

The Appian Way 3

from Casal Rotondo to Frattocchie (Miles VI-XI)



By bike



On foot

This section of the road is lined with the fences of farming properties: the landscape opens onto the large estates of the Roman countryside, stretching all the way to the Castelli Romani (Roman Castles). The final section extends beyond the administrative boundary of the City of Rome, entering the municipal territories of Ciampino and Marino before reaching the junction at Frattocchie, where the ancient Appian Way joins its successor, the Via Appia Nuova. Thanks to recent work by the Appia Antica Regional Park, completed in the spring of 2016, the walk between Via Capanne di Marino and the archaeological area of Santa Maria delle Mole is now particularly pleasant: long sections of ancient paving and original ruins are now visible, and this is, in fact, the only section of the road truly reserved for pedestrians and cyclists!

1) Tower-shaped Tomb

Immediately after the intersection with Via di Casal Rotondo/Via di Torricola, on the right, stands a tower-shaped tomb. The cement and basaltic lava core consists of several stacked sections of decreasing size. The funerary chamber, where the statue of the deceased was probably located, had a barrel-vaulted ceiling made with square blocks of peperino tuff.



2) Mixed-masonry Tomb

Also on the right side of the road there is a two-story monument made with mixed masonry techniques (bricks and reticulate tuff chunks); the plan is square, with the entrance at the back. The tomb is very poorly preserved.

3) Temple-shaped Tomb ("Tomb of the Griffins")

Further along on the right there is a two-story temple-shaped tomb faced with bricks. The staircase and the left wall of the upper floor, used for the funeral ceremonies, are preserved; the entrance to the underground funerary chamber is at the back. The building is located inside a courtyard delimited by a brick wall, into which fragments of marble reliefs representing griffins were inserted.



4) Columbarium

Next on the right is a brick-faced columbarium on a square plan; the side walls have arcosolia (arched recesses) below and niches above.



5) Flint Tower

On the left side of the road, above the cement core of a circular tomb which dates to the early Imperial period and was probably similar in type and size to the Mausoleum of Caecilia Metella (Itinerary 1), stands the Medieval “Flint Tower” dating to the 12th century. Founded on radial retaining walls linked by brick relieving arches, it is a typical example of a “torre vergata” (“striped tower”): a band of peperino tuff chunks is followed, roughly half-way up, by a high band of small regular blocks of white marble and travertine. As a “signal tower”, it had to be visible from a great distance.



6) Inscription of Caius Atilius Euhodus

A little further on the left, on a 19th-century brick support, is an inscribed marble slab with molded frame from a tumulus tomb, which is no longer preserved. The late Republican funerary inscription in verse invites the traveler to stop and direct his gaze in pity at the tomb containing the bones of Caius Atilius Euhodus, freedman of Serranus, a man of good qualities. In life the deceased had been a “margaritarius de Sacra via,” a merchant of pearls and precious stones along the Sacred Way in the Roman Forum.



7) Quintilian Aqueduct

Just before the road diverts to the right following a change in route made during the Imperial period, beyond the ruins on the left, runs the long series of brick arches of the aqueduct that reached the nymphaeum of the Villa of the Quintilii (Itinerary 2) through an underground channel, providing water for the complex. This minor aqueduct, of which about 120 arches are preserved, was probably a branch of the more important New Anio Aqueduct (Itinerary 7).



8) Tomb of the Alabaster Vase (Mile VII)

About 300 m before the point where the Rome Ring Road passed until 2000, on the left, are the remains of the front stairs of a two-story brick monument, with cement and basaltic lava core and vaulted underground chamber. A precious Egyptian alabaster vase dating to the middle of the 1st century BC was found in the tomb; it is today preserved in the Vatican Museums.



9) Exedra-shaped Tomb

Beyond the Rome Ring Road underpass, on the left side of the road, there is a large exedra (semi-circular space) in cement with basaltic lava missing its original marble facing; it was originally covered by a semi-dome and has three rectangular niches for statues. It is a particular type of tomb dating to the late Republic.



