

PDF hosted at the Radboud Repository of the Radboud University Nijmegen

The following full text is a publisher's version.

For additional information about this publication click this link.

<http://hdl.handle.net/2066/204154>

Please be advised that this information was generated on 2021-09-26 and may be subject to change.



Let's meet at Baiae: a journey of 2000 years to the edge of Europe

Lien Foubert

To cite this article: Lien Foubert (2019) Let's meet at Baiae: a journey of 2000 years to the edge of Europe, *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 34:1, 27-48, DOI: [10.1080/09518967.2019.1595885](https://doi.org/10.1080/09518967.2019.1595885)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518967.2019.1595885>



© 2019 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 28 May 2019.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 36



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Let's meet at Baiae: a journey of 2000 years to the edge of Europe

Lien Foubert*

*Institute for Historical, Literary and Cultural Studies, Radboud University Nijmegen, Nijmegen,
The Netherlands*

Since Antiquity, seaside resorts have figured among the most popular sites of leisure and tourism on the European continent. In many ways these sites clearly expressed and supported converging trends in European culture and society. Spa resorts brought together visitors from a range of nationalities in a shared culture of health, pleasure and recreation. This contribution aims to explore how the Mediterranean spa resort of Baiae in the Bay of Naples functioned as a significant cultural setting where visitors and local actors shaped, experienced, discussed and shared cultural values in a changing world throughout the ages.

Keywords: spa resort; Baiae; travel literature; *lieu de mémoire*; meeting place

This contribution aims to explore how the spa and seaside resort of Baiae (modern Baia) in the Bay of Naples functioned as a significant cultural setting where visitors and local actors shaped, experienced, discussed and shared cultural values in a changing world throughout the ages. Scholars have increasingly illustrated that, besides being places visited for therapeutic reasons, spa and seaside resorts were also sites of sociability: they brought together people from a range of nationalities and social backgrounds in a shared culture of health, pleasure and recreation.¹

Since spa resorts served as meeting places, they should be analysed in the light of identity formation. Visitors converged to interact socially with their peers, but also to watch and analyse how others interacted with each other, how they dressed, what they ate, how they spent their time, and so on. This so-called voyeuristic examination went both ways, a reciprocal process that impacted on how visitors behaved and presented themselves during but also in preparation of their spa visit, as well as after their return and in reporting about their stay. Awareness of this social process also influenced the resort's entrepreneurs, who designed and developed the ground plan so as to facilitate these interactions and to, as a result, increase the allure of their resort. The visitor's gaze also turned the resort into an attractive site for patronage: the rich gladly invested in the resort's architecture, decoration or facilities, in the conviction that it would enhance their own standing when their social peers would see and discuss the extent and quality of their financial input. In many ways, therefore, these sites expressed and supported converging trends in contemporary culture and society.

The spa and seaside resort of Baiae was such a site of sociability. Yet, there are many reasons why it stands out compared to other sites on the European continent and why it deserves an examination in its own right. The significance of the resort follows from its role as a reified symbol of an imagined collective past, with roots that go as far back as

*Email: L.Foubert@let.ru.nl

the eighth century BCE, a role that was shaped and reshaped by those who visited the site and wrote about it during a time span of over 2000 years. The resort of Baiae was a *lieu de mémoire*, to use the term coined by the French historian Pierre Nora, a symbolic site to which a community has consciously and collectively attributed memories, the significance of which is cemented in public memory over time.² In Antiquity, the site was closely connected to the idea of Roman-ness (*romanitas*), as a way to express a collective identity. What *romanitas* embodied is never fully explained in the ancient sources, but often referred to by way of exemplary anecdotes. Generally speaking, *romanitas* served as a catch-all term for all those (gendered) characteristics that distinguished Romans from non-Romans, men as well as women.³

In the case of Baiae, *romanitas* was reserved for those with enough financial means to visit the place. It was renowned in Roman Antiquity as a popular spa resort for the elite: one's membership to Roman society was intertwined with spending time in Baiae and its vicinities in a *m'as-tu-vu* sense. After all, *noblesse oblige*. Yet, it was also notorious for its association with decadence, immorality and frivolity. Because of these negative attributes, it was perceived as a place that could endanger *romanitas*. Nevertheless, Baiae became a mark of quality both inside and outside the European continent, in Roman as well as post-Roman periods. Several medieval writers presented themselves as part of this elite community and appropriated the same discursive strategies to describe their visit to the spa resort, whether real or imagined, as those who did centuries before them, thus firmly anchoring themselves in a shared collective past.

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century travel accounts show that during this period Baiae became closely connected to the idea of Europe and a shared European culture with the ancient Roman past as one of its pillars. During this period, tourists rarely travelled beyond the coasts of the Bay of Naples, as they considered this to be the place where Europe ended and Africa began, as will be illustrated later in this article. The itinerary was strictly codified: tourists visited only those places that were described by Classical writers. Much has been written about what Europe and European culture meant in this period, or in any other period for that matter. As Peter Burke, one of the seminal thinkers on this topic, explained in 2006:

Europe is not so much a 'thing' as an idea, image, myth, or in the language of the 21st century, a 'cultural construct'. Once constructed, it became a thing in the sense of being treated as natural and influencing later behaviour.⁴

According to Burke, the seventeenth century saw an awareness of a common European culture, though one that should be understood as a hybrid product of interaction of at least three cultural traditions, namely the "Classical", the "Christian", and the so-called "civilization of the barbarians". The early modern descriptions of Baiae that will be discussed below illustrate in what way the resort was perceived of as a *lieu de mémoire* during this period, and how it contributed to a sense of belonging to a shared, Classical, European culture.

Considering the longevity of the spa and seaside resort of Baiae, it is surprising that its development has never been studied in a diachronic perspective. The fragmentary state of the source material is probably the main reason for this. Because of its archaeological context, reconstructing the ancient spa infrastructure of Baiae is complicated. Due to modern urbanization, the gradual rising and descending of the area's ground-level caused by the cyclic filling and emptying of magma chambers underground (a phenomenon known as bradyseism), and the rising of the sea level, the archaeological remains of the ancient spa resort are inaccessible or simply removed and reused elsewhere. Future findings from

underwater archaeology are something to look forward to, but for now very little remains to ensure a reliable reconstruction. With regard to written sources, one can only conclude that modern scholarship on Baiae has predominantly focused on the literary attestations dated to the Roman period. One reason for this is because – contrary to, for instance, medieval texts or (early) modern travel writing – the ancient texts handed down to us have almost all been published and digitized, making it fairly easy to gather references to the spa resort of Baiae. Another reason, which will be illustrated later, is that even when medieval and modern authors discuss Baiae and its vicinities, they still use the ancient writers as a frame of reference, implicitly by means of intertextuality or explicitly by adding ancient citations to their own accounts. Several questions will be central to my examination: (1) what was the attraction of Baiae as a travel destination; (2) which internal and external factors played a role in its development throughout the ages; and (3) in which contexts did Baiae bear significance as a place of a shared culture? These questions will be addressed through an examination of archaeological remains and literary testimonies of travellers to Baiae from the Roman period until the nineteenth century.⁵

Myths, landscape and peer pressure: the allure of the Baian coast

Thermal baths lay scattered in the intense volcanic region between the Bay of Puteoli (modern Pozzuoli) and the Bay of Baiae, aptly designated as the Campi Flegrei (“burning fields”) (see Figure 1). As Horace put it in one of his letters in the first century BCE: “No bay in the world outshines lovely Baiae.”⁶ The entire region was heavily influenced by Greek culture. In the eighth century BCE, settlers from the Greek region of Euboea founded Cumae, the first Greek colony on the Italian peninsula.⁷ The colony flourished; its economic and cultural influence spread over the entire Bay of Naples, to which it later owed its name of Magna Graecia. From the fourth century BCE onwards, it increasingly came under Rome’s political and cultural influence.

