The Via Appia from Santa Maria delle Mole to Frattocchie

Via Appia Antica

This short itinerary about 1 km long, between the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th milestones, is located in the Commune of Marino, along a stretch of the Appian Way across the countryside, featuring few archaeological remains but interesting nonetheless.

At the beginning of the itinerary are the remains of a building with*tabernae*, or shops, probably an old roadside inn where horses could be changed. Another interesting ancient monument is the tomb surmounted by a tower, called Torre Secchi, erected in the 19th century for conducting geodetic surveys along the Via Appia.

This is yet another example of how some of the ancient remains have been converted to new use over the centuries.

The itinerary ends at a location called Frattocchie, named after the “fratte”, the overgrowth that had concealed the remains of the ancient city of Boville, no traces of which remain.

Poi

1. Via Appia Antica - Santa Maria delle Mole
2. Tabernae
3. Excavation of the Appia substructure
4. Secchi's Tower
5. Via Appia Antica - Frattocchie

Info

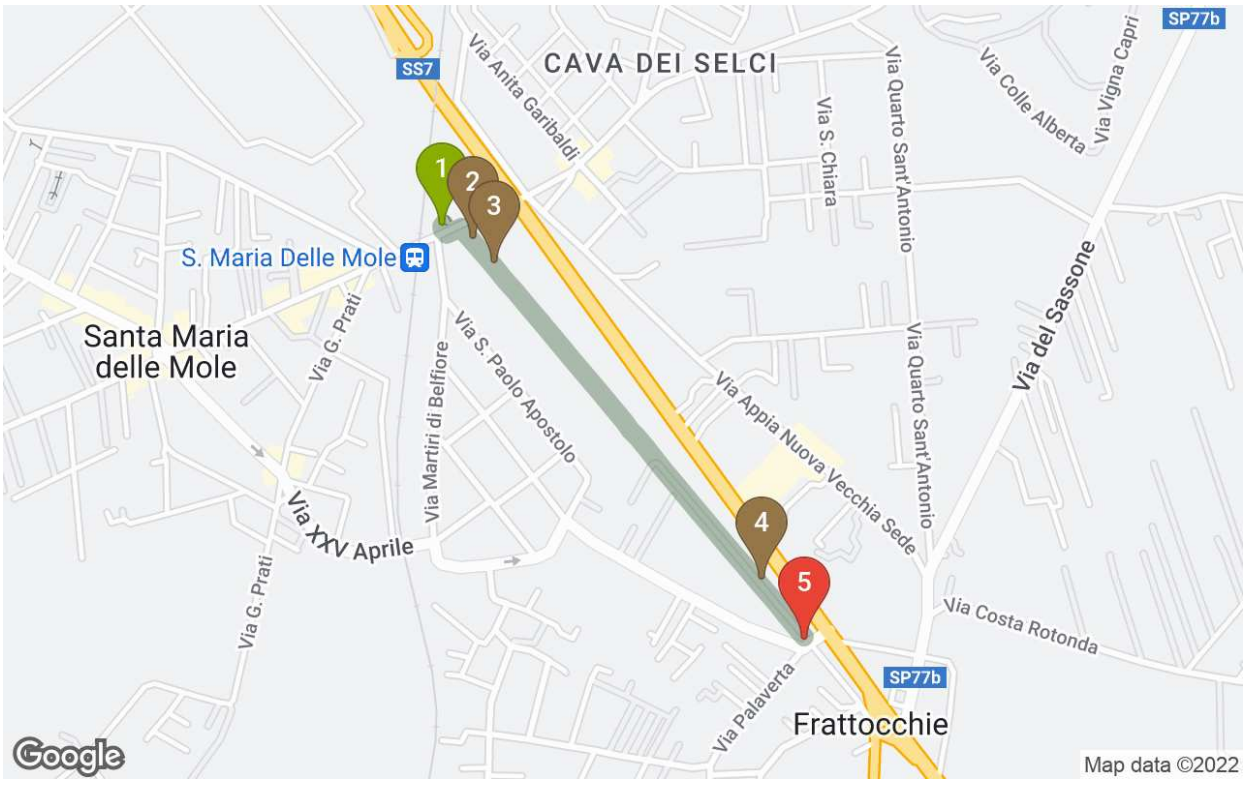
POI

5

Distance

1.04 Km

Scan the QrCode to access the navigable mobile version of the itinerary



Via Appia Antica - Santa Maria delle Mole

Marino / Place to visit - Ancient streets

Santa Maria delle Mole is a town in the commune of Marino, on the Via Appia Nuova and the Rome-Velletri railway. The landscape here is mostly flat except for some low hills, such as the Colle della Falcognana, and is crossed by several small streams, such as the Fosso di Fiorano.
