

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: PIAZZA “LIBERO D’ORSI:”
A CITY GATE TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PARK OF ANCIENT STABIAE, ITALY

Leonardo Varone, Master in Architecture, 2006

Directed By: Prof. Matthew J. Bell, School of Architecture

This thesis was conceived within a broader Master Plan for the archaeological site of Ancient Stabiae, near Pompeii; which aims to enhance and transform the 150-acre site, featuring several Roman seaside villas and ancient city, into a coherent and modern archaeological park. Among the goals: preservation of the Roman villas and their environment, improvement of access and visitor’s experience, promotion of cultural tourism, socio-economical development in the region. The Master Plan, which embraces different disciplines, has been developed since the beginning with a view toward urban integration and renewal; with focus on the connection with the modern city and access to the archaeological site at urban and regional scales. As result, the need for an access node was identified and a new urban space designed: the Piazza “Libero D’Orsi,” an inter-modal urban renewal project that provides easy access to the site while revitalizing a key city node with mix-use functions.

PIAZZA “LIBERO D’ORSI.”

A CITY GATE TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK OF ANCIENT STABIAE,
ITALY

By

Leonardo Varone

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master in Architecture
2006

Advisory Committee:
Professor Matthew J. Bell, Chair
Professor Richard Etlin
Professor Pablo Guiraldes
Professor Stephen Sachs

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Preface

This Master Thesis project is a work of passion, vision, great dedication and patience.

This document is testament to and is dedicated to all my fellow students and young colleagues who believe in the value of good ideas, persevere in keeping them alive, and still believe in the possibility of making dreams come true and visions becoming forces that inform reality in a positive way.

When early in 1997, after my first professional degree in Architecture at the University of Naples “Federico II”, I left Italy and decided to come to the U.S. for a new experience and to continue my education by pursuing a post-professional Master in Architecture, I had no idea of what Destiny was reserving to me; and of the exciting, challenging adventure that would have soon unfold before me, immediately after I applied to the School of Architecture at University of Maryland.

Everything seemed to have happened almost by chance (or fate). In fact, during a dinner at the house of a friend, I was introduced to a professor teaching at the School of Architecture at Maryland; and without even knowing it, I was suddenly invited to visit the School and attend the presentation of Master Thesis projects for the Summer Session of 1997. At the School, not only I had the opportunity to observe first-hand the type of projects and quality work produced; but most importantly, I was introduced to several faculty who shared most of my design ideas, cultural background and intellectual approaches toward Architecture and the built environment. To my great surprise, I was soon invited to apply for a Master in Architecture at University of Maryland; invitation which I highly appreciated and immediately accepted.

When the moment came of choosing the right project for my Master Thesis, my first thoughts went immediately back to my hometown in Italy: Castellammare di Stabia, in the Bay of Naples. Moreover, I did not want to do a “paper thesis,” neither a typical research or theoretical project; on the contrary, I was very much interested and committed to work on a “real design challenge,” on ideas and issues that could potentially lead to a “real project!”

Since I was seven years old, I wanted to become an architect; and I hold on to this promise. I was also extremely fascinated with ancient history and archaeology; almost a natural consequence of living in such culturally and historically “dense” country like Italy, surrounded everywhere by endless physical clues and reminiscences of our millenary history. Thanks to my father, I had the opportunity to visit many times the near-by ancient Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, buried by the catastrophic and infamous eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D.; and I was lucky enough to have special access to many off-limit archaeological sites and excavations, like the fabulous underground ruins of the renown Papyrus Villa in Herculaneum or in-progress excavations. These wonders from an ancient, lost world stimulated my imagination and left a permanent desire of discovery and challenge in my soul.

While million of visitors every year walk the dusty streets of the world-renown cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, only few scholars knew about the existence of Ancient Stabiae, the Roman settlement which later became Castellammare di Stabia, my hometown. Even locals, the so-called “Stabiesi,” are not fully aware of the consistency and importance of the site; some of them even ignore its very existence! Apart from that, Ancient Stabiae is a truly unique archaeological site; once the exclusive summer

resort of the Roman Elite that, between the first centuries before and after Christ, built their most luxurious estates in this enchanted corner of the Bay of Naples. Due to several reasons and historical events, this less-known archaeological jewel has been only partially explored and studied in the last few centuries; and differently from its more famous sister-cities Pompeii and Herculaneum, Stabiae represents an unexploited archaeological treasure and a quite unique opportunity for modern archaeology and research.

