to the verdict displayed by the three cloaked figures placed on the left, whom the epigraph identifies as *Fata Divina. Pluto's* right arm facing them as well as the expectant attitude that connotes Mercury, Vibia and Alcesti, well clarify the absolute power of the word spoken by the *Tria Fata*, superior to that of the gods. Fortunately for Vibia, the *Fata* were favorable to her, which is why we find her depicted in the upper scene as she is welcomed by a *bonus angelus* (a toga-like male figure with a crown on his head) into the heavenly banquet. Such a depiction is very effective in expressing the generic nature of the demons who spun human destiny: the three figures in the hypogeum, while not perfectly preserved, do not have defined male or female connotations; indeed, they do not seem to have a specific characterization. After all, the *Tria Fata* were called upon to define 'other' conditions, such as the transition from the neonatal/fetal state to that of a swaddled individual, or, as in the case of Vibia, to decide the transition to *post-mortem* life.

The inscription from the *Timavus* of *Octavia Sperata* thus acquires special significance, certainly not because of the ex voto itself, but because of the imagery underlying the dedication itself, which lets us understand the popular dimension of life subjected to indefinite forces

that had already foreseen everything. The *Fata* evoked by *Octavia* remained in popular memory and become the *Faerie* dwellers of caves and patrons of waters and springs, all the more so if they were curative, as had been the Nymphs so often mentioned at therapeutic springs. For instance, at Galatro in Calabria, where there are the Terme of S. Elia with salty-bromine-iodine waters at 37 °C, some findings in the Caruso cave (fictile votive offerings and remains of ancient structures) were identified by nearby inhabitants as pertaining to a 'Palace of the Fairies' (Costabile *et alii* 1992). Later on, to the popular imagination, which projected into the irrational remembrances of ancient cults perhaps never quite dormant or at any rate resemantized in the new Christian creed, another testimony to the mineral springs should be ascribed. In Rapolano Terme (Campo Muri, Siena), at the Baths of St. John the Baptist ('La Puzzola') with sulfurous and bicarbonate-calcium-magnesium waters at 39 °C, various votive materials collected in a deposit known as the 'Buca delle Fate/Fairy Hole' were found. These are commonplace objects in bronze and iron, as well as pottery, coins and a fragment of a bronze left hand, which were deposited by pilgrims and devotees in Roman times: they left records of their devotion to the healing waters, which later, in post-antique times, were identified with the Fairies, patrons of a water source that was always and everywhere miraculous.

III. Food for thought and research perspectives

The panorama that emerges from the data presented in the preceding pages allows us to make some concluding remarks and foreshadow possible insights for future research. The two contexts in northern Italy, which arose around curative waters albeit with different characteristics and properties, attracted pilgrims and travelers from multiple origins over time thanks to the extensive network of roads built by Rome between the late Republican and Imperial ages. The consular roads close to the two sites, the *Via Aemilia* and the *Via Annia* (rebated many centuries later by the Via Francigena and the Via Strata), as well as the minor segments connected to them, constituted the necessary infrastructure to reach the shrine of *Minerva Medica* in the Trebbia Valley and the shrine of *Fons Timavi* at *caput Adriae*, respectively.

The importance of a capillary road network and related resting buildings, sometimes also serving the health resorts, has already been highlighted in recent studies (see the miscellaneous volume *Statio amoena* 2016 for a large-scale framing of the phenomenon of *statione*s and *mansione*s, while for the relationship between health resorts and the road system see most recently Ghedini 2014, with previous bibliography; here, see the contribution of J. Turchetto). Indeed, while a general overview such as the one presented has revealed how far away the pilgrims' lands of origin might have been, many of the dynamics related to the journey itself and the time required to reach those curative destinations on foot or by chariot remain to be reconstructed.

