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Light Framed Architecture at Poggio Civitate: A Comparison of Elite and Non-Elite Domiciles

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During the 2008 excavation, approximately 30% of the overall feature was excavated to the original floor level. This excavation revealed the presence of a hut situated on a terrace. The social and political concerns of the site’s local aristocracy. Until this point, evidence for the domestic architecture of Poggio Civitate’s non-elite population remained elusive. However, in 2007 and 2008, excavations revealed the presence of a distinct oval depression cut into surrounding sterile soil. The roof was probably constructed out of bundles of Pragmites Australis, the Common reed. Tightly lashed bundles of the reeds would have covered the roof beams at an angle of approximately 45 degrees, the optimum angle for water resistance. Although thatch is entirely organic, the exact form of which cannot be determined at this time.

Excavation:

Excavation units CC7 and CC7 Ext. revealed the presence of a hut situated on a terrace that had been intentionally excavated to the original floor level. This excavation revealed the presence of a hut situated on a terrace that had been intentionally excavated to the original floor level. When the structure was abandoned, the depressed area was filled with debris from the area. Within this fill, excavators recovered fragments of ceramic dateable to the years somewhere between the mid-7th and early 6th century B.C.E. It is more likely that vermin infestation was the ultimate reason the structure’s abandonment.

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Observations:

The presence of this architectural feature on the southern terrace below Piano del Tesoro’s Workshop structure might suggest that the hut served as a domestic space for laborers engaged in Poggio Civitate’s industrial activity. If so, we would expect to see evidence for additional structures in the immediate vicinity.

However, evidence for the chronological overlap between this hut and the buildings of Piano del Tesoro’s 7th century B.C.E. complex allows for a curious observation concerning the development of terracotta roofing systems in early Central Italy. Poggio Civitate’s architecture of the social elite, with its ornate terracotta roofs, occupied the visible, high on the hill. Buildings constructed according to the architectural vernacular of the Iron Age remained in use for a time, their traditional forms strengthening the technological novelty and distinctiveness of the monumental structures higher on the hill. The emergence of terracotta roofs, the significant architectural innovation and openness for experimentation represented in some of the earliest terracotta roofs.”