My personal interest in the ancient history of my hometown, in addition to the fact the principal of my middle and high schools was the initiator of the modern discovery and excavations at Ancient Stabiae, have been the primary forces that convinced me to propose and undertake this unique project for my Master Thesis; along with the desire to do something positive and constructive for my hometown, and to contribute in a pragmatic way to its cultural, social and economical revival. Furthermore, I was very interested in promoting and developing didactic exchange between Italy and the United States; and in exploiting the best cultural and scientific resources our two countries can offer, by collaborating on this exciting endeavor to study, preserve and enhance the appreciation and understanding of such an important piece of our history and artistic heritage.

After I introduced Stabiae and its the fascinating history to some faculty at the School of Architecture at Maryland, and presented my initial ideas on how to develop a project for the enhancement of the archaeological site; I received such an encouraging and positive feedback that I went beyond the initial proposed thesis project, and suggested to the faculty the possibility for a scientific and research collaboration with

the Italian Ministry of Culture; and in particular with the Superintendancy of Pompeii (in charge of the archaeological site of Stabiae).

Only few months later, following my initial contacts with the Italian cultural authorities, Professor Etlin (representing the School of Architecture at Maryland) and myself flew to Italy to meet with the Superintendent of Pompeii, Professor Guzzo; to discuss a potential collaboration between the University of Maryland and the Superintendancy, focused on developing a research project for preserving and enhancing the archaeological site of Stabiae, while proposing the establishment of an archaeological park. It was March 1998, and the Restoring Ancient Stabiae project was born!

This episode represented a truly historical, turning point for my professional career and me; that dream, which few months earlier was only a design idea, has now turned into an international collaborative project. The occurrences briefly described below represent the milestones and are witnesses to the incredible adventure that, in the following few years, saw the RAS project morphed from a student master thesis into a unique scientific and cultural endeavor; under the auspices of both the Italian and American governments, in partnership with many cultural institutions, and with the participation of hundred among scholars, researchers and professionals.

The interest and curiosity for the RAS project rapidly grew among the entire faculty at Maryland, as well as outside the university itself; in the span of few months, many scholars and professionals from several cultural institutions in Italy and in the U.S. (like the American Academy in Rome or the Italian Cultural Ministry in Rome) joined the endeavor and started contributing to its advancement by providing insights

and new design ideas. While I was working on my Master Thesis, developing the framework for the Master Plan and possible alternative layouts for the archaeological park and Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” project; at the same time I was involved in the outreach and promotion of the scientific effort and collaboration, traveling to Italy several times to collect new project data for my thesis and to meet with people and institutions. The project - my dream for a Stabiae reborn - was growing bigger every day; generating interest in both the scientific and cultural communities in ways I would have never dreamed and deemed possible before...

The local interest for the project started developing as well; and eventually led to the establishment of the “Stabiae Reborn Committee:” a cultural association which reunites all the local high-schools, service associations and concerned citizen from modern Stabia (with the mission of promoting the preservation efforts of the RAS project and supporting locally the collaborative endeavor of the American counterpart). Teamwork and joint design efforts between Italians and American led to the creation of the first official draft of a Master Plan (presented to the public in 2001) for the enhancement of the ancient site and the design of an archaeological park at Stabiae.

New Italian cultural laws, in addition to the growing support and interest by the President of the University of Maryland, the Superintendent of Pompeii, and members of the local committee Stabiae Reborn, were crucial for the establishment of the Restoring Ancient Foundation (RAS), among the first and most innovative Italian-American non-profit cultural foundation. Its primary mission: the preservation of the Roman villas and the establishment of the archaeological park at Ancient Stabiae;

while promoting cultural exchange between Italy and the U.S. Among other things, I had the honor to represent the Italian constituency when President Mote of University of Maryland and I co-signed the constitutive act for the establishment of the RAS Foundation, in February of 2002 at the Embassy of Italy in Washington DC. Since then, the Foundation has achieved relevant milestones and established important institutional relationships with cultural organizations and government agencies both in Italy and in the U.S.; these soon led to the allocation of the first European Community funds to the RAS project (2002), which have been used to launch the first on-site projects and studies, as well as the implementation of the multi-million, multi-phase Master Plan for the creation of the archaeological park. An important achievement in 2004 was the organization of the first touring exhibition and historical long-term loan from Italy to the U.S of 2,000-year-old Stabian artifacts: “*In Stabiano: Exploring the Ancient Seaside Villas of the Roman Elite.*” This exhibit, the first of its kind, was made possible thanks to an international agreement between Italy and the U.S. to protect Italian archaeological heritage and promote cultural exchanges and scientific collaborations; it was a successful joint-collaboration between the RAS Foundation, the Campania Region of Italy, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Embassy of Italy in Washington DC. Essential component and principal ambassadorial initiative for promoting the important cultural mission of the RAS Foundation, the *In Stabiano* exhibit not only gave the unique opportunity to almost three million of visitors of enjoying beautiful and rare original Roman artifacts at the Smithsonian; but also generated great awareness about Ancient Stabiae and the RAS project among the American public and the international audience. *In Stabiano*

was also an important professional experience for me; as well as a great personal achievement for having being able to develop and coordinate the entire exhibit as project manager, collaborating with such prestigious institutions and working closely with expert curators and renowned professionals.

