



# Mapping Etruscan Tombs and Sanctuaries

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## Abstract:

Using primary source data and Aeronautical Reconnaissance Coverage Geographic Information System (ArcGIS), we planned to map the locations of Etruscan tombs and sanctuaries. We sought to better understand the inner machinations of Etruscan culture and the longevity of their civilization by plotting and examining said sites. To accomplish this, we mapped specific sites within our given parameters (60 Kilometers centering around the Nymphaeum, based at the Valle Gianni archeological site) and did further research on what characterized these sites. Through examining Etruscan tombs and sanctuaries, we learned a great deal about both their culture and religion. Mapping the sites also allowed for us to examine their proximity to one another as well as the geographical changes in location associated with temporality. Due to the fact that the Etrurian landscape differs from its modern-day counterpart in Italy, we created a map layer on ArcGIS so that the locations of the sites could be located in a modern context.

## Introduction:

Examining the archeological sites of Etruscan necropoli and religious sanctuaries, our plan was to map the locations of these sites in relation to the archeological site of the supposed Roman nymphaeum, Valle Gianni. To accomplish this, we looked into archeological records, scholarly debates, and Italian museum records. Due to the Etruscan assimilation into Roman culture and the lack of in-depth archeological information pertaining to artifacts, we were limited to mostly mapping the locations of these sites.

## Research Objectives:

Researching the necropoli and sanctuaries of the Etruscans is important because it allows for the reconstruction and better understanding of Etruscan culture. In terms of studying these sites in relation to the Valle Gianni nymphaeum, it reveals the influence of Etruscan religious and civic culture on the Roman civilization. Utilizing digital tools to accomplish this goal is useful because it presents our data in a spatial media that is easily interpreted. Thus, we were able to use GIS to analyze aspects of our project that would otherwise have been impossible such as proximity to geographical features and other sites.



Figure 1

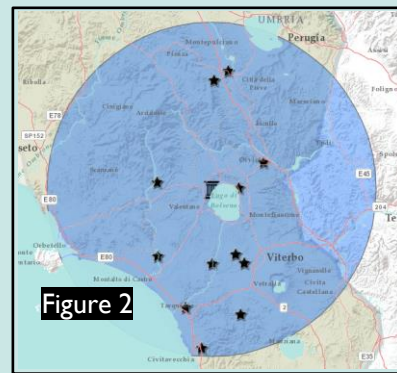


Figure 2

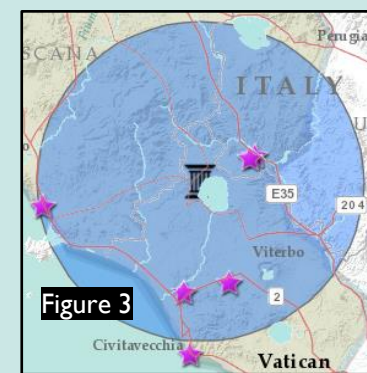


Figure 3

## Results:

The method we used worked well to answer our research questions. We surpassed our original goal of mapping 5 sites and ended up mapping 6 sanctuaries and 12 necropoli. Figure 2 depicts the various necropoli scattered throughout Etruria while figure 3 represents the sanctuaries. Through pinpointing the location of these sites, we learned more about the Etruscan's religion, culture, influence, and temporality. There is still much to be learned about this topic and it is our hope that this research will be continued, diving deeper into the specifics of the sites we mapped.

## Method:

Our method began with research surrounding Etruscan religion and culture drawing from primary source documents and established databases. Once we better understood what it was that we were looking for, we began research on specific necropoli and sanctuaries. At first, we thought we would look for sites within a 40-kilometer radius of the nymphaeum but quickly exhausted those boundaries and expanded the radius to 60 kilometers. We did not map sites beyond this radius because we wanted to keep the sites relevant to the distance that the Etruscans would have likely traveled to visit these sites. To create the database with the characterizations of the sites, we utilized google sheets to create separate spreadsheets for the tombs and sanctuaries. We made the spreadsheets separate so that they would be easier to visualize and compared if put into other software. For the mapping component of the project, we gathered the location of the sites from google maps and used ArcGIS to plot them. We also used ArcGIS to create a layer overlapping the boundaries of Etruria over its modern-day counterpart. The black stars on Figure 2 represent necropoli while the purple stars on figure 3 represent sanctuaries. Figure one shows the map with sanctuaries and necropoli in relation to one another.

## Conclusion:

In summation, we managed to hypothesize several potential answers to our research questions. Primarily, we noticed that there was a seeming correlation between these sites and their proximity to water sources such as lakes and rivers as seen in figures 2 and 3. This indicates several potential possibilities related to our research project. Predominantly, it is likely that water was an important aspect of Etruscan religion and ritual practices. Another likelihood is that Etruscan cities were centered around these rivers; however, our research did not include mapping cities, therefore lacking data surrounding this theory. This research contributes to the scholarly discourse surrounding the Etruscans through its emphasis on the interconnectedness of Etruscan necropoli and religious sites and their connections and influence on the Romans. Studying these sites in relation to one another allows for the analysis of the cultural variations between Etruscan cities and the examination of similarities that might indicate specific continuities between them and other civilizations.