The origin of the name is traditionally associated with the discovery, in the area of a small statue of the Virgin Mary, who later became the patron saint of the town, and a pair of millstones, from one of the many flour mills ("mole" in Italian) that were built along the banks of the Fosso di Fiorano. In ancient times, not far from here, rose the Latin settlement of *Mugilla*, of which there are only a few remains on a hill near the Colle della Falcognana. Near Santa Maria delle Mole, at Frattocchie, are the ruins of *Bovillae*, the first town encountered by ancient travellers on the Via Appia after leaving Rome. Established as a colony of Alba Longa, *Bovillae* was a member of the Latin League and, after being defeated by Rome, became a Roman municipality. Its importance, in ancient times, was due to its location on one of the most important roads in the whole Empire.
After the Via Appia Antica fell into disrepair, *Bovillae* too inexorably declined, although it continued to be inhabited until the 9th century. However, it never recovered from the sacking and destruction perpetrated by the Saracens in AD 846, after which it disappeared from history.
During the Middle Ages the area of the former *Bovillae* became the property of the Savelli family, and later of the Orsini and Colonna. The excavations carried out in the area of *Bovillae* during the 19th century have unearthed a circus, erected by Tiberius, in the 1st century AD, for the commemorative games in honour of his predecessor Augustus.
Several arches of the starting gates, or *carceres*, remain. Until the mid-20th century, the area of Santa Maria delle Mole was mostly used as grazing land for sheep, and vineyards, but over the last decades it has rapidly expanded and has now become one of the most populated and lively towns in the commune of Marino.

Visit Duration

2 min.

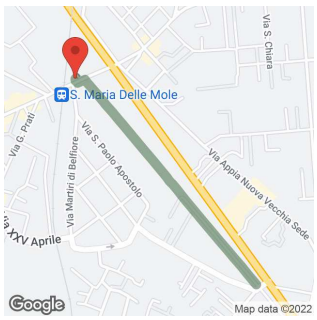
Address

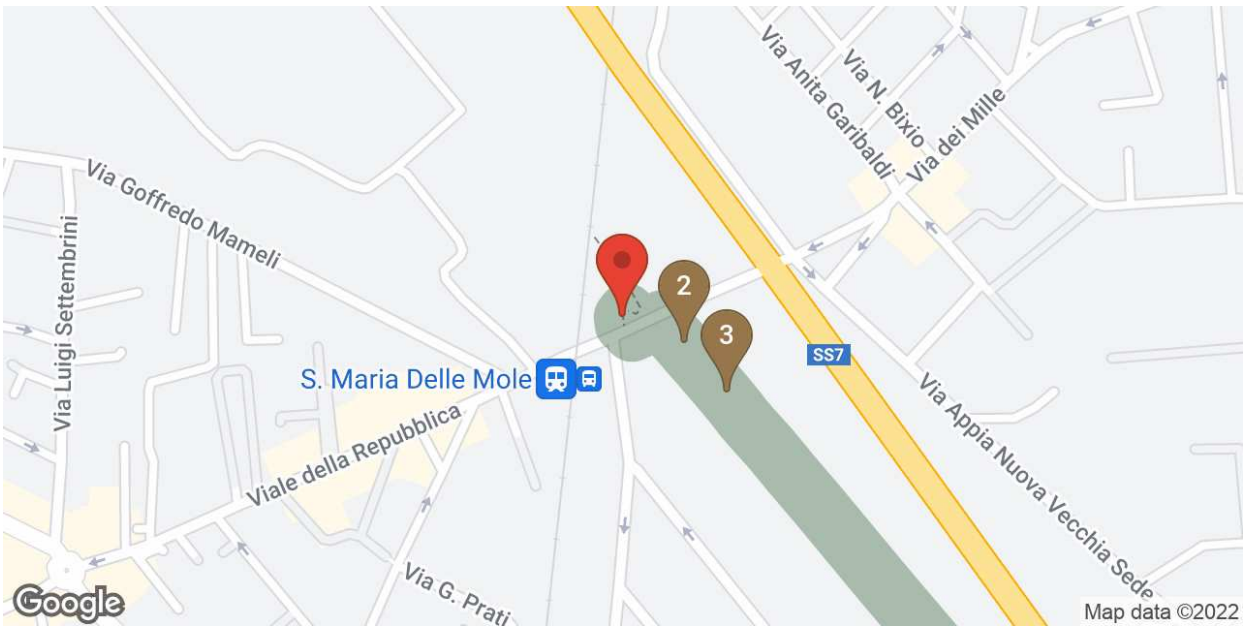
Viale della Repubblica - Marino (RM)

How to get

From ROMA TERMINI railway station take train direction VELLETRI to SANTA MARIA DELLE MOLEstop.

