



## From Via De Bildt to Domine Quo Vadis

### Caffarella Valley

This itinerary explores the Caffarella Valley and ends on Via Appia Antica. The valley is an area of great natural beauty, with rolling hills, crossed by waterways and dotted with buildings and remains from Roman times, such as the Tomb of Annia Regilla and the water cistern converted into a barn by the aristocratic Torlonia family, who owned a large estate here, and the more recent Casale della Vaccareccia farmhouse built in the 16th century.

The itinerary ends at the junction with the Appian Way near the interesting church of Domine Quo Vadis, associated with the legendary appearance of Christ to the apostle Peter, and the Tomb of Priscilla, one of the most monumental tombs along the Appia Antica. From here, follow the map to other itineraries across the Park.



POI

10



Distance

2.68 Km

#### Poi

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- 2 Torlonia Cistern – Barn
- 3 Casale della Vaccareccia
- 4 River Almone (North)
- 5 Tomb of Annia Regilla
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Scan the QrCode to access the navigable mobile version of the itinerary

# Poi 1



## Info

Free admission.

## Address

Via Carlo de Bildt - Roma (RM)

## How to get

From METRO LINE A station FURIO CAMILLO exit to via Baronio and walk for 14 minutes.

## The Caffarella Valley – Via Carlo de Bildt

### Roma / Place to visit - Natural area

The Caffarella Valley is an expanse of public land, covering an area of 190 hectares, bounded by the Aurelian Walls, Via Latina and Via dell'Almone. Its name comes from an estate owned by the noble Caffarelli family, who built a farmhouse here, in the 16th century, known as "Vaccareccia", and which can still be seen in the Park.

The area was listed as public parkland in the 1965 Zoning Plan, and today visitors may enter and appreciate its natural beauty and archaeological remains via a number of gates in the surrounding neighbourhoods. This green valley, crossed by the river Almone, features many archaeological remains, tombs, villas, towers and waterworks, having been inhabited since the 6th century BC. Initially consisting entirely of farmland, in the Imperial age it became a highly prized residential area. In particular, we know from the ancient sources that, at the time, Herodes Atticus, a prominent Athenian orator and politician, who lived in Rome in the 2nd century AD, owned a vast estate and built a huge villa here (known as the *Pagus Triopius*), the core of which, having passed into the hands of the emperor, later became the Villa of Maxentius.

Evocative buildings here are the so-called "*nymphaeum* of Egeria", the church of Sant'Urbano, originally dedicated to Ceres and Faustina, the tomb of Annia Regilla, the deceased wife of Herodes Atticus. Also of interest is the "Valca Tower", built as a mill in around the 11th century, on the shores of the river, as part of a fulling mill for manufacturing cloth.

# Poi 2



## Address

Via della Caffarella - Roma (RM)

## How to get

From METRO LINE A station COLLI ALBANI walk for 11 minutes along Via Marco Menghini towards Largo Tacchi Venturi.

## Torlonia Cistern – Barn

### Roma / Place to visit - Cistern

The Caffarella Valley, thanks to the lay of the land and abundance of water, being crossed by the river Almone, was exploited since Roman times, for farming purposes, as well as being appreciated as a setting for several wealthy suburban villas, with large rooms, baths, gardens and fountains. This is the reason for the presence, in the Valley, of a large number of cisterns – storage tanks for collecting water – an example of which is the so-called "Torlonia Cistern – Barn".

Built originally in the period between the end of the Republic and the Early Imperial age (between the end of the 1st century BC and the beginning of the 1st century AD), it probably belonged to a large villa the remains of which have been unearthed between via Carlo de Bildt and the Casale della Vaccareccia farmhouse. The walls of the cistern are built of concrete containing leucitite aggregates and it has a rectangular ground plan measuring 14 x 5.50 metres. Its unusual name is down to the fact that, between the end of the 19th and the early 20th centuries, it was converted into a barn by the owners of the estate, the wealthy and powerful Torlonia family, as part of the refurbishment of the Tarani cistern. On that occasion, an upper floor was added, to be used as a warehouse.

