

Cetamura Results 2007

The 2007 season at Cetamura produced many new developments in the sanctuary of the Etruscan artisans (Building L; see the maps at [Figs. 17](#) and [18](#)). Work continued near the large rock altar found in 2005, in the sanctuary courtyard. Below the sacrificial deposit discovered in 2006 (now known as Votive Feature (VF) 1A), were found two more deposits, VF 1B ([Fig. 1](#)) and VF 1C. In addition three other repository areas were identified (VFs 2, 3 and 4). Taken together these provide a bonanza of information on Etruscan rituals and sacrificed votive objects, consistent with the findings from 2005-2006, but adding in many new details and providing great insights. All dating indicators confirm activity in the second half of the second century BCE.

Nails remain the offering of choice ([Fig. 2](#)), and they have now been found in association with all deposits except 1C as well as outside the focal offering areas. They are small, medium or large; single or multiple offerings; and almost all made of iron. More than 30 in total have been found, along with at least one bronze nail cap. These relate to the Etruscan idea that nails reflect destiny and fate. Also intriguing are the various examples of polished stones/gaming pieces found inside the offering areas and on the periphery or elsewhere in the sanctuary ([Fig. 3](#)). Examples have been tentatively identified as made of red jasper, milky quartz and green limestone—all stones that do not occur naturally at Cetamura—as well as of ceramic material. Such pieces, often associated with games of chance, are probably also related to fortune and good luck.

The cult of fate and fortune probably belonged to the gods Lurs and Leinth ([Fig. 4](#)), whose names were found in inscriptions in 2006; they are scarcely known at other sites. This year appeared a new example of an inscription type found before at Cetamura, a ceramic fragment inscribed with a monogram with the letters A, L and P all written together ([Fig. 5](#)). There are now 9 total known from Cetamura). The letter order is uncertain, but one possibility is LAP, which might be the name of the god Lapse, known at only one other Etruscan site.

Besides generic vows regarding fate and fortune, it is clear that very specific prayers were made by Etruscan artisans who operated the workshops adjoining the sanctuary. It has long been known that nearby there was a ceramics workshop, with a large kiln for brick and tile and a smaller one, probably for pottery. There is also evidence of a weaving establishment, and the working of iron. This year the votive deposits and their periphery yielded weaving implements (a loom weight, [Fig. 6](#); a spool, [Fig. 7](#); and a spindle whorl) as well as specially shaped mini-tiles or bricks thrown into the offering pit ([Fig. 8](#)). Some objects had been ceremonially broken before deposit. The brick makers and weavers were offering products of their trade, and the ironworkers could have been offering the nails, as well as other objects of iron (for example, two iron rings). Another special offering was a lead weight, completely preserved ([Fig. 9](#)), and weighing 346 grams. Given all this evidence, it is appropriate to think of this sanctuary as being especially for the local artisans, who were seeking good luck and success in making their products. But there were also visitors from outside who came up the hill to seek favorable fortune from the gods of the place.

The other major type of offering was pottery, and of particular predominance is the miniature cup, of a size that is obviously for the gods only ([Fig. 10](#)). Fragments of broken mini-cups have

now been found in 4 of the votive contexts. Another popular form is the small, handleless jar or beaker (Fig. 11). In VF 2A, was found a broken beaker along with a black-gloss offering saucer (Fig. 12), as well as a gaming piece, nails, a mini-brick, and other offerings. Some of the pottery is imported, while other pieces very probably were locally made. The evidence indicates that in each ceremony the vase was ritually broken, then portions were burnt, and finally part or all of the vessel was buried or left on the sacred surface. Expert restorations have been made of many of the vessels and others are underway at Studio Arts Centre International (SACI) in Florence.

In some cases, the offerings were placed in a fire burning on the surface of the sanctuary courtyard. Of particular interest was an oval-shaped rock feature set in a low pit (VF; Fig. 13) which can be understood as a hearth or semi-subterranean altar. Upon it were found evidence of fires being set and deposits of varying types (mini-cup, nails, loomweight, spool, gaming piece, mini-brick, and bronze Roman Republican coin; Fig. 14). In effect, the offerings were still in situ on the hearth/altar, where they had been placed by the worshippers.

