
Populonia, the domus on the acropolis. Using, experiencing, and maintaining a large late-Republican atrium house

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Résumé

The large aristocratic domus on the acropolis of Populonia was built in the 2nd century BC and was destroyed by a fire around 70 BC. Occupying an area of approximately 1,800 m², the house is among the largest in Etruria; it was first excavated by the University of Siena between 2003 and 2011 and, subsequently, starting from 2022, in collaboration with the University of Oxford. The new preliminary data show that a major reconstruction project began on the acropolis from 90-88 BC, i.e. after the end of the Social War: Populonia had become a municipium by that point and started acquiring a new urban layout. The major reconstruction projects involved the city's processional walkway and the expansion of a large terraced complex, perhaps a sanctuary, located on the top of the hill. In this same context, the domus also underwent reconstruction, but the construction site was abruptly interrupted by a fire. This traumatic event occurred following a siege suffered by Populonia, which has been traditionally attributed to Sulla, although it probably happened at a later point in time as part of the raids by corsairs across the Tyrrhenian Sea. In any case, the city never recovered from this event; in the Augustan age, Strabo reports that the acropolis was abandoned.

Recent research in the domus focuses on two areas. The first area corresponds to a triclinium overlooking the rear garden, inside which the collapsed structures of the upper floor and the roof were found. The ground floor was undergoing restoration and did not have a paved floor: here some workers' tools, hastily abandoned, were recovered; on the upper floor, different types of goods and ceramics were stored.

The second area encompasses a kitchen and other service rooms. An extraordinary series of pottery finds was discovered here *in situ*, as well as numerous iron elements of furniture and carpentry, fireplace and kitchen tools, hooks and handles, door and furniture decorations, etc.: this rich repertoire provides a glance of daily life in the domus, including all those domestic activities that took place in the innermost rooms.

Given the specificity of this context and its preservation, a range of integrated laboratory analyses have been planned, which will provide information for an anthropological reading of domestic spaces:

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- archaeometric analyses of pottery, including physical and chemical as well as organic residues analyses of amphorae, cooking, storage, and table wares.
 - experimental archaeology to reproduce the production processes of cooking ware, with the aim of reconstructing the preparation and consumption of food in antiquity.
 - archaeobotany and archaeozoology, which, combined with other analyses, can help understand the eating habits of the house inhabitants.
 - 3D scanning of the finds and virtual reconstruction of the rooms of the house during their last phase of life.
- The results and reconstructions obtained so far will be presented for the first time at the CIAC 2024 conference in Paris.

Mots-Clés: Populonia, Etruria, domus, domestic activities, archaeometric analyses, virtual reconstructions