

# The Appian Way 2

## from Capo di Bove to Casal Rotondo (Miles III-VI)



By bike



On foot

The section of the Appian Way between the Mausoleum of Caecilia Metella and Casal Rotondo is the most monumental part of the road, characterized on both sides by an uninterrupted sequence of funerary structures of different types, constructed with different building techniques and spanning the ages from the Republic to the late Empire. The types range from the simplest collective tomb for cremation, generally underground, the columbarium, to individual or family tombs in the shape of an altar or square shrine, to the taller tower-shaped tombs, of which only the cement core generally remains, missing its original decorative facing. Other typical elements of the landscape are the two-story brick-faced tombs in the shape of a temple. The frequent circular mausolea with conical covering reprise the tradition of the tumulus (mound) tomb. There are also brick-faced mausolea of the 3rd and 4th centuries AD with a circular or articulated plan and dome-shaped covering.

The area from the Mausoleum of Caecilia Metella up to Mile IX was the object of conservation and restoration efforts by Luigi Canina, who created a frame of pine and cypress trees which still today symbolizes the landscape of the Appian Way. Later restorations, like those performed by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage in agreement with the City of Rome on the occasion of the 2000 Jubilee, led to the recovery and rehabilitation of long sections of the ancient road paving, as well as of the ancient crepidines (sidewalks), with the aim of restoring to the Appian Way its function as an “open-air museum” as conceived by Canina.

### 1) Capo di Bove Complex

In January 2002 the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, exercising its right of eminent domain, acquired a residence built in the 1950s approximately 500 m from the Mausoleum of Caecilia Metella which had been sequestered in 1997 due to its cultural significance. Archaeological excavation of the property revealed the existence of a bath complex built in the middle of the 2nd century AD and used at least through the 4th century. The water was supplied by two large cisterns; the modern house was built over one of them.



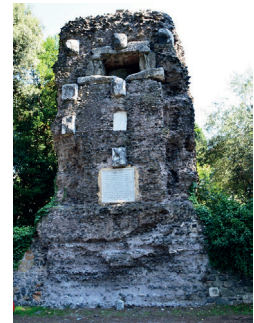
The bath complex was very likely private property used by a villa or a group of persons who were part of an association that frequented the area. The discovery of a re-used marble slab bearing the inscription “Regilla, light of the household” suggested that the complex was part of the property of the Greek politician and orator Herodes Atticus. This suggestion appears to be reinforced by the discovery nearby of a fragment of a statue in Pentelic marble depicting a fold of drapery from the “Temple of the Caryatids,” an ancient building located in the vicinity of the Capo di Bove complex that was drawn by Piranesi but is not preserved.

The main building of the complex houses the archives and library of Antonio Cederna, an Italian journalist, environmentalist, politician, and activist who strenuously advocated the creation of the Appia Antica Regional Park.

Reference web site: <http://archeoroma.beniculturali.it/en/archaeological-site/en-semble-capo-bove>

## **2) Capo di Bove Tower**

Beyond the junction of the Appian Way and the Via di Cecilia Metella, immediately after a section of the ancient paving, appears the cement core of a tower-shaped or multi-story shrine-shaped tomb known as the Capo di Bove Tower. Two plaques affixed to the monument commemorate the trigonometric survey executed in 1855 along the straight section of the Appian Way by the astronomer Fr. Angelo Secchi.



## **3) Heroic Relief**

Beyond the military area of the Appian Fort, one of the 15 Prussian-style forts built all around the Roman countryside between 1877 and 1891 to defend the new capital of united Italy, on the right side of the road, stands a plaster copy of a marble funerary stele (stone slab) with a high relief (the original is preserved for safety reasons in the National Roman Museum). The stele, which belonged to a Republican-era monument now lost, represents a naked boy in a heroic pose with a chlamys (short Greek cloak) over his shoulder and a Hellenistic-style breastplate at his feet.



## **4) Tomb of M. Servilius Quartus**

Just before the end of Mile IV, on the left in front of the Appian Fort, stands the funerary monument of Marcus Servilius Quartus. This was the first monument of the Appian Way to be restored, in 1808, as part of the grand project of the Neoclassical sculptor Antonio Canova.

It is a sort of pillar faced with terracotta and tuff bricks, into which architectural and decorative fragments have been inserted along with the original dedicatory inscription for the tomb.