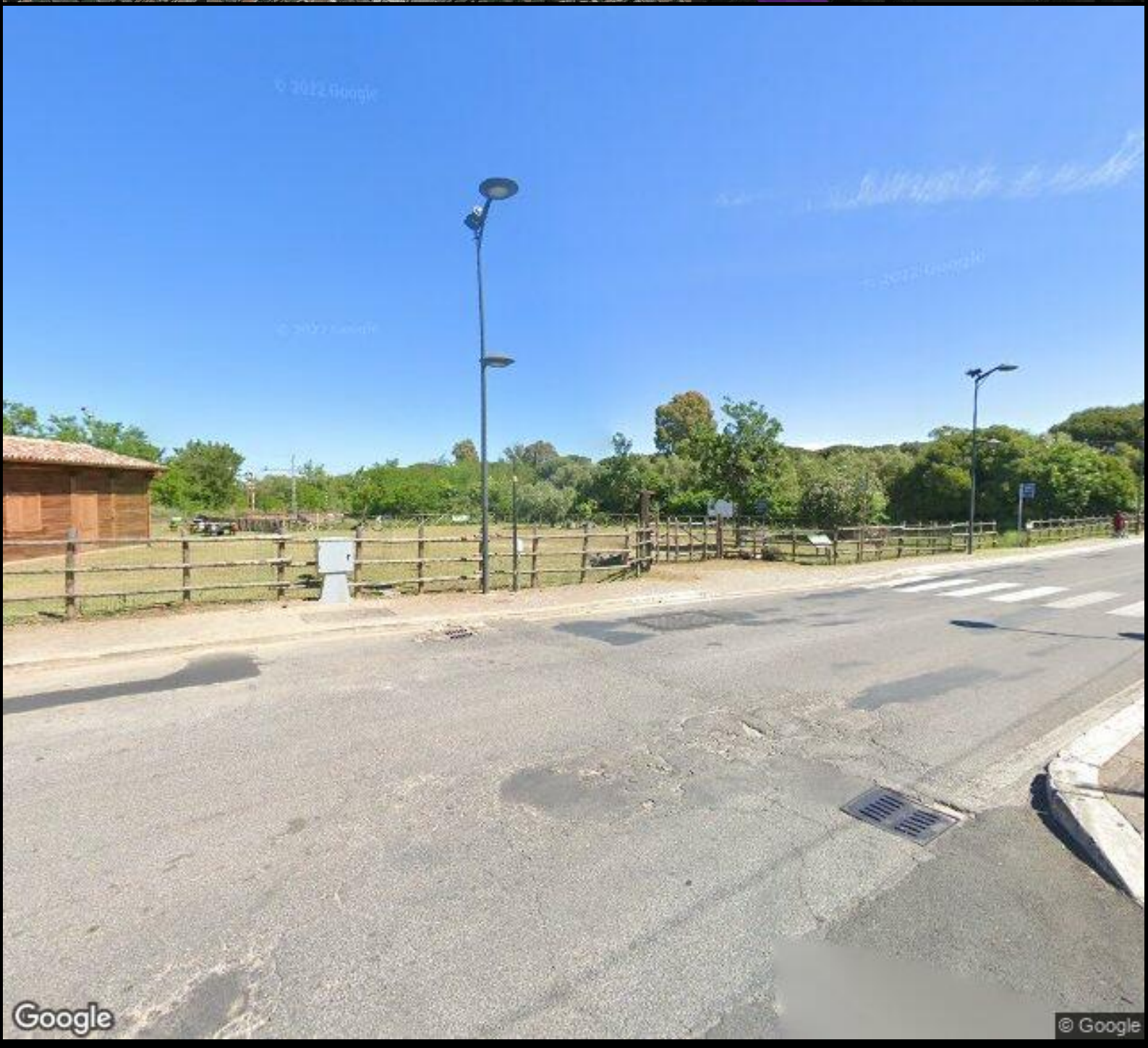
1 Via Appia Antica - Santa Maria delle Mole
2 Tabernae
3 Excavation of the Appia substructure
4 Secchi's Tower
5 Via Appia Antica - Frattocchie





Map / Street View

Poi 1



Tabernae

Marino / Place to visit - Archaeological areas

The stretch of the Via Appia Antica between the 10th and 11th milestones, between Rome and Bovillae, featured a large concentration of facilities serving the many travellers on the road. At the 10th mile, near the present-day railway station of Santa Maria delle Mole, are the remains of an ancient stage station, where horses could be replaced.
At a time when horses were widely used for travelling and transporting goods, it was necessary to be able to replace exhausted horses with fresh ones at these stage stations present on all major roads. In Roman times, every 10 miles there was a mutatio, for replacing horses, while every 20 miles there was a mansio, where could also find a bed and a meal.
At the stage station of the 10th mile there are remains of the tabernae, inn buildings discovered in 2000 and dated to the 2nd century AD, and probably abandoned in the middle of the 5th century.

Visit Duration

2 min.