In 2005, the RAS Foundation became also a non-profit foundation in the U.S.

Recently, the RAS USA Foundation has lunched - in collaboration with several other institutions - a series of Priority Projects for the 2006-08 period, which represent the first tangible steps in the creation and establishment of the archaeological park.

Today the RAS Foundation, after the successful results of several exploratory excavations, is getting ready to lunch - in collaboration with the Superintendancy of Pompeii and other partners - the first large-scale excavations on the site after more than fifty years, to uncover more of the many villas still buried under the volcanic ashes. As well as the construction of the first phase of the Stabiae Visitor's Center (the first new building and research center of the future archaeological park); several scientific joint-studies and field-work activities (to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the site, its relevant features and history); and finally, the first international study and research institute for Archaeology and the Humanities in Southern Italy, to provide academic facilities and study-abroad programs for foreign universities and scholars interested in doing research in this less known - but culturally very rich and fascinating - region of Italy.

While this preface provides a partial summary of the many exciting endeavors, scientific projects and cultural activities characterizing the RAS project and currently implemented by the Foundation; the following chapters of this document will

describe the genesis and evolution of the Master Plan and archaeological park concepts; as well as the Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” project. Starting with an introduction to the Stabiae site, a description of the urban connections and development opportunities offered by the modern city of Castellammare, ending with a overview of the mission of the RAS project and Foundation. An important chapter is the one illustrating the main features of the Master Plan for the archaeological site; this latter subject, while representing its important underlying framework, it also leads indeed to the chapter describing the “Piazza Libero D’Orsi” design proposal. Presented as City Gate to the Archaeological Park of Ancient Stabiae, this inter-modal transit center and urban revitalization project has emerged almost as the natural conclusion of the articulated and comprehensive urban analysis investigation undertaken during the study of the Master Plan; and it represents the primary focus of this Master Thesis.

Dedication

To my beloved parents, Alfonso and Anna Maria, for their continuous and true support and for their love.

To the memory of Principal Libero D'Orsi, for his inspirational example, steadfastness in believing, and dedication in bringing Stabiae back to life.

Acknowledgements

This Master Thesis project, and the subsequent developments that lead from a student Master Thesis to the establishment of one among the most unique Italian-American cultural collaborative endeavors – The Restoring Ancient Stabiae (RAS) project and Foundation - would not have been possible without the intellectual sympathy, generous support, and enlightening leadership of several faculty from the School of Architecture at Maryland; who, since the first days I embraced this Master Thesis, have strongly believed in the scientific, cultural and didactic potentials of the concept and project presented in this document. Among the individuals who gave a crucial contribution of ideas and support, my most sincere gratitude goes to: Professor Matthew J. Bell, chair of the Thesis Advisory Committee, for his strong belief in me and in the project, his continuous support and his extraordinary leadership; to Associate Dean Stephen Sachs, for his valuable support, collaboration and friendship; to Professor Pablo Guiraldes, for his crucial contribution of ideas, moral support and true friendship; and finally, to Professor Richard Etlin, for his contribution toward the inception of the Restoring Ancient Stabiae endeavor. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Archaeological Superintendent of Pompeii, Professor Pietro Giovanni Guzzo, for his support in establishing the scientific collaboration between the Superintendancy of Pompeii and the University of Maryland; and to my fellow Stabiese, Notaio Ferdinando Spagnuolo, whose enlightened leadership, management ability and continuous support have been essential for the implementation of the archaeological park project and for transforming what started as an interesting student thesis into a real project, which every day grows closer to becoming a pioneering

international endeavor and a pilot project for preserving an important part of our cultural heritage. Finally, my gratitude goes also to the many scholars and professionals whose design ideas and contributions have helped the initial concept for the archaeological park growing and developing; in particular, the significant contribution of ideas and design material produced by Professor Thomas Noble Howe, Coordinator General of the RAS project and Chair of the Art Department at Southwestern University (Texas), have played a very important role both in the present document as well as in the implementation of the overall archaeological park project and Master Plan.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Project

The Master Thesis project presented in this document is entitled: “Piazza Libero D’Orsi: A City Gate to the Archaeological Park of Ancient Stabiae, Italy.” It focuses on the issues of urban connections, revitalization and integration between the archaeological site of Roman Stabiae, the modern city of Castellammare and its amenities, and the regional network of historical and tourist sites in the Bay of Naples.

