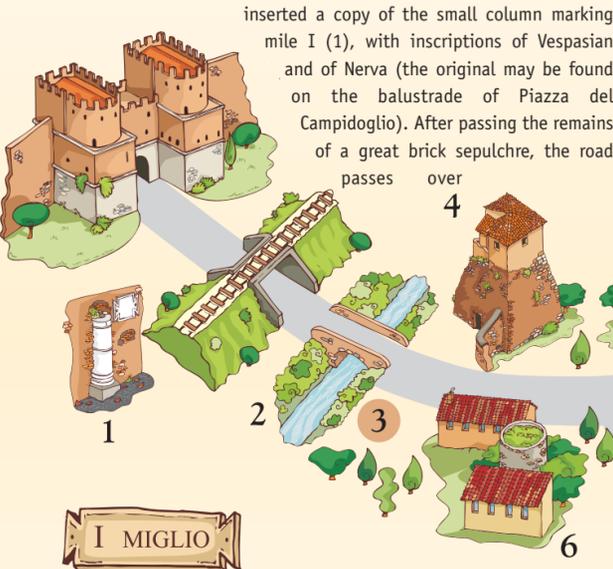


Before arriving at Porta San Sebastiano - the ancient Porta Appia in the city walls built in the second half of the third century A.D. by the Emperor Aurelian - there existed (and still exists under the names of Via delle Terme di Caracalla and Via di Porta San Sebastiano) the initial stretch of the road, almost a mile long that, starting off from Porta Capena in the walls of the republic dating from the fourth century B.C., became incorporated in the city with the building of the Aurelian Walls.

From Porta San Sebastiano, inside which is located the interesting Museum of the Walls, the road runs down slightly following the ancient Clivo di Marte thus called after the sanctuary arising there and of which a number of remains were recently unearthed. Immediately before the fly-over bridge, on the right, are the remains of a group of tombs dating to some time between the I century B.C. and the II century A.D., while in the modern wall we find inserted a copy of the small column marking



mile I (1), with inscriptions of Vespasian and of Nerva (the original may be found on the balustrade of Piazza del Campidoglio). After passing the remains of a great brick sepulchre, the road passes over the Caffarella, the ancient Almona (2), an affluent of the Tiber, in whose water each year on 27th March, the priests of Cybele (the Magna Mater) washed the image of the goddess. Here we find the complex of the former Latin Paper-mill, now the headquarters of the Appian Way Park Authority (3); (Via Appia Antica, 42 - ph. 065126314, 065130682 - www.parcoappiaantica.org) a visiting centre where it is possible to make use of numerous services (guided tours: toll free number 800028000). This Park, set up on the basis of a regional law in 1988, extends for about 3,500 hectares from Porta San Sebastiano to Boville, in the municipality of Marino. The Park comprises the first 11 miles of the Regina Viarum besides the Caffarella Valley and the area of the Aqeducts.

Soon after rises the so-called Sepulchre of Geta (4), erroneously attributed to the son of Septimius Severus whose death was ordered by his brother Caracalla. Originally consisting of several storeys built one on top of the other and tapering progressively, the tomb is now reduced to the core of

concrete, on which a small house has been built.

Arriving at the crossroads with the Via Ardeatina we find the small church of Quo Vadis (5) or Santa Maria in Palmis.

A seventeenth-century reconstruction of a chapel erected in the IX century on the place where, according to tradition, Saint Peter escaping from Rome to avoid the persecutions of Nero, is said to have had a vision of Jesus who reprimanded him, inviting him to turn back. The "prints" of two feet on a marble slab in the centre of the church (copy of a relief to be found in the nearby basilica of San Sebastiano) are supposed to be the miraculous footprints of Our Lord: in fact this is a pagan ex voto for the successful undertaking of a journey. Almost in front of the church may be glimpsed, concealed by an old hostelry, the cement core of a cylindrical tomb (6), surmounted by a small unfinished tower dating from the Middle Ages: this contains the Sepulchre of Priscilla, wife of the powerful freedman of the Emperor Domitian, Flavio Abascanto.



