

the nominal diameter and the outlet orifices smaller, were enabled to balance the quantities received and distributed while having a considerable actual surplus which they sold on their own account. Many of the citizens also were not averse to tapping the state mains supplying the public institutions and fountains.

During the Dark Ages most of the aqueducts supplying Rome fell into decay, but some of them have been incorporated in later schemes. The most impressive remains are the stretches of arches which still stand, indicating in monumental fashion the vast extent of the ancient structures provided for the conveyance of the high level supply across the last broad depression of the *campagna* to the city.

The system of bringing water into the city by means of aqueducts had its disadvantages during a siege, as the attackers generally stopped the supply by cutting the aqueducts. This happened to Rome in the sixth century A.D., when the city was besieged by the Gothic king, Vitiges. It is recorded that "great discontent was aroused among the commons of Rome when the cutting of the aqueducts by the enemy deprived them of their baths, and stopped the water mills for grinding corn. Their two great privileges, free baths and free corn, were taken from them". Belisarius, the Roman defender, succeeded in using the current of the Tiber for grinding corn, placing mills in the river, where they continued to be a feature of the river scene until quite recent times.

Aqueducts figure largely in the life and history of most towns in Italy. The one great disadvantage of living at Ravenna, then a large naval base, in the time of the Emperor Augustus, was the scarcity of water for drinking purposes. Martial writes:

*I'd rather at Ravenna have a  
cistern than a vine,  
Since I could sell my water  
there much better than my  
wine;*

and again:

*That landlord at Ravenna is  
plainly but a cheat,  
I paid for wine and water, but  
he served wine to me neat.*

This weakness was overcome by Trajan, who built an aqueduct nearly twenty miles long, which was restored and repaired several times in the next few centuries. This aqueduct, of which some arches remain in the bed of the Ronco, seems to have run, following the course of the river, from near Forli, where there still remains a village called *S. Maria in Acquedotto*, to Ravenna.

A "circular letter" sent out by order of King Theodoric (circa 500) to farmers gives instructions for the maintenance of the Ravenna aqueduct. "The Aqueducts are an object of our special care. We desire you at once to root up all the shrubs growing in the Signine channel, which before long will become big trees scarcely to be hewn down with an axe and which interfere with the purity of water in the Aqueduct of Ravenna. Vegetation is the peaceful overthrower of buildings, the battering-ram which brings them to the ground, though the trumpets never sound for siege. Now we shall have Baths again that we may look upon with pleasure; water which will cleanse not stain; water after using which we shall not require to wash ourselves again; drinking water too, such as the mere sight of it will not take away all appetite for food."

The Fontana Aqueduct, which brought water from Serino to Naples, has played an important part in the history of the latter town. The same Belisarius who defended Rome against the Goths laid siege to Naples, then