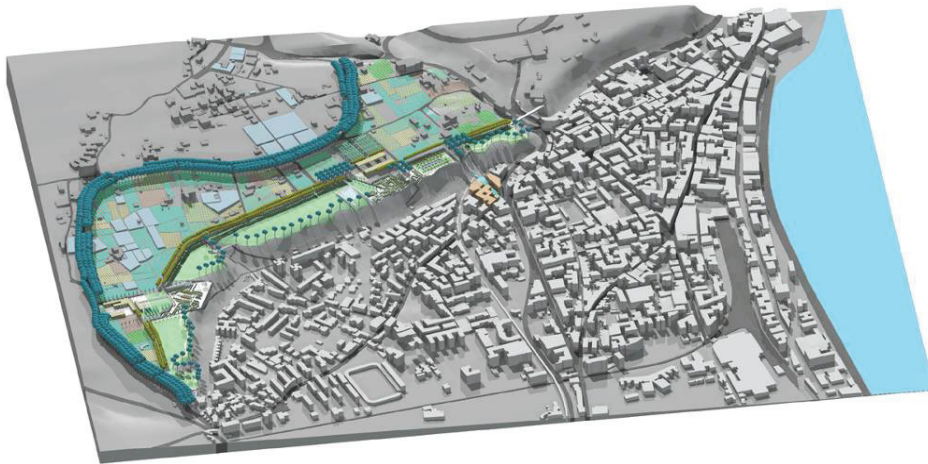


Fig. 1: Bird-eye view of proposed archaeological park at Ancient Stabiae [3D computer model by T.Leader and L.Varone]

The Piazza Libero D’Orsi project has been conceived within a broader and comprehensive Master Plan (Fig.1) addressing the design and establishment of an archaeological park at the site of Ancient Stabiae, near Pompeii (Italy). Consequently, to better comprehend the genesis and urban implications of this thesis project, it is useful to start with a general introduction to the nature and features of the Stabiae site; and eventually continue with an overview of the scope and main objectives of

the Master Plan for the archaeological park, as well as of its important urban relationship with the modern city and cultural synergies with the near-by Roman archaeological sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum.



Fig. 2: Panoramic view of Castellammare, Ancient Stabiae and the Bay of Naples with Pompeii and Mount Vesuvius in the background

Located just three miles from the ancient city of Pompeii (Fig.2), and only few more from the tourist Mecca of Sorrento, the archaeological site of Stabiae is the principal locus of the best-preserved group of luxurious ancient seaside Roman villas in the Mediterranean. A seaside resort where, 2,000 years ago, the rich and powerful of the Roman Elite built their spectacular luxury villas and power-houses; few miles from the active cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, in the very hearth of one of the most beautiful and fashionable places of the Roman world, and of today's social elite: the Bay of Naples (Fig.3) and the Sorrento-Amalfi Coast.

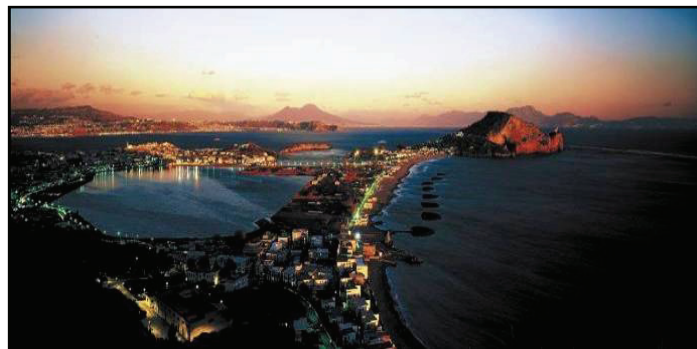


Fig. 3: Panoramic view of the Bay of Naples, from Capo Miseno

The site of Stabiae consists of a series of enormous sea-view villas (so-called “*villae marittimae*”), created between 89 B.C. and A.D. 79 and facing the Bay of Naples, built directly next to the another on the edge of a 1.8 km long cliff, some 50 meters (150 feet) above the ancient shore and the modern town of Castellammare di Stabia; and of a previous, still mysterious, ancient city located somewhere behind these cliff-side villas. These enormous villas (ranging from 120,000 to 190,000 square feet each) contain some of the best examples of ingenious villa architecture and of high quality fresco and decoration (Fig.4); the remains are excellently preserved by the Vesuvian eruption of A.D. 79, and they are largely unencumbered by modern buildings.



