

TERMINAL DISPLAY FOUNTAINS (*MOSTRE*) AND THE AQUEDUCTS OF ANCIENT ROME

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THE CITY OF ROME has had a long-standing tradition of providing each of its aqueducts with an ornamental public fountain that is specifically designated as that aqueduct's display.¹ Such a fountain is called a *mostra* in Italian, a quasi-technical term that in English often goes untranslated, or is rendered as "terminal fountain." What makes a fountain a *mostra* is not essentially its size or splendor, but its specific designation as the fountain that is a public memorial to the whole achievement of the aqueduct (Pl. 1A). Sometimes inscriptions and decoration support this designation and elaborate the achievement with information and allusion to the builder or the benefits of the aqueduct's water. In other cases a fountain is a *mostra* simply by virtue of an inaugural ceremony and its accepted designation as a particular aqueduct's display. (As a rule, the earlier the *mostra*, the more overt its rhetoric).

Prevalent among the authorities on both the fountains and the aqueducts of Rome is the assumption that this same strong tradition of *mostre* was alive in the city of ancient Rome as well. Lanciani, who began the modern era of aqueduct research, assumes this tradition in positing *mostre* for the

¹I wish to thank the anonymous reviewers of this article for their helpful suggestions and corrections, and Hirmer Verlag for their kind permission to reproduce the photographs of coins.

The following works will be cited by author's name or abbreviated title: *Il Trionfo dell'acqua: acque e acquedotti a Roma, IV sec. A.C.-XX sec.* (Rome 1986) = *Trionfo*; T. Ashby, *The Aqueducts of Ancient Rome* (Oxford 1935); D. Cattalini, "Aqua Antoniniana," in *Trionfo* 57-59; H. Evans, "Agrippa's Water Plan," *AJA* 86 (1982) 401-411; J. P. C. Kent, *Roman Coins* (New York 1978); R. Lanciani, "I commentarii di Frontino intorno le acque e gli acquedotti," *AttiLinc* ser 3: *Memorie della Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* 4 (1880), published shortly thereafter as *Topografia di Roma antica. I commentarii di Frontino intorno le acque e gli acquedotti* (Rome 1880) (page numbers for the journal are followed by page numbers for the monograph in parentheses); H. V. Morton, *The Fountains of Rome* (New York 1966); P. Pace, *Gli acquedotti di Roma* (Rome 1986); J. A. Pinto, *The Trevi Fountain* (New Haven 1986); L. Quilici, "Gli Acquedotti di Roma," *Archeo* 53 (1989) 50-97; G. Tedeschi Grisanti, "I 'Trofei di Mario': Il Ninfteo dell'acqua Giulia sull'Esquilino" (Rome 1977); M. Stuart, "The Denarius of M'. Aemilius Lepidus and the Aqua Marcia," *AJA* 49 (1945) 226-251; M. G. Tolomeo, "Le fontane di piazza del Popolo e la mostra del nuovo acquedotto Vergine elevato," in *Trionfo* 240-243; E. B. Van Deman, *The Building of the Roman Aqueducts* (Washington 1934); J. B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture* (Harmondsworth 1981).

Marcia and the Traiana on the Capitoline and the Janiculum respectively.² Both T. Ashby and E. B. Van Deman, in their classic studies that appeared in the 1930s, accept Lanciani's location of a monumental fountain for the Traiana; Van Deman also locates a display on the Capitoline, and indicates the possibility of one elsewhere.³ Most recently, L. Quilici, one of Italy's leading authorities on ancient Roman topography and aqueducts, also locates *mostre* at the end of the Traiana, the Marcia, and the Anio Vetus,⁴ and D. Cattalini hypothesizes a *mostra* for the Aqua Antoniniana branch of the Marcia.⁵ In her detailed study of the "Trophies of Marius" fountain, Grisanti assumes the existence of *mostre* for ancient aqueducts, as does Pinto in his study of the Trevi Fountain.⁶ To my knowledge no one has argued against these common assumptions, and in fact, from such scholarly works the same opinion has spread through more popular treatments of Rome's water, as well as to works on other subjects.⁷ In this paper I will examine the evidence for the existence of such fountains in the ancient capital, and will argue that the predictable practice of furnishing each of Rome's aqueducts with a *mostra* began not in antiquity, as is commonly assumed, but in the post-classical period.

The ancient world, both Greek and Roman, was obviously replete with impressive fountains, generally known as *nymphaea*.⁸ On occasion, an ancient *nymphaeum* fits the preceding definition of a *mostra*: that is to say, it is not only an especially impressive ornamental fountain, but specifically celebrates, whether by inscription or statuary, the aqueduct behind it. In the African city Lambaesis, for instance, inscriptions from the *nymphaeum* commemorate several restorations of both the fountain and the aqueducts

²Lanciani 311 (99) and 376-377 (164-165). Lanciani's opinions, and those of the rest of the writers surveyed here, are treated in more detail in the body of this paper.

