



CATACOMBE SAN SEBASTIANO



Surname : _____ *First name* : _____

School: _____

I visited the catacombs on: _____



*Follow me in discovering
the catacombs...*

« Hominem mortuum in Urbe ne sepelito neve urito »

Under ancient Roman law, the Law of the Twelve Tables established, mostly for hygiene, that no burial or cremation was to take place inside the city. The tomb, a sacred place, was to be respected. Moreover, Roman law accorded the right to a burial to all individuals regardless of status or religion, even the poor and criminals. The handing over of the body could not be refused to whoever asked for it to carry out a burial. Thus, the remains of martyrs also had a tomb.

Names were created based on the tria nomina principle. Indeed, Romans had three names: the praenomen, the nomen (of the family, or of the gens - the clan) and the cognomen (a personal nickname based on the person's looks, attitude or other characteristics). Julius Caesar was in fact called Caius Iulius Caesar. So, his first name wasn't Julius, but Caius ; his surname wasn't Caesar, but Iulius!

What would your three names be?

*Did you know?
To be able to see in the catacombs
people used clay oil-lamps!*



What are the Catacombs?

The catacombs were underground cemeteries, which were mainly related to the Christian and Jewish communities. The first catacombs appeared at the end of the 2nd century A.D. and were used until the end of the 5th century A.D. There are over 60 catacombs in Rome, all of which were built outside the *pomærium*, the city's sacred surrounding walls.

Listen and Observe...

Who are these catacombs dedicated to?

Where were they built and why?

How many levels do they spread over?

Approximately how many tombs are there?

These catacombs are made up of _____ km of tunnels, spreading over _____ levels. The _____ is the private tomb of the time, the _____ was the family tomb and the _____ was a funeral chamber. The tunnels were dug out of the tuff, a _____ rock.



Did you know?
6,000 revolted slaves led by Spartacus were crucified along the Appian Way.

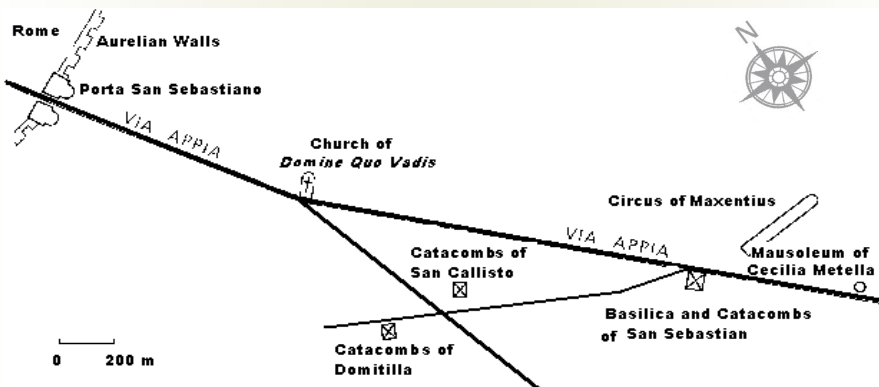
La Regina Viarum : the Appian Way

The Appia Antica, or the Appian Way, is the most important road of ancient Rome. Built in 312 B.C. by Appius Claudius Caecus, this road lined with parasol pines and cypress trees still preserves the basalt paving stones and the ruins of funeral monuments, villas, milestones and other ancient constructions. The Appian Way led to Capua and ended in Brindisi, a port on the Adriatic coast from which boats set sail for Greece and the Middle East. The width of the road measured 14 Roman feet (approximately 4.15 metres), had a footpath on each side and allowed for two chariots to pass, one in each direction. The Appian Way is the symbol of the great road network of the Roman Empire.

Listen and Observe...

According to you, what does *Regina Viarum* mean?

Indicate where we are on the map.



Did you know?
"Cemetery" a word with
Greek origins, means a
"sleeping place"...



What is paleo-Christian iconography?

Discovering the first Christian symbols!

Paleo-Christian iconography, or early Christian art, mainly used pre-existing pagan images, which were given a new Christian meaning relating to the events of the Old and New Testaments. Moreover, during the first centuries, Christians used simple signs to represent the main concepts of Christianity.

Listen and Observe... What do these symbols mean?











Did you know?

A "mausoleum" is a funeral monument which could contain several tombs and urns.

The Necropolis

The pagan necropolis was built in the 2nd century A.D. This place was called *catacumbas*, "near the hollows". The word "catacombs" was then given to all underground cemeteries. The three mausoleums are extremely well preserved and contain some magnificent frescoes, mosaics and stucco decorations.

The *Memoria Apostolorum*, one of the first places of pilgrimage in Rome dedicated to the Holy Apostles, Peter and Paul, was built above the necropolis. Hundreds of prayers, graffiti, are proof of this.

Listen and Observe...

«*M. Clodius Hermes qui vixit annis LXXVI*», how old was Clodius Hermes?

Who were the "*Liberti*" of Clodius Hermes?

What decorative patterns did you see in the mausoleum?

These mausoleums contained tombs and urns for...?

...Etruscans

...ashes

...elections

*Did you know?
"Martyr" means
"witness"!*



From Basilica Apostolorum to the Basilica of Saint Sebastian

The Basilica was built by Constantin in the 4th century A.D. and is composed of a central nave flanked by two naves which form an ambulatory. Its present shape is the result of the restoration work which was commissioned by the Cardinal Scipione Borghese in the 17th century. The remains of Saint Sebastian are now kept in one of the chapels.

Listen and Observe...

When was the Basilica built and who was it dedicated to?

The bust of Christ the Saviour was sculpted in the 17th century A.D. by a great Baroque artist. Who was the artist?

Do you know any other works by this artist?

What have you learnt



Put these words in order to make up a sentence:

Sebastian soldiers of Saint patron the is

Martyrs catacombs buried the were in



What have you remembered?

Now, use what you have just learnt!

Find the seven hidden words in this word search.

P S U Y T B E A W O L N T F
R E N C I T Q S A E T I J L
U O R A N K M U A T O M B S
N I E S P L G B E U A R S I
A L L I E N B A N C I E N T
I O I T N C S L O A M U P D
R I C U X G U J P B C O K T
A S S C E M E T E R Y E R S
H O E F P A V S I L H T F V
J P S D E R L A R O I O M J
O U N I X T E D Q I N V C B
S C A T L Y R U S T E S U A
A R D C H R I S T I A N H D

Final quiz !

What places of burial, or "cities of the dead" were used before catacombs?

- Temples Necropolises Circuses

Which inscription was often found on Christian tombs to ensure rest for the deceased?

- Ave Carpe diem In pace

In the 4th century, which edict proclaimed freedom of worship?

- Edict of Milan Edict of Nantes Edict of Caracalla

The catacombs were:

- Cities Cemeteries Prisons

What did you think?