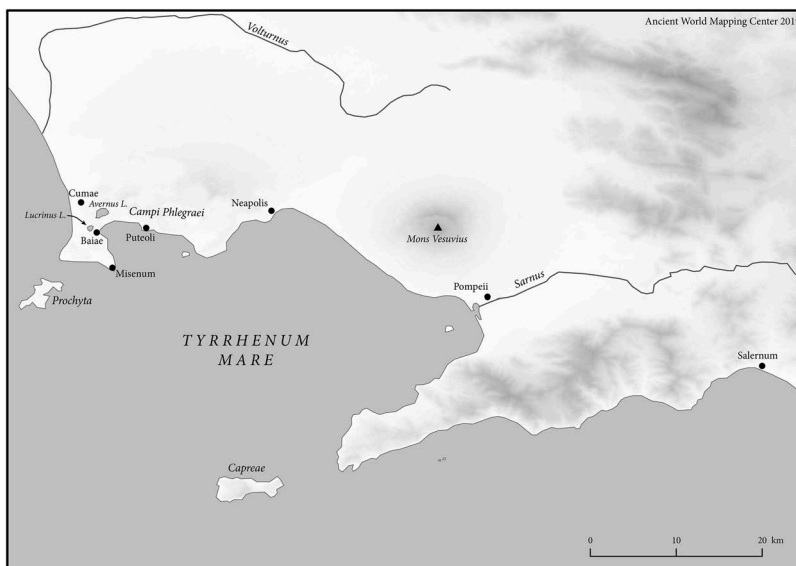


Figure 1. The Bay of Naples in Antiquity. Map developed by the Ancient World Mapping Center.

Throughout the centuries, the Phlegraean Fields were strongly connected to the world of Graeco-Roman myths and legends. The waters of Lake Avernus were associated with the underworld, as it was considered to be the entrance to Hades, used by both Odysseus and Aeneas.⁸ The latter was accompanied during his journey by the Cumaean Sybil, the priestess presiding over the Apollonian oracle at Cumae, who lived in a cave near Lake Avernus. Baiae was believed to have been named after Baius, one of Odysseus's companions, while the nearby Misenum was named after Misenus, believed to be either another companion of Odysseus or a trumpeter of Aeneas. In short, the landscape of the entire region was interwoven with tales of mystery and divine intervention, which was influenced and reinforced by the dramatic volcanic surroundings.

In the first century BCE, Livy attests to the earliest visit to the mineral waters of the Phlegraean Fields, when Scipio Hispallus was sent to the *Aquae Cumanae* in 176 BCE to find a cure for a partial paralysis as a result of falling off his horse.⁹ However, the cure failed and the infection grew worse, and he died shortly after. Where he actually stayed – and whether the author had in mind the baths of Baiae or other baths in the region, and how the treatment was organized – is not explained. Perhaps by the time of Livy the practicalities of a spa visit were self-evident, and therefore he had no need to add an explanation to his account.

The second and more explicit reference to the spa resort dates to almost a century later, when in 88 BCE the Roman people implored the statesman Gaius Marius to withdraw to Baiae for reasons of his health, since he was worn out with old age and afflicted by rheum.¹⁰ The sources state that Marius owned a luxurious villa in the Baiae neighbourhood, perhaps even two.¹¹ The beginning of the first century BCE saw an increase in residential building activities in the region, as Rome's military victories abroad made the elites richer than they already were.¹² At a certain point, therefore, besides the alluring landscape, the need to match one's social peers would have added to the decision to travel to and build second homes in (the vicinity of) Baiae.

Most of the resort's expansion seems to have taken place at the end of the first century BCE and during the first two centuries CE. The general layout of the archaeological site is characterized by irregularity. The wealthy Romans dug wells wherever the hot mineral waters were, and built facilities around them.¹³ The thermal complex is therefore riddled with underground caves, chambers and galleries, which were put to use in spa therapy, as is explained by Vitruvius in the first century BCE:

In the hills of Baiae, [...] sites are excavated for sweating-rooms. In these, hot vapour rising deep down perforates the soil by the violence of its heat, and passing through it rises in these places, and so produces striking advantages in sweating-rooms.¹⁴

Above ground, the hillside carries the remains of elaborate terraced structures, fountains, pools, stairs and ramps. The southern part of the complex, for instance, contained swimming pools attached to small chambers. These small units appear to be functionally independent, which means that they could have been closed off so as to make them more private, perhaps for those visitors who paid enough to do so. Yet, they are connected to each other by stairs, ramps and subterranean passages, signifying that visitors could also take a stroll and meet other visitors in more public areas. A large swimming pool adjacent to these quarters, for instance, is thought to have been a "water-theatre" for musical and aquatic performances. The hillside complex developed over three centuries into a gigantic complex with specialized architectural structures, making it incomparable to anything we know from the Roman world.

Memory, place and identity: imperial patronage at Baiae

For Romans, places were significant as repositories of memories. The city of Rome is, of course, the example par excellence: the city developed organically on its seven hills and ridges, thus creating open spaces like the Forum Romanum, and districts through which the human traffic flow was directed, which turned these areas into popular venues for display. Over time, many aristocratic families and individual rulers appropriated parts of these venues to advertise their personal achievements through architecture, inscriptions and statuary.¹⁵ The responses to and readings of the Roman cityscape were as numerous as there were viewers.¹⁶ It was, therefore, a challenging task for those trying to inscribe their names into the city's collective memory to orchestrate the desired effects of their additions to or alterations of the urban space. However, regardless of what they put on display and how, the mere fact that they were able to take control over parts of the city already singled them out as being in a position of power. This basic principle explains why, from the early republican period onwards, members of the elite continuously altered the urban space, not only of Rome but of the towns and cities on the Italian peninsula as well. Location mattered. Areas that were visited by large numbers of aristocrats, often the target audience of those altering the urban landscape, were desired real estate for public display. The Bay of Naples, the preferred getaway destination of Roman elite families, was such an area. Over time, many men and women shaped and reshaped the urban landscape of Baiae and its vicinities, inscribing themselves – intentionally or not – in the region's cultural memory-scape. To identify these men and women, and the extent of their strategies, in the archaeological remains, however, is a complicated task.

In the 1960s, Alfonso De Franciscis has suggested that the Baian site's exceptional character can only mean that we are dealing with an imperial palace. Besides its irregular form, he added that the high artistic quality of the paintings and sculptures found there strengthened its identification with an imperial palace: "All these pieces are worthy of a place in an imperial palace rather than in a bath complex, no matter how pretentious." Over the years, his arguments have been contradicted. The complex's irregular form, as already mentioned, is above all owed to the geological character of the hillside. Secondly, excavations elsewhere have shown that it was not uncommon to decorate baths with priceless works of art – sometimes commissioned by generous patrons – or luxurious mosaics or wall paintings.¹⁷ Hence, I lean to an interpretation put forward in the 1990s, which argues that the increasing popularity of Baiae from the first century onwards went hand in hand with new development on a large scale.¹⁸ The substantial number of spaces that could be turned into private or public spa units, and the many gathering areas where people could socialize, strengthen the idea that the complex was used by a multitude of people.

The possibility remains that the spa resort started off as a playground for the Roman elite, but gradually evolved into a complex that was also accessible to the Roman middle class. Whether the complex also offered lodgings to its visitors is still subject to debate. Archaeology has uncovered numerous private villas dotted across the Italian peninsula, which suggests that the wealthy often chose to reside elsewhere.¹⁹ Strabo explains in the late first century BCE that

Neapolis has springs of hot water and bathing establishments that are not inferior to those at Baiae, although it is far short of Baiae in the number of people, for at Baiae, where palace on palace has been built, one after another, a new city has arisen.²⁰

Recent underwater archaeology has shown that the area of Baiae was much larger than previously thought, and investigations have identified structures that were without a doubt part of an imperial residential complex near the excavated structures on the hillside.²¹ The accommodation facilities, therefore, may have been as diverse as the spa's public amenities: rich members of the elite may have resided in privately owned villas on the peninsula; imperial and non-imperial elites may have had the option to rent private wings of the spa complex; and the less fortunate may have chosen to use public lodgings near or in the spa complex, to name but a few possibilities.

Baiae seems to have consisted of more than just the mere bath complex on the hillside. In 1985 archaeologists uncovered a huge canal (over 200 metres long and 30 metres wide), which made it clear that the spa complex overlooked a shallow oval coastal lake or harbour, which in turn was connected to the sea by means of this canal. We know that fishermen were active in Baiae, and that the area was famous for its cultivation of oysters²²; both the industries and its agents would have been localized around this lake and canal. There are specific indications that in one way or another the Roman state intervened in the region, impacting greatly on Baiae's development and popularity.

