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## The Blera Archaeological Project

### Investigating Etruscan Urbanism through Multi-Resolution Archaeology

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## 9 RAW MATERIALS, MANUFACTURING TECHNIQUES AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS IN IRON AGE AND EARLY ORIENTALIZING TARQUINIA

**Cerasuolo, Orlando** (Archaeological Park of Cerveteri and Tarquinia - PACT) - **Bordo, Francesco** (Archaeological Park of Cerveteri and Tarquinia - PACT)

The paper aims to present the main aspects of an ongoing research project dedicated to a set of Etruscan artifacts held in the National Archaeological Museum of Tarquinia. The artifacts belong to funerary contexts dating from the beginning of the Early Iron Age to the mid 7th century BCE, that is the period of greater long-range connection between Etruscan society and the wider Mediterranean and European world.

With an interdisciplinary and diachronic approach, the project addresses issues related to provenance and procurement of raw materials; dynamics and interaction between local development and external influence in manufacturing techniques; use and function of exotic and uncommon material in funerary context; social and economic change.

Tarquinia shows the earliest specimen of the granulation technique in Western goldsmithing, but how to frame the specific technique? How was it acquired by the Etruscans? And where was the actual gold coming from? Were the different glass products imported by the Phoenicians, made in Veneto or genuinely local? Silver and lead may have come from Spain; amber from the Baltic; ivory from Egypt, or rather from the eastern Mediterranean. Can we define the time frame of the arrival of exotic material, crafting techniques and craftsmen? All these questions and hypotheses demand a modern inquiry.

The focus of the project lies on exotic and uncommon materials (mainly gold, silver, glass, amber and ivory) on which archaeological study and modern scientific non-destructive analyses (XRF, Raman, DRIFTS, FTIR, HR Digital Microscopy, etc.) are performed for the first time.

Finally, these types of analyses could provide additional insights on the initial stages of the Etruscan Tarquinia, effectively integrating the new information lead by the Science@Tarquinia project and the systematic characterization of specialized handicraft in Pre-Roman Italy (i.e., Bronze Age glass in Northern Italy).

## 10 COMPARING CENTRAL PLACES: SETTLEMENT AND LAND USE IN ETRURIA

**Zeviani, Camilla** (University of Cambridge; Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel)

Etruscan studies have reached great heights in the accumulation of cultural data. This is particularly true for landscape studies: the second half of the 20th century has been fruitful as it saw a growth in survey projects exploring ancient central Italian landscapes. Survey data have indeed a lot of potential for the study of urbanisation, facilitating the quantification of different patterns to draw comparisons of control strategies enacted by different power places.

This paper focuses on the analysis of rural settlement data between the 7th and the 4th centuries BC, when urbanised institutions and lifestyles consolidated. Four case studies are selected and discussed, representing different types of territorial control: Tuscania, a mid-ranking centre tied to the city of Tarquinia; Chiusi and Cerveteri, both urban central places, with different developments and ways to administer territories; finally, the palatial site of Murlo, in open conflict with urbanised realities.

Site trends, proxies of population change, locational analysis and agricultural suitability, using computational techniques (GIS), reveal different rural infrastructures sustaining Etruscan central places. I will show how, despite responding to similar stimuli, these centres adopted different strategies to control their lands and benefit from them.

Relatively new social anthropological studies on state formation and urbanisation are applied: more segmented, irregular processes can better explain the variability defining Central Italian urbanisation and countryside organisation, as consequences of dealing with the challenges of rapid settlement aggregation.

This approach combines therefore quantitative approaches and social anthropology theory, providing nuanced examinations of how structured Etruscan landscapes became, how they were exploited, who lived there, and how relationships with the central place were developed, as well as the different decisions and responses of the central places' leading families to such changes that transformed Etruria into an influential and competing player in the Mediterranean scene.

## 11 THE BLERA ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT: INVESTIGATING ETRUSCAN URBANISM THROUGH MULTI-RESOLUTION ARCHAEOLOGY

**Olsson, Hampus** (Swedish Institute of Classical Studies in Rome; Lund University) - **Landeschi, Giacomo** (Lund University) - **Küçükdemirci, Melda** (Istanbul University - Cerrahpaşa; Lund University) - **Derudas, Paola** (Lund University)