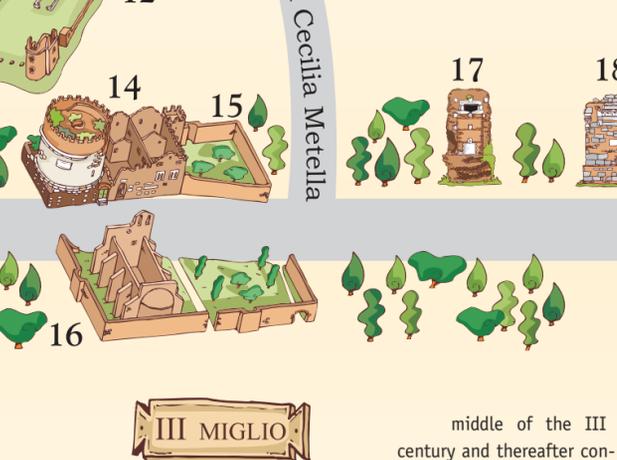
After the crossroads with the Via Ardeatina (7), the Via Appia begins the straight route by means of which it arrives at the Alban Hills. A short distance further on, on the left, we find Via della Caffarella leading to the broad Valley of the Caffarella, of great natural and historic interest. On a level with no. 103, corresponding to the portal of the seventeenth-century Villa Casali, is set the column marking mile II, as indicated by a tablet on the right-hand side of the road.

Further on, still on the right side of the road, we come to the entrance to the Catacombs of Saint Callistus (8), ever since the III century the most important Christian burial place of Rome that housed many tombs of popes and martyrs. The tunnels have been dug out on four different levels involving an area of over 12,000 square metres. The main groups of tombs are in the "regions" of Callisto (Crypt of the popes) and of Santa Cecilia and the so-called crypts of Lucina.

One hundred metres beyond the crossroads with the Via Appia Pignatelli (re-organised at the end of the XVII century by Pope Innocent XII), on a level with no. 119a, is the entrance to the Jewish Catacombs of Vigna Randanini (9).

After the subsequent cross-roads with Via delle Sette Chiese we come to an open space on the left containing the column erected in 1852 in memory of the work of reinstatement of the Appian Way carried out by Luigi Canina at the order of Pope Pius IX; on the right is the basilica of Saint Sebastian (10) built at the beginning of the IV century but rebuilt in the XVII century. Earlier called Saints Peter and Paul (Memoria Apostolorum), after the IX century it was dedicated to the martyr buried in the adjacent catacombs to which access is had from the church. The Catacombs of San Sebastiano were

the first to be indicated using the generic expression deriving from the Greek *Katà Kymbas*, meaning "within the quarries" and which later gave rise to the name used to designate all underground cemeteries. First begun some time after the



middle of the III century and thereafter considerably developed, these are the only ones which have always been accessible and frequented. Of the four levels of tunnels only the second can be visited. The church, built in the age of the Emperor Constantine, now appears as it did following the radical re-organisation of the seventeenth century. Some two hundred metres after San Sebastiano, on the left we find the ruins of the imperial residence of Maxentius. On the first floor, partially hidden by a farmhouse built against it (now restored and destined to become a museum area), we find the mausoleum known as the Tomb of Romulus (11) from the name of the Emperor's son who was buried there in 309 A.D. Set at the centre of an area surrounded by a four-sided arcade, the mausoleum consisted of a "rotunda" with cupola roof and preceded by a pronaos in all ways similar to the Pantheon. On the second storey we find the Circus (13), 250 metres long and 92 metres wide, delimited on the top side by two semi-cylindrical towers between which were located the twelve "pits" from which the racing chariots came

out. In the centre of the area is the "peg" around which the chariots turned and on the curved side a triumphal arch. The steps accommodated 10,000 spectators. Beyond the Circus rose the Villa (12), which was directly connected to the imperial tribune in the Circus. Underneath it and incorporated in it, we find an earlier villa dating from the II century, built in turn over one dating from late republican times.

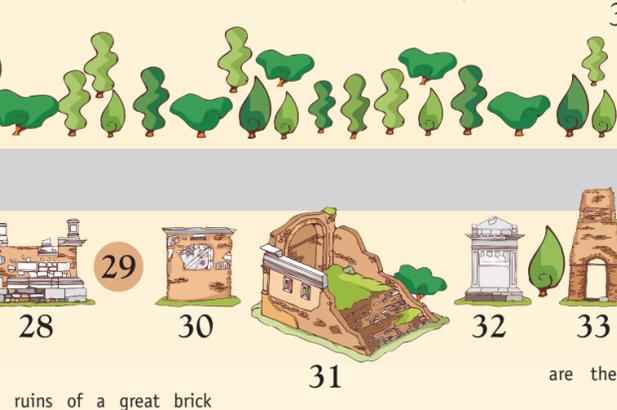
On the top of the rise followed by the road immediately thereafter, stands the Tomb of Cecilia Metella (14), erected shortly after 50 B.C. for the daughter of Q. Cecilius Metellus Creticus, wife of Marcus Grassus, son of the triumvir colleague of Pompey and Caesar: it is of the type having a cylindrical body set on a square base. This cylinder, faced with travertine marble and crowned with a marble frieze in relief with festoons between bucranes, is 11 metres high for 29.50 metres in diameter. Originally it probably ended in a conical structure or, more probably, in a mound of earth, and inside it contained the funerary cell that was closed on top by a cap vault. The Ghibelline battlements form part of a medieval