Of the emperor Nero (54–68 CE) it is said that he

began a pool, extending from Misenum to Lake Avernus, roofed over and enclosed in colonnades, into which he planned to turn all the hot springs in every part of Baiae; a canal from Avernus all the way to Ostia, to enable the journey to be made by ship yet not by sea.²³

Suetonius (second century CE) mentions these plans as an illustration of Nero's "mad extravagance", though one could also interpret it as a plan to professionalise the spa resort, turning it into a more (state) controlled area, with the possibility to close off parts of the resort and charge admission fees. The plans for the canal are also mentioned by Tacitus (second century CE), who states that the canal would connect Lake Avernus to the Tiber, thus speeding up the journey between Rome and Baiae, as well as making it more comfortable compared to travel by road.²⁴ Tacitus explains that works had begun before Nero's death in 68 CE, though it is unclear to what extent these projects were carried through. Various medieval travel accounts mention these remains: Nero clearly succeeded in inscribing his name in Baiae's cultural memory, an achievement that probably owed as much to his posthumous reputation as a bad emperor as to the nature of his alterations to the landscape.²⁵

Written sources attest to other emperors who have built or rebuilt at Baiae. The emperor Domitian (51–96 CE), for instance, possessed so-called *piscinae* (fishponds) of which the poet Martial stated that each of the fish had a name, recognized their master's voice and swam up at his bidding to lick his hand.²⁶ Already in the republican period, cultivating fishponds and treating mullets as pets was a beloved activity of the Roman elite in the Bay of Naples. Their owners were criticized, however, when they showed greater concern regarding teaching their fish to eat from their hand than about the business of state. The imperial fishponds were open to the public. Domitian's fishponds, therefore, were at the same time a public attraction with the possibility to strengthen the ties between himself and the place's visitors, as well as a potential cause for public scrutiny and criticism. In the third century the emperor Severus Alexander (222–235 CE) built a palace and a pool, listed officially under the name of Mamaea, to honour his mother Julia Avita Mamaea, as well as other public works – which exactly the sources do not tell – and huge pools to honour other family members.²⁷ It was common practice for emperors to dedicate public buildings to (usually) deceased relatives, as a way to honour

their memory; at the same time, the emperor represented himself, as in the case of Severus Alexander, as a pious and loyal son or kinsman.

As a result of its huge popularity, Baiae became a point of reference, and soon baths everywhere were invariably compared to the famous spa of Baiae; in the end, Baiae became the stock name for baths all over the realm, wherever they were. In the fourth century CE, for instance, Ausonius's poem *Mosella* describes a journey through a desolate landscape to the shores of the Moselle, where he is struck with its beauty, and praises the region's bathing facilities:

[I]f a stranger were to arrive here from the shores of Cumae, he would believe that Euboean Baiae had bestowed on this region a miniature copy of its own delights: so great is the charm of its refinement and distinction, while its pleasures breed no excess.²⁸

In that same century, Eunapius describes the thermal baths of Hamat-Gader in Roman Syria as "inferior only to those at Baiae in Italy, with which no other baths can be compared".²⁹ But even private amenities took Baiae as a point of reference. A mosaic in a villa in Fundus Bassianus, in the vicinity of Hippo Diarrhytus (Sidi Abdallah, Tunis), situated at the shore of a lake, states that "the rooftops of the Bassianus domain, known as Baiae, sparkle, and the newly found light makes them sparkle even more."³⁰ In other words, by the fourth century, Baiae boasted an established image with a vast geographic reach: it had become a sort of gold standard, to which other bathing facilities in the Western world and eastern Mediterranean were compared.³¹ It became an element of Mediterranean cultural memory that went far beyond the borders of the Italian peninsula. Yet, that well-established image was not exclusively positive.

A place of health, but also of heartache

In late Antiquity spa resorts were valued as places of relaxation, pleasure and health – even by some of the Christian church fathers.³² They were praised for the way the light flooded the buildings, for the use of marble, for the works of art on display, and more generally for the atmosphere of beauty and luxury that enveloped the visitors. However, throughout the ages, these same features sparked criticisms of both Baiae and its guests. Take for example Seneca the Younger, who in the first century CE warned: "Baiae is a place to be avoided, because, though it has certain natural advantages, luxury has claimed it for her own exclusive resort."³³ What bothered the author most – and many other moralists with him – were the drunken people wandering along the beach, the sailing parties with loud sing-along orchestras, the lovers' clandestine trysts, the inappropriate effusions in broad daylight, the gossip, and the general lack of decorum.³⁴ The female visitors seem to have been more subject to these criticisms than their male counterparts.

Cicero's exposition on a certain Roman noblewoman Clodia in his speech of 56 BCE in defence of Marcus Caelius Rufus is a case in point. Both during their marriage and after her widowhood, Clodia was fabled for her colourful lifestyle: a woman of wealth who financed her brother's political campaigns, Clodia received many visitors in her various properties and – if the ancient writers are to be believed – had many affairs with married men.³⁵ One of her lovers was a certain Caelius, whom she later accused of having attempted to poison her. In the man's defence, Cicero undermines Clodia's testimony by depicting her as a loose woman whose decadent lifestyle was there for all to see, both in Rome and at Baiae: "[Clodia is] a woman who made herself common to all, who openly had some special lover every day, into whose grounds, house and place at Baiae every rake had a right of free entry."³⁶ Cicero

explicitly links Baiae to Clodia's abuse of Roman society's traditional *mores*: the fact that her behaviour was on public display, for all to see, made it for him unforgivable. His rhetorical strategy impacted greatly on other writers' representations of women at the Baian spa resort, in Antiquity as well as the Middle Ages.

Elsewhere, the poet Propertius (47–15 BCE) wrote a series of amorous elegies centred on a woman called Cynthia. In one of these poems he expresses his concern that her trip to Baiae would make her forget her love for him: "I would rather that some toy boat, propelled by tiny paddles, be amusing you upon the Lucrine lake, [...] than you be free to hear the seductive whispers of another, comfortably couched on a beach that tells no tales."³⁷ Though he does not question her impeccable behaviour, contrary to Cicero's take on Clodia, he fears that the Baian setting would seduce even the most virtuous woman. He concludes his poem with a plea: "Only, depart with all speed from corrupt Baiae: those shores will cause many to part, shores which have ever been harmful to virtuous girls: a curse on the waters of Baiae, that bring reproach on love!"

While both Cicero and Propertius date to the first century BCE, the endurance of this common attitude is illustrated by a letter of Symmachus (fourth century CE) to his daughter, in which he praises her for the fact that she is making him a birthday present:

Of course, in times when there is no entertainment, one tends to pay an interest in the distaff and in weaving, because one organizes one's life according to the circumstances, when deprived of distraction: but even the proximity of Baiae could not distract you from the care of such an arduous undertaking.³⁸

After the fourth century CE, Baiae's popularity seems to have dwindled. The reasons for this decline were manifold: first the impact of the fall of the Roman Empire in 476, then the Gothic Wars of the mid-sixth century, followed by the Lombard invasion in the eighth century, and the raids of Arab pirates and assaults of the Saracen fleet in the ninth century. The success of any tourist industry depends on a stable government and guarantees of personal safety. It should not surprise us, therefore, that these centuries of turmoil caused a decline in the number of visitors to the spa resort, though it does not necessarily imply that the thermal complex of Baiae closed down altogether. In addition, the phenomenon of bradyseism caused flooding in various facilities and damaged the foundations and mural decorations of others, which forced Baiae to shut down at least some of its mineral springs.

Yet the written sources, when available, attest to a slow but continuous stream of visitors in late Antiquity and the Middle Ages.³⁹ The Roman writer Cassiodorus, who worked in the administration of Theodoric the Great, king of the Ostrogoths, reproduced a letter written in 527 by Theodoric's grandson, King Athalaric, to an unnamed magistrate:

You complain that your health is failing under the long pressure of your work [...]. Seek the sun, seek the pure air and smiling shore of that lovely bay, thickly set with harbours and dotted with noble islands; that bay in which Nature displays all her marvels and invites man to explore her secrets.⁴⁰

Baiae and its Virgilian tradition

Detailed descriptions of journeys to Baiae in the early Middle Ages are rare, while they become more frequent in the high Middle Ages.⁴¹ The seas around and the landscape of southern Italy aroused fear and awe in the minds of medieval travellers, emotions that

were often voiced in their descriptions of shipwrecks, storms, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes.⁴² In addition, besides emphasizing the unpredictable and dangerous natural environment, medieval writers – who were all well-educated men – recognized in the landscape of southern Italy the settings of the Classical stories they had read. In the medieval imagination, the region of Naples was closely tied to the poet Virgil. Formative in this belief were Conrad of Querfurt, the tutor and chancellor of the Swabian emperor Henry VI, and from 1195 bishop of Hildesheim; and Gervase of Tilbury, professor at the university of Bologna and marshal of the kingdom of Arles. They were the first to compose a detailed description of the so-called Virgilian legends and to place the origin of these tales in Naples.