³Ashby 306; Van Deman 67, 139, 332, 338, 342. Van Deman does not use the term *mostra*, but speaks of "terminal fountain" or "official terminus." With such terms she is not simply referring to one of the aqueduct's distribution towers or even its major reservoir or distribution point in the city, for which she specifically uses the term "terminal reservoir" (57) or "general distributing reservoir" (341).

⁴Quilici 66, 72, 93.

⁵Cattalini 58.

⁶Grisanti 44, 45; Pinto 19.

⁷E.g., Pace; Morton; D. J. Hamblin, "The Waters of Rome," *Smithsonian* (Sept. 1992) 94; and P. V. Hill, *The Monuments of Ancient Rome as Coin Types* (London 1989) 68-69, 106.

⁸See N. Neuerburg, *L'architettura delle fontane e dei ninfei nell'Italia antica* (Naples 1965, *Memorie dell'Accademia di archeologia, lettere e belle arti di Napoli* 5) and F. Glaser, "Brunnen und Nymphaen," in *Geschichte der Wasserversorgung 2: Die Wasserversorgung antiker Städte* (Mainz am Rhein 1987) 105-131. On terminology, see S. Settis, "'Esedra' e 'ninfeo' nella terminologia architettonica del mondo romano," *ANRW* 1.4, 661-745, and Glaser 118.

that supplied the city.⁹ On a much smaller scale, a fountain in Urbino with a statue of Oceanus bore an inscription by a local official commemorating his construction of both the aqueduct and the fountain.¹⁰ It was more often the case, however, that a nymphaeum had no such rhetorical or symbolic connection to its supplying aqueduct. The Septizodium, for instance, was probably the most monumental fountain in Rome, but, like the Nymphaeum Alexandri (Aquae Juliae) discussed below, it did not serve to commemorate an aqueduct, however much water it must have derived from one of them.¹¹ The same is true of the nearby nymphaeum built by Nero against the podium originally designed for his uncle Claudius' temple. The water for this came from a branch aqueduct of the Aqua Claudia (the Arcus Neroniani) that was under 2 kilometers in length. Nor did the nymphaeum of Side (in Pamphylia), which rivaled the Septizodium in monumentality and ornament, serve as a *mostra* for the town's aqueduct.¹² The sculpture on it made no special allusion to water, nor do the inscriptions refer to the aqueduct. The restorers of the aqueduct were in fact honored by statues with inscriptions on their bases, but these were placed in various quarters of the city and had no connection to the great nymphaeum or the other known fountains of the town.¹³ Whereas the essential feature of a *mostra* is that it commemorates an aqueduct, Ward-Perkins describes the grand nymphaea especially of Asia Minor as "essentially elaborate columnar facades, put up to close a vista or simply to mask what lay behind It became a favorite device of civic planners in the smaller cities, notably those of southern Asia Minor, where it became almost a symbol of status, comparable to the possession of a colonnaded street."¹⁴ There is in sum no evidence that a *mostra* tradition existed anywhere in the Roman empire such as would lead one to speculate that such a tradition might also be present in Rome itself. To commemorate an aqueduct and its builder with an ornamental fountain was clearly an *option* for city planners and patrons in the Roman empire, but most ancient ornamental fountains made no allusion to the aqueducts that fed them and were not built to glorify them.

⁹ *CIL* 8.2657–63.

¹⁰ *CIL* 11.6068 = Dessau 5782. See Grisanti 20–21.

¹¹ The rhetoric of the Septizodium apparently revolved around its planetary symbolism. Severus built no new aqueducts in Rome, and there is no indication that the Septizodium commemorated Severus' restoration of the Claudia (which aqueduct may or may not have supplied its water). See Ward-Perkins 132–133. L. Richardson, in *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore 1992) 350, doubts that the Septizodium ever had or was meant to have water.

¹² For a description of Side's aqueduct, nymphaeum, and other urban fountains see A. M. Mansel, *Die Ruinen von Side* (Berlin 1963) 49–76.

¹³ Mansel (above, n. 12) 24, 51.

¹⁴ Ward-Perkins 299.

The real model, however, on the basis of which scholars so frequently attribute *mostre* to the aqueducts of ancient Rome is not the ancient nymphaeum, but the *mostre* of modern Rome. To clarify, therefore, just what it is that the commentators have in mind when they locate a *mostra* in ancient Rome, a brief review of this continuing tradition is necessary before I turn to the specific claims for *mostre* in ancient Rome.

Of the seven major aqueducts serving contemporary Rome, six are furnished with a *mostra* recognized as the locus of that aqueduct's achievement. (Of the functioning aqueducts, only the Appio-Alessandrina aqueduct, built in the 1960s to supply the neighborhoods sprawling to the southeast of Rome, has no such singular fountain display.) Admittedly, the most recent of the *mostre* in Rome argues for some decline in the tradition, and it has not assumed the stature of its predecessors. In 1949, the completion of a major branch of the Acqua Peschiera was celebrated with the inauguration of a fountain in the Piazzale degli Eroi, at the foot of Monte Mario. Perhaps because this fountain lacks monumentality and often water, there is currently some confusion over the Peschiera's *mostra*. The other claimant is likewise a largely unnoticed fountain, located in the Piazzale Ostiense, in front of the electric and water agency that utilizes the Peschiera's water.¹⁵ The former fountain can thus claim legitimacy by virtue of a solemn ceremony of dedication, and the latter by its present position of utilitarian significance. The uncertainty suggests that the tradition may have run its course, or perhaps just waits to be revived with a notable fountain.

