The Poggio Civitate Archaeological Project
2027 Field School

I am excited to hear of your interest in the Poggio Civitate Archaeological Project for our 60th Anniversary Season! The field school will run from June 29th to August 4th 2027 in the Commune of Murlo, Province of Siena, Italy.

This packet will provide you with details on the site of Poggio Civitate, as well as the field school itself. Please feel free to email me with any questions you may have about the program.

Thank you for your time,

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A Brief History of Poggio Civitate

The 2027 field season marks the 62nd year of archaeological exploration at Poggio Civitate (Italian for "Hill of the Civilization") located in central inland Tuscany. Excavation began in 1966 under the direction of Dr. Kyle M. Phillips, Jr. of Bryn Mawr College. Work continued under the direction of his student, Dr. Erik Nielsen, and is currently lead by Dr. Anthony Tuck of UMass Amherst. The excavations have brought to light a large volume of material from distinct phases of Etruscan occupation. A brief summary of this work is provided below. For further material and articles related to the site, please see the excavation database website – www.poggiocivitate.org.

Orientalizing Phase – Seventh Century BCE

While Poggio Civitate's Piano del Tesoro preserves traces of Iron Age occupation that may extend back into the ninth or tenth centuries BCE, the site emerges in the early seventh century with a well-preserved complex of inter-related monumental buildings. The first building of this Orientalizing Complex (OC1), a Residence, was uncovered in 1970. This building was elaborately decorated with a sculptural program in terracotta and appears to have served as the residence of a family of regional social prominence. Recovered from the floor of OC1 were cooking equipment, a banquet service of imported Greek and locally produced fine wares, bone, antler and ivory inlays that once decorated furniture, and numerous objects of personal ornament and everyday use. Based on the dating of the Greek pottery from the building indicates that the building's destruction occurred around the end of the seventh century BCE. Other ceramic evidence, somewhat more controversial, suggests that OC1 may have been constructed some time in the second quarter of the seventh century BCE.

In the early 1980s along the southeast flank of Piano del Tesoro, excavations revealed the presence of another building contemporary with OC1, Orientalizing Complex 2 (OC2), that clearly served as the site's primary area of industrial work during the seventh century BCE. Curiously, this building was also elegantly decorated with terracotta sculpture and was substantially larger than the OC1. OC2 was pavilion in form and housed numerous types of manufacturing activity including bronze casting, bone and antler carving, terracotta manufacture, ceramics production, food processing and textile manufacture. This building is currently the earliest known example of such a multifunctional workshop in Central Italy. Despite the number of products this site produced, virtually nothing manufactured at Poggio Civitate has been found at other sites in the region. Excavators now believe that OC2 was intended primarily to support the community of Poggio Civitate itself and perhaps the surrounding hinterland, with virtually all production being locally consumed rather than exported to other sites.

From 1996 through 1999, excavation immediately to the south of the residence revealed the presence of a third building of this complex - a large tripartite structure now referred to as OC3. Although much of the building was destroyed in the subsequent building of the later phase of the site, enough of the floor plan was preserved to allow excavators to reconstruct a building with a large central cella flanked by two chambers precisely half the dimensions of the central room. Both the building's tripartite form and examples of luxurious inscribed vessels found resting on the floor of the central cella suggest this building may have been an early example of a temple, making it one of the earliest examples of monumental religious architecture in Italy known to date.

All three of the buildings of the Orientalizing Complex were destroyed in a single fire that appears to have been accidental. While there is little certainty on this point, it is remarkable that the day the buildings burned down, workers in OC2 were manufacturing roofing tiles and had placed several on the floor to dry in the shade of the roof. In the panic of the unexpected fire, workers fled and stepped on the drying clay and their footprints were fired into the floor.

Archaic Phase – Sixth Century BC

The aftermath of the conflagration that destroyed the seventh century complex, the survivors appear to have combed through the destruction to salvage anything of value. Then, the debris was scraped to level and flatten the plateau in preparation for the construction of a massive four-winged building enclosing central and southern courtyards. Each wing was sixty meters in length and a western defensive work extended that façade an additional thirty meters. Like the buildings of the earlier complex, this structure was also elaborately decorated with terracotta sculpture that sat along the pitch of the roof. In addition, frieze plaques were nailed to exposed wooden beams, a sculpted lateral sima system ornamented the courtyard while gorgon antefixes decorated the building's perimeter.

This remarkable building, far larger than any known in the Mediterranean for its time period, has been the subject of considerable debate. Speculation as to its function has lead to such theories as a political meeting hall, a religious sanctuary, a palazzo and even an Etruscan version of an agora. Currently, the excavators believe that the building combined the functions of the disparate structures of the earlier phase into a single edifice, dating to the early sixth century BCE.

Perhaps the most enigmatic feature of the building involves its final destruction. Based on the latest pottery from the site, some time shortly after the middle of the sixth century BCE, the building was dismantled. The statuary was removed from the roof and smashed, the fragments separated and then buried in pits around the perimeter of the building. The walls were knocked over and the site was never reoccupied.