In 1194 the said Conrad of Querfurt was sent by the emperor from the Alps to Sicily on a mission to conquer Naples. He wrote down his observations on the region in a letter dated to 1195 to Arnold of Lübeck, the prior of the abbey of Hildesheim.⁴³ He explains that the Neapolitans claimed their city walls were founded by Virgil. They also believed that Virgil provided the city with a bronze horse that protected the city's horses, a bronze fly that drove away flies from the city, a butcher's block on which the meat kept fresh for six weeks, and a bronze statue of a bowman, his arrow ready to shoot at Mount Vesuvius to prevent it from erupting. Conrad also describes his visit to the *balnea Virgili*, baths that were supposedly constructed by Virgil, and which he locates near Baiae. One of the largest baths in particular impressed him because of its sculptured figures made of gypsum, so he states, advertising the healing power of the waters, each statue pointing to the part of the body they cured. Whether he actually visited the ancient spa resort of Baiae is doubtful, as a thirteenth-century poem by Peter of Eboli, to which I will return shortly, locates the same sculptured figures in the baths of Tritoli.⁴⁴ The same baths are described by Gervase of Tilbury in his *Otia imperialia* (Recreation for an emperor) dedicated to Otto IV and probably sent to the emperor in 1215, of which the aim was “to present the marvels of every province to our discerning listener”.⁴⁵ The text contains a description of the “Virgilian Baths”, which Gervase locates in Puteoli: “Here Virgil built some baths, which served for the common good and won him undying acclaim.”⁴⁶ Conrad and Gervase's texts have greatly influenced later medieval writers, who more often than not referred to the region's connection with Virgil. Virgil had become part of the spa resort's cultural past.

However, the baths in the Bay of Naples in general and those of Baiae in particular were more than an imaginary or literary construction in the Middle Ages. The monk Peter of Eboli, in the Kingdom of Naples, wrote a didactic poem *De Balneis Puteolanis* (On the baths of Puteoli), in which he describes the baths in the entire region of the *Campi Flegrei* and their therapeutic effects (see [Figure 2](#)). The illustrations that accompany the text give insights into the process of bathing.⁴⁷ Both the text and the images show parallels to what was described by ancient writers in the Roman period, and to what the archaeological remains reveal. There are several references, for instance, to domed bath buildings, large pools and underground caves with vapour outlets (i.e. Vitruvius's aforementioned “sweating places”). Patients, both men and women, are shown travelling by boat, bathing, resting or feasting. All in all, very similar to the practices described in the centuries before. In September 1227 the Roman Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen visited the baths of the region in search for a cure.⁴⁸ He may have been tempted to do so by Peter of Eboli, who dedicated his poem to the holy emperor.



Figure 2. Petrus de Eboli, *De Balneis Puteolorum et Baiarum*, fol. 15r, c.1197, Bibliotheca Angelica, Rome, MS 1474. CKD, RU Nijmegen.

Yet, Frederick's interest in the region may also have signalled the start of Baiae's eventual decline. In 1231, four years after his visit to the spa resort, Frederick II issued medical regulations that turned the medical school of Salerno – which had been flourishing for a while – into a proper institute, prescribing how the physicians were to obtain their degree, and proclaiming that no one was allowed to teach medicine except at Salerno, or to assume the title of master unless examined by the masters of Salerno.⁴⁹ This meant that the medical practices and practitioners at the spa resort of Baiae were bound by these new rules, at least in theory. The increasing prominence of the medical practice at Salerno caused rivalry with those who exploited the mineral springs in the region. The friction that this might have caused becomes clear from a fourteenth-century French translation of Peter of Eboli's poem. In 1392 Richart Eudes, a physician from Normandy, dedicated his translation to Louis II of Anjou, who, according to the author, had commissioned the translation after the House of Anjou took command of Naples.⁵⁰ The French translation closely follows the original text, but adds a conclusion in which the author elaborates on a conflict between the physicians of Salerno and the practitioners at the spa resort, whereby the physicians charged their patients for treatment, while at Baiae people could visit the spa for free. This prompted the physicians of Salerno to organise a raid: they took off to Baiae

and, in order to raise their own clientele, destroyed the spa resort's inscriptions explaining which mineral spring was beneficial for which illness. God's punishment, however, was severe, for the physicians drowned during their return journey at sea.⁵¹

In 1341 and 1343, Petrarch visited the area of Naples. After his second visit, acting as an envoy for Cardinal Giovanni Colonna and Pope Clement VI, he composed a detailed description of his journey to Baiae.⁵² Whether he actually saw the sites he described up close is a subject of discussion, since scholars have pointed out that his text was inspired by Servius's late fourth- and early fifth-century commentary on Virgil, as well as the letter written by Conrad of Querfurt mentioned earlier, and perhaps also by Peter of Eboli's poem. Petrarch frames his visit to Baiae as a literary pilgrimage:

I saw the places described by Virgil; I saw the lakes Avernus and Lucrinus [...]; I saw the native land and the home of the Sibyl, and that dreadful cave from which fools do not return and which learned men do not enter.

Petrarch alludes to Baiae's surroundings' legendary past and its association with the underworld, Graeco-Roman mythology, and the Sibylline oracle, as well as to the area's Virgilian connection, a commonplace in medieval travel narratives of this period. But besides these legendary sites, he also mentions the bathing facilities:

I saw the wholesome fluid which the cliffs everywhere dripped and which as a gift of mother nature was once employed for all kinds of illnesses and later, as the story goes, mixed with the regular baths because of the envy of the doctors. Now many people of all ages and of both sexes throng from neighbouring cities to the waters.

Petrarch's testimony also shows that whereas in Roman times Baiae was visited by a diverse clientele of local, Roman and international origin, in the fourteenth century it received its visitors from the neighbouring towns. Those who had the means to spend more money on both their journey and their treatments took to other spa resorts, in particular those in northern Italy. Petrarch's description also indicates that a new attraction had come into vogue. "Henceforth," so he states,

I shall be astonished by the walls of Rome and her fortresses and her palaces, when such care was taken by Roman leaders so far from the homeland (although the homeland for outstanding men is everywhere). They often took winter pleasures in places more than a hundred miles from home as if they were suburbs. [...] However none was more pleasant nor more popular than Baia.

Though the ancient ruins still seem of secondary importance to a tourist at this time, by the early modern period they would become the main attraction of Baiae's peninsula, as will become clear.

During the late Middle Ages, Baiae's image as a place of decadence resurfaced in Italian poetry. Giovanni Boccaccio, a contemporary and friend of Petrarch, used the spa resort as one of the settings in his novel *The Elegy of Lady Fiammetta* written in 1344.⁵³ Composed as a monologue addressed to other women, Fiammetta recounts her love affair with Panfilo, a merchant from Florence. She explained that while she waited in vain for her lover to come to her, a sense of melancholy overtook her, in such a manner that she turned pale, lost her appetite and appeared ill. Her husband, unaware of his rival, first suggested medication and when he saw that she did not benefit from this treatment, suggested a trip to Baiae as "no sight under the sun is more beautiful or more pleasant

than this”, echoing Horace’s words from the first century BCE cited earlier. He explains to her that it is an excellent hunting area, with many fine sights to see, including the entrance to the underworld, the cave of the Sibyl, the lake of Avernus, and the pools of the emperor Nero. Fiammetta agreed, but realized when she got there that a trip to Baiae was the worst solution possible:

Seldom or never did anyone go to that place with a sound mind and return with their mind still healthy [...]; there more than anywhere else, even the most chaste women forget their feminine modesty and seem to take more liberties on all occasions.⁵⁴

Her words echo those of Propertius. People spend their time in idleness, women and men speak of love, everyone consumes nothing but delicacies and wine. The beaches and gardens are constantly occupied with dances, music and other festivities. And while Fiammetta and her husband participated in all these activities, it did not cure her heartache.