Fig. 4: Images illustrating the luxury and grandeur of Roman seaside villas in the Bay of Naples. They were partly excavated in the eighteenth century, buried and forgotten for 250 years, and since 1950 three of the sea-view villas have been partially re-excavated and are currently open to the public (in a limited fashion). Traces of at least three

more huge villas, numerous farm villas and the ancient city lie still buried (Fig.5).

Others are undiscovered, waiting to be brought back to light some day.

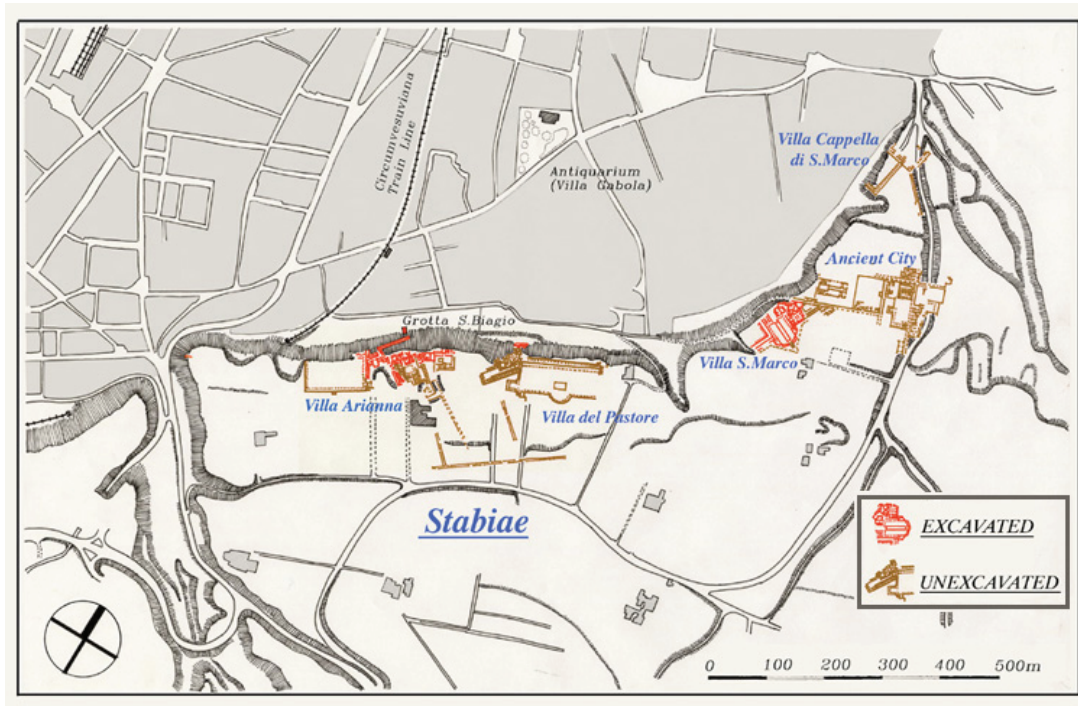


Fig. 5: Site map of the Stabiae archaeological site: in red areas of the villas currently excavated and in brown areas previously surveyed but still buried

In terms of overall visibility and accessibility to potential visitors, the actual condition of the archaeological site and its villas is one characterized by an almost total physical separation from the modern city and the regional transit system serving the other historical and tourist sites of the Bay area; and by the absence of basic welcome services for visitors. The access to the two villas is not easy or immediate (also due to inadequate signage and directions); furthermore, there is no internal connection between the two main archaeological areas open to the public, or between the site and the city below. The cliff clearly represents an obstacle and a physical barrier (Fig.6).



Fig. 6: Aerial view of the archaeological site and of the steep cliff acting as a physical barrier

Nevertheless, the archaeological site has great potentials for easy local or regional access (by public transportation, automobile or via pedestrian pathways from the city below); as well as for internal connections (between the ancient villas and within the site itself, Fig.7). In fact, the site is positioned only few hundreds yards away from two exits of the main highway to Sorrento and the Amalfi Coast; and the local commuter train line is located at the foot of Villa Arianna (west side of site).