The Acqua Vergine Nuovo, completed in the 1930s, is displayed in a fountain that dominates the slope of the Pincian Hill above the Piazza del Popolo. The majority of the square's monumentalization had actually been designed in the early nineteenth century by Valadier, who envisioned fountains in the top tier of the Pincian slope design but never supplied them with water. This was therefore an opportune location for the Vergine Nuovo's fountain, and although not originally designed with such in mind, the Pincian fountain eventually came to serve as the Vergine Nuovo's *mostra*.¹⁶

The *mostra* for the Acqua Marcia Pia is the Fountain of the Naiads in the Piazza della Repubblica, inaugurated in 1901 at the head of the newly built Via Nazionale. This prominent site was chosen over that of an earlier provisional fountain dismantled for the construction of the Termini station.¹⁷

¹⁵G. Bardi, "La fontana di piazzale degli Eroi: La fontana di piazzale Ostiense," in *Trionfo* 314-315.

¹⁶Tolomeo, "Fontane" 240-243.

¹⁷L. Cardilli Alloisi, "La mostra dell'Acqua Pia Antica Marcia," in *Trionfo* 255-258.

These three modern aqueducts and their display fountains are matched by three earlier pairs of aqueducts and *mostre* from the Renaissance and Baroque periods.¹⁸ The most recent of these is the Trevi fountain. Its function as a display of the waters of the refurbished ancient Aqua Virgo is made explicit by both the inscription on the attic and two relief sculptures on the facade. The attic inscription reads: "Pope Clement XII adorned the pure and plenteous Aqua Virgo with magnificent decoration in 1735." The two plaques located above the lateral niches depict in low relief scenes from the discovery of the aqueduct and its original construction under Agrippa's direction.¹⁹

The Acqua Paola, inaugurated in 1612 during the pontificate of Paul v, has its well-known *mostra*, the Fontana Paola, on the Janiculum near the American Academy (Pl. 1A). The inscription (with one error) describes the achievement: '*Paulus Quintus Pontifex Maximus aquam in agro Braccianensi saluberrimis e fontibus collectam veteribus aquae Alsietinae ductibus restitutis novisque additis xxxv ab milliaro duxit*. Actually, it was the Aqua Traiana, not the less savory Alsietina, that the Pope restored, drawing on some of the same ancient sources as the Traiana, reusing much of its route and some of its material.²⁰

Rome's first new post-classical aqueduct, the Acqua Felice, is commemorated by the fountain of Moses two blocks northwest of the Piazza della Repubblica in Largo S. Susanna.²¹ Both the inscription on the enormously proportioned attic and the statues in the central and side niches refer to the accomplishment of the aqueduct, built under Pope Sixtus v (1585-90). The statue of Moses in the center alludes to the time the prophet miraculously caused water to flow in the desert when his thirsty followers were threatening to stone him (Exodus 17; in contrast to the Trevi fountain, the statuary of this *mostra* is Biblical rather than classical, and avoids pagan allusion). Like the Fontana Paola, this monumental fountain is also part of a distribution center for the water. Behind and below the giant facades are quarters for the water men and valves for the control of water branching out in underground conduits from the *mostra*.

Finally, there once existed along the north side of the Trevi piazza a modestly decorated fountain with inscription inaugurated by Pope Nicholas v in 1453, who also carried out some improvements on the Aqua Virgo channel.

¹⁸For a general treatment of these fountains, see C. D'Onofrio, *Le Fontane di Roma* (Rome 1957) and Morton.

¹⁹There is no indication that the site of the Trevi fountain was distinguished by a fountain in antiquity. The arcade of the Virgo simply turned to the west at this spot and continued on to its terminus at the Saepta Julia. See Pinto 18.

²⁰Tolomeo, "La mostra dell'Acqua Paola," in *Trionfo* 250-254.

²¹N. Cardano, "La mostra dell' Acqua Felice," in *Trionfo* 243-250.

In this structure the function of a terminal water-tower and main distribution point predominated in appearance over the fountain's decorative and commemorative features, but it was "a modest forerunner of the Trevi."²²

