

Abstract Title: An Analysis of Roman Water Laws
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Abstract: This project will discuss a variety of factors that are involved with Roman water laws as well as their implication on the everyday lives of Roman citizens. Through an investigation of a range of primary sources, this project is intended to shed light on the inner workings of law intertwined with the functionality and views of water. The project itself is an overview of how laws were broken down, how cases were settled and to take a look at specific water laws and how they show the case by case aspect of settlements. It is intended to begin a narration of the laws of Roman culture and how they affected the day to day lives of Roman people. This project reveals the complexity of Roman water laws. The public, private, and nullis laws reveal the ways in which Roman culture held water in high esteem. The jurists ruled on issues of water and took the breaking of water laws very seriously.

Introduction: In Roman culture, water appeared in almost every category of culture and society. This research is geared towards addressing water laws can tell us about Roman culture, what do they explain to us about how the Romans viewed water, and what could this tell us about how the Romans viewed ownership/property? What do water laws tell us about how water was viewed in Roman culture?



Research Objective: It is our intent to better understand the Roman people by reviewing the laws and narratives that involved water. This will reveal how the Romans viewed water and the role that water played in their everyday lives.

Method: Our initial resource was “Fresh Water in Roman Law: Rights and Policy” by *Cynthia Bannon*, a secondary source from the Cambridge Press. From this secondary source, we were able to pull primary sources from the bibliography cited in sections of the journal that addressed subjects of interests within our project. From there we broke down laws into sections such as private, public and nullis. In addition to this, we investigated who decided to address these cases and formations of laws as well as review a variety of cases to get a better understanding of how laws were addressed on a case by case basis. We wanted to focus on primary sources as they would be able to reveal to us the opinions and first-hand experiences of Romans at the time. This would provide us with information of the impact of the Roman water laws.

Results: Through our research, we were able to address a few of our research questions, albeit very general sense. The Roman people had a very case by case approach when addressing laws and the appeals they pertained to. The views on water depended on location, servitudes, the form of water itself (rain water, rivers, lakes, etc.), waters function and ownership, or lack thereof. Cases of public vs. private vs. nullis would be addressed in property terms and any discrepancies pertaining to property of water would be evaluated in depth by Jurists, the legal experts of the time. These laws had a general layout which over time was revised and addressed by the legal system, which can be reviewed today through narration and official statements by those who reviewed them.

Conclusion: In conclusion our research led us to believe that Roman water laws were just as complex, yet structured as the society that they governed. This project is intended to be continued as we believe that it can contribute to further understanding the nympeum, its nearby structures, Roman culture, and potentially reveal themes through narration that could relate the distant past to contemporary society. We recognize that there is much to learn about the complex culture surrounding water in Roman society, and that this impacted the everyday lives of Roman citizens.

Term	Count	Trend
1 water	227	
2 rights	214	
3 right	98	
4 public	85	
5 local	77	
6 property	67	
7 withdrawal	67	
8 control	64	
9 private	58	
10 legal	57	
11 law	53	
12 aqueducts	52	
13 land	50	
14 access	49	

Freshwater came from a variety of sources, stre...

Freshwater came from a variety of sources, streams and springs as well as aqueducts. Much of the Roman law on freshwater concerns its supply, regulating rights to use it with a variety of legal institutions from public and private law (e.g. ownership, servitudes, interdicts). The study of freshwater has usually followed the legal categories, segregating the public water supply from water that was private property, and consequently segregating different types of evidence. In this paper varied evidence is analysed using the 'bundle' approach, an analytical framework from legal scholarship on rights in the environment in which water rights are not monolithic but are