



Ressort: Reise & Tourismus

Archaeology in Elsa Valley. A Roman Villa in Tuscany

Rome, 13.09.2018 [ENA]

The Roman Villa of Aiano-Torraccia di Chiusi is located in the Elsa Valley, a celebrated Valley for environment and gastronomy, and it is only one of the innumerable examples offered by archeology in Italy. This archaeological site of research is a relevant part of the project "VII REGIO. Elsa Valley during the Roman Age and late Antiquity" under the direction of the Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium).

The project's aim is to prepare and organize the archeological excavations in the Elsa Valley area and the study of the region as crossroads of cultural exchanges in Tuscany - middle area. Cultural exchanges have left significant traces, particularly when groups of people permanently occupied the territory.

This is an example of different kind of occupations in Elsa Valley during the late Roman Age and the way they have been transforming in the early Middle Age. Every assumption is in close relation with the results of the archaeological excavations around the Villa of Aiano-Torraccia di Chiusi archeological site. Due to the permanent occupation by a number of populations from the III Century A.D. untill the end of the VII Century A.D.,

the archaeological site represents a sort of "process in progress". The Elsa Valley during the Roman Age and Late Antiquity " has the objective to carry out excavation, analysis and historical-archaeological synthesis in the territory of the highlands Val d'Elsa, in Tuscany, between the provinces of Siena and Florence.

Since the beginning of the excavation activities, in 2005, a series of geophysical preliminary surveys aimed at the archaeological evaluation of the site. In 2015, the area investigated has reached approximately 2,000 square meters of the estimated almost 10,000 square meters, allowing to verify the large archaeological interest and the remarkable state of conservation of the monumental complex.

Although it has exposed a still small portion of the villa so far, data acquired are so significant as to consider Aiano as a symbolic example of the rich rural residences of the late antique Tuscany aristocracy. It should be emphasized that all the decorative apparatus of the villa emerged today (marbles, sectilia in glass paste, mosaics, frescoes and stuccos) has been found displaced, as something different from of its primitive purpose, that is decoration, and accumulated specifically by human hand or recycled before the abandonment of the settlement.

This villa is just one of the countless examples of how culture and tourism are inseparable components of a

Redaktioneller Programmdienst: European News Agency

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forward-looking development policy for Italy, a country endowed with extraordinary historical, artistic, archaeological and natural heritage derived from multiple civilisations flourishing over millennia and man-nature sound interaction within all of its regions. Such highly respected legacy has inspired Italy's overall urban and suburban development, and successfully accompanied its rapid transformation from an agricultural country into an industrial country, rather than hindering it. This exclusive feature is recognised, acknowledged and appreciated all over the world.

Italy has a leadership as the ultimate Country for travellers who appreciate Italian art and culture, as well as its environment and gastronomy, and are intrigued and stimulated by Italian manifold realities. Italy's future challenge lies in governing a complex offer system.

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https://treede.en-a.eu/reise_tourismus/archaeology_in_elsa_valley_a_roman_villa_in_tuscany-72165/

Redaktion und Verantwortlichkeit:

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