This then is the prominent tradition that many writers on the aqueducts imagine to be a continuation of an equally consistent and predictable practice in *classical* Rome. Since, however, the evidence from elsewhere in the ancient world does not warrant the presumption of a *mostra* at the end of every aqueduct, it is necessary to examine the archaeological and literary evidence for each of the reputed *mostre* in Rome individually. *Mostre* have been assigned to the Aqua Virgo at the Saepta Julia,²³ to the Anio Vetus somewhere on the Esquiline,²⁴ and to the Aqua Antoniniana (a branch of the Marcia) outside the Baths of Caracalla,²⁵ but these monuments are almost entirely hypothetical, and there is little or no evidence to consider. Their attribution rests primarily on our expectation of a *mostra*. The Aqua Claudia and the Anio Novus ended at a large distribution tower on the Esquiline. This *castellum* (as the water towers for the distribution of water were called) is now destroyed, but a Piranesi drawing preserves the look of this ruin in the seventeenth century, and Lanciani studied its still sparser ruins in the late 1800s.²⁶ Neither study suggests that this was once an ornamental showpiece, nor has anyone to my knowledge considered it a *mostra*. In the case of two of the city's ancient aqueducts, however, the Marcia and the Traiana, there is indeed some evidence that needs to be considered in more detail. There is also a large monumental fountain (The Nymphaeum Alexandri, on the west side of the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele in Rome) that complicates the debate and needs to be discussed. I will examine each of these cases in turn and then look at what Frontinus has to contribute to the topic, before closing with an observation relating the imposing presence of ancient baths in the capital to the *mostra* tradition.

From Frontinus (1.7) we know that a branch of the Aqua Marcia brought water to the Capitoline (most likely by means of an inverted siphon between the Quirinal and Capitoline hills). The distribution system of the water on the Capitoline is unknown, but it would not be an unreasonable assumption that there was at least one sizeable distribution tower (*castellum*), and

²²Pinto 18, 28.

²³Pace 144. Ashby (180–182) mentions no evidence for a fountain of the Virgo near the Saepta or elsewhere along its course. He states, in fact, that "we cannot point to remains of a terminal *castellum*."

²⁴Pace 122 and Quilici 66. The evidence here is that the Anio Vetus ended on the Esquiline, and that descriptions of the Esquiline in late antiquity refer to a Lacus Orphei on the hill. None of the ruins, however, found in connection with the Anio Vetus suggests a *mostra*. To link, as Pace does, the Lacus Orphei (of unknown design and only roughly known location) with the *mostra* of the Anio Vetus is highly uncertain.

²⁵Cattalini 58.

²⁶Piranesi's etching is reproduced in Van Deman 251; Lanciani 362 (150).

several public fountains. Is there anything to suggest that this *castellum* or one of the (likewise hypothetical) fountains was a *mostra*?

There are no physical remains to suggest just where the Capitoline *mostra* might have been or what it looked like. The best evidence suggesting that a *castellum* or one of the fountains, besides distributing or dispensing water, also celebrated in some fashion the Aqua Marcia or its builder, appears in the text of a diploma from Nero to Cattaui (CIL 3, p. 846), which refers to a statue of Quintus Marcius Rex, and locates it behind the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus.²⁷ There is no mention of a fountain in connection with this statue, but the assumption is generally made that the statue was part of or located near the terminal *castellum* or fountain on the Capitoline.²⁸ In favor of this topographical connection between the statue and a fountain is the prominence that the construction of the aqueduct assumed among the achievements of Marcius Rex and his gens. This prominence is nicely shown on a coin minted by a later member of the family (L. Marcius Philippus in 56 B.C.), bearing on the obverse the head of king Ancus Marcius; the reverse shows images of a horse and rider placed above an arcade of the Aqua Marcia (Pl. 1B).²⁹

The assumption of at least a grand water display in connection with this statue, however, is rendered less likely by its absence as a place of reference, both in Nero's diploma and on the family coin. The diploma locates the statue with reference to the temple, rather than by what would have been a well-known fountain to which the statue belonged. Furthermore, the coin, in depicting the achievement of the aqueduct, represents it not with a fountain, but rather with a series of arches, such as carried the Marcia

²⁷Lanciani 311 (99).

²⁸Van Deman (69, 139) talks of an "official terminus" here, and Quilici (72) of a "fontana terminile." The Marcia delivered water to ten regions of the city and had 51 *castella*, with its primary reservoir and distribution tank on the Viminal (Van Deman 72). To say then that the Marcia had an "official" terminus on the Capitoline assumes that it did so by virtue of a special *mostra*, since the Capitoline as a destination was one of many, and its *castella* were secondary. As a destination Frontinus (1.7) does indeed single the Capitoline out, but only with reference to the dispute between the builders and the Sibylline books, which forbade Marcia waters on the hill.

²⁹The photograph of the coin (Pl. 1B) can be found in Kent, coin 73. Photographs of other versions of the same coin can be found in Stuart (238). The title of Stuart's article refers to a coin (91-89 B.C.) on which the moneyer, of the Aemilian gens, shows one of his ancestors on a horse above the arcade of the Marcia (227). According to Stuart's interesting interpretation of the references to the Marcia's construction (243-251), the identification of the Marcia as primarily the work of Marcius Rex was not always accepted. This uncertain state of affairs over the aqueduct's genesis and name, evident in times both before and after Frontinus' treatise, would have been less likely if a prominent monumental fountain to Rex's achievement had stood right behind the Temple to Jupiter. An equestrian statue, on the other hand, could easily be lost in the herd, or countered with another statue and *cursus honorum*.

channel across the campagna. The equestrian statue portrayed on the coin (assuming, as is often the case, that the equestrian image on the coin refers to a public statue) may well be the statue on the Capitoline referred to in Nero's diploma.³⁰ If such is the case, it would be highly unlikely that the statue was part of a monumental fountain, only to be abstracted from this fountain on the coin and placed on top of an arcade from a different part of the aqueduct.³¹

In summation, neither the coin, nor the diploma, nor any physical remains provide any grounds for assuming that a *mostra* existed on the Capitoline. The coin, in fact, suggests the contrary.

