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PHILOGELOS 23; 130
AND THE MEANING OF οὐ λούει

In the “longer” recension of *Philogelos*, the story about the man who came to the bathhouse at its very opening is attested twice with some lexical variations. *Philogel.* 23, belonging to the section dealing with σχολαστικός, is found in both **A** (*Par. sup. Gr.* 690; 11 c.) and **M** (*Monac. Gr.* 551; 15 c.), while *Philogel.* 130, belonging to the group of jokes about the silly Sidonians,¹ is omitted in **M**, which is generally characterized by the elimination of doublets.

23. Σχολαστικὸς κατὰ πρώτην ἄνοιξιν τοῦ βαλανείου εἰσελθὼν καὶ μηδένα εὐρὼν ἔσω λέγει πρὸς τὸν δοῦλον αὐτοῦ· Ἐξ ὧν βλέπω, μὴ οὐ λούει [τὸ βαλανεῖον].

μηδένα **A**, *Boissonade aliiq*; μηδ’ ἓνα **M**, *Eberhard* | μὴ *del. Thierfelder* | τὸ βαλανεῖον *del. Dawe praeunte Thierfelder (in comm.)* | *in fine punctum A*, *Thierfelder aliiq*; *interrogandi signum M*, *Boissonade, Eberhard*

¹ This part of the collection is puzzling because, unlike the Abderites (110–127) or Kymaeans (154–182), the Sidonians never had a reputation for being fools. For a possible solution to this problem, cf. Minunno 2016. In jokes about Sidonians, the protagonist’s occupation is always indicated – “a lawyer from Sidon” (129), “a fisherman” (133), “a teacher” (136), “a butcher” (137) etc. – which leads one to suppose a separate origin of the section (Thierfelder 1968, 238; Beard 2014, 192). In two cases, however, commentators recognize this indication as excessive, playing no part in the plot: this is the case with the “Sidonian provincial governor” in 128 and the “Sidonian sophist” in 130 (Thierfelder 1968, 239). In our opinion, for *Philogel.* 128 this conclusion would still be exaggerated: although this joke also has a doublet in the σχολαστικός section (100), it should be noted that even if the story of the runaway mules could have happened to a man of any rank, the figure of the pompous and arrogant ἑπαρχὸς gotten into trouble gives it a special flavor. Thus, 130 remains the only “Sidonian” joke in the *Philogelos* in which the designation of the profession of the butt of the joke does not seem to be necessary; we will turn to this question in n. 35.

A *scholasticus*, arriving at the bathhouse just before it opens and finding no one inside, says to his slave, “From what I see, [the bath] doesn’t seem to wash”.

130. Σιδόνιος σοφιστῆς κατὰ πρώτην ἄνοιξιν τοῦ βαλανείου <εἰσελθὼν> [λουόμενος] καὶ μηδένα ἔσωθεν εὐρών λέγει πρὸς τοὺς ἰδίους οἰκέτας· Καθὼς βλέπω, οὐ λούει.

<εἰσελθὼν> [λουόμενος] Thierfelder (*in comm.*), Dawe λουόμενος
A Boissonade, González Suárez λουσόμενος Eberhard, Brodersen

A sophist from Sidon, arriving at the bathhouse at its very opening and finding no one inside, says to his slaves: “As I see it, it doesn’t wash”.

Although the MSS variants as well as the emendations proposed by editors hardly affect the meaning of the joke, it is worth saying a few words about them.

23. The context does not require any special emphasis, so μηδένα is preferable. With a question mark, μή οὐ would have appeared as an equivalent of Lat. *nonne* (cf. *Philogel.* 217); the period, on the contrary, would turn the phrase into a doubtful assertion about a *present* fact introduced by μή or μή οὐ + *ind.*² In our opinion, ἐξ ὧν βλέπω makes the interrogative sentence impossible. Thierfelder’s deletion of [μή] suggests the simple “The bath does not wash”, as in 130; both statements, the categorical one and the one colored by cautious doubt, are equally suitable for the interpretation of the joke that we shall argue, but it seems difficult to explain μή of the MSS if it is not authentic. On the bracketing of [τὸ βαλανεῖον], see below.