The plan of the sacred area has been considerably clarified, with mapping of details that were missing in the past and with discovery of completely new features (Figs. 17-18). New excavations of foundations allowed the identification of 3 (possibly 4) new rooms or chapels of the sanctuary (Fig. 15). Two of these are elongated rectangular rooms side by side, which recall the cellas of Etruscan temples. Room 3 has a gap in the foundations suggesting the presence of a doorway, and just outside the doorway appeared VF 3, with an assortment of votive objects, suggesting that visitors made a liminal offering.

The overall plan of the sanctuary, Building L, now appears as a large trapezoid with sides ca. 20 meters long, and with a broad courtyard in the wide end of the trapezoid, oriented toward the southeast as is common in Etruscan temples. The altar is located near the center of the sanctuary and VFs 1, 2 and 4 are all located on the southeast inside the courtyard.

In the artisans' quarter were completed two very deep trenches exploring the workers' area in front of the kiln, Structure K, excavated intermittently since 1996. The culmination was finding bedrock at a depth of 4.58 meters below datum. We now understand that the workers began by hollowing out a huge cavity in the earth, building the stone kiln within the cavity and then plying the kiln from a deep protected area directly in front of the kiln. The "workers' yard" yielded an enormous amount of evidence for their practices, including heaps of broken pottery gathered around the site and brought there to be ground up and recycled as brick and tile. Within such pottery deposits the inscriptions to Lurs and Leinth were found in 2006.

A bonus to understanding the kiln workshops emerged in an area on the exterior west flank of the sanctuary, where extensive dumping from the kiln areas was carried out when the sanctuary was remodeled into its present second-century form. Here were found rugged, giant-size ceramic fragments of storage jars (dolio; Fig. 16), as well as Etruscan fired bricks and imported amphoras.



Fig. 1. Pit 1B during excavation: Black gloss saucer and beaker



Fig. 2. Pit 2: Nails



Fig. 3. Gaming pieces from Structure L



Fig. 4. Black gloss sherd with inscription MI LEIN



Fig. 5. Black gloss bowl with inscription A,L, P (or L, A, P, or A, P, L)



Fig. 6. Pit 2: Loomweight



Fig. 7. Pit 2: Spool



Fig. 8. Pit 2: Brick



Fig. 9. Pit 4: Lead weight



Fig. 10. Pit 4: Miniature cup



Fig. 11. Pit 1B: beaker



Fig. 12. Pit 1B: Black gloss saucer (cf. Fig. 1)