Perhaps the best evidence for a *mostra* in ancient Rome concerns the Aqua Traiana. Virtually all commentators accept Lanciani's judgment that the aqueduct ended on the Janiculum in a "bellissima *mostra*."³² This conclusion is drawn from ruins located on the Janiculum, and from a coin struck in Trajan's reign.

The ruins, documented in the last century and since destroyed, were located on the Janiculum, just below the American Academy and not far from the conspicuous *mostra* for the Acqua Paola located one block to the north.³³ The plan given by A. W. Van Buren and G. P. Stevens shows the arrangement (Pl. 2A), whereby the known sections of the Traiana channel (A, B, and C) are in line with the ruins (shaded D on the diagram) destroyed to build the Villa Spada.³⁴ There was nothing about these ruins, however, as they were described in the last century, to suggest that they were the basis of a display fountain rather than of an unadorned water tower (of which there were hundreds in the city), or of some other installation connected with an aqueduct, such as the mills found just up-channel (F).³⁵ One must also reckon with the likelihood that whatever struc-

³⁰This identity is accepted by T. Mommsen in the *Bulletino dell'Istituto di Correspondenza Archeologica* (Rome 1845) 119 ff., Stuart 251, and M. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage* (Cambridge 1974) 1.449 (coin 425). Crawford unaccountably gives Frontinus 1.7 as a reference for the unfounded statement that "a statue of Rex was placed on the aqueduct."

³¹The design of the coin's arches (closely analyzed by Stuart 237-240) and the exaggerated scale of the equestrian statue preclude the possibility that the coin actually portrays the *mostra*; none of the commentators suggests this.

³²Lanciani 376-377 (164-165). In his identification of the Traiana *mostra*, Lanciani is preceded by A. Nibby (*Analisi storico-topografico-antiquaria della carta de' Dintorni di Roma*² [Rome 1848] 3.263), and followed by Ashby (306) and Van Deman (332, 338).

³³This proximity is probably as influential as any evidence in creating the opinion that a beautiful ancient *mostra* stood at this spot.

³⁴A. W. Van Buren and G. P. Stevens, "The Aqua Traiana and the Mills on the Janiculum," *MAAR* 1 (1917) 137-139, at 138.

³⁵This mill installation is labelled F on the plan. Recent construction in the area, however, has shown that the mills are misplaced in Lanciani's sketches, on which this plan is based, and that they actually lie astride the main channel, a little to the south of where Lanciani placed them on his map. See L. Richardson, "The Aqueducts of the

ture arose at this spot (D) was located just in front of a "major industrial establishment."³⁶

What creates the vision, however, of a "bellissima mostra" on these ruins is an attractive coin struck in Trajan's reign commemorating the completion of the new aqueduct (Pl. 2B). At the center of the reverse the water-god reclines, representing the Aqua Traiana. His left elbow is propped on what appears to be an urn; in his right hand he holds a reed. Several courses of stone form the base for the god and for the short columns supporting the arch above him. The outside rim of the arch is decorated with a row of plants, shorter and denser versions of the reed in the water god's hand. These images on the coin are commonly taken to refer to an actual fountain built in commemoration of the aqueduct. On the face of it, this appears plausible. A river-god could, and often did, recline in ancient fountains, holding some symbol of growth and plenty. This god might well be set in a niche and perhaps on the top of some stairs (the courses of stone on the coin?), down which water might cascade. Perhaps the water of the fountain poured from the urn on which the god props himself. The archway was presumably ringed with vegetative antefixes.

Another reading of the coin, however, must be considered. Not all human figures and designs on coins represent statues or architectural structures. Mattingly in fact says that "Trajan's reverse types are mainly of a general character. The custom of adopting some personification, such as Fortuna, Abundantia, or Pax as the reverse type was developed more extensively than under the Flavians."³⁷ Two other coins struck under Trajan are particularly relevant, though personifying in this case not abstractions like Fortuna but a river and a road. One personifies the Danube (Pl. 3A) with a reclining god very similar in form and symbolism (the reed in right hand, the urn by the left) to the reclining god of the aqueduct.³⁸ Admittedly, the Aqua Traiana coin has more architectural detail, but in light of the difference between a river and an aqueduct, both the stone base and the vault (features absent in the Danube coin) make good sense in the personification of an aqueduct. Another coin represents the Via Traiana with a reclining god who holds a wheel (Pl. 3B).³⁹ Unless one argues that this was a road-*mostra*, it is clearly conceivable that a non-architectural coin was struck for the aqueduct as well.

