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# Ideology and technology in Rome's water supply: *castella*, the toponym AQVEDVCTIVM, and supply to the Palatine and Caelian hills

## with considerations on Frontinus 76.6 and several Marble Plan fragments

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Some of the less investigated fragments of the *Forma Urbis*, the Marble Plan of Rome engraved between A.D. 205 and 208, are among those with already identified topography. One such case concerns fragments 4a-b, which show part of the platform of the Temple of the Divine Claudius on the Caelian and the piers of an aqueduct running along a street, near a large irregular area labelled AQVE/DVCTI/VM (figs. 1 and 11). These fragments were identified around the middle of the 17th c. by the architect Andrea Bufalini, who studied the Marble Plan along with the monuments of Rome and reported his achievements to the antiquarian G. P. Bellori, who with great honesty credited the former in the first printed edition of the *Forma Urbis*.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, after more than three centuries (and several publications) those fragments still have much to tell us about Rome's water supply, and particularly about the aqueducts of the Caelian and the Palatine.

### The *Arcus Neroniani/Caelemontani* and the stone pressure pipes of the Caelian

The aqueduct piers and arches are visible only on fragment 4a. They were part of a branch of the *aqua Claudia* supposedly built after the fire of A.D. 64 to supply the Domus Aurea. Frontinus, appointed *curator aquarum* by Nerva in 97, called them *arcus Neroniani* (20.3). Nero tapped the aqueduct, completed in 52 by his predecessor Claudius, at the point where it turned 90° before reaching the Porta Maggiore (fig. 2): from there the water was channelled "on an arcade to the Temple of the Divine Claudius, so that it could be distributed from that point".<sup>2</sup> Several piers and arches of this branch, whose remains are still visible between the Porta Maggiore and SS. Giovanni e Paolo, were restored or rebuilt at the time of Septimius Severus and Caracalla. Their celebratory inscriptions, displayed in 201 over the main arches, called them *arcus Caelemontani* (CIL VI 1259) after their route across the ridge of the *mons Caelius*.<sup>3</sup>

Frontinus says (76.5-6) that the Caelian had been supplied by both the *Marcia* and *Julia* well before the introduction of the *aqua Claudia*:<sup>4</sup> the two earlier aqueducts ceased to distribute their water to that hill precisely after the building of the Neronian arches, and no *castella* (distribution tanks) were added, since the existing ones of the *Marcia* and *Julia* were re-used without changing the names of the original waters. Evidently from that moment onwards the lead pipes coming from those *castella* continued to deliver water to the Caelian and to the Palatine, even though the water belonged to the *aqua Claudia* alone. Strangely, Vespasian's inscription on the attic of the Porta Maggiore (CIL VI 1257) tells that the *aqua Claudia* was interrupted for 9 years, which means between 62 and 71, but does not mention the *Anio Novus*

- 1 G. P. Bellori, *Fragmenta vestigii veteris Romae* (Rome 1673) 2 and 11: "AQVEDVCTIVM. On this fragment Andrea Bufalini recognizes the aqueduct of the *Aqua Claudia*, whose remains are still visible on the Caelian towards the triumphal road and the Palatine".
- 2 Frontin. 76.6; cf. 20.3-5. See H. B. Evans, *Water distribution in ancient Rome. The evidence of Frontinus* (Ann Arbor 1997) 115-28.
- 3 See A. M. Colini, *Storia e topografia del Celio nell'antichità* (AttiPontAcc VII, 1944) 90-93; H. B. Evans, "Nero's Arcus Caelimontani," *AJA* 87 (1983) 392-99; P. J. Aicher, *Guide to the aqueducts of ancient Rome* (Wauconda 1995) 61-68.
- 4 The *aqua Marcia* reached the Caelian also through the *rivus Herculanus*, a channel coming from the area north of the Porta Maggiore and terminating *supra portam Capenam*; however, due to its low elevation, this water could not be delivered to the summit of the Caelian (Frontin. 19.8-9).