Urban and to a lesser extent rural administrators endeavoured to supply certain basic requirements for the public including, most prominently, a supply of water, which was a basic necessity, as well as certain less-essential but desired amenities.

A: Public Water Supply

In cities, some water for private use was supplied from springs within or just outside the city or was carried from more distant springs via aqueducts. Such water was more likely to have been intended for communal than private use, for example, to supply communal bathhouses or for industrial use. In Jerusalem, the Gihon spring supplied a varying quantity of water to the Siloam pool—the quality of which was probably not very high, especially in the summer—and this would explain its use primarily for the tanning industry which was located around nearby Tanners’ Gate. The aqueduct that carried water from the reservoirs at Artas south of Bethlehem was still in working order in the Middle Ages and continued to supply water which was directed to the Temple Mount and probably used in the bathhouses located there. Another aqueduct carried water from the Patriarch’s Pool west of the city to a cistern under the northwest tower of the citadel and to the inner Patriarch’s Pool (Hezkiah’s Pool) in the Patriarch’s quarter. This latter pool supplied the Patriarch’s bathhouse (located south of the hospital). The open pools in and around Jerusalem would probably have supplied water for livestock and other purposes rather than for drinking water.

1 Even long after the Crusader period this aqueduct was still in working condition, Ludolf of Suchem writing in the first half of the fourteenth century notes that Jerusalem’s cisterns “are filled by water which is brought from Hebron by underground aqueducts and channels, which may be seen by the side of the road as one journeys along it”. See Ludolf, p. 97.
A spring referred to by Ibn Jubayr, the Ox Spring (Ain al-Bakr), was located near the eastern wall of the town of Acre. Is it possible that in the Crusader period water was also supplied to Acre from springs to the north of the city? Although there is, as yet, no clear archaeological evidence, this would seem a not entirely unreasonable suggestion considering the use in the Hellenistic period of an aqueduct to carry water from springs in the region of Kabri to the north-east as well as the aqueduct that was constructed in the period of Turkish rule. Both Frankish Tyre and Sidon had aqueducts. In Tyre an aqueduct carried water from Ras al-Ain to the south. According to Ibn Jubayr, there was a spring at the Land Gate and the city had numerous wells. As for Sidon, al-Idrissi wrote that water was brought down from the mountains by an aqueduct. One of the aqueducts in Caesarea, the high-level aqueduct, may still have been in use in the twelfth century, although the adjacent low-level aqueduct and the old channel in the high-level aqueduct had fallen into disrepair due to the continuing deterioration and erosion of the coastline north of the city.

B: Bathhouse and Bathing in Frankish Society

In European monastic houses bathing was generally discouraged and monks were limited to bathing three times a year. Only the sick were permitted more frequent use of the baths. The conventual bias against bathing was a fear of infringements to morality as much as anything else; but members of the lay community were also infrequent bathers, and here it may come down simply to the difficulty and expense involved in regular bathing. The thirteenth century Muslim geographer al-Qazwini (d. 1283) gave the Muslim view of western Frankish

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3 For an eighteenth century plan and drawing of this aqueduct by Pococke see N. Jidejian, Tyre through the Ages, Beirut, 1969, Plate 3. See also facing map, Plate 6.
4 Le Strange, 1890, p. 346.
6 In a brief description of bathing at Canterbury in the eleventh century, Lanfranc refers to the brothers assembling in the cloister, then, under charge of the senior monk taken to the bathhouse where each monk undressed, entered a cubicle behind a curtain, took a short bath in silence, then rose, dressed and returned to the cloister. See D. Knowles (ed.), The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc, London 1951, p. 10.