The building partially collapsed, in 2011, after which restoration and strengthening works were carried out.

# Poi 3



## Casale della Vaccareccia

### Roma / Place to visit - Casali

The Casale della Vaccareccia farmhouse is one of the many farmhouses built in the Caffarella Valley and incorporates a Medieval watchtower built to defend the Roman countryside.

It was erected in 1547 by the Caffarelli family, and important family of the Roman nobility, who

Address

How to get

Via della Caffarella - Roma (RM)

From METRO LINE A station COLLI ALBANI walk for 11 minutes along Via Marco Menghini towards Largo Tacchi Venturi.

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had started purchasing land in the area since 1529 and eventually built up an estate covering almost the entire valley. The Caffarelli sold the estate in 1695 to the Pallavicini, who, about a century later, in 1816, sold it to the Torlonia.

# Poi 4

## River Almone (North)

### Roma / Place to visit - Natural area

In Roman times, the stream crossing the entire length of the Caffarella Valley was called *Almo flumen* (river Almo) and was the third most important waterway of the ancient city. Its headsprings being located in the Alban Hills, near the modern-day town of Marino, and it crossed the Roman countryside before reaching the city.

In this area, near the Tenuta della Caffarella estate, the river was fed by the Fonte Egeria springs, after which it crossed the Aventino Valley and then flowed into the Tiber. Ovid mentions a solemn festival linked to the river and held every year on 27 March, since 205 BC, called the *lavatio Matris deum*, during which the black stone symbolising the goddess Cybele (Magna Mater) and the sacred ritual objects used in her temple on the Palatine hill were washed at the point of confluence of the Almone and the Tiber. Almo, Virgil recounts in Book VII of his Aeneid, was also the name of a young woman at the court of the Latin king, associated with the legend of the arrival, on the coast of Latium, of the Trojan Aeneas, fleeing from the destruction of Troy, the first to die in the clash between the Latins and the Trojans. Since the 16th century the river has also been called Acquataccio (Bad Water), from which marrana dell'Acquataccio or marrana della Caffarella, marrana meaning ditch in the Roman dialect. In 1939, the river, after the point where it is crossed by the Via Appia, was covered over and channelled into an underground pipe to the wastewater treatment facility of Roma Sud.

At the Casale della Vaccareccia farmhouse the river is crossed by a small brick and tufa bridge.

# Poi 5

## Tomb of Annia Regilla

### Roma / Place to visit - Tombs

In the Caffarella Valley, on a path branching off northwards, after the Casale della Vaccareccia farmhouse, there is a building which, according to a 17th and 18th century legend, was the Temple of Rediculus, the Roman divinity who protected travellers leaving and returning to the city.

Instead, it is a temple-shaped bicoloured brick tomb, which is now generally thought to be the tomb of Annia Regilla, wife of Herodes Atticus, who died prematurely in AD 160. A nearby former farmhouse with a mill has been refurbished as an info point.

Address

How to get

Via della Caffarella 23 - Roma (RM)

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take the BUS 118 to APPIA ANTICA/CAFFARELLA stop and then walk for 15 minutes along Via della Caffarella.

# Poi 6

## Chapel of Reginald Pole



#### Address

Via della Caffarella - Roma (RM)

#### How to get

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take the BUS 118 to APPIA ANTICA/CAFFARELLA stop.

### Roma / Place to visit - Churches

At the junction of Via Appia Antica and Via della Caffarella there is a small round chapel built, in 1539, by the English cardinal Reginald Pole, in thanksgiving for the failure of an attempted ambush by assassins at the orders of King Henry VIII. The cardinal, in fact, had opposed the king's decision to separate the English Church from Rome and the Pope. After Mary I was crowned Queen of England, he became one of her most trusted advisers and was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury. The cylindrical building is modelled on an ancient Roman tomb. The outside wall features eight pilasters in yellow brick, with granite plinths and capitals, which divide the wall into eight equally sized areas and support an entablature above topped by a domed roof, which fits onto the projecting cornice. The building shares some architectural features with the little church of San Giovanni in Oleo, on Via di Porta Latina, especially in having two doorways, probably associated with pilgrimage rites. The interior, which is currently closed, preserves some 16th century frescoes.