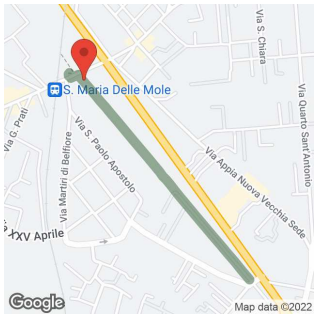
Address

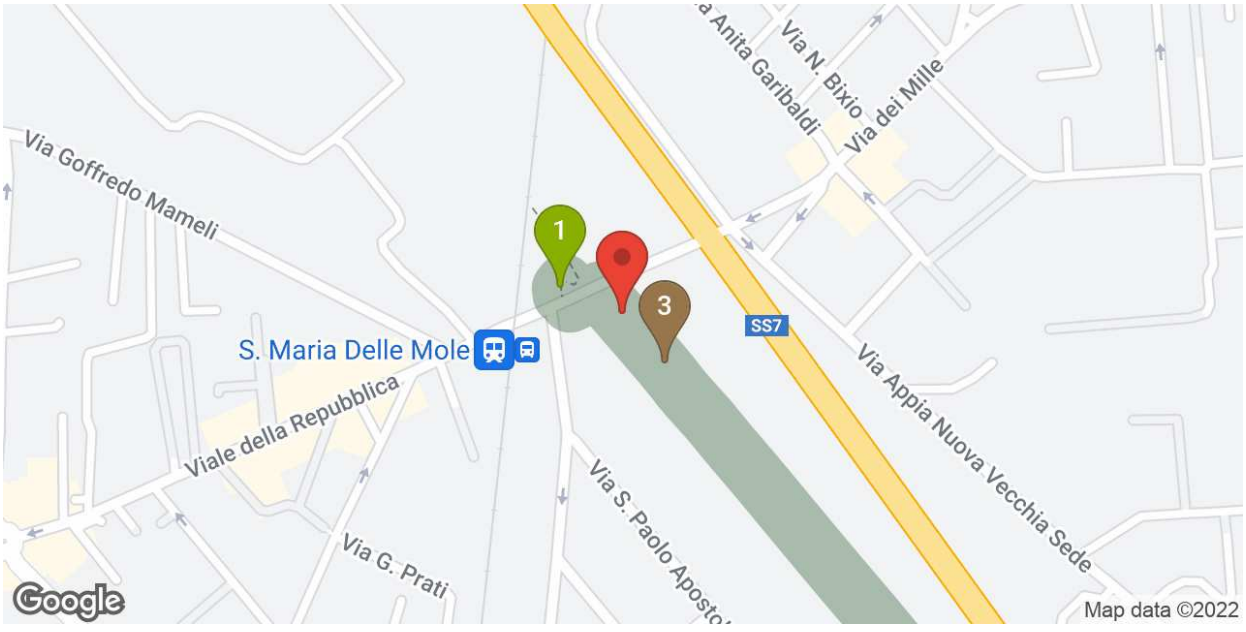
Via Appia Antica - Marino (RM)

How to get

From the ROMA TERMINI railway station take the train direction VELLETRI to SANTA MARIA DELLE MOLE stop and then walk towards the Via Appia Antica.

1 Via Appia Antica - Santa Maria delle Mole
2 Tabernae
3 Excavation of the Appia substructure
4 Secchi's Tower
5 Via Appia Antica - Frattocchie





Map / Street View

Poi 2

Excavation of the Appia substructure

Marino / Place to visit - Archaeological areas

During the excavation campaigns conducted by the Gruppo Archeologico Romano at Santa Maria delle Mole, between 2008 and 2015, a 5 metre long masonry structure was unearthed, probably a substructure of the Via Appia Antica.
Over the centuries it had become buried beneath layers of both natural and man-made origin and features a complex stratigraphy. The discovery was made at the 9th mile of the road and is, in fact, a significant example of construction technique.
The Via Appia was gradually paved from the 3rd century BC onwards, with basalt paving stones and using the same technique that was used to build all the major Roman roads, although the engineering precision and beauty of the Queen of All Roads was unrivalled.
The studies carried out on the construction technique of the Via Appia have revealed that the first step in the process was the excavation of a 1 metre deep trench filled with soil and gravel, which formed the roadbed, on top of which a thinner layer of gravel and crushed limestone was laid, finally topped by the basalt slabs, which formed the actual surface of the road and which were flat at the top, while underneath they were cut to a point, or edge, in order to grasp the underlying layer more firmly and ensure greater stability. The stones were arranged close to each other so as not to leave any holes and smoothened. The stone used to build the Via Appia is leucitite, a very hard lava stone from quarries in the Alban Hills.
The road width is about 14 Roman feet, corresponding to between 4.10 and 4.20 metres. This was the standard width for all important Roman roads and was designed to allow two carts to pass at the same time without having to give way. On the sides were pavements for pedestrians, consisting of beaten earth or gravel, as a result of which the roads could measure up to 10 metres in width.

Visit Duration

1 min.