Fig. 13. Pit 2 during excavation



Fig. 14. Pit 2: Roman Republican coin, prows series



Fig. 15. View of rooms in Structure L



Fig. 16. Dolio

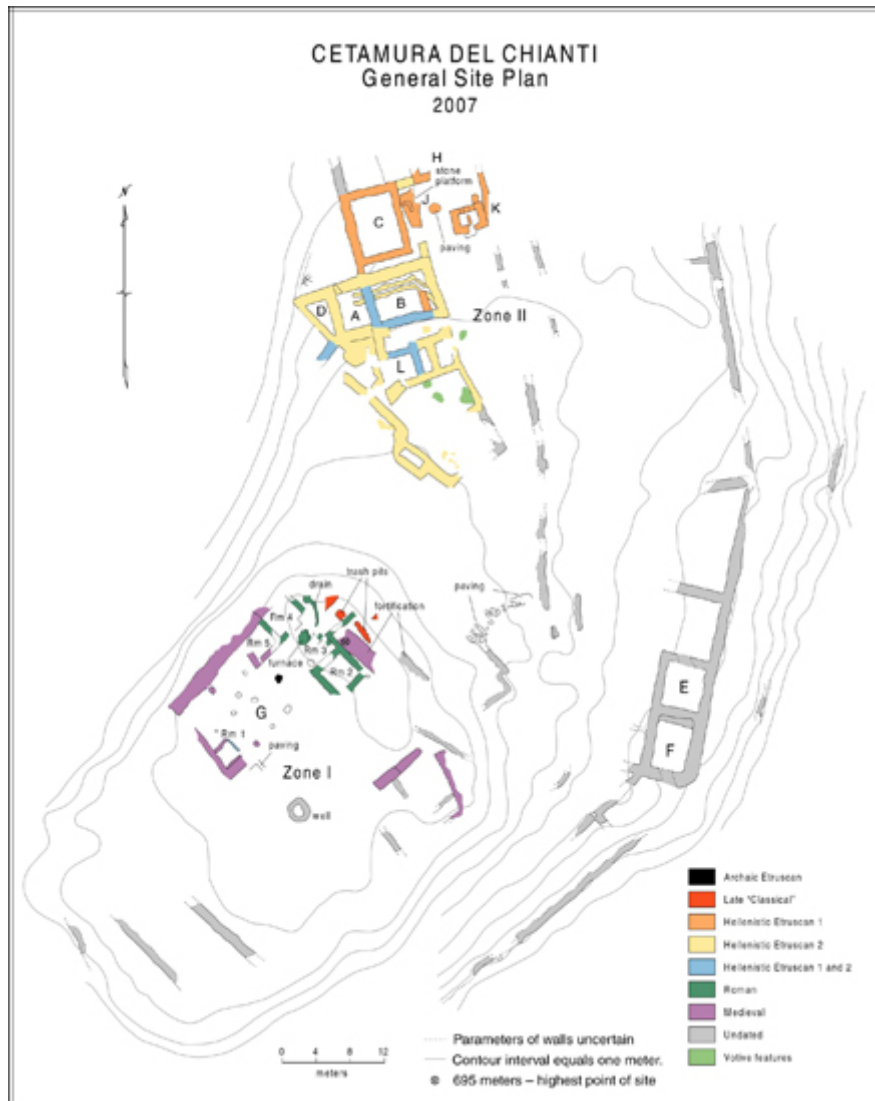


Fig. 17. Cetamura del Chianti, 2007 Site Map

Zone II, Phase II - NW Complex
and Area L
2007

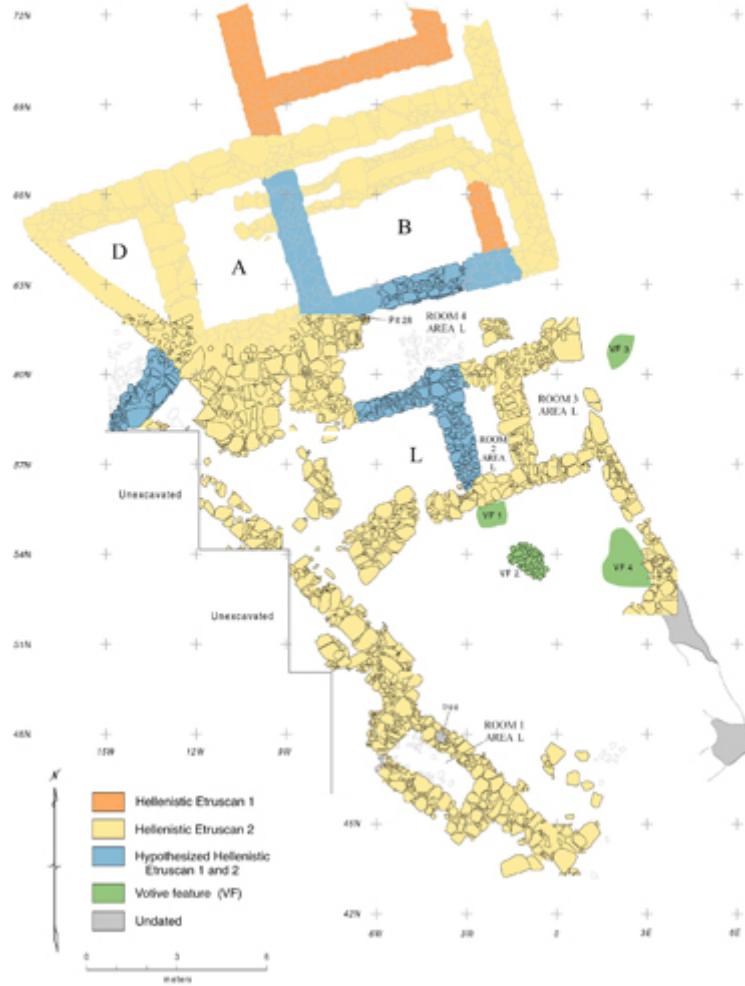


Fig. 18. Map of Zone 2, 2007