For example, the journey from *Mediolanum* of the three dedicators of the inscriptions to *Minerva Medica* according to Google Maps today corresponds to a 20-hour walk (compared to 1.30 minutes by car) from Milan to Caverzago. Therefore, one can imagine at least two days of walking, along which there were certainly stopping and refreshment points for wayfarers

before they reached Minerva's shrine. It might therefore be a useful element to have valid comparisons to evaluate, in addition to the ancient traces, the ways in which pilgrims' journeys along the three Romee routes are undertaken today, whether done on foot or by slow means such as bicycles, on unpaved paths (thus with reduced speed like that of a wagon).

In addition, I believe that the possibility of analyzing the complex phenomenon of ancient pilgrimage together to the healing stations along waterways, as well as along land roads, should not be ruled out. The discovery of the boat in the vicinity of the *mansio* at the base of the 'Collina della Punta' at the *Fons Timavi* leaves open the hypothesis that, where possible, travel was also ensured for the sick and travelers using boats along rivers and by sea, intercepting people who came even from very distant places in the Adriatic and Mediterranean. Here, then, is where an analysis aimed at investigating possible traces of even these alternative routes to those over land would perhaps enable a broader view and understanding of structural and infrastructural remains attested in the surroundings of the healing and cult centers, which now appear in their own right and not in relation to the therapeutic stations. Illuminating in this regard is the famous description of the sacred springs of the *Clitumnus* in Umbria (with springs in ancient times considered curative but to this day not recognized as mineral) by Pliny the Younger, who records that the springs, the temple and the many shrines to the deities worshipped there were reached both by land and by the river by crossing a bridge, which separated the sacred and the profane parts. The river over which the bridge had been built was navigable and, in some stretches, 'swimmable' for those who felt like swimming; around and over it then stood villas and accommodations, where the devout and needy could be housed. And to fully understand the value of the experience of pilgrimage to those springs, Pliny suggested that the recipient of the letter go to the shrine to study and read the "many phrases of many people, written on all the columns and on all the walls, phrases by which that spring and the god are celebrated. You will appreciate many of them, some will make you laugh, although you, given your humanity, will not mock any of them":

> (1) Vidistine aliquando Clitumnum fontem? Si nondum - et puto nondum: alioqui narrasses mihi -, vide; quem ego - paenitet tarditatis - proxime vidi. (2) Modicus collis assurgit, antiqua cupressu nemorosus et opacus. Hunc subter exit fons et exprimitur pluribus venis sed imparibus, eluctatusque quem facit gurgitem lato gremio patescit, purs et vitreus, ut numerare iactas stipes et relucentes calculos possis. (3) Inde non loci devexitate, sed ipsa sui copia et quasi pondere impellitur, fons adhuc et iam amplissimum flumen, atque etiam navium patiens; quas obvias quoque et contrario nisu in diversa tendentes transmittit et perfert, adeo validus ut illa qua properat ipse, quamquam per solum planum, remis non adiuvetur, idem aegerrime remis contisque superetur adversus. (4) Iucundum utrumque per iocum ludumque fluitantibus, ut flexerint cursum, laborem otio otium labore variare. Ripae fraxino multa, multa populo vestiuntur, quas perspicuus amnis velut mersas viridi imagine adnumerat. Rigor aquae certaverit nivibus, nec color cedit. (5) Adiacet templum priscum et religiosum. Stat Clitumnus ipse amictus ornatusque praetexta; praesens numen atque etiam fatidicum indicant sortes. Sparsa sunt circa sacella complura, totidemque di. Sua cuique veneratio suum nomen, quibusdam vero etiam fontes. Nam praeter illum quasi parentem ceterorum sunt minores capite discret; sed flumini miscentur, quod ponte transmittitur. (6) Is terminus sacri profanique: in superiore parte navigare tantum, infra etiam natare conces-

sum. Balineum Hispellates, quibus illum locum Divus Augustus dono dedit, publice praebent, praebent et hospitium. Nec desunt villae quae secutae fluminis amoenitatem margini insistunt. (7) In summa nihil erit, ex quo non capias voluptatem. Nam studebis quoque: leges multa multorum omnibus columnis omnibus parietibus inscripta, quibus fons ille deusque celebratur. Plura laudabis, non nulla ridebis; quamquam tu vero, quae tua humanitas, nulla ridebis. Vale (Plin. *epist*. VIII, 8; See Bassani 2012).