A similar discourse is found in the poems written by Giovanni Pontano and posthumously published in 1505, two years after his death, as *Two Books of Hendecasyllables or Baiae*. They are composed in a metre of the ancient poet Catullus, and tell of his male and female friends and family, of friendship and old age, and of the ancient writers and Antiquity in general. Most of the poems are set against the background of Baiae, and in many cases the women mentioned appear to have been prostitutes. One example suffices to illustrate the atmosphere evoked by Pontano:

Batilla sought out the Baian Waters, | And tender Cupid went along. | Then they wash and warm themselves, | Take soft ease in bed a while, | Play some games, start a brawl, | and from the lazy, sleepy boy | Batilla, laughing, steals the bow, | Arms her flank with painted quiver | And shoots soft arrows, here and there. | Oh, poor lovers, no one’s spared: | Those arrows can pierce anything. | Oh Baiae, ruin of young and old!⁵⁵

Petrarch’s account as well as Boccaccio and Pontano’s texts clearly show that the literary impressions of Baiae that they devised owes much to the images created by the ancient and medieval writers before them, in particular Cicero, Propertius, Ovid and Conrad of Querfurt. Though it is clear that the spa resort was still frequented, owing to its bathing facilities and the entertainment offered by its natural surroundings, the fact that its history was also intertwined with that of the canonical and much-admired ancient writers drew visitors to the site. At the same time, this period of Renaissance humanism in Italy went hand in hand with a vigorous antiquarian tradition that focused on collecting and studying the remains of the Roman world. The most famous exponent of this tradition was Flavio Biondo, who treated the Baian region in his *Italia Illustrata*, a geography based on his personal travels and posthumously published in 1474. Biondo explains that in this area

there are so many monuments of ancient workmanship to be seen – some intact beneath the ground, some half-ruined above ground, some collapsed in ruins – that apart from the walls of Rome, I cannot think that there is anything in the whole world to equal it in the extent and beauty of its buildings.⁵⁶

He describes what he believes to be the area’s most important ruins, and tries to connect them to the villas and bathing facilities listed by the ancient writers, illustrating his argument with citations of the already mentioned Horace, Tacitus, Suetonius and so on.

“The name of Baiae hasn’t changed”: memories of Baiae in modern travel accounts

The early modern period introduced important alterations to the Baian landscape that would impact on its representation in travel narratives. On 29 September 1538 a week-long eruption in the Campi Flegrei formed a new volcano, Monte Nuovo, on the south-eastern shore of Lake Avernus.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, Lake Lucrinus became partly filled with volcanic ash. The eruption was preceded by upward shifts in ground level all across the area that altered the geological structure of the region, destroying most of the thermal sources and – most importantly – its access roads. It appears that this disruption led to the near-complete abandon of Baiae as a cure centre, for centuries to come. In 1667 the Viceroy of Naples Pedro Antonio de Aragón commissioned the physician Sebastiano Bartolo to carry out a survey of the lost and remaining baths in the region.⁵⁸ He reported that of the eight original baths between Baiae and Misenum, only two remained in use; the others in the region were reduced from 32 to 16. Following the physician’s investigation, three marble inscriptions listing all the extant thermal springs were put on public view in Naples, Puteoli and Baiae, and the viceroy invested money in an attempt to reopen the baths and restore the tourist economy in the region. His efforts were only partially successful, and in fact the Baian inscription was taken down in 1830. Meanwhile, Bartolo had also erected a monument in 1668 on the top of the slope of the path leading to the so-called *Grotta Vergiliana*, a mountain tunnel whose construction was attributed to Virgil in the Middle Ages, to commemorate, so the inscription explains, both the poet and the assignment given to him by the viceroy.⁵⁹ The monument frequently appears in drawings of the approach to this *Grotta*, as well as to a Roman tomb nearby, which came to be identified as the grave of Virgil by the mid-fourteenth century.

Due to these natural catastrophes, the number of travel accounts and geographical or antiquarian descriptions of the Baian region dwindled until approximately the eighteenth century, after which we have a surge of testimonies written by visitors to Baiae.⁶⁰ The retrieval of the sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum in the eighteenth century had put southern Italy back on the map of the Grand Tour. Whereas previously Venice had been the preferred destination after Rome, now Naples and its environs were in high demand. Travellers who visited the Italian peninsula followed a codified route, which was determined by the travelogues of their predecessors, as well as their shared cultural frame of reference, namely the legacy of the ancient past.⁶¹ Scholars have discussed at length how the Grand Tour imbued travellers with a sense of a pan-European identity, a common culture that overcame national differences, emphasized by the differences travellers perceived with the locals.⁶² Some examples will illustrate this.⁶³

In the eighteenth century the French Minister of Finance Étienne de Silhouette undertook a trip to Italy, where he visited the Bay of Naples. In the introduction of his travel account *Voyage de France, d’Espagne, de Portugal et d’Italie* (1770), he explains that in his day the number of travel guides available was endless, especially those focusing on Italy.⁶⁴ A true traveller needs to show interest in everything a particular place has to offer, and must present his discoveries in such a way that his readers can visualize the destination from a new and original angle.

According to de Silhouette, the region of Baiae in particular was a must-see for any traveller partial to ancient ruins. He informs his readers that besides these features, the region is abundant with medicinal springs and swimming pools. Of the city itself, however, he paints a gloomy picture:

Baiae was a place of pleasure for the ancient Romans, where debauchery reigned, and where there were many things to fear that could damage one's virtuous reputation. The coast was dotted with baths and temples, but these are now nothing more than crumbling vestiges, such that we cannot ascertain for sure what they were. [...] The landscape is uncultivated: it is nothing more than a wasteland, and rather the abode and refuge of snakes than of men.⁶⁵

De Silhouette is not alone in his sense of abandon. In most early modern travel accounts, references to Baiae consist of melancholic affirmations – often made in passing – of how contemporary Baiae was a mere shadow of its ancient glory. A century earlier, Richard Lassels applied similar tones in his *Voyage of Italy* (1670), one of the most influential English guidebooks of this period: “Reaching the other side of the bay, and leaving our boat to attend us, we rambled for an hour and a half among the Antiquities of this ruined Paradise of Baiae, for you know, *Nullus in orbe locus Baiis praelucet amoenis*. [...]”⁶⁶ He concludes that Baiae owes its reputation to the poets, because they elevated “this little spot of ground into a paradise”.

Referring to the Classical poets' descriptions of Baiae was a literary commonplace in travel writing, as we can already see from the descriptions of Boccaccio, Pontano and Biondo mentioned earlier. This trope is evident, for instance, in *Le voyage pittoresque* (1781) by Jean-Claude Richard de Saint-Non, a French clergyman, engraver and painter. He includes in his travel account a Latin poem by the first-century poet Statius (c.40–96 CE), together with its French translation. With his text, Statius tried to convince his wife Claudia to leave Rome and move to his birthplace, the Bay of Naples. He explains to his wife that the region does not lack entertainment: one of the attractions, he continues, is Baiae with “its steaming springs and alluring coasts”.⁶⁷ Saint-Non felt the need to add a footnote to these poetic lines, explaining to his readers that: “The name of Baiae hasn't changed, but the landscape is far from what it once was.”⁶⁸ A final example, because the list of travel accounts is indeed endless, is taken from Maximilien Misson's *Nouveau voyage d'Italie* (1691), which would become one of the most standard travel guides for decades to come. Misson draws the following picture of Baiae:

It once was, as you know, the most agreeable and most magnificent place in the world. [...] The Bay of Naples is extremely pleasant: the air is perfectly mild, and nothing is more charming than the coasts that gradually arise in the surroundings. One can see many ruins of temples, baths and palaces; and some of these remains are visible under the surface of the sea. The vicinities of the city (of Baiae) were dotted with pleasure villas. Today, these are nothing more than grim remnants that turn this once-enchanted place in a place of ghastly desolation.⁶⁹

His travel account is accompanied by Latin descriptions of Baiae from the Classical authors Martial, Propertius and Seneca, firmly anchoring his own text in an ancient literary tradition.