supra-elevation while the tomb was transformed into a tower and included in a fortified quadrilateral that comprised the Appian Way. At the beginning of the XIV century, in the form of a corner "keep", it was incorporated in the Castello dei Caetani (15), which also comprised the Palazzo, built against the tomb: within its recently restored interior the materials collected from along the road at the beginning of the XX century are gathered, to form the primary nucleus of the "Appian Way Museum". Also restored of late and open to visitors is the inside of the Tomb at whose underground level a spectacular lava flow dating back to 260,000 years ago may be seen. On the other side of the road we find the little church of San Nicola (16), roofless, that is a rare example of the Gothic (Cistercian) style in Rome. About 80 metres further on was the column marking mile III, while a portion of the original road paving is visible here with its great slabs of volcanic lava. After the crossroads with Via di Cecilia Metella, beyond the walls and enclosures of the villas built in the last few decades, we are confronted with the great ruin known as Torre di Capo di Bove (17) and some 200 metres further on, the

remains of two tower sepulchres. After passing Casale Torlona (on a level with no. 240), the road finally runs freely flanked by pine and cypress trees with numerous remains of tombs now more easily accessible. Beyond the gates of the former Forte Appio, we find one after the other, on the right, the epigraph of one Gneo Beblio Tampilo and the inscription of the family Turania, then a high relief in marble with a character depicted in "heroic" nakedness (19). A little further on, on the left, the fragments and the epigraph of the tomb of Marcus Servilius (18) are inserted into a nineteenth century "wing" of bricks. Following the ruins of a tower sepulchre another modern "wing" in brick, known as Seneca's Tomb (20) comprised marble fragments recovered in the vicinity and now removed. Here the column marking mile IV stood.

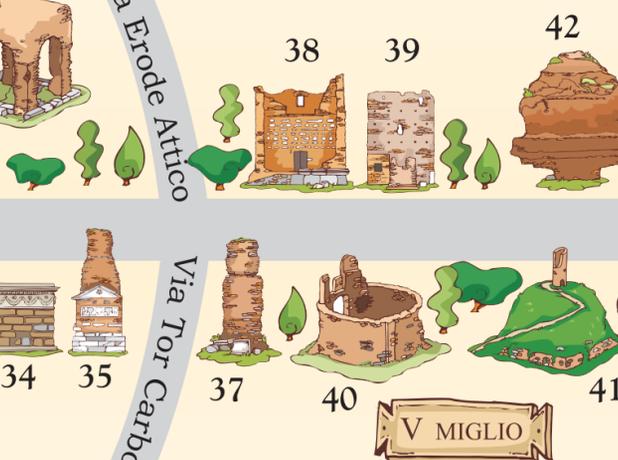
There follows a round mausoleum (21) with a square base and then, following a stretch of ancient slab paving, the nucleus of a chamber sepulchre and the tomb of the children of the freedman Sextus Pompeius Justus (22) with the great epigraph in verse on the usual nineteenth-century pillar from which many architectural fragments walled into them have been removed. Further on and, set back from the road itself,



are the ruins of a great brick monument, on a podium and with apses on three sides, believed to have been a temple of Jove (23); while in front (inside a private property) is the Sepulchre of Saint Urban (24), in the form of a small temple with steps in front, in brickwork in which Pope Urban the successor of Callistus is said to have been buried. The stretch of the Appian Way that follows is among the best preserved, even if the present state of many tombs is the result of the "reconstructions" ordered by Canina, whilst in our days, reliefs and ancient statues have been replaced with copies and casts. On the right-hand side we find in succession: the Tomb of the Licini (25); the so-called Doric Tomb (26), an altar type sepulchre, dating from the time of Silla; the tomb of Hilarius Fuscus (27), with the cast of the original relief comprising five portraits of dead persons; the Tomb of Tiberius Claudius Secundinus (28), surmounted by two bases for statues. After the remains of a columbarium (29), that once contained a headless statue in the centre of the back side, comes the Tomb of Quintus Apuleius (30), with a large fragment of lacunar in travertine pertaining to a ceiling.