Not only a pilgrimage by land, then, but also a pilgrimage by water, with the whole network of related structures and infrastructure. And a central aspect of such an experience was participation in rituals and gift-giving to the deity: objects to be dedicated to the deities were often bought near the shrine, as documented in the Mediterranean area (*Lo spazio del rito* 2005; specific samples in Cipriano, Rizzo, Serritella 2018). Statues, statuettes, reliefs, altars, arule, vases, parts of architectural elements etc. could be donated with or without inscriptions by devotees who intended to leave a trace of their spiritual experience at the aquae (Bassani 2019, with bibliography). A tangible example of this is offered by the discovery of a probable vase emporium found in the Montirone locality near Abano Terme, which intercepted devotees to *Aponus* and other deities worshipped in the Euganean area (Lavizzari Pedrazzini 1995). In the cases examined in this contribution, the types of objects are very diverse, while on a general level, the formularies are rather repetitive in their inscriptions; at the same time, the motivations for which the offerers went to those places of worship also seem to be multiple. Some asked for healing from a specific illness, others wished for the health of a loved one, and still, others asked for protection in a broader sense. Thus, while the main motive for the visit was probably to heal from illness, the pilgrimage itself could also be dictated by subjective instances, related, for example, to the fact that a person was most devoted to Minerva and intended to pay devotion to her even beyond her healing abilities.

At the *Fons Timavi* people worshipped not only *Timavus* and his *Fons* (a single god? or the god *Timavus* and the god *Fons*?) but also Diomedes, the goddess *Spes*, *Hercules*, *Dionysus*, *Mithras*: thus, one could go to the springs not only to recover health through the *Fons* but also for simple faith or to ask for help in overcoming difficult times. Indicative in this sense is the inscription with a dedication to the *Fata* recovered at the springs of the *Timavus*, and although the last transcribed syllable 'MVN' has not yet been effectively interpreted, clear is the intent of *Octavia Sperata*, who had dissolved the promise made to the *Fata* through the object laid down.

The gods of fate were conjured up for reasons unknown to us, and their presence projects us far beyond the therapeutic experience, giving us glimpses of passages of people who entrusted their expectations and hopes to abstract divine subjects. And indeed, over time, pagan gods were often replaced by Christian saints and martyrs sometimes endowed with healing powers but as simply (re)discoverers of beneficial springs. This is the case of St. Agnes at the springs of Bagno di Romagna (of the bicarbonate-alkaline-sulphureous type, hyperthermal at 45°C), over which the Via Germanica passes (near Sarsina: Ortalli 2004; see the website): the young woman, who was ill and persecuted for her beliefs, fled to the springs, where there

was formerly a Roman curative building with an adjoining station for travelers. Here she began proselytizing among the local and surrounding inhabitants, causing them to rediscover the therapeutic potential of the waters and promoting a new impetus to the settlement and economy of the area. After her death, a church was built and a cult was dedicated to her, the memory of which still remains.

In conclusion, the transition from paganism to Christianity at mineral springs is a research topic of great interest and opens up new investigations, which will allow reconstruction elements of continuity and discontinuity of cults to healing springs, namely pilgrimage practices between Antiquity, Medieval and Modern times.

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AE
Année Epigraphique.

CIL
Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.

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I.Aq.
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ILLRP
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Abstract

The article aims at analyzing two Roman archaeological contexts attested in Northern Italy characterized by the presence of thermos-mineral sources, in which sacred buildings and artifacts, as well as private structures related to pilgrims have been found. The dataset proposed can offer interesting elements to consider the pilgrimage phenomenon in a *long durée* perspective, and the relations with the votive activities along the three Romee routes (Via Romea Francigena, Via Romea Germanica, Via Romea Strata) throughout the centuries.

keywords | Thermalism; Sacred Places; Roman Roads; Pilgrimage.

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