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*Buried spaces and painted dimensions in the tombs of Etruscan Tarquinia*

The painted tombs of Tarquinia (a UNESCO heritage site since 2004) are one of the most well-known and investigated phenomena of the Etruscan funerary context. Centuries of systematic research have considerably extended the number of potentially painted hypogea in Tarquinia. The qualities that characterise Tarquinia seem to distinguish them from other Etruscan metropoleis. This suggests the existence of specific beliefs at the heart of the local design of the funerary space. The results of the research project presented in this paper discuss the choices and the motivations at the root of the formation and development of the painted tombs of Tarquinia, considering each local peculiarity. This analysis derives directly from the data collected systematically in a total of five hundred monuments. For the first time, this brings together all the graphic, architectural and descriptive information: the result is a system of tools created for the specific needs of Etruscan funeral wall painting, expressly developed to deepen understanding of the Tarquinian district. As a result, it is now possible to observe the distribution of the hypogea over time, in order to interpret the reasons, goals, social value and role of the monuments within the community.

