

“AQUA AUGUSTA: A SYSTEM OF AQUEDUCTS FROM THE FIRST CENTURY B.C. SERVING THE GULF OF NAPLES”

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ABSTRACT

The Aqua Augusta is a complex system of aqueducts, 145 km long including secondary canals, conceived under the rule of the Roman Emperor Augusto. It was built during the second half of the First Century B.C., with the specific purpose to collect waters flowing from the *Serino* river springs in Campania region, near Benevento (Southern Italy) and convey them, mostly underground, to the small towns scattered along the gulf of Naples. These were ranging from Pompeii down to the harbor of *Misenum*, where a very important and strategic naval base was settled, because the largest Roman fleet, for that time, was there serving. The final destination of this sophisticated system of canals, underground conduits and bridges, thus built in order to supply drinking water to the vast population of the area, was a reservoir known as the “*Piscina Mirabilis*” (that would be *Magnificent Pool*) with a storage capacity of more than 12,000 m³ and thus capable of giving water to the more than 30.000 people living in the naval base of *Misenum* and serving the Roman fleet, at that time. Along with a description of the system, the paper makes a brief mention to the main cities served by the aqueduct and, particularly, describes the distribution of water in Pompeii.

KEYWORDS: aqueduct, *cuniculum* (tunnel), *Castellum Aquae*.

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RÉSUMÉ

L'*Aqua Augusta* est un système d'aqueduc avec un développement global de 145 km réalisés dans la seconde moitié du premier siècle avant JC, pour capter les eaux des sources de Serino dans la Région Campania (Naples) et les transmettre, principalement en souterrain, afin de fournir de l'eau potable à tous les villes dispersées dans le golfe de Naples, Pompéi principalement et le port militaire de Misène, base de la plus importante flotte romaine de l'époque. Ici, la livraison finale était un réservoir, la soi-disant *Piscina Mirabilis*, ayant une capacité de plus de 12.000 m³. En plus d'une description de l'aqueduc, dans la mémoire il y a de brèves notes sur les principales villes desservies par l'aqueduc et, en particulier, sur la répartition de l'eau dans Pompéi.