Considering the design of the Aqua Traiana coin in further detail, I would suggest that it makes better sense as an independent personification than as

Transiberim and the American Academy in Rome," in Norma Goldman (ed.), *Classical Society: American Academy in Rome Newsletter* (Dec. 1990) 6-8, at 8, and M. Bell, "The Mills of the Janiculum," *ibid.* 9.

³⁶Bell (above, n. 35) 9.

³⁷H. Mattingly and E. A. Sydenham, *Roman Imperial Coinage 2: Vespasian to Hadrian* (London 1926) 237.

³⁸Kent, coin 260.

³⁹Kent, coin 261. A photograph also appears in Mattingly (above, n. 37) pl. VIII.146.

an architectural copy of a fountain. As an overall design, it would have been an unusual fountain, with such a slender and isolated arch. The vegetative antifixes on its curving rim would suggest that this odd arch was not just a section of a larger traditional structure (such as the triumphal-arch facade of the Nymphaeum Alexandri, or the theater-facade of the Septizodium). One might argue that this presumed fountain was more like a grotto hollowed into a hill, and the arch merely its frame. There were no signs of a grotto, however, around the ruins reported to be the site of the fountain. But the dots in the niche above the god are perhaps the oddest feature of the coin, if it represents a fountain. It seems unlikely that the coin would attempt such detail as the coffering of the vault, or the spray of the water.

On the other hand, as a personification of the aqueduct, all the details of the coin work rather well. The curve of the arch denotes water that is covered, in contrast to the uncovered water-god of the Danube.⁴⁰ The vegetation outside the channel symbolizes the life the aqueduct nourishes (perhaps like the flower above the arcade of the Marcius coin), and the dots are droplets designating not a feature of a fountain but the water that nourishes the life represented by the vegetative designs.

While not disproving the existence of a fountain resembling this coin's design, these design features and the representational style of other coins of the period suggest a strong possibility that the coin does not refer to a fountain at all. And in light of the uncertain ruins on the Janiculum, the upshot of the evidence is this: with the existence of a *mostra* tradition taken as axiomatic, it is possible, though unlikely, that the coin represented the Traiana *mostra*, and that the ruins on the Janiculum locate the *mostra*; without this tradition as a given, however, the evidence is slim, and the existence of a *mostra* (or any grand ornamental fountain) in connection with the Aqua Traiana remains very much a conjecture.

This brings me to the ancient fountain located at the east end of the Piazza di Vittorio Emanuele. This fountain, now reduced to its massive brick and concrete core, has had numerous names and still lacks a solid title. Originally named the Oceani Solum, it was probably called the Nymphaeum Alexandri.⁴¹ Currently it is often called either the Trophies of Marius, its medieval misnomer, or the Nymphaeum Aquae Juliae.⁴² This last name

⁴⁰If one is looking for architectural referents, the channel of the Aqua Traiana has in fact some similarities with the coin's design. Rather than being topped with a flat stone slab, the channel, as can be seen from the Van Buren's plan, had a profile much like the coin's arch, with a characteristic cement hump for its cover.

⁴¹For a history of the fountain's names in the past, see Grisanti 14–16. For a different identification of the Nymphaeum Alexandri (a name which is mentioned in the ancient Catalogues of monuments), see Lanciani 386–387 (174–175).

⁴²On F. Scagnetti's map, *Roma urbs imperatorum aetate* (Rome 1985), the fountain is labeled "Lacus Orphei?."

(which is not an ancient one) is also probably erroneous. Clearly the structure was a large ornamental fountain, a *nymphaeum*, but there is currently some dispute over which of Rome's aqueducts supplied this fountain, the Julia or the Anio Novus.⁴³ This uncertainty over the fountain's name, however, has no bearing on the issue of whether the fountain was a *mostra*. Both the Julia and the Anio Novus were built two centuries before this fountain, which is dated by coins and construction techniques to the reign of Alexander Severus. This emperor had no reason to celebrate either of these aqueducts. To supply the fountain a short feeder branch was built from one of the main aqueducts, but this was a modest piece of work, serving rather than deserving a monumental display.⁴⁴ Alexander Severus did indeed build a new and substantial aqueduct, the Aqua Alexandrina (ca 226 A.D.). This aqueduct, however, entered the city at far too low a level to supply this fountain.⁴⁵ Since it would be odd if this fountain boasted either of waters other than its own, or of the relatively insignificant feeder branch that fed it, it is safe to exclude this structure as an example of a *mostra* for any of the aqueducts. The *Nymphaeum Alexandri* was an ornamental fountain that glorified the Severan family and probably also functioned as a distribution tower, but it was not the special and singular display celebrating an aqueduct.