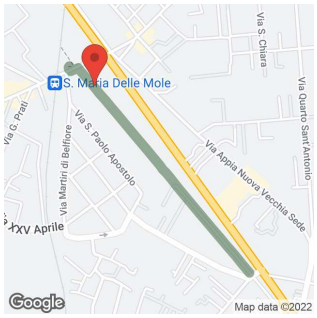
Address

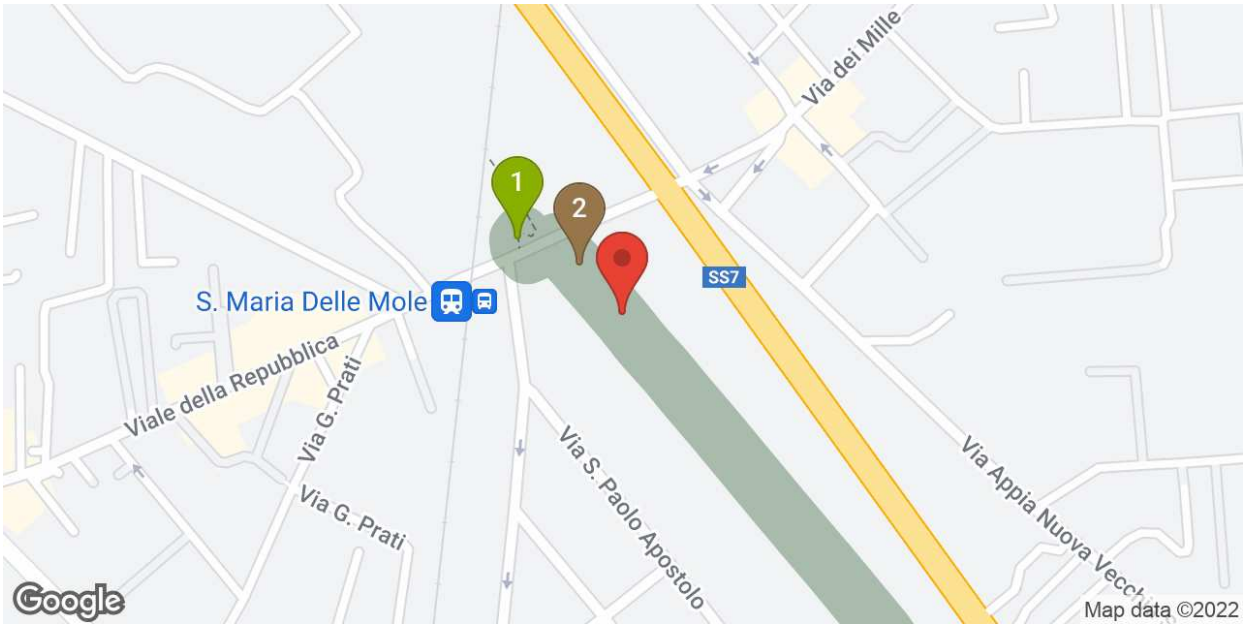
Via Appia Antica - Marino (RM)

How to get

From ROMA TERMINI railway station take train direction VELLETRI to SANTA MARIA DELLE MOLE stop and then walk towards Via Appia Antica.

1 Via Appia Antica - Santa Maria delle Mole
2 Tabernae
3 Excavation of the Appia substructure
4 Secchi's Tower
5 Via Appia Antica - Frattocchie





Map / Street View

Poi 3

Secchi's Tower

Marino / Place to visit - Towers

This monument, situated near the 11th mile of the Via Appia Antica, is a Roman tomb surmounted by a modern tower. The tomb, dating back to the 1st century AD, consists of a rectangular podium, originally faced with blocks of marble, topped by a cylinder shaped structure made of concrete. Inside is the funeral chamber, with niches in the walls for the burial urns.
The tower was built in the 19th century as the final control point for geodetic levelling purposes by the astronomer Angelo Secchi along the Via Appia Antica. The initial control point was located 12 kilometres away, near the Tomb of Cecilia Metella.
A survey had already been carried out in the mid-18th century, but it was no longer possible to accurately identify the southern control point at Frattocchie.

Visit Duration

60 min. cc.

Address

Via Appia Antica - Marino (RM)

How to get

From the ROMA TERMINI railway station take the train direction VELLETRI to SANTA MARIA DELLE MOLE and then walk for about 10 minutes towards the Via Appia Antica.

Audioguide

Scan the QrCode to access the Listen to the audioguide

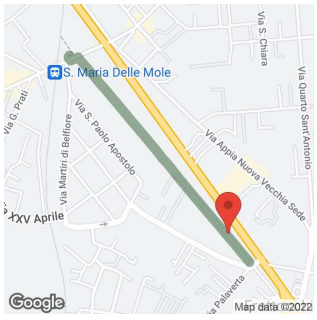
1 Via Appia Antica - Santa Maria delle Mole

