

# The differences between the *via Salaria vetus* and the “borderland” between the *via Appia* and the *via Ardeatina*.

Dr. Michela Stefani

This analysis focuses on the spatial distribution of burials dating back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD present within two funerary areas, the necropolis along the *via Salaria vetus* and the funeral area between the *via Appia* and the *via Ardeatina*, in relation to the defensive border, the Aurelian Walls, and to the juridical-sacral border of the imperial age of the city, the *Pomerium*, which follow different paths, creating border areas defined as “borderlands” with fluid settlements and with typical characteristics of both the *urbs* and the *suburbs*.

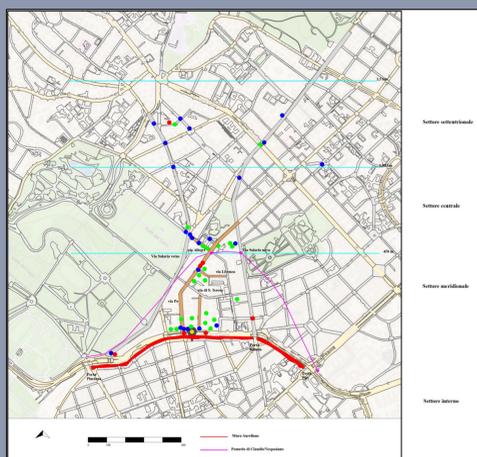


**Fig. 1:** The two funerary areas examined: the *via Salaria vetus* in the northern sector and the funeral area between the *via Appia* and the *via Ardeatina* in the southern sector of the city. R. Lanciani, *FUR*, Plan L, I, 1.

Specifically, all the funerary evidence located in the area between the imperial *Pomerium* of Claudius/Vespasian and the Aurelian Walls, in the portion immediately behind the two limits, were taken into consideration. In the suburban portion, outside the walls, a territorial strip included within the first mile of the city walls corresponding to approximately 1.5 km was taken into consideration.

## The necropolis of the *via Salaria vetus*

The necropolis of the *via Salaria vetus* corresponds approximately to the territory between Porta Pinciana and Porta Salaria of the Aurelian Walls and was exploited intensely from the end of the Republican age and throughout the imperial age. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD we witness a significant change in the methods of exploitation of the burial area, which will then become characteristic of the following centuries.



**Fig. 2:** Plan of the necropolis of the *via Salaria vetus* with indication of the sectors and funerary attestations. The blue dots indicate funerary evidence built between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD; the green ones show signs of reuse in the late antique period; and the red ones instead indicate late antique finds for which the exact context of provenance is unknown.

The detailed analysis of the area highlighted an important reuse during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD of the portion immediately behind the walls and a tendency to build new funerary monuments, especially in underground form, in the sector of the necropolis furthest from the city, along the main road axes of the *via Salaria vetus* and the *via Salaria nova*. The southern part of the burial ground, outside the walls but inside the ancient *Pomerium*, has a greater percentage of reused tombs (*formae*, cappuccino burials of various types, and sarcophagi in marble and terracotta, and epigraphic materials). The central portion of the area, located outside the *Pomerium* of Claudius/Vespasian, is mostly exploited for the construction of new sepulchral buildings, consisting of underground family tombs which are mainly found in the area between *via Po*, *via G. Allegri* and *via Pinciana*. The central portion of the necropolis and the furthest part from the walls are occupied by early Christian cemeteries such as the cemetery of Panfilo and Massimo and Felicita, large catacombs such as the catacomb of Trasona and the anonymous catacombs of “Villa Amici”, and also by private tombs.

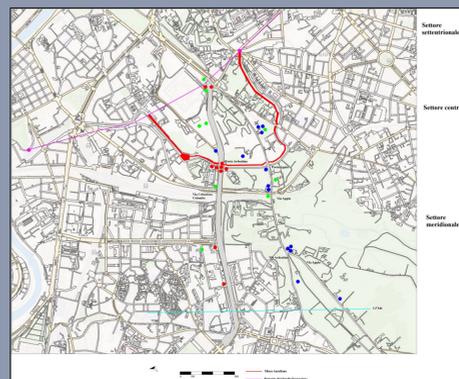


**Fig. 3:** The underground tomb found between *via G. Paisiello* and *via P. Raimondi*. Moffa et al. 2016, 326, fig. 4. **Fig. 4:** Plan of the cemetery galleries found beneath the “Columbarium of the Villa Amici”. Marucchi 1933, 442, fig. 149.