130. Even if we accept that the infinitely obtuse σοφιστῆς, *having already washed* in the bath, still considers it “not washing”, λουόμενος is hindered by the following μηδένα εὐρών: the sequence of verbs should be reversed. Eberhard’s conjecture provides the correct meaning (“going to wash”), but such a construction is alien to the language of *Philogelos*: *participium futuri* occurs only once in its text (19: ἔσειε τὸ δένδρον ὡς ὑποδεξόμενος τοὺς στρουθοὺς),³ in close connection with the predicate and supported by ὡς. So Thierfelder’s idea seems to be the best: εἰσελθὼν, preserved in 23, was accidentally omitted by the copyist in 130, and λουόμενος appeared at a later stage as filling up this lacuna.

² Kühner–Gerth 1898, 224–225 (§ 394, n. 7).

³ Ritter 1955, 61 n. 139.

Let us now turn to the interpretations of the joke. Jacobus Pontanus rendered its punchline, somewhat vaguely and without any explanation, as *nemo hic lavat*;⁴ Charles C. Bubb confessed that he did not understand it.⁵ It was Andreas Thierfelder⁶ who first demonstrated that, at least from a linguistic point of view, the remark “οὐ λούει (τὸ βαλανεῖον)” is not by itself ridiculous. He adduces two Latin inscriptions giving an almost identical text, evidently an advertising formula: *[b]alineum more urbico lavatur et omnia commode praestantur* (CIL XI 721 [= 254 Fagan];⁷ Bononia, undated) and *balineus lavatur more urbico et omnis humanitas praestatur* (CIL XIV 4015 [= 259 Fagan]; Ficulea, presumably 2nd c. CE). Then Thierfelder cites CIL III 1805 (= 189 Fagan; Narona in Dalmatia, 280 CE), an inscription honoring the local benefactor who, among other services to the city, *thermas rei p(ublicae) hiemales [rog]a[n]te populo in ruinam [de]lap[sas] [...] de frugalitate sua [...] [aedifi]cavit et lavantes rei p(ublicae) tradidit*.

Particularly impressive in Thierfelder's argument was the reference to a Byzantine proverb from a small alphabetical collection preserved under the title Αἰσώπου κοσμικαὶ κωμῳδαί (6 = *Aesopica* vol. I, p. 287, 149 Perry): Βαλανεῖον ἔχω, καὶ οὐ λούει· εἰ εἶχεν, ἔλουεν. According to the previous interpretation by Victor Jernstedt (1893), the explanation εἰ εἶχεν, ἔλουεν⁸ is wrong and “the meaning of the proverb is that a bath does not wash itself: whoever wants to bathe in his bathhouse must take care that everything is prepared for it”.⁹ Instead, Thierfelder persuasively suggested that the proverb should be understood in a different way, namely as a mockery of boasting. A braggart says: “I have a bath, but now it is not working”; if he really had one, it would be working (“Ich habe ein

⁴ Pontanus 1758, 478; a Latin translation of most of the jokes from the longer version of *Philogelos* was first included in the 15th edition of Pontanus' *Progymnasmata Latinitatis* (1620). Cf. “Как видно, здесь нельзя мыться” (Gasparov 1962 [М. Л. Гаспаров (tr., comm.), *Федр. Бабрий. Басни*], 187).

⁵ Bubb 1920, 23 (“As far as I can see, it doesn't wash”; cf. n. 2: “I can not grasp the point of the joke”). His reference to Diogenes' bon mot on a dirty bathhouse (DL 6. 2. 47) is completely irrelevant.

⁶ Thierfelder 1968, 209–210.

⁷ Fagan 1999, 317.

⁸ On the irreal apodosis without ἄν, see, e.g., Blass–Debrunner 1961, 182, § 360.

⁹ Jernstedt 1907 [В. К. Ернштедт, “Забытые греческие пословицы”, in: *Victoris Jernstedt Opuscula: Сборник статей по классической филологии В. К. Ернштедта*], 187: “Смысл пословицы в том, что баня сама собою не моет: кто хочет умыться в своей бане, должен позаботиться о том, чтобы все было к этому приготовлено”.

Bad, es funktioniert bloß nicht”, commentary: “Wenn er eins hätte, würde es auch funktionieren”). All these parallels brought Thierfelder to the conclusion that οὐ λούει (τὸ βαλανεῖον) in *Philogel.* 23; 130 is idiomatic and means “the bath is not in operation” (“Nach dem, was ich sehe, ist das Bad nicht in Betrieb”).

