

## Walls Around Walls: Domestic Architecture from Late Etruscan Fortified Settlements

Studies of Etruscan domestic architecture often focus on tracing the heritage of the tradition, with an interest in determining which features are Etruscan in nature and which show influence from elsewhere in the Mediterranean. Much work has focused on explaining the local developments of the Etruscans in terms of their foreign influences. While certainly there are similarities in architectural techniques and designs throughout the Mediterranean community, as Izzet rightly argues, there is a need for examining Etruscan domestic archaeology independently, and studying why the Etruscans chose the forms they did and how these choices influenced Etruscan society (Izzet 2007, 20-1).

Traditionally, Etruscan domestic architecture has been seen as an “inevitable continuum from huts to houses” (Izzet 2007, 163). This “evolutionist view” as well as what is seen as a “natural choice” of particular features imported from other Mediterranean cultures has attributed to the Etruscans a passive role in the formation of their built environment (Izzet 2007, 163-4). Instead, domestic architecture should not be considered either arbitrary or inevitable. The choices of architectural techniques, processes and building materials should be seen as shaped by social and cultural factors (Rapoport 1969, 47).

This paper aims to counter the traditionally accepted view of Etruscan domestic architecture as a progression impacted solely by technological developments and foreign influences. Through a case study of domestic architecture from small, fortified settlements of the Late Etruscan period (4<sup>th</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BCE), such as Rofalco (Cerasuolo and Pulcinelli 2009) and Ghiaccio Forte (Rendini and Firmati 2010), Etruscan houses will be examined in their own right.

In the Late Etruscan period, there is a shift in the population distribution within Etruria. The population is no longer agglomerated in moderately sized settlements, as many were destroyed, but instead dispersed amongst villas and farms. Additionally, if the few large centers, which remain were in need, they established satellite settlements, established *ex novo* for political, military, or economic reasons. These satellite colonies were usually built in border areas for the predominant city-states (Colonna 1986, 462). These sites provide a valuable source for studying Etruscan domestic architecture, not only for what can be learned about the structures themselves, but also elements of Etruscan society as a whole.

### Bibliography

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