## Poi 7

### Church of Domine Quo Vadis

#### Roma / Place to visit - Churches

Located where the modern Via Ardeatina branches off the Via Appia, the small church of *Domine Quo Vadis* has been a pilgrimage attraction for centuries. Tradition has it that this is the site where Jesus appeared to Peter, who was fleeing Nero's persecution in Rome; when Peter asked him “Lord, where are you going?” (*Domine quo vadis?*), he replied “I am going to Rome to be crucified again”. A shrine was built on this spot in the ninth century, although the current church dates to the 16th and 17th centuries. The church is also known as St. Mary “of the footprints”, because of a marble slab with two footprints kept there, said to be those of Jesus Christ (actually, a pagan Roman “*ex voto*”, the original of which is preserved in the Basilica of San Sebastiano).



#### Address

Via Appia Antica 47 - Roma (RM)

#### How to get

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take the BUS 118 to APPIA ANTICA/DOMINE QUO VADIS stop.

## Poi 8

### The tomb of Priscilla

#### Roma / Place to visit - Tombs

Almost opposite the church of *Domine Quo Vadis*, on the other side of the Via Appia, is a cylindrical 11th century tower, built on top of a monumental Roman tomb. The tomb itself was built by Titus Flavius Abascantus, a freedman of the emperor Domitian, for his wife Priscilla, who died prematurely in the middle of the 1st century AD. The huge square podium is hidden behind the surrounding Medieval buildings.



#### Address

Via Appia Antica 76 - Roma (RM)

#### How to get

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take the BUS 118 to DOMINE QUO VADIS stop.

## Poi 9

### Appia Antica Visitor Information Centre



## Roma / Tourist Services - Info Point

The Info point, the management of which has been awarded by the Regional Park of the Appia Antica to EcoBike Srl, supplies information materials, welcomes tourists, provides a bike hiring service and a guided reservations for nature and archaeological tours (walking, bike and electric minicar tours), also in foreign languages. For further info visit <https://www.infopointappia.it/>

### 📍 Info

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#### Open every day:

November - February: Monday-Friday 9.30-13 / 14-17.30

Saturday and Sunday 9.30-17.30

March - October: Monday-Friday 9.30-13 / 14-18.30

Saturday and Sunday 9.30-19.30

### 📍 Address

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Via Appia Antica 58/60 - Roma (RM)

### 🚩 How to get

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From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take BUS 118 to APPIA ANTICA/DOMINE QUO VADIS stop, alternatively from METRO LINE A station SAN GIOVANNI take the BUS 218 to APPIA ANTICA/DOMINE QUO VADIS stop.



### 📍 Address

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Via Appia Antica 46 - Roma (RM)

### 🚩 How to get

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From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take the BUS 118 to DOMINE QUO VADIS stop.

# Poi 10

## Via Appia Antica - Domine Quo Vadis

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### Roma / Other places - Other Places

This point, at the 2nd mile of the Via Appia Antica, is of strategic importance for reaching any of the areas in the Park. Slightly to the south, in fact, at the church of *Domine Quo Vadis*, is the important junction between the Via Appia and the Via Ardeatina. This is the place where, according to Christian tradition, Christ appeared to Peter as he was fleeing Rome to escape persecution. From here you may continue along the Appian Way either northwards or southwards, otherwise you may decide to proceed westwards along the Via Ardeatina to the Tenuta di Tor Marancia estate, or explore the evocative Caffarella Valley, from where you may then reach the Tombs on the Via Latina, Tor Fiscale and the Aqueducts.