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# Living in Etruria: from the Etruscans to late antiquity. New interdisciplinary research on residential architecture and domestic activities

Stefano Camporeale\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dipartimento di Scienze storiche e dei Beni culturali, Università di Siena – Italie

## Résumé

Etruria is one of the most important regions of ancient Italy for the knowledge of residential construction from the Etruscan period to late antiquity. The diffusion of planimetric schemes, construction modules and decoration styles has constituted the main focus of the more traditional studies, especially in relation to the dwellings of the ruling classes. However, the analysis of decoration or architectural features alone, even interpreted against the backdrop of written sources, hardly succeeds in providing an image of the house as a lived space, whether urban or rural dwellings. New and more original approaches and methods offer different points of view, focusing on how houses were built, used and transformed over time. The center of attention is the changing interaction between the building and the people who, with different roles and functions, used and frequented it. With reference to specific chronological, socio-economic and territorial contexts, the life of the houses can be reconstructed in its multiple facets. In the face of these complex issues, even a pre-established and universally valid chrono-typology of the Roman house tends to take on more nuanced contours. A more thorough archaeological investigation of any domestic building, in fact, shows how it underwent profound changes, often appearing to our eyes as a bricolage of interventions that followed one another even in short periods of time. If we refer to a context such as Pompeii, all these aspects have emerged with increasing importance, for example through contextual approaches to the analysis of artefacts (Allison 2004, *Insula of the Menander 3*), in recent excavations (Anderson and Robinson 2018, *House of the Surgeon*) and advanced multidisciplinary studies (Dessales 2020, *Villa of Diomedes*). Research into residential buildings thus raises new questions about their use, the constant changes to which they were subjected or the lifestyles of their inhabitants.

How did the residents of a house interact with each other and how did changes in domestic spaces influence these interactions? What were the multiple functions of areas inside the house? How did the culture of living change over the long term and how can archaeology decipher changes in living habits? These are just some of the questions that form the focus of this panel. The contributions highlight how new archaeological research on some domestic buildings in Etruria has the potential to change the perspectives of residential architecture studies in the region and beyond. In fact, the panel intends to compare, in an original way, some contexts currently being excavated that offer new data as they deal with important finds both in relation to single phases of the life of a specific dwelling and to the modifications of domestic buildings over time. The chronological framework taken into consideration is broad and the typology of dwellings is varied.

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\*Intervenant

In all of these investigations, different methodological approaches can be combined with the archaeological analysis of buildings:

- Anthropological reading of domestic spaces.
- Applied sciences and archaeometric analyses.
- Other methods such as experimental archaeology, archaeobotany and archaeozoology.
- 3D reconstructions, which help to relate the results of different types of analysis to each other.

The panel includes six papers, starting with some domus excavated in the archaic Etruscan settlement of Gonfienti. New excavations have also been carried out in the late Republican domus of Vetulonia and Populonia, in both cases destroyed by fire, which allowed for the exceptional preservation of artifacts. Also from the same period are settlements of different types: the village of Podere Cannicci and the villa of San Marco on the Island of Elba. Finally, excavations in the domus of Luni have revealed phases of use from the late Republican age to late antiquity.

Diet, production and craft activities, the reception of guests and family life, cults, construction processes are all aspects that can be highlighted in relation to the ways in which the inhabitants of Etruria lived, experienced, and modified domestic spaces.

**Mots-Clés:** Etruria, residential architecture, domestic activities, interdisciplinary research, Etruscan period, Roman period, late antiquity