## **5) Tomb of Seneca**

The fourth milestone of the Appian Way stood just before another of Canova's constructions which is also on the left side of the road, although today it is reduced to a mere pillar of bricks completely stripped of the architectural and decorative fragments that had been inserted into it. It is known as the "Tomb of Seneca" in commemoration of the famous philosopher and tutor of the emperor Nero who owned a villa at Mile IV where, after falling into disgrace, he received from the emperor the order to kill himself.

## **6) Circular Mausoleum**

Also on the left side of the road, in front of No. 199A, is the cement and basaltic lava core of a large circular mausoleum datable to the early Imperial period. It had a square base, conical covering, and facing of travertine blocks (now lost). The underground funerary chamber, accessed from the back side, has a barrel-vaulted ceiling and four niches for the sarcophagi.



### 7) Tomb of Sextus Pompeius' Sons

Further down the road, on the left side, in front of the modern Via dei Lugari, stands a brick-faced architectural façade with a triangular pediment created by Antonio Canova and containing a hexameter inscription in which Sextus Pompeius Iustus recalls the untimely death of his sons. The only one of the numerous decorative and architectural fragments inserted into the structure still preserved today is a fragment of a sarcophagus with the portrait of a married couple within a shell frame.



### 8) Tomb of St. Urbanus and Villa of Marmenia

A brick-faced tomb in the shape of a small temple on a high podium, barely visible in private property on the right side of the road near the intersection with Via dei Lugari, was in the past identified as the tomb of St. Urbanus, who succeeded St. Callixtus as pope in the 3rd century AD; in reality, the building's features date it to the 4th century AD. A large villa brought to light in the vicinity at the end of the 19th century, with building phases from the Republican period to the 4th/5th century AD, is hypothetically identified as the domus (aristocratic house) of the Roman matron and Christian convert Marmenia.

### 9) Doric Monument

This brickwork columbarium, discovered in 1831 by Pietro Campana, a learned antiquarian and collector, is located in the public garden behind the Tomb of the Scipios, not far from the Aurelian Walls and along the route of a secondary road (diverticulum) that linked the Appian and Latin Ways. The entrance is at Via Latina No. 10. It originally belonged to Pomponius Hylas and his wife Pomponia Vitalis, with its construction dating to the reigns of Tiberius and Claudius (AD 14-54).

### 10) Tomb of Hilarius Fuscus

Further ahead on the right side of the road, inserted into an architectural façade in the shape of a triangular pediment created by Canina, is a copy of a funerary stele with portrait busts of five persons in relief (the original is preserved in the National Roman Museum). The central niche represents a married couple in the "dextrarum iunctio" (matrimonial joining of the right hands) pose and, perhaps, their daughter; each of the lateral niches contains the portrait of a man. The reliefs can be dated by the women's hairstyles to approximately 30 BC. The name of the tomb comes from the inscription of Hilarius Fuscus, which was originally inserted into the structure along with the portraits.



### 11) Elliptical Columbarium

Further down the road, on the right side, stands a brick-faced columbarium with square plan, recently found and restored, dating sometime before AD 150. The entrance to the funerary chamber is, as usual, on the back side; the chamber consists of a semicircular room with several levels of niches for the burial urns. The entrance courtyard preserves the mosaic pavement made with large white tesserae (stone fragments) and short stretches of the decorative facing of the walls. The remains of a square structure located between the columbarium and the Appian Way probably belonged to a temple-shaped tomb.



## 12) Brick-faced Columbarium

Another brick-faced columbarium with a vaulted ceiling is preserved a little further down the road, on the right: it has a rectangular plan, with elongated side walls forming a distinct wing; the left wall has the niches that contained the burial urns.

## 13) Tomb of Claudius' Freedmen

Also on the right side stands a brick-faced façade containing architectural fragments and originally capped by statues of the deceased, designed by Canina. This is the tomb of a family of freedmen of the emperor Claudius (r. AD 41-54): the head of the family, Tiberius Claudius Secundinus, a tax collector, copyist, and envoy, his wife Flavia Eirene, and their two children.



## 14) Temple-shaped Tomb

Beyond the modern Via degli Eugenio, on the right side of the road, is a two-story tomb in the form of a temple.

The entrance staircase on a high podium led to the upper floor, where the funeral rites were celebrated; the entrance to the funerary chamber, built inside the podium, was located at the back. The tomb is characterized by the exclusive use of two colors of brick, a typical decorative technique



of the middle of the 2nd century AD which is also found in decorative elements like the window frames and the Corinthian capitals of the corner pilasters.

