

# The Tomb of Cerberus discovered in Giugliano: it is in excellent condition

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An exceptional chamber tomb, inviolate and in perfect condition, was discovered within cultivated land in the municipality of Giugliano in Campania (Naples), during water works. Thanks to surface reconnaissance, during the preliminary archaeological investigations prescribed by the Superintendence for the Metropolitan Area of Naples, which led to the recognition of a dispersion of material from the historical era, and to an intuition of Dr. Simona Formola, official responsible for the territory, an excavation site was positioned precisely in correspondence with the area which will prove to be full of burials, with different rites (both inhumation and incineration), which testify to the long use of the area for funerary purposes, with multiple levels of attendance, over a chronological span of at least four centuries, from the Republican age to the Roman Imperial age.

Almost as a delimitation of the necropolis area, the crest of a wall in opus incerta, very well built, turned out to be the front of a monumental chamber tomb, with the entrance still well sealed by the original closing tuff slab, just notched on the top to create an opening and evidently allow access in a subsequent phase of use of the mausoleum, finally well closed with tiles.

The vault of the underground chamber seen from above – Superintendency of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for the Metropolitan Area of Naples

The spectacle that presented itself to the eyes of the Superintendent Mariano Nuzzo, the first to access the burial chamber, after having removed the closing tiles, was that of a moment crystallized

in the past of over 2000 years ago. “The emotion aroused by the privilege of such a discovery is indescribable – comments Nuzzo – the work that keeps the Superintendency engaged in its tireless protection actions and the passion lavished by the archaeologists in the field have finally received a worthy recognition today. A heartfelt Thanks also go to the Carabinieri of the Protection Unit who constantly and with great energy support us in our work and who, in this particular case, prove to be an indispensable resource to guarantee the safety of the area. The territory of Giugliano, after years of oblivion, is finally restoring significant vestiges of its glorious past, to be preserved and protected, thanks to a common effort”.

The entrance to the burial chamber – Superintendency of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for the Metropolitan Area of Naples

The room has frescoed ceilings and walls, in perfect condition, with mythological scenes, ichthyocentaurs holding a clipeus on the front wall, festoons that go all around the room, and figurative representations among which a three-headed dog stands out. , hence the conventional name of the mausoleum as the Tomb of Cerberus. Three *klinai* painted, an altar with vessels for libations, the deceased still placed on the funeral beds with rich objects, complete the picture of a discovery which, in this area, is unprecedented.