

Etruscan settlement uncovered

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A large Etruscan settlement - the most complete yet found - has been dug up on a Tuscan plain near the Italian city of Prato. It was built during the fifth century BC and seems to have been an important trade centre.

The Etruscans introduced much of what we know about ancient Roman culture, architecture, agriculture and technology. Yet where they came from remains a mystery as they left no texts. Only fragments of their language survive and historians are still not sure about its origin. Perhaps this discovery will provide more clues.

A large road runs through the centre of the unearthed settlement just below a major byway that joins northern and central Italy across the Apennines. Once it was lined with houses featuring stone foundations, tiled roofs and crude brick walls which have long since collapsed. Narrower streets crossed this main road in a regular grid pattern. Five neighbourhoods have been uncovered with the ruins of up to 10 houses in each, but the ancient city probably spanned a much wider area. Workers have also learned that the sophisticated Etruscans preferred large homes containing anywhere up to seven rooms.

Today, Prato is a leading textile manufacturing centre, and there is strong evidence the Etruscans had a spinning industry some 2,500 years before. A wealth of weaving equipment has been catalogued alongside mining tools and crockery offering a rare glimpse at their refined lifestyle. The head archaeologist stated that they had found a lot of items relating to women's work, which was not surprising considering that clothes were a point of pride with Etruscans.



The fertile plains of Tuscany, protected on one side by mountains and on the other by sea, provided an ideal place to settle for the migrating Etruscans

Use the information above and any reference below to answer the following questions:

1. Near what modern-day city was the Etruscan settlement found, and what key industry was common to both places?

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2. Why were the Etruscan people ahead of their time? Refer to the page references below and this recent excavation.

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3. If the Etruscans did so much for Rome, why did the Latin people revolt against the reigning Etruscan king in 509 BC?

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4. What evidence from this latest discovery suggests that the Etruscans might have traded their textile goods?

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References: SOSE Alive 1, pp74-75 • Retroactive 1, p81 • SOSE for Queensland 1, pp110-111, 114
 Jacaranda SOSE 1 2E, p81 • SOSE Alive History 1, pp74-75