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## Poggio Colla: a N Etruscan settlement of the 7th-2nd c. B.C. (1998-2004 excavations)

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The Etruscan site of Poggio Colla, c.35 km north-east of Florence, was probably the dominant ceremonial and political centre of the intermontane region that leads up to the Apennines. Its position may have allowed it to exercise control over primary passes that connect Tuscany with the Bolognese and the Adriatic.

The site has been excavated since 1995 as part of a project that seeks to combine excavation with survey and geo-archaeological prospection.<sup>1</sup> Its goal is to produce a general picture of a settlement that spans most of Etruscan history, from the mid-7th to the second quarter of the 2nd c. B.C. The primary focus of excavation has been the dominant plateau of Poggio Colla (first excavated by an Italian team from 1968 to 1972) inhabited from the late Orientalizing period to the first half of the 2nd c. B.C. Formal and informal surveys of surrounding areas have shown that the settlement pattern expands well beyond the acropolis; occupation can be documented on the nearby promontory of Montesassi, on nearby plateaux, and beyond for several kilometres on surrounding slopes and terraces. The exigencies of agricultural work that threatened important cultural contexts caused us to undertake salvage archaeological work in two subsidiary areas: the Podere Funghi, a field about 0.9 km. north-east of Poggio Colla, and on the NW Slope that leads up the top of the acropolis.

### The acropolis

The plateau of the acropolis, which was the centre of settlement, provided the setting for several phases of a monumental structure, evidence of which was first discovered in 1968-72.<sup>2</sup> Those soundings had found several moulded sandstone blocks<sup>3</sup> presumably from a podium, set in a trench between two walls that run along the plateau's N edge and are now designated the N and S "terrace" walls (H11-13). The blocks had been removed from their original context and re-deposited. Further evidence for a structure included at least two sizes of terracotta tiles and an antefix. The Italians had also cleared several sections of fortifications which define the edges of the plateau. They also excavated an Orientalizing tumulus located off the acropolis's SW flank.

Excavation since 1995 under the auspices of the Mugello Valley Archaeological Project has produced further dramatic examples of monumental stone architecture, including two types of moulded podium blocks and 3 large column bases.<sup>4</sup> There is evidence of at least three building phases, as first reported in 1999,<sup>5</sup> but more recent work suggests that the plan of the building in the second and third phases is quite different from that previously hypothesized (fig. 1).

1 For previous results, see P. G. Warden, M. L. Thomas, and J. Galloway, "The Etruscan settlement of Poggio Colla (1995-1998 excavations)," *JRA* 12 (1999) 231-36, with earlier bibliography. M. L. Thomas, "Excavations at Poggio Colla (Vicchio di Mugello). A report of the 2000-2002 seasons," *Etruscan Studies* 8 (2001) 119-30; P. G. Warden and M. L. Thomas, "Sanctuary and settlement: archaeological work at Poggio Colla (Vicchio di Mugello)," *Etruscan Studies* 9 (2002-3) forthcoming.

2 C. Curri, "Vicchio di Mugello (Firenze). Saggi esplorativi nell'acropoli etrusca del Poggio di Colla," *NSc* 1976 (1977) 93-112.

3 There was an ample supply of sandstone at Poggio Colla; the hillside below the acropolis is dotted with ancient and modern stone-quarries which were utilized until the turn of the 20th c.

4 These blocks are being studied by I. Edlund Berry. Cf. L. T. Shoe Meritt and I. E. M. Edlund Berry, *Etruscan and Republican mouldings: a reissue of MAAR 28, 1965 by Lucy T. Shoe* (Philadelphia 2000) xxiii-xxiv. Like those discovered by the Italians, the podium blocks had been moved to quadrant G14 from their original context. Several are set into the N terrace wall.

5 Warden *et al.* (supra n.1) 237-44.