10) Shrine-shaped Tomb

Further along, on the left side of the road, is a shrine-shaped brick funerary monument on a high parallelepiped base; inside was the funeral chamber, with entrance at the back. At the center of the shrine, capped by a pediment, is a niche for the statue of the deceased, which was originally framed by two brick semi-columns with Corinthian capitals. The tomb is dated to the middle of the 2nd century AD.



11) Mausoleum

Beyond the modern Via degli Armentieri, on the right side, near a section of ancient paving, there is a magnificent mausoleum on a square base made with a cement and basaltic lava core into which numerous peperino tuff blocks from the original facing are inserted. The access to the underground funeral chamber is, as usual, located on the side opposite the road; the brick-faced chamber has three arched niches for the sarcophagi.



12) Tumulus Tomb

Further along on the right, next to No. 400, there is a tumulus tomb on a circular base made of cement with basaltic lava; the peperino tuff blocks set into the cement core served to anchor the facing, which also consisted of peperino blocks. Recent maintenance work brought to light blocks with low reliefs depicting shoots of the acanthus plant and flowers which, on the basis of comparable objects, suggest a date for the monument in the Augustan period (31 BC–AD 14).



13) Temple of Hercules (Mile VIII)

Immediately after the circular tumulus, in a large field on the right side of the road 50 m before the beginning of Mile VIII, is an area with column shafts in peperino tuff which in the past was identified as the Temple of Hercules known to have been built under the emperor Domitian (AD 81-96) at Mile VIII. In reality, it is a four-sided portico dating to the late Republican period, part of a structure that offered rest and food for travelers.



14) Shrine-shaped Tomb

Further along, on the left side of the road, is a shrine-shaped brick tomb very similar to the one (10) located immediately after the Exedra-shaped Tomb. The shrine, resting on a high podium, still has the small brick column on the left side and the Corinthian capital on the right side. This tomb, likewise dating to the middle of the 2nd century AD, has traditionally—and for no reason—been attributed to Quintus Veranius,



consul in AD 49, whose funeral monument was in fact found on the Tiburtine Way.

15) Berretta del Prete

Just beyond the shrine-shaped tomb attributed to Quintus Veranius, on the left side of the road, stands a circular building with hemispherical dome covering, called “Berretta del Prete” (“Priest’s Cap”) due to its characteristic shape. The building technique, with alternating rows of terracotta and tuff bricks, and the architectural form suggest a date between the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 4th century AD. In the early Middle Ages the funerary monument was transformed into a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary, other of God.



16) Remains of a Tomb Ceiling

Beyond the modern Via di Fioranello, on the left side of the road and embedded slantwise in the ruins, is a large block of hollow cement in the shape of a truncated pyramid. This block, originally the ceiling of the small square funerary chamber of a tomb, was commonly called “Ruzzica d’Orlando” (“Orlando’s Top”) because of its resemblance to a sort of spinning toy called ruzzica, a corruption of the local dialect word ruzzola.



17) Tomb of Gallienus (Mile IX)

On the right side of the road, half a kilometer after the intersection with Via di Fioranello, stands a circular brick mausoleum, about 18 m in diameter, which the ancient sources indicated as the final resting place of the emperor Gallienus, who died in AD 268. The two-story monument was originally roofed with a dome; the exterior of the second story has four semi-circular niches separated by large relieving arches.



18) “Monte di Terra” Tumulus Tomb

Beyond a paved section of the road, on the right at Mile IX, is the imposing bulk of the cement and basaltic lava core of a circular tumulus mausoleum known as “Monte di Terra” (“Dirt Mound”). The monument was built on a large square base made of peperino tuff; many of these blocks, some decorated, are preserved along the road pavement.



19) Circular Brick Tomb

After the modern Via Capanne di Marino, the route of the Appian Way continues beyond a private property gate. On the right is a circular brick tomb with rectangular funerary chamber; inside, beneath the floor, was found a limestone sarcophagus with a “cushion” carved to support the deceased’s head. The tomb, which can be dated by the building technique to the Imperial period, was later re-used as an ossuary.

