

For 850 years since the building of the first aqueduct until the interruption caused by the Goth's invasion of Rome in 537a.D., the city was provided with a progressively improved waterworks system, which was no match, for its abundance and quality, for any other city in the world.

In the beginning, table water was collected in a network of underground passages, while surface water was collected in large brick basins. Population growth and the larger quantity of water needed to provide with water fountains and thermal baths in the patricians' villas, made it necessary to exploit sources far away from the city and to build large aqueducts, whose projects had obviously to cope with the land's varying altitude to keep the right pipelines' angle. So the path could run underground or sometimes be in open air, in trenches dug at land level or in elevated structures, such as those of the Acquedotto Caludio. Six of the ancient Rome's eleven aqueducts run in the Park's area: Anio Vetus, Marcia, Tepula, Julia, Anio Novus. Two of them, Tepula and Julia, took their waters from sources in the Colli Albani, while the others from the high path of the Aniene river or from the Simbruini and Prenestini mountains' sources. Rome's decadence marks the highest development point of its waterworks system; the Baths' decadence, the population

decrease and the city's administrative inefficiency, made repairation and maintenance works become rare and partial. Large Parts fell down and sprouting water created many swampy areas in Roman countryside, but the great arches that made Rome's landscape famous stood the test of time and of man. The use of the aqueducts was limited to those used in churches or temples. Some ditches were dug to collect water, but basically Romans used for over 1000 years the Tevere's unhealthy waters. Only at the end of 16th century Romans saw a working aqueduct again, thanks to Sixtus V, called by the citizens "er papa tosto" (the tough Pope) for his energy. After the historic minimum in the Middle Ages (17.000 people), Rome's population started to grow back, so the building of the Acquedotto Felice (named after the Pope's original name) was started: completed in less than 5 years it is 28.7 km long, 8 of which elevated. The area surrounding the aqueduct was left in that state of abandonment that appealed to many artists and tourists in the following centuries.



THE SEVEN AQUEDUCTS AND TOR FISCALE