This brief overview of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century travel accounts makes several things abundantly clear. First of all, in this period the region of Baiae was emblematic for a lost ancient past: it was once a paradise, or so it is framed, but that paradise belonged to a period long gone. Secondly, this sense of loss was closely tied to the travellers' romantic thirst for ruins, a sentiment that was fuelled, as already stated, by the spectacular findings during the excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii from the eighteenth century onwards (see [Figure 3](#)).⁷⁰ The melancholic focus on Baiae's ruinous state ties in with a wider conceptualization of the Bay of Naples in the eighteenth century, for it was considered to be a point of transition between civilized Europe and the uncivilized south. As Auguste Creuzé de Lesser put it in his *Voyage en Italie et Sicile*



Figure 3. John Hill after Robert Freebairn, *The Ruins of the Temple of Diana at Baiae near Naples*, mixed print on paper, 51 × 62 cm, 1800, British Museum, London, inv. no. 1953,0214.24.

(1806): “Europe ends at Naples and it ends there badly. Calabria, Sicily and the rest are Africa.”⁷¹ A region dotted with unidentified ruins ties in with that view.⁷² It shows that the region still served as a *lieu de mémoire*, as it was inextricably linked with its ancient visitors.

In more recent periods, little changed in the overall representation of Baiae in travel writing. Nowadays, only one thermal spring remains active in Baiae, namely the Stufe di Nerone spa at the shore of the Lucrine Lake. The management of the spa makes use of the same discursive elements to draw visitors to its resort:

Two thousand years ago the rich of antiquity came to Baia, the richest and smartest holiday resort in the Roman Empire; those who could afford it had a villa built, possibly a huge and luxurious one. The name of this gorgeous cove is connected to the legendary journey of Ulysses who buried there his companion Bajos.⁷³

Since 2007 the area has found a new way to attract visitors as the archaeological authorities granted permission to offer diving activities to tourists at the Parco Archeologico Sommerso di Baia. Underwater remains of the port created by Marcus Agrippa – and of ancient villas, along with parts of the imperial residence of the emperor Claudius – are among the sights visible to divers. After the decline of the spa resort, the foremost attraction of Baiae was and remains its link to the area’s golden age in the early imperial period.

Epilogue

In her examination of Grand Tour narratives, Chloe Chard argued that “travel entails the construction of particular myths, visions and fantasies, and the voicing of particular

desires, demands and aspirations.”⁷⁴ The literary descriptions of Baiae that this contribution has discussed earlier illustrate how writers from Antiquity onwards translated their visions of and sentiments towards the region into a distinct discourse. The spa resort of Baiae developed from being a meeting place with a (to a large extent) regional clientele in Antiquity to one with a mixed regional and international clientele in the Middle Ages and – in its ruinous state – a predominantly international clientele during the Grand Tour period and after. During its rise, Baiae became an archetypal label with cultural identity markers that could be transferred to spa resorts all over the world, in both East and West. In its ruinous state, the site was emblematic for a shared culture, of a past at once glorious and decadent.

During the Roman period, a stay in or near the spa resort of Baiae was part of elite culture. Leisure-seeking visitors of the Baian region immersed themselves in a shared culture of both Greek and Roman influence. For members of the elite, being among their social peers in the area signified an understanding of the rules of sophistication and good taste, and that they took part in a life of *otium* (leisure) consistent with their financial capital. That said, it remains difficult to assess the diversity of the spa resort’s clientele with regard to their social and ethno-cultural background. The literary sources mostly discuss the sojourns of members of the elite of the city of Rome, though notably many Roman politicians were actually born outside Rome, either in one of the country regions of the Italian peninsula or in one of the many provinces of the empire. An undated funerary inscription found at Ostia near Rome offers an illustration of Baiae’s international clientele during this period: “I who speak from this marble tomb was born at Tralles, in Asia. Often did I repair to Baiae, to enjoy its tepid baths and wander in its delightful neighbourhood by the sea.”⁷⁵ The fact that the deceased Socrates, son of Astomachus, thought it worthy to mention his visits to Baiae on his funerary monument indicates his belief that such a mention benefitted his posthumous image.

During the Middle Ages the same discursive thread appears in the written sources: when writing about their presence at the spa resort of Baiae, medieval authors reflected on the Classical past connected to the region and, in so doing, presented themselves as participants in a shared transnational intellectual culture. As D. S. Chambers put it: “[H]ot springs and mineral waters were among those common elements of civilization which transcended political division, like Roman remains, language, religion, civil law, and good wines.”⁷⁶ In both Antiquity and the Middle Ages, Baiae also carried negative connotations, as it was associated with immorality and decadence: a stay at the spa resort put a virtuous lifestyle at risk. From the thirteenth century onwards, spa resorts underwent a revival, not only due to elite visitors, but also to increasing visits by common people who lived in the vicinity of the mineral springs. This development went hand in hand with the renewed interest of European rulers in spa resorts, who not only invested in spa infrastructure, but also operated as patrons of the medical sciences in general, and more specifically of authors of treatises on the therapeutic characteristics of mineral springs. This general European trend also explains the reappearance of Baiae in medieval sources, though it should be noted that from the thirteenth century onwards the Baian region began to compete with spa resorts in central and northern Italy, of which Tuscany in particular seems to have become the spa hotspot for the European elite.⁷⁷

The Renaissance introduced a new aspect to Baiae’s development as a *lieu de mémoire*. The humanist tradition of collecting and studying Roman antiquities lured antiquaries from the walls of Rome down to the Bay of Naples. Their descriptions of the region owed much to the narratives of the Classical writers, the guiding principle behind the identifications of

the ancient ruins they encountered. In addition, legends figuring the poet Virgil became increasingly written into the landscape of the entire region of the Bay of Naples. By the seventeenth century, the spa resort had fallen victim to geological upheavals that made many of the spa facilities inaccessible. This notwithstanding, Baiae has continued to be a tourist destination, though in the modern period visitors invariably saw Baiae as a ruined echo of its past self, a paradise evoked by ancient writers. Travellers describing their visits not only referred to the ancient past, however, but often included Latin passages to flaunt their knowledge of the ancient texts. The “Europe” they conjured up while in Baiae was effectively a distillation of a universal Classical heritage.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes

1. For general studies on spa resorts on the European continent as meeting places, see especially Anderson and Tabbs, *Water, Leisure, and Culture*. On the aspect of a spa’s sociability, see, for instance, MacKaman, *Leisure Settings*; Herbert, “Gender and the Spa,” 361–83; Walton, “Health, Sociability, Politics and Culture,” 1–14.
2. Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire*. The scholarly field that studies the intersection of “place” and “memory” is still in development. The concept of *lieu de mémoire* has proved to be very flexible, leading to several related terms and sub-categories, of which “mnemonic site,” “memoryscape,” “mnemotope” and “memory landscape” are examples. See, for instance, Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*; Galinsky and Lapatin, *Cultural Memories in the Roman Empire*; Kattago, *Research Companion to Memory Studies*.
3. The literature on the idea of *romanitas*, and on the related notions of manliness and femininity, is extensive. See, for instance, McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*; Pohl, “Romanness,” 406–18; Caldwell, *Roman Girlhood*.
4. Burke, “How to Write a History of Europe,” 233–9, written in response to Fernandez-Armesto, “A European Civilization,” 3–14. See also Burke, “Did Europe Exist before 1700?” 21–9.
5. For reasons of feasibility, visual sources have been left out of this research, though it would be worthwhile to add an examination of the visual narrative strategies in the construction of Baiae as a *lieu de mémoire* to that of the literary, for instance through an examination of engravings such as those of Joris Hoefnagel (1580) or Pietro Fabris (1777), and the first photographs (panoramic or otherwise) after the invention of photography in the mid-nineteenth century.
6. Horace, *Letters* 1.1.80–5.
7. Hazelton Haight, “Cumae in Legend and History,” 565–78.
8. Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.442, 6.126, 6.242; Strabo 5.4.5f.; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 14.101ff.; Lucretius 6.744; Pliny, *Natural History* 31.21; Servius, *Commentary on the Aeneid* 3.442.
9. Livy, 41.16.
10. Plutarch, *Life of Marius* 34.2–3. See also Seneca, *Letters* 51.11; Pliny, *Natural History* 18.32.
11. D’Arms, *Romans on the Bay of Naples*, 37–40.
12. Leonard, “From *otium* to *imperium*,” 139–54.
13. For a detailed discussion of the archaeological site, see Yegül, “The Thermos-Mineral Complex at Baiae,” 137–61.
14. Vitruvius 2.6.2 (the translation is taken from the Loeb Classical Library edition).
15. Rutledge, *Ancient Rome as a Museum*, 7. See also Edwards, *Writing Rome*, esp. chapter 1.
16. Seminal in theorizing on collective memory is Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective*. He explained that individuals remember and communicate by way of discourse what is important for their social environment, thus creating “discourse communities.” But while memories may be collective, they are understood by different social groups and by each individual, subjectively.
17. See for example Dunbabin, “*Baiarum grata voluptas*,” 6–46.