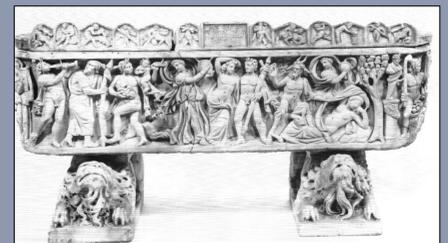
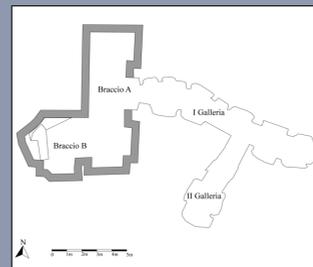


## The funerary area between the *via Appia* and the *via Ardeatina*

The funerary area between the *via Appia* and the *via Ardeatina* was used continuously starting in the Republican period, to which the famous *hypogeum* of the Scipioni dates back. Throughout the imperial age, the area was widely used for burial purposes. Between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, the burial area has different methods of exploitation: in addition to a significant reuse of the area for burial purposes, numerous funerary monuments were built in the necropolis, which was inserted within the Aurelian Walls. These mainly consist of underground burial chamber constructions or additions of underground appendages to buildings built on the surface, such as the chamber tomb with an adjoining small catacomb located in the area of the Scipioni’s Tomb, belonging to families and/or associative groups, or the Campana *hypogeum*. Brick funerary monuments built above ground, such as the Maconiana Severiana monument, are rare. Underground tombs are also found outside the walls, and the largest Christian cemetery, the Balbina catacomb, is located along the Appian Way, 1.5 km from the walls.



**Fig. 5:** Plan of the funerary area between the *via Appia* and the *via Ardeatina* indicating the sectors and funerary attestations. The blue dots indicate funerary evidence created from scratch between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD; the green ones show signs of reuse in the late antique period; and the red ones indicate late antique finds without the exact context of origin.



**Fig. 6:** Plan of the chamber tomb with underground appendage located in the archaeological area of the Scipioni’s Tomb. Stefani 2022; **Fig. 7:** *Sarcophagus* of Severiana Maconiana. Walker, 1990, fig. 1a, 87, fig. 1h.

From this analysis, differences emerged in the spatial distribution of the funerary monuments compared to the Aurelian Walls, and similarities with regard to the forms of exploitation of the necropolises and the funerary typologies used between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.

The difference is probably the result of the different route of the Aurelian walls and the *Pomerium*, which make the territory between the *via Appia* and the *via Ardeatina* a transitional territorial band, recently defined as “borderland or borderscape”, characterized simultaneously by dynamics typical of both the *urbs* and the *suburbs*.

This is probably the origin of the greater diffusion of the practice of violation of the legal regulations in force regarding the prohibition of burials inside the *Pomerium* that Aurelian must have made coincident with the city walls, thereby synthesizing and “monumentalizing” of the most important borders of Rome, the juridical-sacral one, the defensive one and the commercial one (customs duty).

This strategy was extremely functional, but at the same time it also had an important symbolic value, in a difficult period like that of his reign, characterized by continuous revolts and incursions near the *limes* which continually called into question the solidity of the empire.

## Bibliography

- O. Marucchi, *Le Catacombe Romane*, (Roma 1933).
- C. Moffa- C. Rambelli - F. Salamone, *BCom* 2016, 322-327.
- M. Stefani, *L’area archeologica del sepolcro degli Scipioni a Roma. Analisi delle strutture di età imperiale*. (Ph.D. Diss. Università degli Studi Roma Tre, Roma 2021) Bar Publishing Editor, Oxford 2022.
- S. Walker, *The Sarcophagus of Maconiana Severiana*, in *Ocassional Papers on Antiquities*, 6, *Roman Funerary Monuments in the J. Paul Getty Museum Volume 1*, Malibu 1990, 83-94.