Thierfelder’s contribution proved decisive: the subsequent translators of *Philogelos* either follow him literally,¹⁰ or clarify “The bathhouse is closed / out of hours”,¹¹ or, finally, resort to oblique periphrases leading in the same direction.¹² However, there is no joke, not even a flat one: if you go to a public place (e.g. a shop or a restaurant) and no one is there, then even if the door is open and you manage to get in, you naturally conclude that the establishment is not functioning for some reason. The deduction of the σχολαστικός is not silly at all.

A fresh interpretation of the text was offered, in passing, by Hanna Zalewska-Jura in her overview paper on the *Philogelos*. Listing the daily habits of the Greeks reflected in the jokes of the collection, she notes: “There is no reason to come to the bathhouse in the morning, because you will not meet your acquaintances (23, 130)”.¹³ In this case, the punchline of the story would be that the σχολαστικός goes to the bathhouse to communicate: “the bath is not working” if there are no people to meet.¹⁴ This, however, does not correspond to the nature of the character (however protean, the σχολαστικός is never endowed with the traits of an *homme du monde*) and, as it seems, would have needed a more distinctive expression.

¹⁰ “As far as I can tell, the public bath is not in operation” (Hansen 1998, 278), “À ce que je vois, ils ne sont pas en service, ces thermes” (Zucker 2008, 16), “It looks to me as if the bath isn’t working” (Berg 2008 [26]), “Thierfelder [...] nota che l’espressione [...] potrebbe essere di matrice tecnica” (Braccini 2008, 106–107), “Por lo que veo, el baño no funciona” (González Suárez 2010, 53), “Pelo que vejo, o banho não está a funcionar hoje” (Troca Pereira 2013, 28), etc.

¹¹ “Wie ich sehe, hat das Bad heute Ruhetag” (Löwe 1981, 10; *idem fere* Brodersen 2016, 19), “Jak widzę, łaźnia nieczynna” (Łanowski 1986, 92), “Polo que vexo, parece que está pechado” (Seara-Soto 2016, 20), etc.

¹² “À ce que je vois, on ne lave personne aux bains aujourd’hui” (Noël 2021, 23).

¹³ Zalewska-Jura 2010, 108 (“Dlatego nie ma sensu przybywać tam zaraz po otwarciu, bo poza łaźniami nie zastanie się znajomych [23, 130]”).

¹⁴ Cf. a similar story about Jean Moréas, who refused to enter a restaurant because there were no acquaintances to chat with: “Je me souvenais de cette anecdote parisienne qui m’a contée jadis Paul Fort, le poète. Paul Fort arrachant Moréas au Vachette et le menant déjeuner dans un petit restaurant de la rue Campagne-Première; et Moréas, sur le seuil, ayant ajusté son monocle, et de sa belle voix grecque: *Mais il n’y a personne, ici!* Il n’y avait, en effet, personne, ajoutait Paul Fort. Il n’y avait qu’Apollinaire, Picasso, Lénine et moi...” (Bauër 1967, 35).

The extensive and contradictory comment by Barry Baldwin deserves a separate mention.¹⁵ He adduces the parallel passages from Thierfelder's edition, concluding that "the bath isn't bathing" is "a proverbial expression, and probably technical". Nevertheless, he does not stop there, apparently feeling that the joke lacks a punchline, and observes that the morning hours in the Roman baths were reserved for women and invalids; the *σχολαστικός* thus is ridiculed for committing "a social solecism". Why, then, has he come "absurdly early"? Baldwin, referring to Lucian (*Lexiph.* 4), explains that he wanted to use clean water, an advantage given to those who came first to the baths.