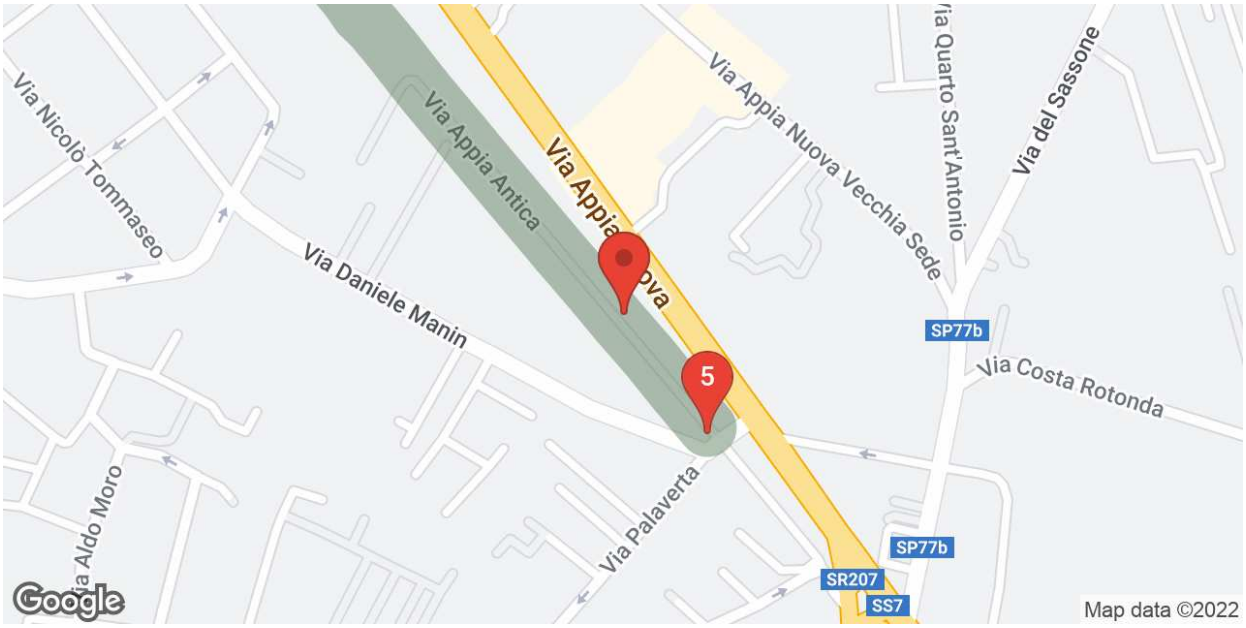
2 Tabernae

3 Excavation of the Appia substructure

4 Secchi's Tower

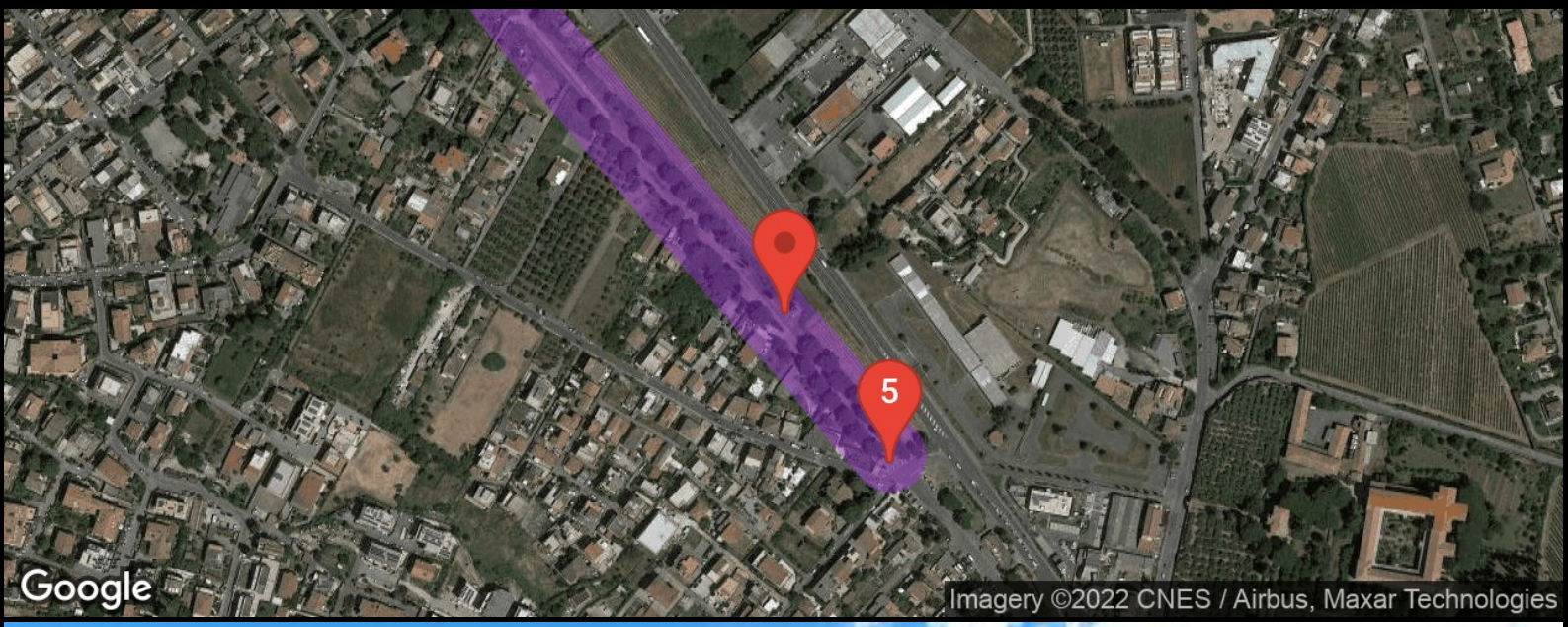
5 Via Appia Antica - Frattocchie

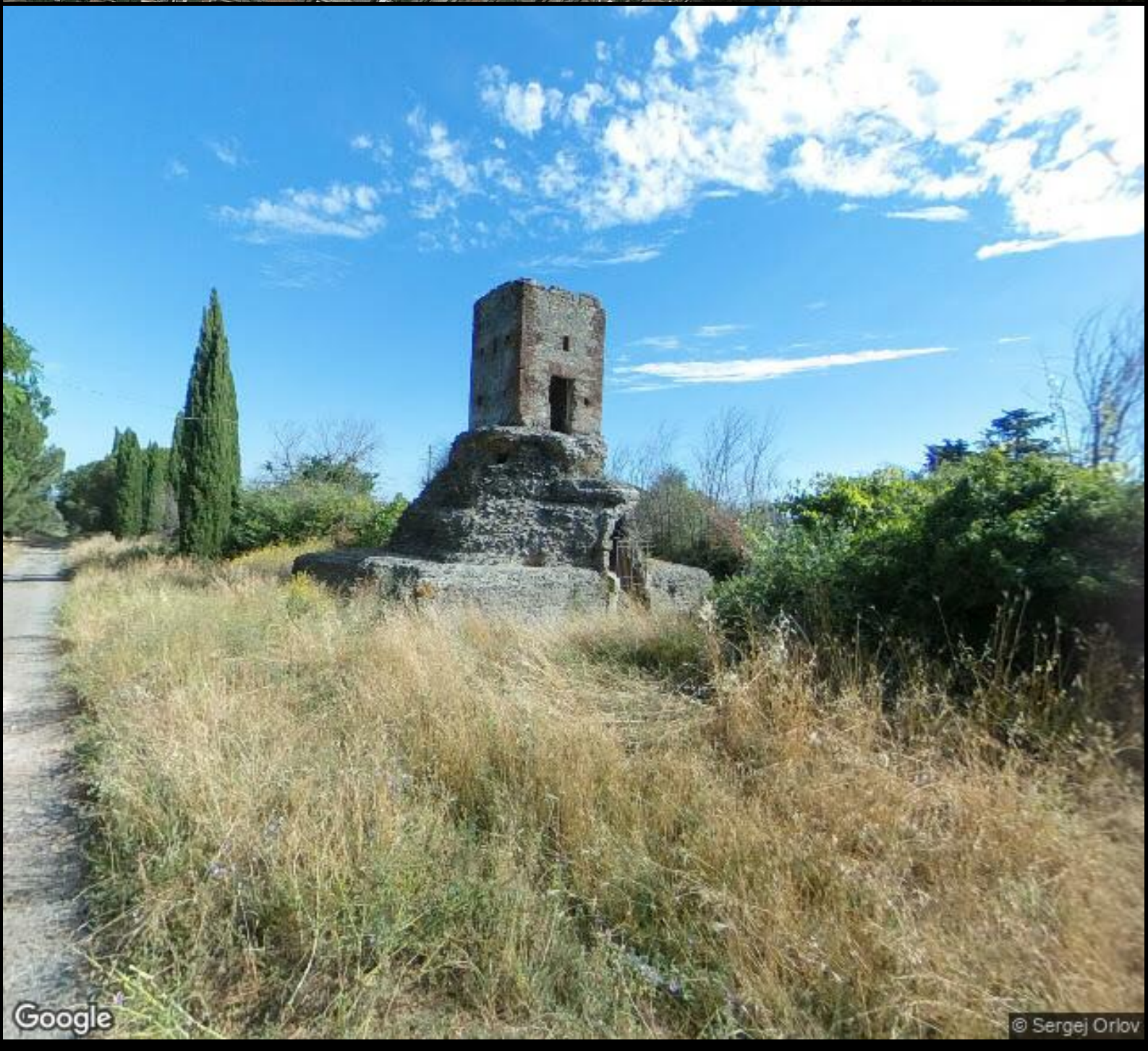




Map / Street View

Poi 4





Via Appia Antica - Frattocchie

Marino / Place to visit - Ancient streets

This is the southernmost edge of the Appia Antica Park, from where, continuing northwards to number 195 in the Commune of Rome, begins the state-owned stretch of the Via Appia Antica, which is managed by the Archaeological Park of the Appia Antica authority. The location called “Frattocchie” is named for the overgrowth of vegetation (called “*fratte*” in Italian) which had overrun the ruins of the ancient city of *Bovillae*, once the first city travellers along the Appian Way encountered after leaving Rome. According to tradition, the city had been founded by *Latinus Silvius* a king of Alba Longa, a rival city of Rome, and the name is perhaps connected to the herds of cattle that once grazed in the area. The site of Bovillae, outside the perimeter of the Park, was located at the 12th or 13th mile. In AD 14, the funeral cortège of the deceased emperor Augustus, coming from Nola, was met here by members of the Equestrian order, who then carried it the emperor’s mortal remains the rest of the way to Rome.
Tiberius, who succeeded Augustus to the throne, transformed the town into a cult centre of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, erecting a family shrine here and establishing a college of priests to superintend the worship of the deified Augustus. The city then disappeared from history after the fall of the Roman Empire and was rediscovered only at the beginning of the 19th century, when excavations were carried out, which unearthed incriptions, statues, cisterns nd the remains of a theatre and a circus built by Tiberius.

Visit Duration

2 min.

Address

Via Appia Antica - Marino (RM)

How to get

From ROMA TERMINI railway station take the train direction VELLETRI to SANTA MARIA DELLE MOLE stop and then walk for 10 minutes.