18. For the site's identification as an imperial palace, see De Franciscis, "Underwater discoveries around the Bay of Naples," 212–14. For its identification as a spa centre, see Yegül, "The Thermos-Mineral Complex at Baiae," 137–61.
19. For an overview of who lived where, see the still indispensable D'Arms, *Romans on the Bay of Naples*.
20. Strabo 5.7 (the translation is taken from the Loeb Classical Library edition).
21. The imperial residence has been attributed to the emperor Claudius; see most recently Avilia and Caputo, *Il ninfeo sommerso*.
22. See Günther, "The Oyster Culture of the Ancient Romans," 360–5.
23. Suetonius, *Life of Nero* 31 (the translation is taken from the Loeb Classical Library edition).
24. Tacitus, *Annals* 15.42.
25. Besides the citations in the main text, see also Petrarch, *Familiar Letters* 5.4: "I saw the foundations of that admirable reservoir of Nero, which was to go from mount Misene to the Avernian lake, and enclose all the hot water of Baiae."
26. Martial 4.30.3–5.
27. *Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Life of Severus Alexander* 26.9–10.
28. Ausonius 10.340–8 (the translation is taken from the Loeb Classical Library edition).
29. Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 459 (the translation is taken from the Loeb Classical Library edition).
30. *CIL* 8.25425 (fourth–fifth century CE, the translation is my own).
31. For other examples, see *AE* 1968, no. 610; Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmina* 18; *Latin Anthology* 23, 109 and 110.
32. Dunbabin, "*Baiarum grata voluptas*," 6–9.
33. Seneca, *Letters* 51.
34. See for example Cicero, *For Caelius* 25, 28, 49; Ovid, *The Art of Love* 1.255–8.
35. It is generally believed that the unfaithful Lesbia, to which Catullus devoted several love poems, and Clodia, were one and the same.
36. Cicero, *For Caelius* 38 (the translation is taken from the Loeb Classical Library edition).
37. Propertius, *Elegies* 1.11 (the translation is taken from the Loeb Classical Library edition).
38. Symmachus, *Letters* 6.67 (the translation is my own).
39. References to visitors of Baiae in late Antiquity include Sidonius Apollinaris, *Letters* 5.14 (to his friend Aper in 472–3 CE): "Are you taking your ease in your sunny Baiae, where the sulphurous water rushes from hollows of the porous rock, and the baths are so beneficial to those who suffer either in the lungs or liver?"
40. Cassiodorus, *Variae* 9.6 (translated by Thomas Hodgkin). See also 12.22 in which Istria is compared to Campania and is explained as having its own Baiae with lagoons, pools, oysters, and fish, palaces and islands.
41. Visitors who have said to have been in Baiae in the Middle Ages, besides those singled out in the main text, include John the Deacon (906, *Translatio Sancti Sosii* 28), and the traveller Benjamin of Tudela (1164, Adler, "The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela," 472). In addition, the king of Italy and Holy Roman Emperor Louis II and his wife Engelberge in the 860s made a point visiting the waters of Puteoli, though it is unclear which facilities in particular they visited (*Chronica Sancti Benedicti Casinensis* 4). See Pontieri, "Baia nel Medioevo," 31–73.
42. Oldfield, *Sanctity and Pilgrimage*, esp. chapter 5.
43. *Epistola Conradi cancellarii* = I.M. Lappenberg (ed.), *Arnaldi abbatis Lubecensis Chronica Slavorum* 5.19, in G.H. Pertz (ed.), *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores* (Hannover, 1869), XXI, at 196.
44. Clark, "Conrad of Querfurt and Petrarch," 270.
45. *Otia* 3, preface.
46. *Otia* 3.15. The translation is taken from Banks and Binns, *Gervase of Tilbury*.
47. The text is in its entirety edited by d'Amati, *De balneis terre laboris* by Peter of Eboli. For a study of the manuscript's illuminations, see above all Kauffmann, *The Baths of Pozzuoli*. See most recently Grévin, *Pierre d'Eboli*.
48. Richard of San Germano, *Chronicle*, s.v. 1227 (ed. G.H. Pertz, 65).
49. The regulations were published at Amalfi in 1231 in the *Constitutiones Imperiales*, cited in translation in Pioreschi, *A History of Medicine*, 273–5.
50. See Hanly, "Richard Eudes's French translation of Pietro da Eboli," 254.

51. See also *Otia* 3.15.
52. Petrarch, *Familiar Letters* 5.4 (the translation is taken from Bernardo, *Francesco Petrarca*). On his missions, see Wilkins, *Life and Works of Petrarch*, 11–12.
53. Boccaccio's literary treatment of Baiae and its environments is examined in more detail in Tufano, *Quel dolce canto*.
54. The translation is taken from Causa-Steindler and Mauch, *The Elegy of Lady Fiammetta*, 72–3.
55. Pontano, *Baiae* 1.3 (the translation is taken from Dennis, *Baiae*, 11).
56. Flavio Biondo, *Italia Illustrata* 13.29 (the translation is taken from White, *Biondo Flavio*, 193). Günther's *Phlegraeian Fields* lists many other sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century examples of this antiquarian tradition.
57. Di Vito et al., "The 1538 Monte Nuovo Eruption," 608–15.
58. Giacomelli and Scandone, "History of the Exploitation of Thermos-Mineral Resources," 23.
59. Trapp, "The Grave of Vergil," 31.
60. This relative silence in the source material is noticeable in the bibliography compiled in Günther's *Phlegraeian Fields* in 1908.
61. The role of Classical studies in the upbringing of members of the European elite is a well-studied topic. See for instance Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain*; Martirosova Torlone and LaCourse Munteanu and Dutsch, *Classical Reception in Eastern and Central Europe*. It goes without saying that the increase of references to Baiae in the literary sources also has to do with the rise, popularity and development of non-fiction travel literature.
62. For an overview and discussion on the historiography on this topic, see Naddeo, "Cultural Capitals and Cosmopolitanism in Eighteenth-Century Italy," 183–99.
63. The overview of travel accounts in what follows is by no means exhaustive, nor does it attempt to offer a representative sample of travel writing in this period. As a guiding principle, those travel accounts that pay attention to Baiae and the Bay of Naples and that are illustrative for a general trend in the representation of the region are cited. For a more general discussion of travel writing, see, for instance, Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*. See also Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy*; Dolan, *Ladies of the Grand Tour*; Ouditt, *Impressions of Southern Italy*.
64. De Silhouette, *Voyage de France, d'Espagne, de Portugal et d'Italie*, viii–xii.
65. *Voyage de France, d'Espagne, de Portugal et d'Italie*, 26–7 (the translation is my own).
66. Lassels, *The Voyage of Italy*, 297–8. The reference is to Horace, *Letters* 1.1.82.
67. Statius, *Silvae* 3.5.95–6.
68. Saint-Non, *Voyage pittoresque*, 155.
69. *Nouveau voyage d'Italie*, 149–50.
70. The Romantic thirst for ruins, though this so-called *sentiment des ruines* or "ruinophilia" – by no means exclusively reserved to the Romantic period – has been extensively studied. See, for instance, Mortier, *La poétique des ruines en France*; Goldstein, *Ruins and Empire*; Forero-Mendoza, *Le temps des ruines*; Baum, *Ruinenlandschaften*; Korenjak, "Ruinenlandschaften und Landschaftsruinen," 95–115.
71. Creuzé de Lesser, *Voyage en Italie et Sicile*, 96.
72. On this topic, see also Moe, *The View from Vesuvius*.
73. <https://www.termestufedinerone.it/en/our-history.html> (accessed 6 February 2019).
74. Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour*, 9.
75. *CIL* 14.480 (trans. William Spalding).
76. Chambers, "Spas in the Italian Renaissance," 3.
77. See especially Boisseil, *Le thermalisme en Toscane*.

Notes on contributor

Lien Foubert is a permanent lecturer and researcher at the Institute for Historical, Literary and Cultural Studies of the Radboud University in Nijmegen. She is also a member of the research group "Tourism, Travel, Text". She is an ancient historian, specialized in Rome's late republican and early imperial period. Her current research focuses in particular on forms of so-called "proto-tourism", including stereotypes of travellers and travel behaviour, seaside resorts, souvenirs and tourist guides.