The confusion that this fountain continues to cause with regard to the existence of a *mostra* tradition is due more to vague terminology than to ignorance about its relation to Rome's aqueducts. Grisanti calls the *Nymphaeum Alexandri* a *mostra*, which she equates with Frontinus' term *munera*; a *munus* she defines as a "parola che ben esprimeva il significato di opera pubblica 'donata' alla popolazione dallo Stato."⁴⁶ In this extended sense, then, the *Nymphaeum Alexandri* would be a *mostra*: Grisanti is simply using the term *mostra* in a wider sense to refer to all monumental display fountains (*munera*), and not just those designated as the special, singular display of an aqueduct. But because the word *mostra* is so firmly connected with the post-classical fountains that have given the word its stricter sense, a loose use of the term makes for trouble. Elsewhere Grisanti herself gives the word its narrower meaning: "Era consuetudine che gli acquedotti avessero una loro mostra dell' acqua, cioè una fontana che in genere era costruita attorna e sopra i grossi castelli

⁴³A succinct summary of the evidence can be found in Evans 407.

⁴⁴Though well documented in the latter half of its route, this arcade has since been demolished, except for six arches on Via Pepe, between the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II and the train station: R. Lanciani, *Forma Urbis Romae* (Rome 1990) map 24.

⁴⁵The Alexandrina channel's elevation at Porta Maggiore was 45 m above sea level; the channel delivering water to the *Nymphaeum Alexandri* was 64 m.

⁴⁶G. Tedeschi Grisanti, "Le mostre degli antichi acquedotti: I 'Trofei di Mario'." in *Trionfo* 126-135, at 126.

d'acqua per mascherarli, come l'acqua Traiana (oggi Paola) che aveva la sua mostra sul Gianicolo; o l'acqua Vergine a fontana di Trevi."⁴⁷ With a firm grasp of the facts, Grisanti does not go on to identify the Nymphaeum Alexandri with a *mostra* in this latter sense, but her equation here of ancient fountains with post-classical *mostre* (offered as an axiom rather than a conclusion) leads her to reason that the Aqua Alexandrina must have had a *mostra* somewhere, even if it clearly was not the Nymphaeum Alexandri.⁴⁸

One final factor that deceptively draws the Nymphaeum Alexandri into league with the later tradition of *mostre* is the influence this fountain may have exercised in the design of some of the great post-classical *mostre* (specifically, the Paola, Felice, and Trevi.)⁴⁹ Nor can it be ruled out that the Popes and architects *thought* they were perpetuating a tradition of ancient Rome.⁵⁰ But this is a fine example of creative misinterpretation. It warrants no assumption that a *mostra* tradition existed in ancient Rome. If such a tradition did in fact exist, the Nymphaeum Alexandri is not an example of it.

Two other arguments lend support to my contention that there was not a tradition of *mostre* in ancient Rome. The first is an *ex silentio* argument—specifically, Frontinus' silence on the matter. To be sure, he mentions a special class of fountains which he calls *munera* (1.3), which has provided the occasion for further confusion in the naming and understanding of ancient fountains.⁵¹ Defined as *cultiores salientes*, the *munera* form a class of

⁴⁷Grisanti 44.

⁴⁸"In effetti l'acqua Alessandrina doveva avere una mostra" (Grisanti 45). The comparison of the Nymphaeum to a post-classical *mostra*, though in some aspects justified, leads Pinto to the misleading claim that "like the Trevi, the Nymphaeum of Alexander Severus was the terminus and grand urban display of a major Roman aqueduct also built by Agrippa" (19).

⁴⁹See Pinto 18, Grisanti (above, n. 46) 126, and Tolomeo, "Mostra" (above, n. 20) 250.

⁵⁰The feeder branch leading into the back of the Nymphaeum would have encouraged this assumption, since, in the general ignorance about the course and dating of the ancient channels only then beginning to be dispersed by archaeology and the rediscovery of Frontinus' text, this short but imposing feeder branch no doubt appeared to be the end of an independent aqueduct.

⁵¹An uncertain text just where Frontinus (1.3) glosses his use of the term *munera* is part of the problem. The Loeb edition of *The Stratagems, and the Aqueducts of Rome*, tr. by C. Bennett (Cambridge, Mass. 1980, orig. 1925) reads [*munera*]*—ita enim cultiores appellant*. This is translated, "ornamental fountains (*munera*, as the more polite call them)"—a translation which says more about polite society than about the fountains. The manuscript reading is *ita enim cultiores adpellantur* ("as the more decorated [fountains] are called"), which has been emended to supply a noun for *cultiores*, yielding in C. Kunderewicz's Teubner edition of Frontinus, *De aquaeductu urbis Romae* (Leipzig 1973) [*munera*]*—ita enim cultiores <salientes> adpellantur*, or "... *munera*, as the more decorative fountains are called." See Evans 402–403.

especially ornamental fountains.⁵² But Frontinus reports (1.78) that there were 39 *munera* in Rome in his day, when there were only nine aqueducts. Clearly then these *munera* cannot be equated with the tradition of a definitive *mostra* for each aqueduct. If there was a sub-class of *munera* fountains functioning specially as *mostre*, Frontinus does not mention it.