## 15) Mausoleum of the Rabirii

The Mausoleum of the Rabirii, located on the right side of the road after the modern Via degli Eugenio, is an example of the altar-shaped type of tomb. Canina rebuilt it by assembling the marble fragments found in the vicinity. The copy of the relief (the original is preserved in the National Roman Museum in Palazzo Massimo alle Terme) shows the portraits of three dead persons: Caius Rabirius Hermodorus and his wife Rabiria Demaris, probably both freedmen of Caius Rabirius Postumus, a merchant and successful banker defended in a trial by Cicero, and Usia Prima, a priestess of Isis portrayed with sistrum (metal rattler) and patera (ceremonial dish), symbols of the cult of the Egyptian goddess, whose portrait was later added to the relief by re-carving an existing portrait.



## 16) Tower-shaped Tomb

Further down the same side of the road is preserved the cement core of a tower-shaped tomb, one of the most common types of funeral monument along the Appian Way. It is built of stacked blocks that decrease in size, and its original decorative facing is missing.

## 17) Tomb of the Festoons

The next tomb, also on the right, of the altar-shaped type, was rebuilt by Canina with blocks of peperino tuff. It has a crown with dossierets (a small space on a column between the capital and the spring of the arch above it), a Gorgon mask, and a frieze with Erotes supporting festoons, which give the monument its modern name. Just like the "Doric Monument", the various elements inserted into the blocks of the base, datable to the middle of the 1st century BC, come from several monuments of the Appian Way and therefore constitute an assemblage designed by Canina.

### 18) Tomb of the Frontispiece

Of the next tomb, tower-shaped in type, only the cement core is preserved. In the 19th century an architectural façade with triangular pediment was added to the front, and a copy of a relief with four portrait-busts was inserted (the original is in the National Roman Museum). At the center is a married couple in the “*dextrarum iunctio*” pose; a younger man and woman at their sides are probably their children. The women’s hairstyles, with a central “knot,” suggest a date for the relief in the second half of the 1st century BC.

### From the intersection with Via di Tor Carbone/Via Erode Attico to Casal Rotondo

#### 1) Tomb with Inscription of Baricha, Zabda, and Achiba

Beyond the intersection with Via di Tor Carbone/Via Erode Attico, on the right side of the road, at No. 288, there is another cement core of a tower-shaped funeral monument, in front of which is an inscription commemorating Lucius Valerius Baricha, Lucius Valerius Zabda, and Lucius Valerius Achiba, freedmen of the Valerii family who were clearly Semitic in origin.

#### 2) First Brick-faced Monument

On the left side of the road is the “First Brick-faced Monument,” a classic example of the two-story temple-shaped tomb made with two colors of brick, typical of the middle of the 2nd century AD. The façade added during the 19th-century reconstruction contained numerous marble fragments, only a few of which are still preserved today.



#### 3) Second Brick-faced Monument

Located next to the previous tomb and set back from the road, the “Second Brick-faced Monument” is a clear example of the Medieval re-use of Roman monuments, which were often transformed into watch-towers. The terracotta brick-faced walls of a Roman chamber tomb standing on a podium are abutted by typical Medieval walls faced with small tuff bricks.



#### 4) Circular Mausoleum

Traces of transformation and re-use in the Middle Ages are also visible in the next monument on the right side of the road: a building made with chunks of basaltic lava and other re-used material standing over the cement core of a circular tomb.

#### 5) “Tumulus of the Curiatii” (Mile V)

At Mile V the straight section of the Appian Way is interrupted, curving slightly to the left in order to avoid the area of the Fossae Cluiliae, the ditch that marked the ancient border between the territory of Alba Longa and that of Rome, where tradition held that the famous fight between the Horatii and the Curiatii, teams of three brothers championing Rome and Alba respectively, took place during the reign of king Tullus Hostilius. This fight led to the end of Alba’s independence.



Immediately before a diverticulum (secondary road) crossing the Appian Way, on the right side, there is a tomb in the shape of a tumulus with circular cement foundation

and surmounted by a short cylindrical tower in small tuff blocks, known as the “Tumulus of the Curiatii.”

#### **6) Tumuli of the Horatii**

About 300 m south of the “Tumulus of the Curiatii” are the two “Tumuli of the Horatii”, located close to each other. Both have low foundations, one in peperino tuff, the other in travertine, and probably date between the end of the Republic and the early Imperial period.

#### **7) S. Maria Nova Farmhouse**

In 2006 an archaeological complex of 3 ha (7.5 acres) adjoining the Villa of the Quintilii was purchased by the Archaeological Superintendency of Rome. The property includes a 13th-century farmhouse with tower built over the remains of a 2nd-century AD Roman structure. By the end of the 14th century it belonged to the Benedictine Olivetan monks of the Monastery of S. Maria Nova at the foot of the Palatine hill in central Rome.

