

The bathhouse in Denmark – an exhibition in the autumn of 2025 at Moesgaard

Friday 21st June 2024

Bathhouses are a well-known phenomenon of the Middle Ages. They served not only for personal hygiene and medical treatment by the barber-surgeon but also as social meeting places. The host offered food and drink, and prostitutes often plied their trade here as well. In earlier research, the decline of bathhouses at the end of the Middle Ages was linked to the spread of infectious diseases: the plague and syphilis were said to have spelled the end for the institution. However, recent research by Thomas Thomsen has shown that bathhouses existed well into modern times, with their demise primarily connected to climate change during the Little Ice Age, which led to a significant increase in the cost of fuel. The spread of private baths – especially among the upper class – finally contributed to the end of the old bathhouses in the early modern period. However, since the 19th century, there has been a renewed interest in bathing culture, with public swimming pools, saunas, and brothels contributing to a renaissance of the bathhouse in contemporary times. The seminar will present the idea of an exhibition that is set to open in collaboration with the Moesgaard Museum in the autumn of 2025 in the Udstillingslab. We look forward to a discussion of our ideas.



Location:

Moesgaard, 4205-123

Schedule:

13:00-13:15, Rainer Atzbach, Introduction
13:15-14:00, Thomas Samuel Thomsen, New research on bathhouses in Denmark
14:00-14:30, Rainer Atzbach, Exhibition concept
14:30 - Questions, snacks and drinks