

Investigating the Relationship Between Spiritual and Artisanal Practices in Etruria:

The Case of Cetamura del Chianti

Archaeological evidence from the Late Etruscan (3rd-1st centuries BCE) site Cetamura del Chianti illustrates the intersection between the spheres of the religious and the mundane for the Etruscans. This site is unusual among known Etruscan settlements because it contains a center for the manufacturing of utilitarian goods in which exists one of the best preserved Etruscan kilns, and it is situated within the boundaries of a clearly delineated sacred space. Facilities for the production of pottery, textiles, and metalwork co-exist alongside a fully functional religious sanctuary, a proximity that suggests a relationship between craft production and ritual activity. It is also apparent that religious rituals were performed within these facilities of production themselves, providing an even closer link between the spiritual and the profane. The analysis of the remains of ceramic wares found within the kiln demonstrate the religious implications associated with the production of ceramics for the Etruscans. These ceramic remains, ranging from basic utilitarian wares to finely manufactured gloss coated objects illustrate how as a ritual medium such utilitarian objects facilitated the interactions between the individual and the ritual world. The findings from Cetamura provide a model by which we can interpret the Etruscan ritual relationship with mundane objects. This information reveals the inextricable link between religious ritual and profane contexts within the Etruscan world, further exposing Etruscan ritual spaces are multi-faceted and multi-functional in nature.