

Rome's Appian Way Eyes UNESCO Status

All roads lead to Rome, as the saying goes, and the most prestigious is the Appian Way, the strategic highway for the Roman Empire now hoping to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

A paved road of more than 500 kilometres (310 miles) begun in 312 BC by Roman statesman Appius Claudius Caecus, the "Via Appia" is an archaeological treasure trove.

The artery leading south to the key port of Brindisi at Italy's heel provided a gateway to the eastern Mediterranean, especially Greece, and was of strategic importance for the armies and merchants of a quickly expanding Rome.

This week, archaeologists showed off progress in their attempt to dig deep enough to unearth part of the first mile of the road, hidden far underground near Rome's Baths of Caracalla.

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