

## Catacomb of St. Severo



The catacomb is linked to the memory of the bishop Severo who promoted the construction of an extra-urban basilica where he ordered the remains of the Neapolitan bishop Maximus to be laid to rest. The basilica soon became flanked by a tight network of burial hypogea, which apparently included the first burial place of the saint and bishop Severo. This is how what we know as the catacomb of St. Severo originated.

In reality, nothing remains of this catacomb today except for a small cubiculum and a suggestion of a mysterious continuation that can barely be made out among the foundations because of the unregulated, irrational urbanization that has affected the entire area of the Sanità.

There are three arcosolia that take up the surviving sides of the cubiculum: two of them, the central one and the one on the left, are still partially intact and preserve the pictorial decorative pattern that is legible in part; on the other hand, the third one on the right has been almost entirely destroyed. The central arcosolium depicts five personages. From the characteristics of the central personage's clothing and the absence of a halo around the head, it can be hypothesized that it was a patrician or another high level dignitary of the State. The personages to the left are identified with St. Peter and St. Gennaro, and those to the right with Saints Paul and Severo.

In the ninth century, the saint's relics were moved to an oratory of the urban basilica where a congregation of priests called "of the sixth feria" was put in charge of them.