

Classics 17B: Italy Before the Rise of Rome

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The Etruscans ruled Northern Italy, while the Greeks settled Magna Graecia, Southern Italy.

1 Architecture and Art

Greek architects concerned with “proportion and the cosmic order.” Example: TEMPLE OF HERA II, PAESTUM, CA. 460 BCE. On public buildings, metopes were used to present a narrative to citizens, regardless of literacy.

The only surviving example of Ancient Greek tomb painting is the TOMB OF THE DIVER, PAESTUM, CA. 470 BCE. It depicts a symposium, a male drinking party. It may be derivative of Etruscan painting. The ceiling depicts a diver in an abstract landscape, contrasting with the more natural landscape of the Etruscan TOMB OF HUNTING AND FISHING, TARQUINIA, CA. 520 BCE.

2 Etruscan Civilization

Etruscan Villages:

Caisra	Cerveteri
Tarchna	Tarquinia
Velch	Vulci
Veii	Veii
Vetluna	Vetulonia
Velzna	Orvieto
Clevsin	Chiusi
Perusia	Perugia
Curtun	Cortona
Fulfluna	Populonia

Etruscans built villages on hilltops for natural defense. Villanovans predated the Etruscans and practiced cremation. The gender of the deceased could often be discerned from items interred. Upper-class Etruscans began to practice inhumation. Example: REGOLINI-GALASSI TOMB, CA. 7TH CENTURY BCE.

Later apartment-like tumuli sold plots for families. Exmaple: BANDITACCIA NECROPOLIS, CERVETERI. Sarcophagi were made of dense clay, often with a layer of terra cotta. Example: SARCOPHAGUS OF THE “MARRIED COUPLE,” CERVETERI, CA. 520 BCE.

Etruscans provides us with the earliest and largest body of examples of pre-Roman wall painting. Example: TOMB OF THE BULLS, TARQUINIA, CA. 540-530 BCE. Etruscans adopted the Greek

alphabet and adapted Greek myth. The Etruscan language is non-Indo-European. Eggs were symbolic of the afterlife, as depicted in the banquet scene in the TOMB OF THE LEOPARDS, TARQUINIA, CA. 480 BCE.