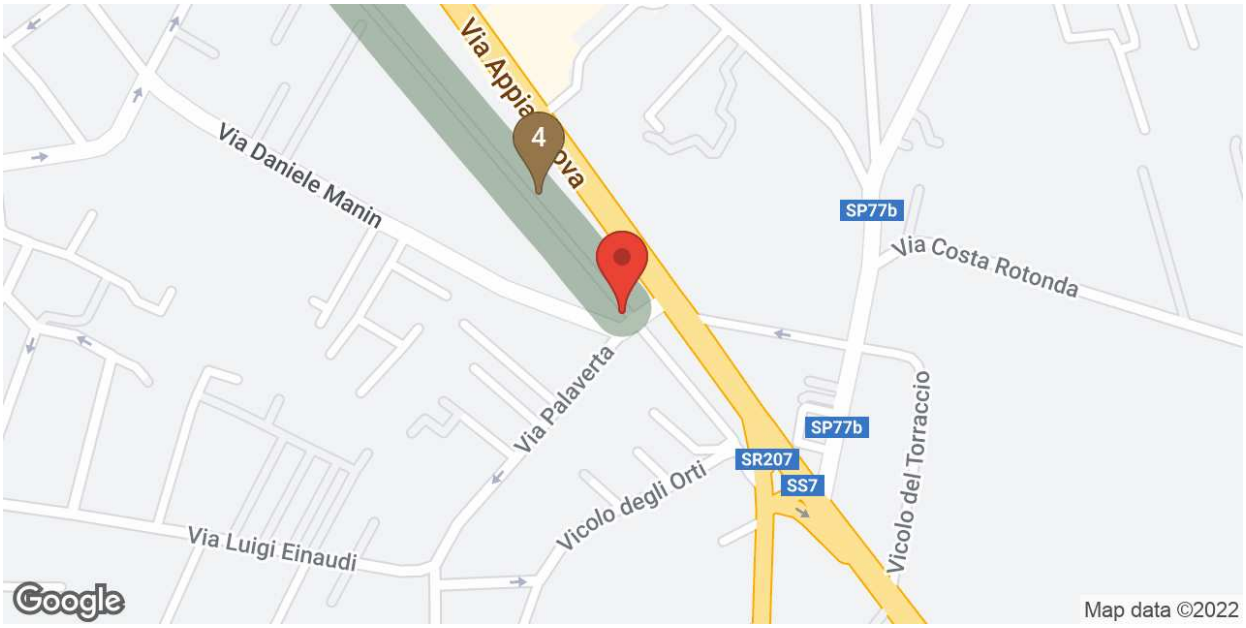
1 Via Appia Antica - Santa Maria delle Mole

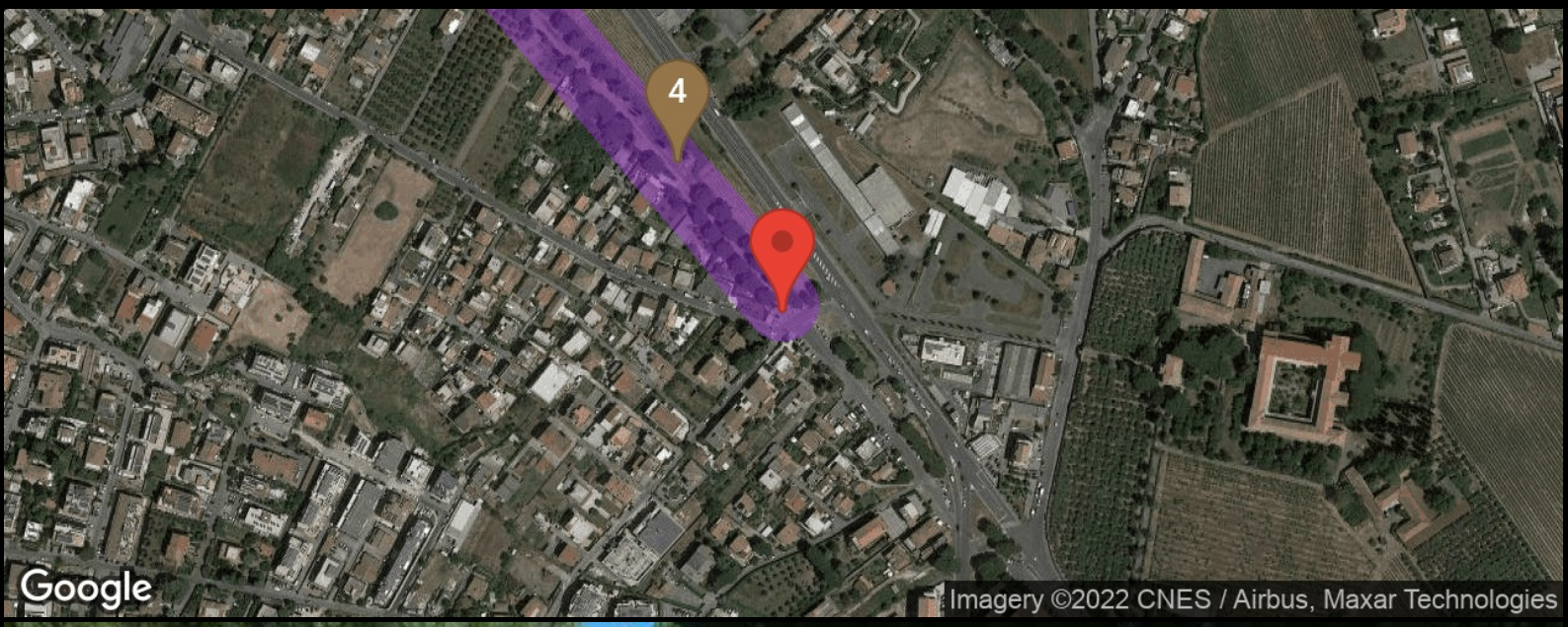
2 Tabernae

3 Excavation of the Appia substructure

4 Secchi's Tower

5 Via Appia Antica - Frattocchie



Map / Street View

Poi 5