20) Greek cross-shaped Tomb

A little further along, also on the right, the remains of a funerary monument with rectangular plan are visible; the cement and basaltic lava core and brick facing

are preserved. A flight of limestone steps led to the funerary chamber with rectangular niches on three sides containing the cinerary urns; excavation recovered one urn in glass, containing the remains of two persons, and another in ceramic, containing the ashes of a young boy. This type of structure is attested beginning in the 3rd century AD, and the date has been further confirmed by excavations carried out in 2005: the tomb was built over the remains of a bath complex dating to the reign of Hadrian (AD 117-138), which was then partially demolished.

21) Tumulus Tomb

On the opposite side of the road, almost completely obscured by vegetation, is a notable tumulus tomb featuring a square base in blocks of peperino tuff capped by a projecting cornice; above that is a conical cement core about 3 m high.

22) Tomb with Stacked Sections

Beyond the small bridge that crosses the Fosso di Fiorano, which marks the administrative boundary between the City of Ciampino and the City of Marino, on the right side, is the square cement core of a tomb made of stacked sections which is preserved to a height of about 5 m. The entrance, located as usual on the side opposite the road, led to the rectangular funerary chamber. The lintel of the door is still preserved, consisting of a cornice in peperino blocks that separated the funerary chamber from the ceiling, which was presumably conical or pyramidal in form and faced with stone blocks.

23) "La Mola" Circular Mausoleum

Further along the road, on the left side at Mile X, near the railway line leading to Velletri, is a notable circular tomb with a diameter of 23 m, known as "La Mola" ("The Millstone"). It was perhaps originally surmounted by a conical crown; the socle had a brick façade with alternating rectilinear and semi-circular niches separated by semi-columns. Inside, there is a funerary chamber in blocks of peperino tuff with niches for the burials. The date is controversial: either late Republican with additions in the Imperial period or early Imperial.

24) Stone Dump

A few meters beyond the bridge for the railway line to Velletri, on the left, is a dump of peperino tuff blocks which used to fill a structure that may have been built in the Middle Ages. The stone dump contained two large, but fragmentary, peperino sculptures of crouching lions; the better preserved lion has the head of a fawn pinned beneath its paw. The sculptures, probably from a dismantled tomb, are hypothetically dated to the 1st century AD.

25) Building with Bath Complex

Between the railway bridge and Via della Repubblica was found a well-preserved section of the original road paving, about 100 m long. To the southwest lay a paved square, onto which faced a bath complex with at least 15 different rooms. The rooms equipped with heating systems using hollow terracotta pipes, raised floors, and bathing pools with traces of marble lining indicate that this was a public bath complex opening onto the road.

The materials recovered in the excavations attest a long chronology of use for the complex, from the end of the 1st century to the middle of the 3rd century AD. Furthermore, the complex has been hypothetically linked to the area's notable geothermal character as manifest in numerous springs of mineralized water, several of which are hot and rich in gas and sulphurous emissions. In fact, in the Imperial period the Romans extracted sulphur from the ground just as they used the hot water for bathing.

26) Tabernae

On the left, after the intersection with Via della Repubblica, are several structures discovered by the Gruppo Archeologico Romano beginning in 2000 and interpreted as tabernae, or shops, perhaps part of an ancient horse-changing station belonging to the Imperial Post (cursus publicus). The structures were probably built in the 2nd century AD and abandoned around the middle of the 5th century.

27) Secchi Tower and Tomb (Mile XI)

On the left, in the locality known as Frattocchie (named for the fratte, or blackberry bushes, which covered the ruins of the ancient town of Bovillae), is the cement core of an early Imperial tomb stripped of its original facing in square masonry, with a cylindrical drum resting on a parallelepiped socle. The funeral chamber inside contained three square niches for the cinerary urns. In recent times a small square tower was built in brick and stone on top



of the ancient core, perhaps re-using the remains of a Medieval watch-tower. The tower was used as the final datum point of the geodetic measurements executed along the length of the Appian Way by the Jesuit Frs. Boscovich and Maire in 1751; the initial bench mark was located near the Mausoleum of Caecilia Metella at Mile III (Itinerary 1). During the restoration of the Appian Way by Luigi Canina in the middle of the 19th century the Jesuit Fr. Angelo Secchi likewise laid out a geodetic base from the Mausoleum of Caecilia Metella to the same tower at Frattocchie; in 2013 his bench mark B, the terminal point of his geodetic base, was discovered and made visible.

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