Vescovado and the Later Phases

Evidence of occupation around Poggio Civitate has long suggested communities on hills such as Vescovado di Murlo, Lupompesi, Murlo, Castelnuovo Tancredi and Montepescini. Chamber tombs dating from the fourth to third centuries were found in Vescovado di Murlo in 1960 and a ceramic kiln Hellenistic in date was discovered during road construction in 1970. In 2006, excavators were given permission to further explore the area around the

Hellenistic kiln. This work revealed traces of domestic architecture contemporary with the kilns as well as sporadic evidence of occupation contemporary with the at least the Archaic phase of occupation of Poggio Civitate.

This evidence suggests that not only did ancient occupation of the region continue after the final destruction of Poggio Civitate, but also that the monumental buildings of the site did not stand in isolation. Rather, they can be considered a nucleus of a broader community, with the elites of Poggio Civitate at the center of a dispersed population clustered around the hill.

Work in 2027

The 2027 field season will continue our exploration of the western edge of the plateau locally known as Piano del Tesoro – the Plateau of the Treasure. Recent excavation in this area revealed traces of the earliest known example of monumental palazzo employing a tiled terracotta roofing system in the region. Further to the west, excavation uncovered traces of a village contemporary with the site's elite domestic structures. The 2027 field season will explore the relationship between these monumental buildings and the site's non-aristocratic population.

Program Information

The Poggio Civitate Archaeological Field School is among the oldest and most respected archaeological programs in the world. Our training provides students and archaeology enthusiasts the opportunity to excavate at the site under the direction of a staff of professional archaeologists, conservators, illustrators, and photographers. Participants receive training in all aspects of fieldwork, including excavation and data collection, archaeological survey and drawing, objects conservation, illustration, photography, and cataloguing.

At Poggio Civitate, we believe that the best field experience is comprehensive. Students are encouraged to work directly with directors of excavation units, follow artifacts from discovery through conservation and into cataloguing. Most of our participants come with no field work experience – many have never even taken an archaeology or classics course –and by the end of the season, we believe, each comes away with a foundation in Etruscan Archaeology and field methods, as well as a rich appreciation for Italy and rural Italian culture.

Work on site or in the laboratory (called the Magazzino) will constitute the majority of your "classroom" experience. Participants will work side by side with professional archaeologists, conservators and other members of the excavation team on projects integral to the functioning of the dig as a whole. While the majority of this time will be spent on the hill, working in the trenches, there is a weekly rotation into the magazzino where students will work in conservation, data entry, photography, cataloguing or illustration.

Fieldwork and excavation experiences are supplemented by lectures and a more traditional educational program. Weekly lectures by Professor Tuck or other members of the excavation staff cover a broad range of topics, from a general history of Etruria to the Social and Political implications of Bucchero pottery from Poggio Civitate. Visits to the museum that houses material from our excavation, as well as other regional museums occur frequently. There is also ample free time, including weekends, for participants to explore the Commune of Murlo, Tuscany, and further afield in Italy.

Excavation

Students work under the instruction of our trained field staff, with decades of combined excavation experience, and take part in all aspects of digging. Everyone will work in a trench (or excavation unit) for a week at a time, which allows you to track the progress of work in the area. Tasks in the field will range from pick axing to brushing, and everything in between. Participants come away with a hands-on experience and appreciation for the physical work, as well as detailed record-keeping necessary to successfully document excavation

Conservation
Steve Miller of the London Museum is our head conservator. He is a gifted conservator and a patient teacher. Students will work with Steve to first learn basic techniques of cleaning artifacts, such as dry brushing and swabbing, and eventually work their way up to more advanced forms, such as artifact consolidation and creating fills. Participants will rotate through the conversation laboratory each week during their day off the hill working in the Magazzino.

Photography
Participants with an interest in photography can work with Anthony Tuck and other members of the excavation team to learn archaeological photography and photo editing. All of the catalogued artifacts are photographed and loaded into the database. Additionally, students can work with on-site photography, learning the various factors needed to take documentary photographs in the natural environment.

Meals, Recreation and Travel

Murlo and Vescovado di Murlo
Excavation takes place on a forested hill in the Commune of Murlo, both outside the town of Murlo (pop. 25) as well as in the town of Vescovado di Murlo (pop. 900). We are located approximately 25 km south of Siena, and 90 km south of Florence. We reside in a villa across the street from the Albergo di Murlo, the local hotel owned by the Rubegni Family. Participants are housed in double, triple or quad rooms, each with its own bathroom and shower. We have a large common/dining room located below the building, which doubles as our lecture hall.

Meals
All meals are provided Monday through Friday, and are prepared by our excavation chef. Participants who are assigned to the Magazzino also help with preparation of meals, and many have left with a new appreciation for cooking and Italian food. We make every effort to meet the dietary restrictions of participants, and there is always a vegetarian option available. Most also take advantage of the various local restaurants for favorites such as Pici al Tartufo (handmade pasta with truffles) and Pizza alla Diavola (pizza with spicy sausage).