Still on the right side are a succession of well preserved ruins in the posterior part of a temple-shaped sepulchre (31), rectangular, with a high podium and steps; the Tomb reconstructed by the Rabiri (32), dating from the I century A.D., with copy of the original relief depicting the busts with funerary inscriptions of Usia Prima, priestess of Isis, and of two freedmen of a Rabirius, a core in concrete of a tower sepulchre (33), with arched doorway; the Tomb known as of the Festoons (34) of altar type, adorned with a frieze in relief with putti bearing festoons; the tomb known as of the frontispiece, reconstructed (35), leaning against a high core in flint, in the form of a shrine, with copy of the relief with four busts, dating from the second half of the I century B.C.

On the left-hand side close to the cross-roads with Via Erode Attico, after the remains of three chamber sepulchres, not very far back from the road rises a quadrangular tomb in the shape of a four-fronted arch (36). After the crossroads with Via Erode Attico and Via di Tor Carbone we come to another of the most evocative stretches of the Appian Way. Among the

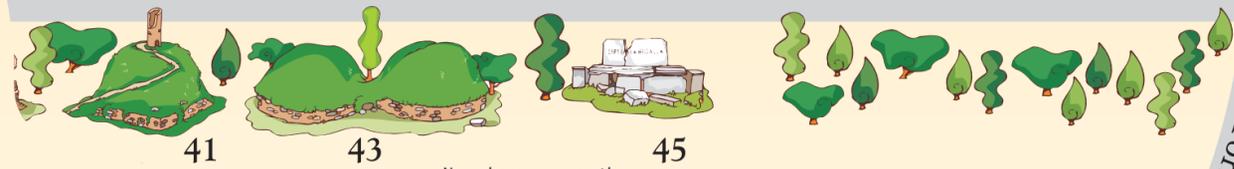


many ruins are, on the right, those of the core of a tall tower, in concrete (37), at the foot of which is an epigraph bearing the names of three Jewish freedmen; on the opposite side, those of two temple sepulchres dating from the II century A.D. (38, 39) and, on the right once more, after two cores of towers, those of a round mausoleum on a quadrangular base (40), surmounted by the remains of a medieval tower. Thereafter a tomb in brickwork, reconstructed in the Middle Ages as a tower and the core of a pinnacled sepulchre. Immediately afterwards, the road that comes here to mile V, bends slightly to the left, perhaps out of respect for a "sacred" place probably connected with the ancient border between the territory of Rome and that of Alba Longa and with the memory of the legendary fight between the Orazi and the Curiazi. Further on we come to the so-called Tumulus of the Curiazi (41), which could be dated to between the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Empire. On the opposite side, after the medieval habitations of Santa Maria

Nova, rises the great ruin of a tomb in the form of a pyramid (42). About 100 metres on, on the right, are the so-called Tumuli of the Orazi (43), as in the case of those of the Curiazi, referring to the tradition of the fight believed to have taken place in the neighbourhood, and according to a recent hypothesis, built "in memory" of it, at the time of Augustus.

At less than 150 metres from the Tumuli of the Orazi, on the left, the road is flanked by the Nymphaeum of the Villa dei Quintili (44), consisting of a great semicircle with a niche at the back and a basin in front. To the right is a medieval colonnade. Of the Villa, that was the largest of all those in the suburbs of Rome and belonged to two brothers sent to their deaths by Commodus in about 182 A.D., the grandiose remains may be described in the direction of the Via Appia Nuova where (on a level with no. 1092) a way in for visitors was recently opened up, following important excavation work and re-arrangement of the whole complex and the setting up of an antiquarium in an old farmhouse appropriately restructured for the purpose.

