

# Narrative Contexts of Ancient Roman Waterworks

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**Abstract:** The overall purpose of our research was to look at the written narratives of different scholars who talked about the different water structures, such as fountains, nymphaeum, and aqueducts, throughout ancient Rome. After examining these different narratives our goal is to be able to draw conclusions about the importance and the roles that water played in the lives of the Ancient Roman people.

**Method:** The method that we used throughout our research was to study primary source narratives from ancient Rome. While researching the narratives we looked for commonalities between the narratives in order to draw conclusions about the significance of water to the ancient Roman people. To help in our research of finding similarities through the narratives we used Voyant to show a visualization of the most common buzz words that were found throughout the narratives.

**Research Objectives:** The main objective of our research is to find the significance of water to the ancient Roman people during the first century. Through our research we want to prove that water had a symbolic meaning to the Romans that goes beyond the basic uses of it.

**Conclusion:** Water culture was very important to the ancient Roman people. The term was made in order to try and bring together the meanings and various relationships that the Roman people had with water. Romans viewed what has good being able to nourish and give life but also have negatives. They saw passed the basic needs for water and used it for other medicinal and utilitarian needs. Specifically, we found that water had extra significance in philosophy and poetry as it was also used as an art form and was incorporated in almost every aspect of life possible.

**Introduction:** Through our initial research we have found that many different fountains and nymphaeums have a similar structure to each other. In addition we have found that ancient Romans place a large importance on water throughout their society. Fountains were not just used as decorations throughout cities but were central to the water supply of the city. Through our research we looked at how the ancient Roman people viewed water and the significance it had to them beyond the basic uses of it. We will go about this by researching narrative histories that explain the purposes of water itself and its various structures. By reading narratives about different meanings of water throughout ancient Rome we will be able to compare them and find similarities about them and draw conclusions about their structures and the importance of water to the ancient Roman people. We will also use Voyant to understand the contexts of when Romans were talking about fountains, and see if there are any correlations between fountains and other aspects of Roman life.

**Results:** Through our research we found a variety of uses for water. We found religious and utilitarian needs for it. In addition, we found that part of the reason water was used in a symbolic way was because nature was important to society and water is found in nature so the two went together. We also found the medicinal purposes for water. Physicians would often prescribe water as medicine because it was seen as a healing source. This connects to another point we found about there being good and bad qualities of water. Good water was healing and gave life while bad water was seen as the opposite. The final point emphasized was the importance of moving water because this purified it, making it to be considered good water because that made it healthy and then could heal.

