



Park Authority in 2004 stands out both for its size and its ecologic importance. On the North-East sides of the valley there are some Oak woodlands. The tuff rich agricultural terrains are often interrupted by untamed Mediterranean scrublands, partly due to some chasms and holes that are a testament of centuries-long mining activity. The peculiar distribution of all these components along the valley's hydrographic network is one of the defining elements of its landscape and its agricultural ecosystem. Such a diversified environment offers a favorable habitat for a great number of species. In particular, the cohabitation of birds usually tied to many wild habitats, from the forests to the wet lands, along with birds that are from cities and more foreign environments, is a peculiar condition of ecologic and academic interest.

However the mammal species are scarce. Besides the fox, symbol of the park, hedgehogs, moles and weasels can be encountered. Almost all of the reptiles belonging to the Rome city area are present in the park. The green toad prevails amongst the amphibians. Native fishes, like the Rovella, live in the local channels, along with several introduced species. Finally, the invertebrates of these lands, insects in particular, have been object to intense entomological studies since the last century.



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THE CAFFARELLA VALLEY



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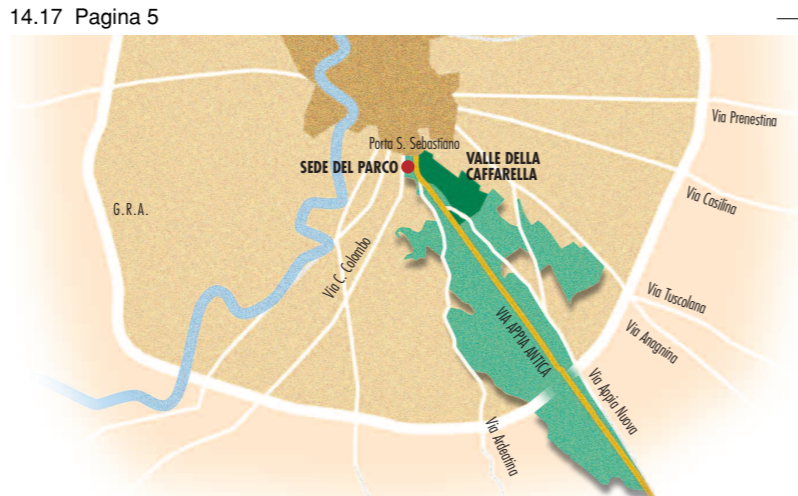


The Caffarella Valley is located near the Aurelian Walls and between two ancient roman roads, Via Appia and Via Latina, both leading to southern Italy. The valley played an important role both in the history and in the myths and legends of Rome: along the river Almona, an affluent of the Tiber, important rites connected with the mysteries of the Mother Goddess Cybeles were held at the Ides of March; a sacred wood, whose traces can still be seen, was here preserved since the early times of the city; here a secluded nymphaeum, according to the legend, was credited to be the romantic meeting place of Numa Pompilio and his lover and counsellor, the nymph Egeria. During the Republic, and in the centuries of the Empire, the land housed big country estates and villas.

The valley's rural character didn't change after the fall of Rome, as the first towers rose to watch the fields, farm-houses and mills. In the 16th century,

in the valley was settled a big farm owned by the Caffarelli family (hence the name). After some years, the property passed under the possession of the Pallavicinis

*Ninfeo di Egeria
XVIII Century print*



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and then of the Torlonias, thus preserving those typical "romanlike" country landscapes that made many painters and artists fall in love with them. In the fifties of 20th century, an overflowing urban growth almost ended this millenniums-long history, as the valley was risking to be entirely covered by a concrete flood. Thanks to the political campaigns led by scholars and intellectuals, among which Antonio Cederna is to be remembered, and followed

by an ever-growing number of citizens, the valley suffered only little damage and eventually became part of the Appia Antica Regional Park. The larger part of the land (132 hectares) was restored at the end of the 90s by Rome Municipality, and now is ready for all to enjoy. A walk in the Caffarella is today an exciting adventure in a unique setting, ranging from traces of Roman history, to grazing cattle and a blooming nature - only a step away from Rome's historic centre.

Cisterna romana



Sepolcro Annia Regilla

The history of human occupation shows no interruptions from pre-modern and archaic age to today.

In fact, it is easy to understand how early the valley was inhabited, located as it is in a very fertile area with an orography that enables a quick passage to the Colli Albani and to the southern Italy. The highest development stage was between II century B.C. and the beginning of the imperial age when the valley starts to be crowded by sepulchres, dovecotes, little temples and room tombs, while in the neighbouring areas many big villas start to appear - some of them will remain in use up to the late centuries on Rome after the falling of The Empire.

Among these villas, very conspicuous were the monumental residential house built by Herod Atticus and his wife Annia Regilla and, later, the great complex built around Massentius imperial palace. During the early Middle Age the area around the Appia belonged to the Counts Tuscolani that fortified and militarised it to control every transit to their Tuscolo possessions. The abundance of water in this area allowed agricultural and handicraft activities, so there were built several water-powered mills and fulling plants. The reunification of all the allotments into one large

Casale della Vaccareccia



estate started in 1529 with Giovanni Pietro Caffarelli. Later the property of the estate passed to the princes Pallavicini and in 1816 was bought by the duke Giovanni Torlonia. The continuous maintenance and improvement works by the Torlonias, mainly to the complex hydric network, surely helped to preserve the countrylike characteristic scenery that the estate had acquired since the first works by the Caffarellis. Starting from the 1920s an exception to the town planning-scheme provides a division of the valley into streets and lots, and this was confirmed by the 1931 and 1953 plans. The struggle to preserve

the valley started in that year. Only in 1981, Rome Municipality approved a restoration project for this area and in 1988 the area became part of the Appia Antica Regional Park. In 1992 and 1996 Rome municipality allocated the funds necessary to acquire and finally restore the largest part of the area. Thanks to the 2007-2013 ROP (regional operational program) the Public Authority of the Park has implemented the educational areas, restored two historic farmsteads and three artifacts related to the ancient hydraulic system

The peculiar landscape of the Caffarella has been created by millennium-long human transformations of the territory.



Oak

Thanks to the progressive deforestation and swamp reclamation the originally forest dense areas were transformed into an environment more suited

for agriculture, livestock and the excavation of construction materials. Today the wide valley floor terrains are used as grazing lands mainly for ovines. The Almona river and other smaller streams, nourished exclusively by native springs, run across the terrains. They are all connected by ancient root canal treatments and water regulation mechanisms. These wet lands, with distinguishing vegetation made of rushes, poplars and willows, contribute to the environmental diversification. Among these lands, the pond made by the