Some 300 metres from the



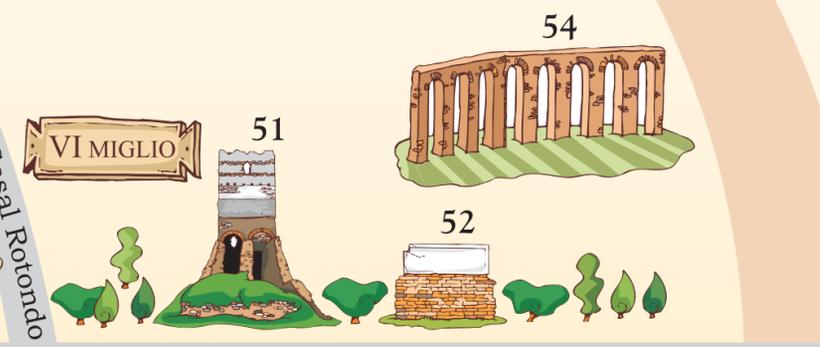
right, are the ruins of the circular sepulchre of Septimia Galla (45) surmounted by an epigraph; on the left, a sepulchre with an arched doorway (46) and other remains including those of a large core in flint, preceded by a headless statue (47). On the opposite side are the remains of a baths complex, perhaps belonging to the villa, and the tomb of a magistrate from which the frieze in relief with weapons and consular fasces has been removed (48). In front is the mass of the biggest mausoleum on the Appian Way, known as Casal Rotondo (49) from the farmhouse built over it and now replaced by a small villa. Dating from the time of Augustus, it was once considered, incorrectly, to be the tomb of Messala Corvino, consul in 31 B.C. consisting of a cylindrical body, originally faced with travertine, set on a quadrangular base 35 metres square. The architectural elements walled into the brick wall erected by Canina beside the mausoleum, contrary to earlier beliefs, would not seem to belong to it and have instead been referred to another sepulchre in the shape of a circular tabernacle with conical roof of scale type capped by a pinnacle, that might be attributed, on the basis of a fragment of inscription, to a member of the family of the Aureli Cotta.

Immediately after Casal Rotondo, where the railway for Naples passes under the road, the column marking mile VI once stood. Continuing beyond the cross-roads with Via di Casal Rotondo, we see cores in concrete of sepulchres of different heights, plinths of tombs in peperino and remains of the flint roadway. On the right is a tomb in brickwork (50) faced in marble slabs with figures of griffins, whose funerary chamber is still in good condition. There follows on the left Torre Selce (51) built in the XII century over the nucleus of a mausoleum which must have been similar to that of Cecilia Metella. Soon after, on the left among the pines, on a pedestal, is placed a frame bearing a fine funerary inscription (52). Before arriving at the point where the road takes a slight bend to the right, leaning against a ruin in concrete, we come on a headless statue of a man in a toga (53); while on the left, among the grass, lies



the cast of a marble relief dating from the late years of the republic bearing the portraits of three dead persons. In the distance, on the left, the arches of the aqueduct that supplied the Villa dei Quintili may be seen. Further on, before arriving at the underpass of the "Great Ring Road", we come to column marking mile VII of the road that since 1848 stands on the balustrade of the Capitol, on the Aracoli side. Continuing on, after the cores of several sepulchres in concrete on the left, there is a great exedra (55) of which only the internal structure remains, perhaps originally roofed with a semi-cupola, faced in precious marbles and adorned with statues. On the left still, a little further on, we may note, among other remains, a tomb in brick (56) on a square base that contained the sepulchral chamber and a wing in the form of a tabernacle elevated over the facade, with a central niche, perhaps for a statue, framed by two semi-columns surmounted by a tympanum. Further on, on a hillock on the right (57), are the remains of a

sepulchre over which in the Middle Ages a tower had been built: this is the Torre Appia, which collapsed in 1985 in the course of a violent storm. Still further on, on the right, are the ruins of another great round mausoleum, followed, on the same side, by an area containing stumps of columns in peperino (58) that indicate the presence of a portico earlier referred to a temple of Hercules, but more probably to be attributed to a building dedicated to the god Silvanus. Some fifty metres afterwards stood the column marking mile VIII. Some distance further on, on the left, preceded by a tabernacle tomb in a good state of conservation, there still stands a round mausoleum (60) originally with cupola roof, known on account of its shape as the "Priest's biretta". Dating from the late Empire it had

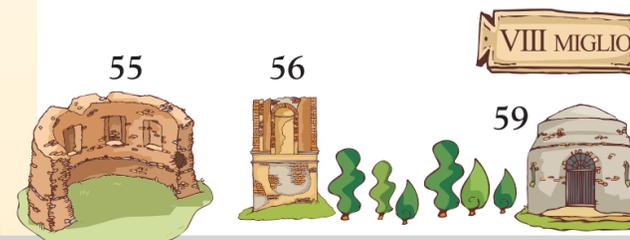


been adapted in the early Middle Ages to a small church dedicated to the Madonna, already abandoned in the X century. A little further ahead is the cross-roads with Via di Fioranello, after which the Appian way continues up to mile XI, in the neighbourhood of the inhabited centre of Santa Maria delle Mole, where the ancient layout is overlaid with the modern one of the Via Appia Nuova.