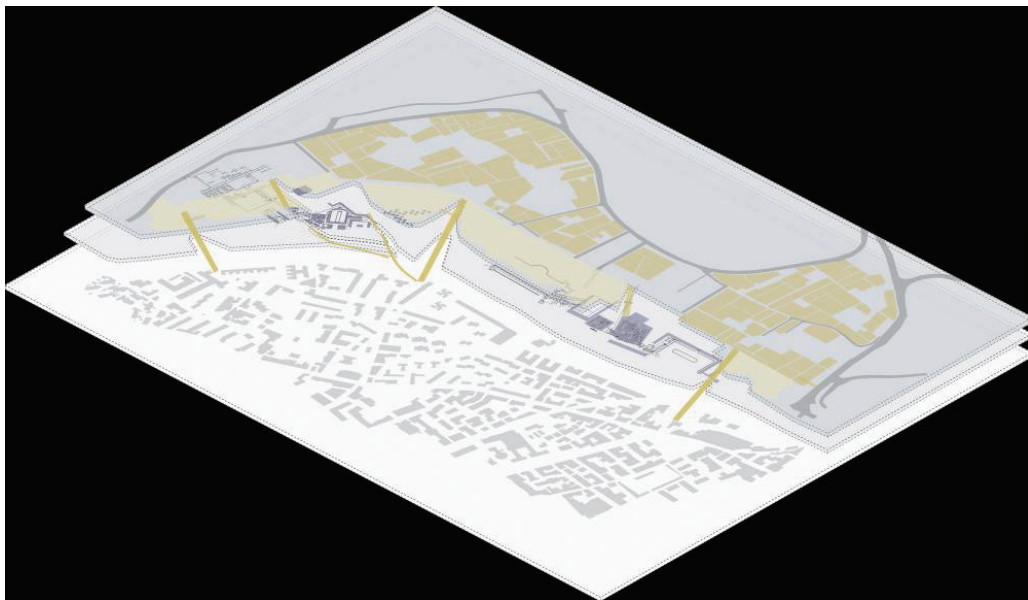


Fig. 7: 3D study diagram showing existing and potential connections along the cliff of the archaeological site, which can be exploited to provide easy access from the city

Furthermore, traces of the original Roman streets still remain on the site and can be recovered; in addition to an original ramp that can be reused for providing pedestrian access directly from the city below, just as it did in ancient times. All these elements can be recovered and rehabilitated to allow - once again - connection between the site, its villas and the modern city.



Fig. 8: Panoramic view of the Stabian Bay and modern Castellammare, with the historical Bourbon shipyard (foreground) and the Medieval Castle (on the right) giving the city its current name

Castellammare di Stabia today is a modern seaport and commercial town of approximately 65,000 people, and serves as the gateway to the Sorrento-Amalfi Coast (Fig.8); strategically positioned and well connected to the regional transit system. Its layers of historical fabric are testament to the thousands of years of settlement by Greeks, Etruscans, Roman and Italic populations. The eruption of Mount Vesuvius destroyed the ancient city of Stabiae, along with Pompeii and Herculaneum; but because of its strategic location, the city continued to be settled and developed in later centuries as an important port and center for commerce and industry.

Castellammare is home to twenty-eight springs of mineral and curative waters, and for centuries has been a renowned *locus* for thermal treatments and spas. The historical center of the city still preserves an almost intact medieval layout and fabric of tight streets and large palazzi. Castellammare also boasts a very active downtown shopping district, and a quite lively seafront animated by restaurants and bars (Fig.9).

The city is still known today for its world famous shipyard, a historical city landmark established by the Bourbon dynasty in the eighteenth century; still today a prominent industry and source of jobs for the area.



Fig. 9: Images of Castellammare: the historical center (left) and the alive waterfront (right)

Between the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, Castellammare was also a popular seaside and hillside resort; but after World War II, industrialization took over the economy of the city and altered its natural identity as resort and cultural center. In addition, pollution of the Bay, urban sprawl and the general neglect of recent years have had a negative impact on the amenities and on the valuable resources of the city, and consequently on its economy.

With proper planning and improvements, the site of Ancient Stabiae (Fig.10) could become an important asset to the life and economy of modern Castellammare; instead of simply being an “historical curiosity.”

The next major and crucial step is enhancing the archaeological site, and exploiting its great potentials to become a central feature of the city and a “generator” of social, economical, and cultural development.



Fig. 10: images of the Roman villas and of the excavations at Ancient Stabiae

It is because of all these factors and of the undeniable potentials for becoming a major, easily accessible archaeological site and park - attracting hundred thousands of visitors per year and operating in conjunction with Pompeii and Herculaneum, while integrated with the amenities of the modern city - that I have chosen Stabiae and the archaeological park as subjects of investigation for the Master Thesis project illustrated in this document (Fig.11); in addition to the emotional value that the city of Castellammare di Stabia - my hometown - represents for me.