The notion that the Roman baths of the imperial age during the morning hours were reserved for the ill and disabled persons is based on a single passage from Hadrian's biography in *SHA* (22. 7): *ante octavam horam in publico neminem nisi aegrum lavari passus est*. Garrett G. Fagan dwells on this testimony at length, explaining that it contradicts all available evidence: either this account is unfounded, or it did not refer to all baths, municipal and private, but only to the "imperial controlled *thermae*".¹⁶ As public baths were usually crowded, visitors tried to guess the time when they could wash in comfort: thus, in *Vita Aesopi*, Xanthus asks Aesop to go and see if there are many people in the bathhouse (65–66). Complaints about having to bathe alongside all sorts of rabble form the background of *Philogel.* 149 (where a comparison is made with the Trojan Horse, which was just as crowded, but the society was incomparably more decent) and 150, while the desire to save some clean water for a dear friend is the point of *Philogel.* 163. Finally, *AP* 9. 640, an anonymous epigram of the imperial age, explicitly states that bathing immediately after opening is the best time to do so: Ἀθάνατοι λούονται ἀνοιγομένου βαλανείου, / πέμπτη δ' ἡμίθεοι, μετέπειτα δὲ πῆματα πάντα.¹⁷ Thus, not only did the

¹⁵ Baldwin 1983, 59–60.

¹⁶ Fagan 1999, 184–185 (cf. 87). The designation of morning hours for women is attested only for a bathhouse of the imperial mines at Vipasca in Lusitania (*CIL* II 5181₂₀ = 282 Fagan; Hadrianic time), which, however, was by no means typical: "Depending on the shifts of the workers, the reservation of the bath for women early in the day could be a dictate of necessity rather than of morality" (*ibid.*, 325–326; cf. Bowen Ward 1992, 140 ff.).

¹⁷ P. Waltz and G. Soury claim that the "immortals" are the emperor and his family (Waltz–Soury 2002, 256), which is implausible: for the members of the imperial house, there were obviously no problems of crowds and dirty water, so they could wash whenever they wanted. In our opinion, Ἀθάνατοι here means simply "the lucky ones", ῥεῖα ζῶντες. To visit a public bath in the morning, one had to have free time: neither an artisan, nor a small merchant, nor a clerk could afford that time.

σχολαστικός not do anything inconsiderate by coming to the bathhouse at an early hour, but, on the contrary, he proceeded with foresight.

In our opinion, Thierfelder rightly assumed that the salt of the joke lies in the expression “the bath washes / does not wash” and that this expression is idiomatic;¹⁸ however, the four instances that he collected are heterogeneous. In two of them (*CIL* XI 721; XIV 4015) there is an adverbial of manner (*urbico more*), while in the other two (*CIL* III 1805; *Aesopica* I, p. 287, 149 Perry), the combination is used absolutely, as in *Philogelos*. For each of these groups, the number of examples can be substantially increased.

Let us begin with the first category. Epictetus (*Diss.* 2. 21. 14), enumerating the anxieties that beset an exhausted and irritated man unable to concentrate on self-improvement, mentions καὶ ἐν Νικοπόλει σαπρῶς λούει τὰ βαλανεῖα. Frontinus (*De aquaed.* 2. 107) defines the *thermae* as *balneae, quae publice lavarent*. The Christian pilgrim Antoninus of Piacenza (570 CE; *Itiner.* 7; 10) describes the hot springs near Tiberias as “natural baths”, *termas* [acc. pro nom.] *ex se lavantes salsas*. In all these examples the verb means simply “to fulfil its function”, and the main sense is carried by the adverbial.

On the contrary, in the passages belonging to the second group, the exact meaning of the expression has to be reconstructed. Here, as it seems, the examples omitted by Thierfelder are more revealing than the ones he adduces. First of all, the special meaning of λοῦσις and λούω in relation to public baths is well known to the epigraphists and papyrologists. The fact that this technical expression denotes *free access* (without charge) to the baths was first pointed out in 1911 by Édouard Cuq, and then, independently, in 1954 by Jeanne and Louis Robert;¹⁹ in 1968, the authors of the first *Supplement* to the *LSJ*, following Roberts, added to the entry λούω a new meaning I c “provide free baths”. The problem was further revisited by Thomas Drew-Bear in a series of critical notes devoted to the treatment of the epigraphic material in the *LSJ Supplement*; he touched on it again in 1980, publishing an inscription from Hypaipa.²⁰ In the same year at the XVI International Congress of Papyrology, Béatrice Meyer delivered a valuable paper, collecting a large number of examples of the idiom from Greek

¹⁸ This does not allow one to accept the rather forced explanation of D. Crompton and G. Vergara: “It looks to me as though the water isn’t washing properly” (Crompton 2010, 25); “Il sapientone [...] non si rende conto che la capacità dell’acqua di lavare non può variare da bagno a bagno” (Vergara 2011, 65). The σχολαστικός does not say, “The water here does not wash”, but “This bath does not wash”.

