

Plautus, *Mostellaria* 157f.

Iam pridem ecastor frigida non lavi magis lubenter,
nec quom me melius, mea Scapha, rear esse defecatam.

defecatam seems always to have been taken to stand for *defaecatam*, 'with the dregs cleared', editors instancing the behaviour of verbs *quaero/inquiro* etc. But the form is peculiar to this passage, as is the sense, of human ablutions, until Prudentius. The metaphorical use of *defaecatus* with *animus/cor* (*Aul.* 79, *Pseud.* 760 respectively) seems distinct.

Given *defecatam* in the mss. only here, and further considering such examples as *Rhet. Her.* 4. 10. 14: *Nam ut forte hic in balneas venit, coepit, postquam perfusus est, defricari*; also *Naev. com.* 80: *facete et defricate* (which seems more likely to be a synonym of *laute* than of *salse*, suggested by *TLL*), *defricatam* suggests itself as a possible interpretation of the ms. reading at *Most.* 158. After her cold bath Philematium has been rubbed down by Scapha.

The suggestion has the secondary recommendation that it makes the thirteenth element of the iambic septenarius short, as it normally is, (*Questa*, p. 174).