Fig. 11: The Master Plan focuses on transforming the site into a coherent and modern archaeological park, providing enhanced visitor's experience and fully integrated with the modern city

My first approach to the study of the archaeological site was the definition of a project scope aiming to improve and organize the site into a more coherent, understandable and enjoyable cultural experience (Fig.12).

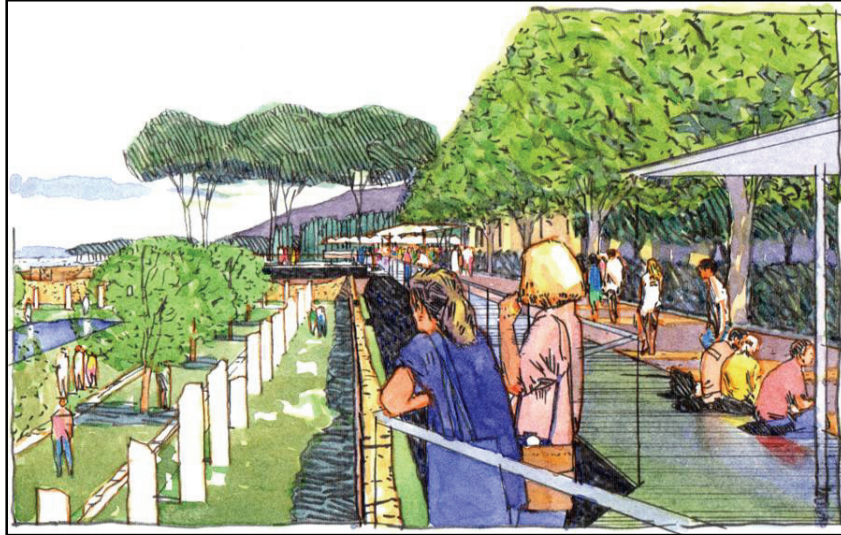


Fig. 12: Sketch of proposed pathways and viewing platforms over in-progress excavations at Villa Arianna, one of the ways to significantly enhance the visitor's experience at the Ancient Stabiae park [K.Crubs, RAS]

The Master Plan, which represents both the premise and core of this project, focuses on enhancing and transforming the 150-acre site into a coherent and modern archaeological park. Among the main goals of the park: the preservation of the Roman villas and their environment, improvement of the visitor's experience, promotion of culture and tourism, economical and social development in the area. The Master Plan (Fig.13), which embraces and coordinates different disciplines and projects, has been generated and developed since the beginning with a view toward urban integration and renewal; with focus on the issues of approach, connection with the modern city, and access to the archaeological site both at urban and regional scale.

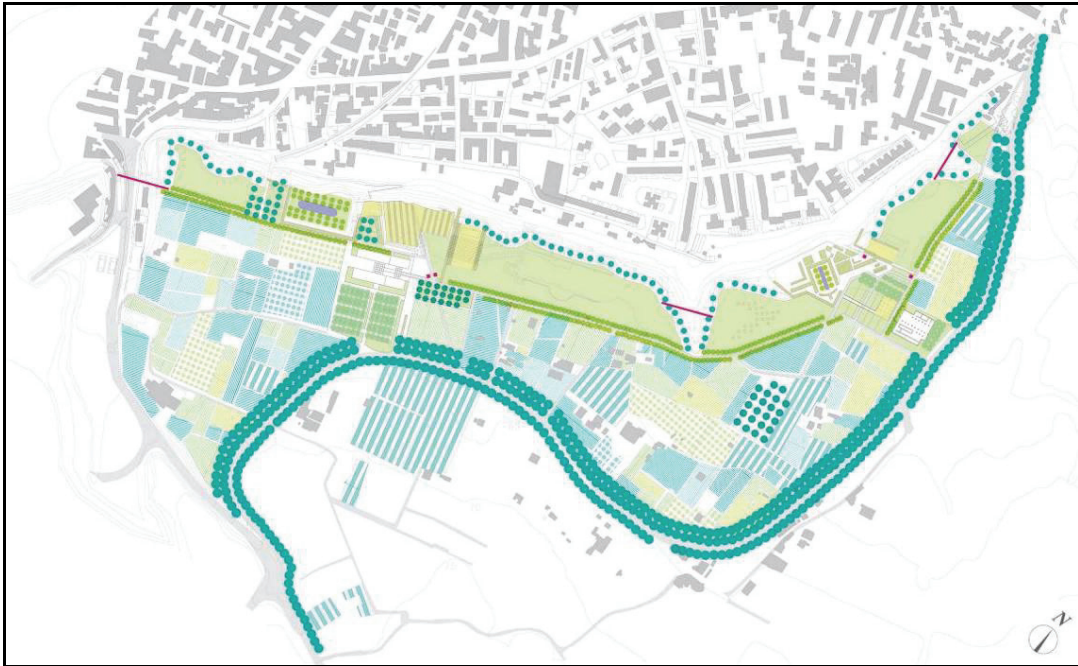


Fig. 13: Proposed Master Plan for the archaeological park at Ancient Stabiae [T.Leader, RAS]