Recreation
As a 60+-member excavation in a town of 1000, we significantly change the dynamics of the community during our stay in Vescovado. Luckily, we are well liked in town, and are invited to the many festivals and events put on in the Commune. Traditionally, we are in town for the Cinghiale (wild boar) Festival, various concerts, as well as wine tastings in the Castello at Murlo. We also have a long-standing tradition of playing the locals in soccer.

Down time is utilized by participants in many ways- catch up on sleep, practice Italian with native speakers, or read a good book from the excavation library. There are also many opportunities available for local travel – walks, bike rides, and hikes – within a short walk from the house. There are also two pools in town that can be used for a nominal fee.

Travel
The weekends are free for excavation members to do as they desire. For the past few seasons, excavation members have taken the time off to explore Tuscany, as well as locations further afield such as Rome, Pompeii, Venice, and Naples. Buses run from Vescovado to Siena, where you can catch trains or busses most anywhere in Italy.

Costs and Grant Opportunities

The cost of the 2027 Field Season is $5,500. This price includes all fees associated with the excavation, six academic credits from UMass Amherst, room, and all meals during the workweek (Monday through Friday). Airfare and meals on weekends, as well as incidentals (travel, etc) are not included.

Many universities and individual departments have funds for summer studies, research or participation in archaeological excavations that may be able to help defray the cost of attendance. Past participants have been able to tailor additional research to specific subjects (economics, art history, conservation, etc) in order to fulfill the requirements for many of these awards and grants. There are also external grants available for qualified students.

The Murlo FoundationM Fellowships
Application Deadline: March 1, 2027 *http://www.murlofoundation.org/*

The Murlo Foundation was founded in 2016 in recognition of the 50th anniversary of excavation at Poggio Civitate. Since its inception, the excavation has been dedicated to teaching graduate and undergraduate students alike the methods and processes of archaeology. Two fellowships are currently available to support undergraduate and graduate students who are looking to participate at Poggio Civitate for the first time. Generous alumni and patrons of the excavation have created these opportunities for students who might not otherwise be able to afford work at Poggio Civitate. Students may be majoring or concentrating in any field, where a summer abroad would help shape their understanding of the ancient and modern world.

The Caroline Horovitz Fellowship was created to foster excavation and research experience by providing $2500 dollars to defray partial program cost of the excavation. **While priority is given to qualified students from Mount Holyoke, anyone can apply for the grant**.

The Director's Fellowships are for $500 dollars, and meant to support field school participants who might not otherwise be able to afford the program.

The Etruscan Foundation Fieldwork and Conservation Fellowships
Application Deadline: March 1, 2027 *http://www.etruscanfoundation.org/programs/fieldwork-fellowship/*

The Etruscan Foundation has supported fieldwork and scholarship in Etruscology and its related disciplines for a half century. Young and developing scholars have received fellowships from the Foundation to help defray the costs of participation in a field school or in archaeological fieldwork at Etruscan and other ancient sites across Italy. Fieldwork fellowships are currently available to advanced undergraduate and graduate Participants enrolled at accredited North American colleges and universities. Each fellowship carries an award of up to $2,000 and is restricted to the following excavation-related expenses: travel, room, board, fees connected with the excavation, and museum entrances. All fellowship applicants must be members of the Etruscan Foundation, which costs 25 dollars for one year.

Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) Jane C. Waldbaum Archaeological Field School Scholarship
Application Deadline: March 1, 2027 *https://www.archaeological.org/grant/waldbaum-scholarship/*

These scholarships are intended to help students who are planning to participate in archaeological field work for the first time. Students majoring in archaeology or related disciplines are especially encouraged to apply. Scholarships provide $2000 each to help pay expenses associated with participation in an archaeological field work project (minimum stay one month/4 weeks). **Scholarships will be awarded to junior and senior undergraduates and first-year graduate students only.**

Directions for Applying

If, after a thorough review of this information, you are interested in applying to Poggio Civitate, please fill out an application at the following link

https://forms.gle/V1vdCL26AKoXsa17A

Your professor should complete the below recommendation form link

https://forms.gle/bBwuoYfRpJRRbf3o7

Once you are accepted into the program, there will be a registration and application through UMass Amherst for participation in the program. This is the same process for participants who are taking the course for credit and those who are not. The program costs are also the same.

In order to be considered for the Early Admission to the program, and for the third party grants, your application must be received by March 1, 2027. The final application deadline will be May 1, 2027. We have usually filled all spots on the program before this date, so please apply early. Upon acceptance a deposit is due to ensure your position on the excavation, with the remainder of payment due by May 1st.

I hope that this information has answered most of your questions about Poggio Civitate and our field school. If you have any additional questions or concerns, or would like to talk to a past participant about his or her experience, please let me know and I would be happy to facilitate. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Jason Bauer, Director of Operations