

Catacomb of St. Hermes or Bassilla



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This funerary area is located along the Salaria Vetus. The cemetery, dating back to the first half of the third century AC, comprises three levels; the martyrs Proto and Giacinto were deposited in a tunnel forming part of the original nucleus, situated nearby the stairs, while the tomb of St. Hermes is located in a region that developed at a lower level.

The location where the martyrs Proto and Giacinto were interred, was augmented during the fourth century. Meanwhile, on the site of the tomb of St. Hermes, a semi-hypogeal basilica was built between the sixth and seventh century. The basilica was composed of a quadrangular room, a semi-circular apse, and transverse arcs dividing it into three sections.

During the medieval period, on the left wall of the basilica, an oratory was opened, probably to serve a growing monastic settlement. In 1940, the archaeologist Sandro Carletti discovered a frescoed niche which featured, at the top, a Christ set in a clypeus-like form between two angels, and, below, the enthroned Virgin Mary and child, the arch-angels Gabriel and Raphael and the saints Hermes, John the Evangelist and Benedict. The frescoes have recently been dated to the second half of the eleventh century.