¹⁹ Cuq 1911, 190; Robert–Robert 1954, 139.

²⁰ Drew-Bear 1970, 208–209; Drew-Bear 1980, 523 and n. 70.

inscriptions and papyri; her interpretation, however, is more generalized: “faire fonctionner le bain” (“la notion de gratuité [...] réside essentiellement dans la nature des documents où ces expressions apparaissent”).²¹

The syntax of the expression varies. In some honorary inscriptions, the subject of λούω is the benefactor who paid for access to the baths and provided all the necessities, while the object, expressed or implied, is the δῆμος.²² In other instances, where the formula has the same meaning, τὸ βαλανεῖον appears as a direct object of λούειν, so that the literal translation would be “NN washed the baths” (in fact, as Meyer has pointed out, the verb is used in a causative sense).²³ Finally, Meyer has rightly identified a third construction: τὸ βαλανεῖον λούει, or λούει *tout court*. Her example includes *PFlo*r III 384_{28–31} (Alexandria, 489 CE), where the lessee undertakes to avoid provoking complaints that the two parts of the baths are closed to the public (ἐνεδρε[ῦ]σαι λούειν τὰ δύο μέρη τοῦ αὐτοῦ βαλανίου) but to “keep them available every day without exception” (ἀλλὰ τα[ῦτα] ἐφ’ ἐκάστης ἡμέρας ἀδιαλίπτως λούειν),²⁴ *PGiss* I 50_{13–16} (Oxyrhynchus, 259 CE), where the *capsarii* are subjected to the φόρος τοῦ λούοντος βαλανείου,²⁵ and the famous *PLond* III 1177₃₂ (Fayum, 113 CE), where, when listing the

²¹ Meyer 1981, 213–214.

²² So, *IGR* IV 555_{3–4} (= 329 Fagan; Ankyra, 1st c. CE) honors a local magistrate ἀλίψαντα τὸν δῆμον ἐκ λουτήρων καὶ λούσαντα ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων (“who anointed people and washed them with his own money”). Cf. *Demitsas* Μακεδ. 51_{4–5} (Beroia, Roman time): ἀλείψαντα καὶ λούσαντα δι’ ὅλης ἡμέρας πανδημεί; *SEG* 42 (1992) 582₃₄ (Kalindoia, 68–98 CE).

²³ See an honorary inscription from Kys in Caria, *BCH* 2 [1887] 306–308₈ (40 CE): λούσας δὲ καὶ τὸ βαλανεῖον, a contract for the rent of the baths *PMich* V 312_{17–19} (34 CE): λούσωσι τὸ βαλανῖον κατὰ μῆνα ἕκαστον μίαν παρὰ μίαν οἱ αὐτοὶ μεμισθωμένοι καὶ ταῖς ἑωρτές (“the tenants themselves shall provide free baths every month every other day, and on holidays also”) or a statute of an association of ἐριοπῶλαι καὶ λινύφοι *SEG* 30 (1980) 1382_{14–15} (= 330 Fagan; Hypaipa, 301 CE): τὸ βαλανεῖον λούειν μελέτω τοῖς ἐπιμελη[ταῖς *lac. circa 7 litt.*] τοὺς κατοίκους (“the overseers should take care to ensure the functioning of the bath without charge for the local population”). Cf. Drew-Bear 1980, esp. 523; in 1996, this inscription was added to the examples of λούω “provide free bath” in the revised *LSJ Suppl.*

²⁴ The public status of these “two parts” is specified above, l. 23–25: καὶ ποιῆσθαι τὴν λούσιν τῶ[ν] δύο μερῶν τοῦ αὐτοῦ βαλανίου καὶ τὴν ὑπόκ[α]υσιν [ἄπ’ ἰδ]ίων σου ἀναλωμάτων; the tenant is free to use the other parts of the bathhouse for his private needs, but two must be open gratis to all local people. This example convinces us (*pace* Meyer) that it is not the mere functioning of the bathhouse that is involved, but the provision of free access to it; cf. also λούειν τοὺς κατοίκους in *SEG* 30 (1980) 1382_{14–15} (quoted in the previous note).

