

Caffarella Valley



The Valley, during the Middle Ages, was named "Vallis Marmorea" (Valley of Marble), thanks to the rests of many ancient buildings. An affluent of the river Tiber, the river Almone, always sacred to Romans, runs through the valley and there is also a sacred wood", where stood the Nymphaeum of Egeria. Legend has it that in a cave Numa Pompilio used to meet the Nymph, advisor and wife of the king.

The whole area of 132 hectares became property of various eminent Roman Families which enriched it with villas, temples, sepulchres, columbaria and tombs, between 2nd century BC and the beginning of the Imperial Age. After the fall of Roman Empire several towers stood to guard and protect the country estates,

then farmhouses and mills were built. The unification of the different plots of land into one estate begun with Giovanni Pietro Caffarelli in 1529. Later the property passed first to the Rospigliosi Family, then to the Pallavicini Princes and, in 1816 to Duke Giovanni Torlonia.

You can visit the Sepulchre of Annia Regilla, very well kept, and the Temple of the god Reticolo (from Latin *redeo*, return), dedicated to the deity which convinced Hannibal to stop his march to Rome: its an elegant tomb, dating back to the half of the IInd century a.C., built in red and yellow files, in the shape of a temple with full walls, marked with semicolumns, pilasters, framed windows and marble tables. The sepulchral room was covered by a barrel vault, now collapsed, while the upper floor was reserved to funeral ceremonies.

Near the junction between Via Appia Antica and Via della Caffarella is the Chapel of Reginald Pole, an English Cardinal known to be opposed to the Anglican Reformation of Henry VIII: it is a round little chapel with a small dome on the top, built in 1539 in polychrome files, similar to roman ancient buildings, as an *ex voto* for escaping an ambush made by the Kings men right there.