

Roman Sewers.

The Romans built public and private toilets and these are found all over the empire. These toilets had well designed drainage systems to carry away the sewage. In Rome itself there were miles of sewers that carried the waste to the river Tiber where it flowed out to sea.

Water pipes, drains and toilets all go together. In roman towns there were drains laid along all of the streets and joined together with sewers to carry off the rain water and sewage. The many public toilets all had neat stone seats and even a hand basin. Although the way they were laid out meant you were sat side by side with up to twenty other people!! In Rome itself the sewers were massive (think of the “waste” that 1 000000 people can produce!) and flowed out through the Cloaca Maxia into the river Tiber. A friend of Emperor Augustus once had himself rowed through the sewers in a boat. These sewers must have been smelly as even the Romans couldn't bring enough water to wash out the sewers properly. Roman drains were built to last and York still uses a section of Roman sewer, still doing its' job after nearly 2000 years when the Victorian sewer around it is crumbling.



Source C

Main Cloaca. Rome

Source A

“Along your route each open window may be a death-trap. So hope and pray, you poor man, that the local housewife drops nothing worse on your head than a bed pan full of slops”

(Juvenal, 'Satires' Rome A.D. 100)

Source B

“The results of the great number of reservoirs, works, fountains and water basins can be seen in the improved health of Rome. The city looks cleaner, and the causes of the unhealthy air which gave Rome a bad name amongst the people in the past are now removed.

Compare such important engineering works with the idle pyramids and the useless though famous buildings of the Greeks.”

(Frontinus, "The Aqueducts of Rome" Rome A.D. 100. Frontinus was the official in charge of aqueducts)

Questions.

1. Put the title **Roman Sewers**
2. What three things made up the Roman sewer system?
3. Where did the sewage from Rome Eventually Go?
4. What features did the public toilets built by the Romans have?
5. How do we know that the Roman sewers were very large?
6. Are source A and B primary or secondary sources? Explain your answer.
7. How do we know that the sewers lasted a long time?
8. Why was Frontinus so proud of the Roman water system?
9. In what way do sources A and B disagree about the streets of Rome?
10. Why might Frontinus' and Juvenal's evidence be unreliable?