Bibliography

- Adler, M.N. "The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela." *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 14 (1904): 84–101.
- Anderson, S.C., and B.H. Tabbs, eds. *Water, Leisure, and Culture: European Historical Perspectives*. Oxford: Bloomsbury, 2002.
- Assmann, J. *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*. Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1999.
- Avilia F., and P. Caputo. *Il ninfeo sommerso di Claudio a Baia*. Naples: Valtrent Editore, 2015.
- Banks, S.E., and J.W. Binns. *Gervase of Tilbury, Otia Imperialia. Recreation for an Emperor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Baum, C. *Ruinenlandschaften. Spielräume der Einbildungskraft in Reiseliteratur und bildkünstlerischen Werken über Italien im 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert*. Heidelberg: Winter, 2013.
- Bernardo, A.S. *Francesco Petrarca. Rerum familiarium libri I–VIII*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975.
- Boisseil, D. *Le thermalisme en Toscane à la fin du Moyen Âge*. Rome: Publications de l'École française de Rome, 2002.
- Burke, P. "Did Europe Exist before 1700?" *History of European Ideas* 1 (1980): 21–29.
- Burke, P. "How to Write a History of Europe: Europe, Europes, Eurasia." *European Review* 14 (2006): 233–239.
- Caldwell, L. *Roman Girlhood and the Fashioning of Femininity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Causa-Steindler, M., and T. Mauch, ed. and trans. *The Elegy of Lady Fiammetta. Giovanni Boccaccio*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Chambers, D.S. "Spas in the Italian Renaissance." In *Reconsidering the Renaissance. Papers from the Twenty-First Annual Conference*, edited by M.A. Di Cesare, 3–27. Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1992.
- Chard, C. *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour. Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography, 1600–1830*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.
- Clark, R.J. "Conrad of Querfurt and Petrarch on the Location of the Vergilian Underworld." *Papers of the British School at Rome* 64 (1996): 261–272.
- Clarke, M.L. *Classical Education in Britain, 1500–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959.
- Creuzé de Lesser, A. *Voyage en Italie et Sicile*. Paris, 1806.
- D'Amati, J.M. *Prolegomena to a Critical Edition of the Illustrated Medieval Poem De balneis terre laboris by Peter of Eboli (Petrus de Ebulo)*. PhD diss., John Hopkins University, 1975.
- D'Arms, J. *Romans on the Bay of Naples (and Other Essays on Roman Campania)*. Bari: Edipuglia, 2003.
- De Franciscis, A. "Underwater Discoveries Around the Bay of Naples." *Archaeology* 20 (1967): 212–214.
- Dennis, R.G. *Giovanni Giovanni Pontano. Baiiae*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- De Silhouette, E. *Voyage de France, d'Espagne, de Portugal et d'Italie*, vol. 2. 1770.
- Di Vito, M., L. Lirer, G. Mastrolorenzo, and G. Rolandi. "The 1538 Monte Nuovo Eruption (Campi Flegrei, Italy)." *Bulletin of Volcanology* 49 (1987): 608–615.
- Dolan, B. *Ladies of the Grand Tour*. London: HarperCollins, 2001.
- Dunbabin, K.M.D. "*Baiarum grata voluptas*: Pleasures and Dangers of the Baths." *Papers of the British School at Rome* 57 (1989): 6–46.
- Edwards, E. *Writing Rome: Textual Approaches to the City*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Fernandez-Armesto, F. "A European Civilization: Is There any Such Thing?" *European Review* 10 (2002): 3–14.
- Forero-Mendoza, S. *Le temps des ruines. Le goût des ruines et les formes de la conscience historique à la Renaissance*. Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2002.
- Galinsky, K., and K. Lapatin. *Cultural Memories in the Roman Empire*. Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2015.

- Giacomelli, L., and R. Scandone. "History of the Exploitation of Thermos-Mineral Resources in Campi Flegrei and Ischia, Italy." *Journal of Volcanology and Geothermal Research* 209–10 (2012): 19–32.
- Goldstein, L. *Ruins and Empire. The Evolution of a Theme in Augustan and Romantic Literature*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977.
- Grévin, B. *Pierre d'Eboli. Les bains de Pouzzoles*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris, 2012.
- Günther, R.T. "The Oyster Culture of the Ancient Romans." *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom* 4 (1897): 360–365.
- Günther, R.T. *A Bibliography of Topographical and Geological Works on the Phlegraean Fields*. London: The Royal Geographical Society, 1908.
- Halbwachs, M. *La mémoire collective*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950.
- Hanly, M. "An Edition of Richard Eudes's French Translation of Pietro da Eboli's *De Balneis Puteolanis*." *Traditio* 51 (1996): 225–255.
- Hazelton Haight, E. "Cumae in Legend and History." *The Classical Journal* 13 (1918): 565–578.
- Herbert, A.E. "Gender and the Spa: Space, Sociability and Self at British Health Spas, 1640–1714." *Journal of Social History* 43 (2009): 361–383.
- Ingamells, J. *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy, 1701–1800, Compiled from the Brinsley Ford Archive*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.
- Kattago, S., ed. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Memory Studies*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015.
- Kauffmann, C.M. *The Baths of Pozzuoli: A Study of the Medieval Illuminations of Peter of Eboli's Poem*. Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1959.
- Korenjak, M. "Ruinenlandschaften und Landschaftsruinen in der gelehrten Literatur der frühen Neuzeit." *Arcadia* 52 (2017): 95–115.
- Lassels, R. *The Voyage of Italy or a Compleat Journey through Italy*, vol. 2. 1670.
- Leonard, A. "From otium to imperium: Propertius and Augustus at Baiae." *Illinois Classical Studies* 40 (2015): 139–154.
- MacKaman, D.P. *Leisure Settings. Bourgeois Culture, Medicine and the Spa in Modern France*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Martirosova Torlone, Z., D. LaCourse Munteanu, and D. Dutsch, eds. *A Handbook to Classical Reception in Eastern and Central Europe*. Oxford: Wiley, 2017.
- McDonnell, M. *Roman Manliness. Virtus and the Roman Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Misson, M. *Nouveau voyage d'Italie*, vol. 2. 1691.
- Moe, N. *The View from Vesuvius. Italian Culture and the Southern Question*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Mortier, R. *La poétique des ruines en France*. Geneva: Genève Droz, 1974.
- Naddeo, B.A. "Cultural Capitals and Cosmopolitanism in Eighteenth-Century Italy: the Historiography and Italy on the Grand Tour." *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 10 (2005): 183–199.
- Nora, P. *Les lieux de mémoire*. Paris: Gallimard, 1984–1992.
- Oldfield, P. *Sanctity and Pilgrimage in Medieval Southern Italy, 1000–1200*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Oudit, S. *Impressions of Southern Italy. British Travel Writing from Henry Swinburne to Norman Douglas*. London and New York: Routledge, 2014.
- Pohl, W. "Romanness: a Multiple Identity and its Changes." *Early Medieval Europe* 22 (2014): 406–418.
- Pontieri, E. "Baia nel Medioevo." *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane* (1976): 31–73.
- Prioreschi, P. *A History of Medicine*, vol. 5. Omaha: Horatius Press, 2003.
- Rutledge, P. *Ancient Rome as a Museum. Power, Identity and the Culture of Collecting*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- De Saint-Non, J.-C.R. *Voyage pittoresque, ou Description des royaumes de Naples et de Sicile*, vol. 1.1. Paris, 1781.
- Trapp, J.B. "The Grave of Vergil." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 47 (1984): 1–31.
- Tufano, I. *Quel dolce canto: letture tematiche delle "Rime" di Boccaccio*. Florence: Franco Cesati Editore, 2006.
- Walton, J.K. "Health, Sociability, Politics and Culture. Spas in History, Spas and History: an Overview." *Journal of Tourism History* 4 (2012): 1–14.

- White, J.A. *Biondo Flavio. Italy Illuminated*, vol. 2. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2016.
- Wilkins, E.H. *Studies in the Life and Works of Petrarch*. Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1955.
- Yegül, F.K. "The Thermos-Mineral Complex at Baiae and *De Balneis Puteolanis*." *The Art Bulletin* 78 (1996): 137–161.
- Youngs, T. *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.