The continuity of Etruscan cities and settlements into Roman, and up to our own days, is a hotly debated topic. The Etruscan town of Blera, located approximately 55 km northwest of Rome, was probably founded in the 8th century BC. Unlike many other ancient towns in its vicinity, Blera has never been abandoned and it has retained its ancient

name for more than 2,500 years, albeit in a somewhat corrupt form. Blera survived into the Roman period and gained the status of municipium after the Social War. The Petrolo plateau, located northwest of the medieval city centre, was the site of the Etruscan and later Roman town. The settlement was subsequently abandoned in favour of the adjacent smaller plateau where today Blera's Old town is located. The purpose of the project is to provide a deeper understanding of the structure and organisation of Etruscan smaller towns and how these were affected by the later Roman expansion across Italy. Furthermore, it is intended to map and define different settlement phases on the city plateau, from the Villanovan period to the Early Middle Ages. This will be carried out through a systematic investigation of the Petrolo plateau, where a recently developed theoretical and methodological approach, known as 'multi-resolution archaeology', will be introduced and applied to the study of urbanism in Etruscan small-size towns.

## 12 A VIEW FROM THE EAST: COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF RURAL SETTLEMENT FROM THE VALLEY OF GUBBIO

**Negro, Marianna** (University of Cambridge) - **Whitehead, Nicholas** (Independent Scholar) - **Ceccarelli, Letizia** (Politecnico di Milano) - **Cocoza, Carlo** (Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology) - **Fernandes, Ricardo** (Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology) - **Teegen, Wolf-Rüdiger** (LMU Munich) - **Tilby, Emily** (University of Cambridge) - **Trentacoste, Angela** (British School at Rome) - **Halpin, Áine** (Trinity College, Dublin) - **Bradley, Dan** (Trinity College, Dublin)

This paper contributes to the interdisciplinary examination of long-term change and transformation in Central Italy by focusing on the landscape organisation in the Gubbio Valley. Drawing from archaeological research spanning the 19th century to the present, the study delves into the evolution of rural settlements within the valley, revealing a nuanced interplay between urban, rural, and religious landscapes from the second millennium BC to the Roman era. The most recent research highlights the correlation between Umbrian sites and Roman landscape occupation, challenging traditional narratives of romanisation.

Furthermore, the paper discusses innovative methodologies, including the re-examination of ceramic materials and digitization of paper records, to elucidate the density of rural occupation over millennia. By integrating cutting-edge scientific techniques such as isotopic and aDNA analysis and presence of pathologies on the sampled teeth, alongside precise radiocarbon dating, we anticipate novel insights into the faunal deposits of Monte Ingino and Monte Ansciano. All this updates the 1994 publication.

This interdisciplinary approach not only enhances our understanding of the landscape dynamics in the Gubbio Valley but also contributes to the broader discourse on long-term societal change and resilience in Central Italy. Therefore, by presenting the study of the Gubbio valley alongside other projects, the paper aims to foster comparative analyses that deepen our comprehension of Italy's ancient civilisations.

## 938 THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ANCIENT BORDERSCAPES: MULTIPLE APPROACHES, NEW PARADIGMS

**Session theme: 4. Persisting with Change: Theory and Archaeological Scrutiny**

**Session organisers:** **Gatto, Maria Carmela** (Polish Academy of Sciences; University of Leicester) - **Nicolini, Serena** (Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna) - **Ferrario, Marco** (University of Augsburg; Università di Trento)

**Session format:** Regular session

The session proposed solicits papers interrogating the concepts of geopolitical, socio-cultural, natural, symbolic, and spiritual boundaries in the ancient world. Often, even the most defined borders are fuzzier and more complex than they first appear. We propose to approach this complexity through the concept of "borderscapes": the political, cultural, physical, mental, intellectual, and/or spiritual geographies where boundaries are located and where the tangible and intangible practices of boundary-making and boundary-maintenance occur. "Borderscapes" emphasize how boundaries are actively shaped in specific places, though these places need not exist in the physical realm.

The discussion of geopolitical borderscapes will be a focus. From a methodological standpoint, the session taps into recent scholarship on frontier zone history, historiography, anthropology, and archaeo-ethnology from a multidisciplinary and comparative perspective. For too long, borderlands have been approached as spaces (physical and/or discursive) of imperial or state appropriation, violence, and exploitation or as pockets of resistance and defiance of said attempts at people and resource control. Moving forward from such a dichotomy, the session makes a case for reconceptualizing borderlands as spaces of transformation, affecting patterns of community building and state formation (or breakup) within and beyond the frontier itself. Recent scholarship, especially the Imperial Turn, has stressed entanglement, mediation, appropriation, and reassembling of material culture are defining features of borderlands and the processes contributing to creating, reshaping, and even causing their demises. They ought, therefore, to be understood and investigated as critical areas of innovation, capable of affecting both the space of the frontier itself and the wider world(s) entangled with them.