²⁵ “Le φόρος payé par les *capsarii* ne l’est pas pour chaque utilisation du bain, mais pour les périodes où l’établissement est en activité” (Meyer 1981, 211).

water supply expenses incurred by the magistrates, it is stated that on certain days there was no bathing: ἀπὸ ἰς ἕως λ (sc. τοῦ Μεσορή) μὴ λελουκέναι. To this set of instances²⁶ we may add the colloquial expression *balineum lavat*, which is mentioned, without any context, by Roman grammarians condemning its solecistic counterpart *balineum lavatur* (Charis. p. 352, 6 Barwick; *GL* 4. 437. 28; 7. 104. 14 etc.).²⁷

Let us now turn from τὸ βαλανεῖον λούει to οὐ λούει and adduce a close parallel to the text of *Philogelos*, which seems to provide the key to its interpretation. The historian Olympiodorus of Thebes tells of an elaborate prank initiation (“mascarade qui symbolise les risques d’un échec de carrière”)²⁸ to which Athenian students of the 4th–5th c. subjected newcomers: they were led by a crowd to the baths, while another crowd of students rushed and shouted at them, trying to push them away (28 Müller [*FHG* IV 64] = Phot. *Bibl.* 80. 60b):

τῶν μὲν ἔμπροσθεν τρεχόντων καὶ κωλύόντων, τῶν δὲ ὠθούντων καὶ ἐπεχόντων, πάντων δὲ τῶν κωλύόντων ταῦτα βοώντων· Στᾶ, στᾶ, οὐ λούει...

Some ran forward and prevented them [from entering], others pushed and directed them towards the bath, and all those who prevented them shouted: “Stop, stop, οὐ λούει!”...

Such translations of Στᾶ, στᾶ, οὐ λούει as “Stop! Stop! Don’t take the bath!”,²⁹ “Arrête-toi, arrête-toi, tu ne te baignes pas!”,³⁰ “Stop, stop,

²⁶ We do not discuss the corresponding nominal collocation ἡ λουῖσις τοῦ βαλανεῖου (for a list of epigraphical examples, v. Drew-Bear 1970, 208; Meyer 1981, 210–213), grammatically ambiguous because of the amphiboly of the *genetivus subiectivus* / *obiectivus*.

²⁷ *ThLL* VII 2 (1973) 1049. 26 sqq. The longest passage of this kind belongs to Pompeius (5th or 6th c.; *GL* VI, p. 233, 25 sqq.): “*Ecce puta lavo: puta de me ipso possum dicere lavo ego et labor ego. De balineo quid possum dicere? Balineum lavat. Hoc bene dicimus. Balineum lavatur quem ad modum possumus dicere? Nam lavat balineum nos. Numquid a nobis balineum lavatur? Homo enim lavatur*”. As we have seen, *balineum lavatur* is attested by inscriptions (*CIL* XI 721; XIV 4015).

²⁸ Bernardi 1992, 155 n. 3. Iohannes Meursius, the first to collect, in his *De ludis Graecorum* (1622), the extant information about this initiation procedure, likens it to the *depositio cornuum* in the universities of his day (Meursius 1744, 1005).

²⁹ Blockley 1983, 193; DeForest 2011, 323–324. Cf. “Stop, stop! Don’t bathe!” (Rothhaus 2000, 92), “Fermati, fermati, non bagnarti” (Baldini 2004, 57), “Стой, стой, не мойся” (Vasilik 2021 [В. В. Василик (пер., комм.) *Фотий. Библиотека* I], 108) etc.

³⁰ Kugener 1904/1905, 353 (obviously, Kugener understands λούει as 2 *sing. med.*).

he must not wash”,³¹ or “Стой! Стой! Он не моется!” (“Stop! Stop! He is not washing!”)³² are evidently misleading: the implied subject of οὐ λούει is not the novice, but τὸ βαλανεῖον (cf. the same ellipsis in *Philogel.* 130).³³ This is clear from a parallel provided by Gregory of Nazianzus, who experienced this unpleasant ritual some sixty years before Olympiodorus’ visit to Athens (*Orat.* 43. 16. 5): κελεύει δὲ ἡ βοή μὴ προβαίνειν, ἀλλ’ ἵστασθαι ὡς τοῦ λουτροῦ σφᾶς οὐ παραδεχομένου. Then the students start banging on doors (closed from the inside by their accomplices), intimidating the novice, until finally everyone is allowed in the bathhouse: καὶ ἅμα τῶν θυρῶν ἀρασσομένων, πατάγῃ τὸν νέον φοβήσαντες, εἶτα τὴν εἴσοδον συγχωρήσαντες.