The complex includes thermal rooms with marble-lined walls and black-and-white floor mosaics featuring scenes of gladiators, circus games, and other spectacles probably attended by the guards stationed at the Villa of the Quintilii.

<http://www.viaappiaantica.com/2014/04/09/santa-maria-nova/>

#### **8) Pyramidal Tomb**

Further down the road, on the left side, stands an imposing cement and basaltic lava core belonging to a funerary monument stripped of its facing blocks and decorative covering. The pyramidal elevation rests on a parallelepiped base. It is dated to the 2nd century AD and hypothetically attributed to the Quintilius brothers, owners of the Villa of the Quintilii.



#### **9) Villa of the Quintilii**

The majestic nymphaeum (monumental fountain) facing onto the left side of the Appian Way immediately after the Pyramidal Tomb was the original entrance to the villa that belonged to the Quintilius brothers, with imposing structures occupying a vast swath of the Roman countryside between the Appian Way and the Asinarian Way (today's Via Appia Nuova). The nymphaeum's current appearance is the product of the fortification of the part of the villa that faced the Appian Way in the Middle Ages: the counts of Tuscolo and Astalli, who owned this area at different times, built a castle to control the traffic along the road.



The villa was originally the property of the brothers Sextus Quintilius Condianus Maximus and Sextus Quintilius Valerius Maximus, both consuls in AD 151. In AD 182 it became the property of the emperor Commodus, who took possession of it after executing the owners for allegedly participating in a conspiracy against him.

The numerous buildings that comprise the villa are articulated into several distinct nuclei characterized by varied building techniques belonging to different building phases, ranging from the 2nd to the 3rd/4th century AD.





Behind the theatrical entrance nymphaeum extended a large garden leading to the residential and entertainment sector, which was dominated by the brick-faced structures of the magnificent bath complex which still contain patches of the extravagant colored marble floor decorations.

The lower level of the residential area, raised on a series of terraces, contained covered corridors, service rooms, and the heating systems for the residential rooms.

An enormous circus, added in the last phase of the complex, was located on the southeastern side.

The entrance on Via Appia Nuova (No. 1092) also contains a visitor's center and an antiquarium (small museum) housing finds from the area of the villa.

Authority: Archaeological Superintendency of Rome

Reference web site: <http://archeoroma.beniculturali.it/en/archaeological-site/villa-quintilii>



### 10) Tomb with Spiral Staircase

In front of the Villa of the Quintilii, on the opposite side of the road, are the ruins of a tomb built with mixed techniques, perhaps a variation of the more common tower-shaped tomb. A parallelepiped base supports an octagonal element which was probably capped with a statue or viewing platform; a spiral staircase runs through the inside. The building technique and features date the tomb to the Trajanic period (end of the 1st/beginning of the 2nd century AD).

### 11) Tower-shaped Tomb

Further down the road, on the left side, stands a tower-shaped mausoleum. The remains consist of a cement and basaltic lava core and a funerary chamber in peperino tuff blocks with barrel-vaulted ceiling. The tomb dates to the middle of the 1st century BC.



### 12) Tomb with Statue

Further along, on the left side, is the cement and basaltic lava core of another funerary monument. In front is a statue of a man wearing a toga in white marble; the head is missing.



### 13) Bath Building

The brick-faced structures on the right side of the road belong to a bath building inside a rest area for travelers and to a large villa dating to the 1st-2nd century AD.

### 14) Casal Rotondo (Mile VI)

Just before the point where Mile VI begins, on the left side of the road, is the largest circular tomb of the Appian Way, with a base 35 m in diameter, named Casal Rotondo ("Round Farmhouse").

The building, dating to the early Augustan period (late 1st century BC), consists of a cylindrical drum originally faced with travertine blocks. Sections of marble facing attributed to the monument by Canina were inserted into an architectural façade built next to the monument in the 19th century.



A fragmentary inscription found in the area suggested that the mausoleum belonged to Marcus Valerius Messalla Corvinus, consul in the year 31 BC; his son Marcus Valerius

Messalinus Cotta probably dedicated the monument to him. This attribution is no longer accepted by scholars, however: the marble fragments set into the architectural façade are now believed to have belonged to another, smaller circular funerary building. The small house that crowns the mausoleum today, with facing in blocks of peperino tuff interrupted by chunks of white marble, rests in turn on the base of a 13th-century tower which was part of a fortification perhaps built by the Savelli family.

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