Finally, there is reason why specifically in the city of ancient Rome a notable *mostra* tradition was not as likely to thrive as in post-classical Rome. Especially under the emperors, Rome's water found a much more elaborate and popular display in the great baths, where all of a *mostra*'s ornament of statuary, colorful stone, running water, and rhetoric would be present, but on a vaster scale and coupled in addition with recreation. Often the builder or restorer of an aqueduct was the builder of a bath that was supplied by the aqueduct. Agrippa's baths are perhaps the best example, where the water of the Aqua Virgo was conspicuously employed in an elaborate layout of baths, gardens, lake, and swimming canal. In proximity to this, the hypothesized *mostra* at the Saepta Julia, though in an ideal location, loses some of its purpose. Likewise, some have identified a *mostra* for the Aqua Alexandrina at various places on the Esquiline, although the aqueduct had a grand termination in Alexander's lavishly refurbished baths of Nero between the Pantheon and the Stadium of Domitian.⁵³ The branch aqueduct Aqua Antoniniana was built to serve the baths of Caracalla. Here, as in all the great imperial baths, there was in fact, in the wall-facade of the natatio and frigidarium, a combination of architecture and water very similar to monumental fountains of the period.⁵⁴ These ornamented statuary walls above the fountains and pools are perhaps the most graphic illustration of why a tradition of a separate *mostra* was not needed to display water, when so many of the *mostra*'s characteristic elements appeared in the grander surroundings of the baths.⁵⁵

⁵²These *munera* could also serve as distribution towers if necessary; see Frontinus 2.117 and Evans 403. Since the Nymphaeum Alexandri was probably a distribution point as well as showpiece, it fits Frontinus' description of a *munus* quite well.

⁵³Grisanti 44.

⁵⁴I. Nielsen, *Thermae et Balnea: The Architecture and Cultural History of Roman Public Baths* (Aarhus 1990) 1.51, 53. See also Neuerburg (above, n. 8) 77, and more generally, F. Yegül, *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass. 1992) 395.

⁵⁵The emperors of Rome also employed grand monumentalized archways to commemorate their construction or renovation of an aqueduct. The most impressive example is Claudius' travertine arches where the Claudia/Anio Novus crossed the Via Praenestina and the Via Labicana at today's Porta Maggiore, but other monumental arches can still be seen at what later became Porta Tiburtina (commemorating Augustus' repair of several aqueducts, primarily the Marcia) and the "Arch of Drusus," which carried the Aqua Antoniniana over the Appian Way. The former two monuments, as probably the third as well, carried inscriptions for the benefit of travellers leaving and entering Rome on these busy streets.

Rome's spectacular baths and the copious supplies of water which they demanded, luxuries made possible by the city's former position as the primary recipient of imperial booty and donation, were a thing of the past when Popes Sixtus v and Paul v revived Rome's water supply in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Since they could not likewise resurrect the tradition of large public baths for the populace, it was the fountains, not the baths, that became the most elaborate and monumental display of the water. Whereas in ancient Rome it was the baths that arose ever grander in aquatic emulation (Agrippa's, Nero's, Trajan's, Caracalla's, and Diocletian's), the Popes had to content themselves with increasingly monumental fountains.

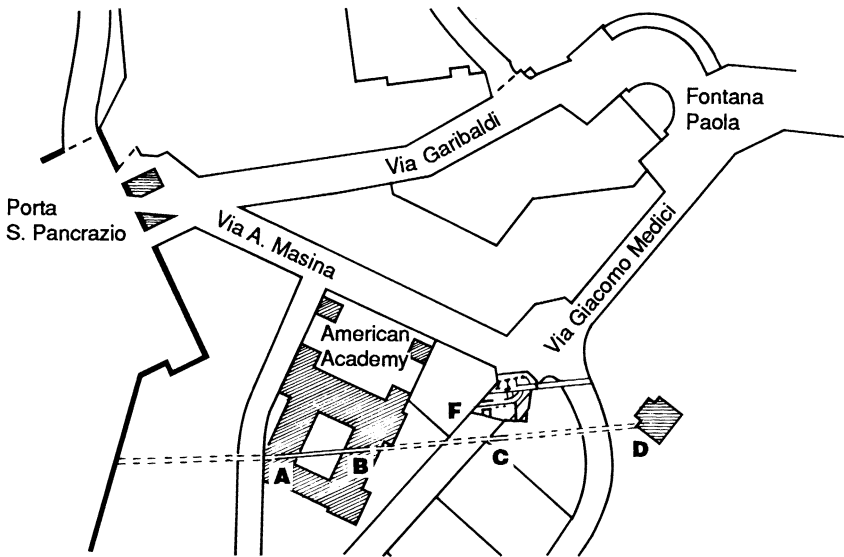
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1A The Fontana Paola, *mostra* for the Acqua Paola
(photograph by Peter J. Aicher)



1B Denarius, 58 B.C.,
commemorating the
Aqua Marcia and the
Marcian gens
(Hirmer Verlag, New
York)



2A Ruins of the Aqua Traiana on the Janiculum
(after Stevens and Van-Buren p. 138)

2B Trajanic coin commemorating the Aqua Traiana (drawing by Andrea Shahan, from photo in *Trionfo*, p. 113)



3A Trajanic coin with figure representing the Danube (Hirmer Verlag, New York)



3B Trajanic coin with figure representing the Via Traiana (Hirmer Verlag, New York)