What situation is being simulated here, and what is the meaning of Gregory’s words “as if the bathhouse would not receive them” (ὡς τοῦ λουτροῦ σφᾶς οὐ παραδεχομένου), equivalent to Olympiodorus’ οὐ λούει? Obviously, the victim of the hoax must think that the bathhouse is for some reason inaccessible to ordinary visitors: for example, that it is entirely rented by some large company or by a rich person, or that the owner bathes there with his family and friends, etc. Indeed, if the bath were not in operation, with unfired stoves and unheated water, it would make no sense to break the doors and there would be no κωλύοντες. Nor does it seem plausible to assume that οὐ λούει means “you can’t wash here for free”: in this case visitors would not be chased away, but asked for money. An exact counterpart to the scene staged by the pranksters is Theodoret of Cyrus’ account of Eunomius, an Arian bishop of Samosata: when he went to the public baths, his servants locked the doors and turned away visitors until an outraged crowd gathered at the entrance and the bishop ordered everyone to be let in (*Hist. Eccl.* 4. 15. 2, p. 235, 15 sqq. Parmentier–Scheidweiler): ἐπειδὴ γὰρ λούσασθαι βουλθέντος οἱ οἰκέται τοῦ

³¹ Freese 1920, 142.

³² Bolgova 2018 [А. М. Болгова, “Посвящение в студенты и другие неформальные ритуалы позднеантичных Афин”, *Научные ведомости БелГУ. История, политология*], 432; the author cites, without any attribution, the translation by Helena Skrzynska (Skrzhinskaja 1958 [Е. Ч. Скржинская (tr., comm.), “Олимпиодор. История”, *Византийский временник*], 228). The previous Russian version by Spyridon Destounis was closer to the truth, although evasive: “Стои, стои, не вымоешься” (“Stop, stop, you will not be able to bathe”: Destounis 1860 [С. Ю. Дестунис (пер., примеч.), *Византийские историки Дексин, Эвнаний, Олимпиодор, Малх, Петр Патриций, Менандр, Кандид, Ноннос и Феофан Византиец*], 202).

³³ “No bathing here!” (Walden 1910, 302), “Pas de bains!” (Henry 1959, 178), “Niente bagno!” (Maisano 1979, 46 = Mugelli 2000, 106) *et sim.* are therefore grammatically correct.

βαλανείου τὰς θύρας ἔκλεισαν τοὺς εἰσελθεῖν βουλομένους κωλύοντες, πλῆθος δὲ πρὸ θυρῶν θεασάμενος ἀναπετάσαι ταύτας ἐκέλευσε.³⁴

As we suggest, the exact meaning of the idiomatic οὐ λούει in *Philogel.* 23 and 130 is, as in Olympiodorus' passage, "the bathhouse is not accessible, is occupied, closed for an event". The σχολαστικός, as often in the *Philogelos*, applies twisted logic: if there are no visitors in the baths, it means that they are not allowed in; if they are not allowed in, it means that there is some special event going on – a deduction that is absurd because no one is in the bathhouse at all.³⁵ Imagine a person who comes into a completely empty restaurant and says: "As far as I can see, there is a gala banquet being held here."

In conclusion, it is worthy of notice that in Olympiodorus, as in *Philogel.* 130, the subject of οὐ λούει is omitted,³⁶ just as it is omitted in modern "CLOSED" signs. This makes one agree with Thierfelder's assumption, "οὐ λούει dürfte die Phrase der Umgangssprache gewesen sein, τὸ βαλανεῖον in § 23 ein mehr literarischer Zusatz",³⁷ as well as with Dowe's deletion of τὸ βαλανεῖον³⁸ at the end of *Philogel.* 23.³⁹

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³⁴ Cf. the analysis of this story in the context of bathing habits of Late Antiquity: Maréchal 2012, 55; Zytka 2019, 51; 95.

³⁵ Ἐξ ὧν / καθὼς βλέπω provide an additional comic touch; perhaps it was this intonation of elaborate reasoning that gave the Sidonian in *Philogel.* 130 the profession of σοφιστής.