Professor Romolo Augusto Staccioli
University of Rome "La Sapienza"

OPENING HOURS

- **Museum of the Walls** - Via di Porta San Sebastiano, 18 - ph. 0670475284
Daily 9.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m., Monday closed. Sundays: winter 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.; summer 9.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. lit.5000 (€2,58)
- **Catacombs of St. Callisto** - Via Appia Antica, 110 - ph. 0651301580.
Daily 8.30-12.00 a.m.; 2.30-5.00 p.m.; summertime until 5.30 p.m.
Closed on Wednesdays and in February. Admission Lit. 8.000 (€ 4,13).
- **Catacombs of St. Sebastian** - Via Appia Antica, 136 - ph. 0651301580.
Daily 8.30-12.00 a.m.; 2.30-5.00 p.m.; summertime until 5.30 p.m.
Closed on Sundays and in November. Admission Lit. 8.000 (€ 4,13).
- **Jewish Catacombs „Vigna Randanini“** - Via Appia Antica, 119 -. Visits the 1st Monday of each month on request: Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma - ph. 064880530/fax 064814125.
- **Tomb of Cecilia Metella** - Via Appia Antica, 161 - ph. 067802465.
Daily 9.00 a.m. until one hour before sunset. Monday closed. Admission Lit. 4.000 (€ 2,07)



- **Villa of the Quintili** - Via Appia Nuova, 1092 - ph. 067182273.
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- **Circus of Maxentius, Mausoleum of Romulus and Imperial Residences** - Via Appia Antica, 153 ph.067801324. Daily 9.00 a.m. until one hour before sunset.
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THE ANCIENT APPIAN WAY was the first and most important of the great roads which the Romans built. Rightly called the *Regina Viarum*, or queen of roads, it was constructed towards the end of the 4th century B.C. in order to set up a fast communication between Rome and Capua.

The year of birth of the road was 312 B.C., when Appius Claudius held the office of censor in Rome: he was the magistrate who had the road built, giving it his own name. Its planning followed a surprisingly modern approach, which left the intermediate towns to one side, though they were linked to it by apposite streets, and aimed straight for the objective. The road thus had to be built overcoming great natural obstacles like the Pontine marshes by means of important engineering works.

The first stretch, as far as Terracina, was an extremely long straight line of approximately ninety kilometres in length, the last 28 of which flanked by an artificial canal that allowed one to alternate the carriage or horseback trip with a boat ride. After Terracina the road turned towards Fondi, then passed through the Itri gorge to slope down to Formia and Minturno. After having passed Sinuessa (today called Mondragone) with another straight stretch it aimed at Casilinum (present-day Capua), on the Volturno river, and from there reached the ancient city of Capua, known today as Santa Maria Capua Vetere. The whole distance was 132 miles, and was normally covered in a journey lasting five or six days.

As a consequence of the further expansion of Rome in the south of Italy, the Appian way was lengthened several times: at first immediately after 268 B.C., as far as Beneventum, then from there to the Apennines, thence to Venosa and finally on to Taranto. During the second century before Christ, lastly, it was taken as far as Brindisi, gateway to the East.

The stretch after Benevento was however gradually substituted by an alternative route, a shorter one which crossed all Puglia passing through Ortona, Canosa, Ruvo, Bari and Egnazia. During the first years of the second century A.D. this was made into a real variant by the emperor Trajan, who added his name to it. Along the new Appian Trajan way it was possible to get from Rome to Brindisi in 13 or 14 days, covering a total of 365 miles.

The Appian way was paved with huge stones called *basoli*, made of basalt rock and roughly polygonal in shape. The carriage-way had a standard width of 14 Roman feet (approximately 4.15 metres) which was sufficient to allow two carriages going in opposite directions to cross. Two hard-packed earth walkways limited by a stone kerb, and at least one and a half metres in width each, flanked the carriageway.

Every 7 or 9 miles (10/13 Km) in heavy-traffic traits, and every 10 or 12 miles (14/17 km) in less frequented stretches, there were the post-stations along the road to allow for a change of horses and to offer a place of rest and a dwelling for travellers. Near the towns the streets was flanked by great villas, and especially by tombs and funerary monuments of various kinds.



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LA VIA

APPIA

ANTICA

