Caere Project 2018
Archaeological Excavation of an Etruscan city in Central Italy

Field activities will include classes on Etruscan and Roman archaeology, field methods of archaeology, field conservation, and other topics of interest. During weekends daytrips to Rome and to Etruscan and Roman sites and museums of the region will be organized.

On Sundays, students have the opportunity to travel at their leisure. The town itself is very close to of Rome and is easily accessible by train. Although Rome is one of the primary destinations for Sunday travels, there is plenty of options including Florence, Pisa, Ostia, Tivoli, Tarquinia.

The Site

Cerveteri is a town on the West coast of Italy, 48 km North of Rome, which lies on the site of the Etruscan city of Cisra, called Caere by the Romans. Caere was one of the metropoleis of the ancient Mediterranean, a rich and powerful city which was an ally of Carthage and developed good relationships with its southern neighbors the Romans. The site is famous for its necropolis of rock-cut tombs imitating houses complete with carved furniture and decorations, recently listed among the UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Many of the most famous Etruscan artworks, such as the Sarcophagus of the Spouses, were found in the tombs of Caere. While the cemetery has early attracted scholarly attention, the exploration of the city has begun much later. Though some sanctuaries are known, the general plan of the city is still largely unknown.

The Project

The team of the Queen’s University will continue the investigation a religious compound in the centre of the city, the so-called “hypogeum of Clepsina” consisting of an underground room with frescoes, sketches and inscriptions, and a network of corridors and stairways. This has been identified as the cult place of the ancestors of the community and the seat of rituals dealing with its foundation and its destiny, also including divination. The orientation of the complex may depend on Etruscan religious and cosmological beliefs, which might have conditioned the master plan of the whole city. The excavation will also investigate the urban area near the hypogeum, where a regular urbanization pattern is coming to light, and explore a network of tunnels and wells dug beneath the ancient city.

How to Join

Participants can either enrol into the full-credit course CLST 409 Archaeology Fieldwork Practicum or the graduate course CLAS 809 or join as volunteers. The program can accommodate up to 30 participants a year. Non-Queen’s students may ask for credit transfer with the approval of their home institution.

Program dates May 12th – June 8th 2018 (checkout June 9th)

How to apply Fill the application form posted on the project website caeresite.com at the end of the Overview page and on the website of the Department of Classics and return it via e-mail to the project director Dr. Fabio Colivicchi (colivicf@queensu.ca)