³⁶ Cf. the same ellipsis in *PLond* III, 1177, 32 (v. *supra*), where, however, μὴ λελουκέναι has the non-specific meaning "keine Badebetrieb stattfand" (Habermann 2000, 9). The proverb from *Aesopica* (βαλανεῖον ἔχω, καὶ οὐ λούει) does not allow a judgment to be made.

³⁷ Thierfelder 1968, 239.

³⁸ "The final τὸ βαλανεῖον sounds superfluous, and comparison with 130, which ends καθὼς βλέπω, οὐ λούει, confirms this suspicion. Ἦγουν μνήμα in 26, and ἦται τὴν σφαῖραν, deleted in 33 by Thierfelder, are other intrusions in the vicinity" (Dawe 1997 [but the text is dated "January 1999"] 308).

³⁹ We are deeply obliged to Alexey Belousov, Elena Chepel, Denis Keyer, Alexandra Pimenova, Maria Pirogovskaya, Yakov Podolny, and Kristina Rossiianova for bibliographical assistance.

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In two almost identical jokes from *Philogelos* (23; 130), a σχολαστικός (or a “Sidonian sophist”), on arriving at a bathhouse at its very opening, when no one else is in it, says: “As far as I can see, οὐ λούει”. According to Andreas Thierfelder, whose interpretation has prevailed in recent scholarship, the technical expression οὐ λούει (τὸ βαλανεῖον) means “the bath does not work”. With this understanding, however, the joke loses any salt: for even if the entrance doors are open, the sight of an empty bathhouse might naturally lead a visitor to think that it is not functioning for some reason. The authors deal with examples of the idiom (τὸ βαλανεῖον) λούει / *balineum lavat* meaning *free access to the baths*, which epigraphists and papyrologists have discussed more than once. As the closest parallel, a passage from the historian Olympiodorus (28 Müller [*FHG* IV 64] = Phot. *Bibl.* 80. 60b) is first invoked, describing the initiation procedure to which newcomers were subjected in fourth- and fifth-century Athenian schools. In endeavoring to prevent the novice from entering the deliberately locked bath, students shout, “Στᾶ, στᾶ, οὐ λούει”: as a parallel passage from Gregory Nazianzinus (*Orat.* 43. 16. 5) shows, this does not imply “the bath is not in operation”, but “there is no access”, “the bath is occupied”. Thus, the σχολαστικός, applying perverse logic, concludes that the visitors are not allowed into the bath because same “special event” is taking place there: in a completely empty bathhouse, these words sound absurd, which seems to restore the punchline to the joke.

В двух дублирующих друг друга анекдотах из позднеантичного сборника *Филогелос* (23; 130) схоластик (или “сидонский софист”), придя в баню к самому открытию, когда в ней никого нет, говорит: “Насколько я вижу, οὐ λούει”. Согласно интерпретации Андреаса Тирфельдера, возобладавшей у позднейших переводчиков, техническое выражение οὐ λούει (τὸ βαλανεῖον) означает “баня не работает”. При таком понимании, однако, шутка лишается соли: ведь даже если входные двери открыты, вид пустующей бани естественно может навести посетителя на мысль, что она по каким-то причинам не функционирует и помыться не получится. Авторы разбирают примеры конструкции (τὸ βαλανεῖον) λούει / *balineum lavat*, не единожды исследованной эпиграфистами и папирологами и означающей *свободный доступ* в баню. В качестве наиболее близкой параллели впервые привлекается пассаж из историка Олимпиодора (28 Müller [*FHG* IV, 64] = Phot. *Bibl.* 80, 60b), рассказывающий о процедуре инициации, которой студенты в Афинах IV–V вв. подвергали новоприбывших. Стараясь не пустить новичка в нарочно запертую баню, его специально подученные однокашники кричат “Στᾶ, στᾶ, οὐ λούει”, что, как показывает параллельное место из Григория Назианзина (*Orat.* 43, 16, 5), подразумевает не “баня не работает”, но “в баню нет доступа”, “в бане занято”. Таким образом, схоластик из *Филогелоса*, применяя извращенную логику, заключает, что посетителей не пустили в баню, поскольку там проходит “специальное мероприятие”: в совершенно пустом помещении эти слова звучат абсурдно, что, как представляется, возвращает анекдоту пуанту.

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