

BRUNDISIUM
LONGAE FINIS
CHARTAEQUE,
VIAEQUE.

The modern city developed on the old one. In the church of Holy Sepulchre and in the Granafei Palace, there are well-preserved remains of 'domus' (Roman houses). On the side of the roads there are pieces of columns, millstones and capitals too, while there are putti and torsos built into walls of posterior buildings. Along these lines, the ancient is reinterpreted and reinserted in a new context.

The great 'Forum' (today's Market Place) had a monumental character. In this place, Aulus Gellius argued with a wretched reader of the Virgil's Aeneid. Many are the artefacts found in this area that can be still admired in the Ribezzo museum, true gate of the urban history.

The gardens around the city were wonderful. One of these gardens housed the home of Marcus Laenius Flaccus, where Cicero remembered: 'Who ignores what was my return? At my arrival in Brindisi, the same inhabitants of the city were those who offered me their right hand as if it were the one of all Italy and of the fatherland (...) when the same home of Laenius Flaccus, of his father and his brother, learned and excellent men, housed me with great joy; the same house that just a year earlier welcomed me, protecting me from danger'.

For the benefit of cultivation, water did not miss thanks to the presence of many sources. One of these sources fuelled the 'Great Font' in the ending stretch of the via Traiana. Travellers and citizens could count on regular water supplies, thanks to the aqueduct, whose structure can be partially visited nearby Mesagne's gate.

In the 'tabernae' all around the city, people could drink good wine. Marguerite Yourcenar places in one of these 'tabernae' the meeting between the Emperor Hadrianus and his trusty Attianus. The amphorae that were produced in Lâpani and Giancòla were distributed throughout the Mediterranean Sea, also in favour of kings like Herod the Great.

After having tasted the mussels 'with long lashes' and the 'pinfish/sargo' celebrated by Plinius, Ennius and Apuleius, people who had to embark would have had to go to the stretch of waterfront that is nowadays known as "Laenius Flaccus". Among sellers of

Cauno's figs and booths full of books, remembered by Cicero and Aulus Gellius, people could find from April to October a ship directed to the East. The same Spartacus hoped this, while he was directed to Brindisi, in search of freedom.

Lucanus described with admiration the port and the city in which Pompey would have found refuge after his escape from Rome. The same thing did Victor Emanuel III about 2000 years later too:

'A cramped plot of shrunk land shoves that tenuous spit of land that encompasses the waves of the Adriatic Sea as in curly horns. Nevertheless, in this so narrow ravine, where the sea penetrates, there would not exist a port, if the reef of an island did not stop the exhausted waves. On either side, the nature has placed by the sea rocky mountains and kept away winds, in order to permit vessels to dock, tied in with a weak rope. Outside there is an endless field of water, both en route to the ports of Corcyra and en route to the Illyrian Epidamnus, on the floods of the Ionic sea. This is the refuge of the seafarers, when the Adriatic Sea emanates his violence and Ceraunia dive into clouds and the Calabrian Sasòna is submerged by the sparkling floods.

The 'home of Virgil' was on the promontory of the Roman Columns, where he spent the last days of his life. When he was about to die, he continually asked for the boxes in which was preserved the Aeneid. He did want to burn them, but nobody took him them. In fact, Varius could publish it only after Augustus' authorisation.

In ancient times, the Appian way was an original model of road link, that connected Rome to far places. More than 2300 years later, the Appian way can become for Rome, Brindisi and the entire South of Italy, an opportunity to connect archaeological values with culture, environment and natural beauty. The best viaticum for the inauguration of an extended museum along the Appian way, that values its physical space and conquers new spaces, can be the best way to begin to think of an 'Appian way itinerary'. It is mandatory for this itinerary to enhance the current route, to make it more accessible and to free it from illegal building.



13 E 14 MAGGIO 2018
Un viaggio che parte dalla scalinata Virgiliana

