

Cammin Arte



THE APPIAN WAY



Named the “Regina Viarum” or “Queen of Roads” by the poet Statius for the beauty of the route as it leads among lavish villas and magnificent funerary monuments, the Via Appia was one of the main consular roads of ancient Rome and is still a key route for the city today. It was inaugurated in 312 BC by the censor Appius Claudius Caecus and linked Rome with the Campanian city of Capua, Rome’s great ally and jumping off point for its expansion into southern Italy. Later it was extended to Beneventum and later to Tarantum. The creation of the Suburban Regional Park of the Ancient Appia has allowed not just the protection of a particularly interesting archaeological landscape, but also the

preservation of one of the few remaining examples of the Roman countryside that was so admired by the painters of the Grand Tour, young men from good English families who came to Italy in search of its beauty to capture on canvas.

Our walk will take us to the massive structures of the Circus of Maxentius, built by the emperor in memory of his son Romulus: this is one of the best circus complexes to survive from ancient Rome, it was used for chariot racing and could hold around 10,000 spectators. Following on from this we will look at the symbol of the Appian Way: the Tomb of Caecilia Metella. The tomb dates to 50 BC and commemorates the daughter of Quintus Caecilius Metellus Creticus and wife of Crassus (the triumvir with Pompey the Great and Julius Caesar). In 1299 the Caetani family took the tomb and

converted it into a fortified castle from which they controlled the traffic on the road. The visit will then offer you some of the most picturesque views of the ancient road as it passes through mature cypress and pine trees. You can add a visit to the catacombs of San Callisto or San Sebastiano to this walk.