Within the framework of the Master Plan, The Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” project has emerged as result of a series of preliminary urban analysis and design studies aiming to improve the internal organization of the archaeological site, as well as its connection with the modern city below and with the regional network of tourist and cultural sites of the Bay of Naples. The project proposes the creation of a city gate to the archaeological park; an inter-modal transit center and new urban space, acting as the main access and entrance to the archaeological site from the modern city (Fig.14). The Piazza will also provide integration with the regional transit system, and easy connection with the other historical and tourist sites of Pompeii, Herculaneum, Naples and Sorrento; via a new commuter train station and highway exits, integrated with a funicular that will bring visitors directly to the site.

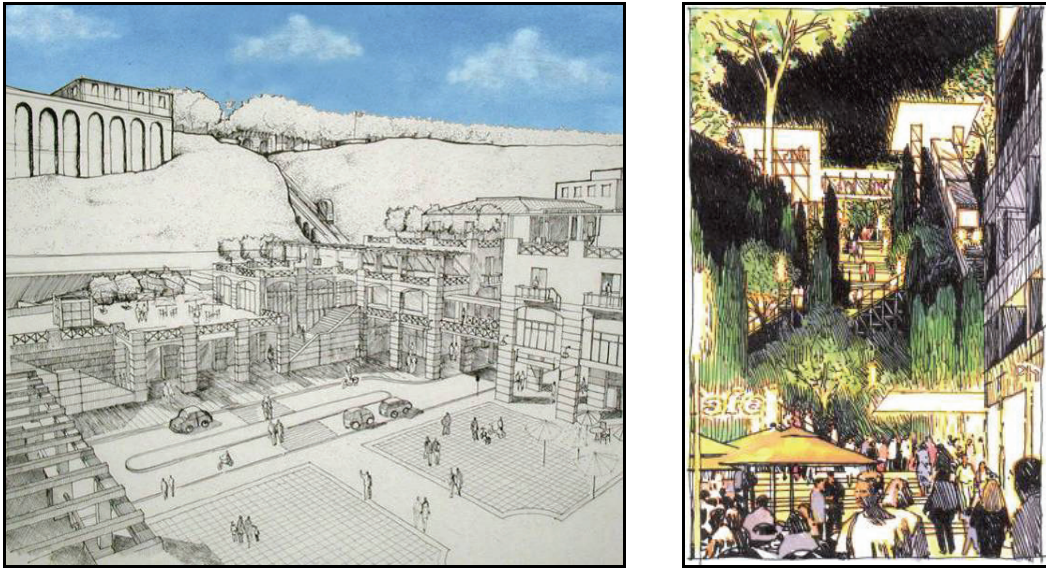


Fig. 14: Images of the proposed Piazza “Libero D’Orsi,” a new inter-modal, mixed-use development and urban gate providing local and regional access to the archaeological site at Stabiae

Thanks to the interest and developments generated by this Master Thesis in the recent years, the Restoring Ancient Stabiae project – which started as a collaborative research program between the University of Maryland and the Superintendancy of Pompeii - is now becoming one of the most innovative cultural endeavors to date. In fact, the Stabiae site is in the process of becoming an archaeological park centered on the great Roman seaside villas, based on the Master Plan concept emerged from this Master Thesis investigation; which has been further developed by the Restoring Ancient Stabiae Foundation and incorporated in the city and regional master plans. With an overall projected global budget of approximately 140 million Euros (between public and private funds), the archaeological park project will entail several large excavations, extensive studies and conservation, site preservation and a museum dedicated to the presentation of the Roman Villa Culture of the Bay of Naples,

panoramic promenades connecting the villa sites, outdoor theaters, visitor centers, more services and amenities for visitors.

The archaeological park will operate in conjunction with the better known sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and the museum and villa *rustica* at Boscoreale; to present an almost complete panorama of all classes and aspects of Roman society in the first century A.D.: bustling small port towns, working farm villas, and the villas of the social elite and their dependents (Fig.15).

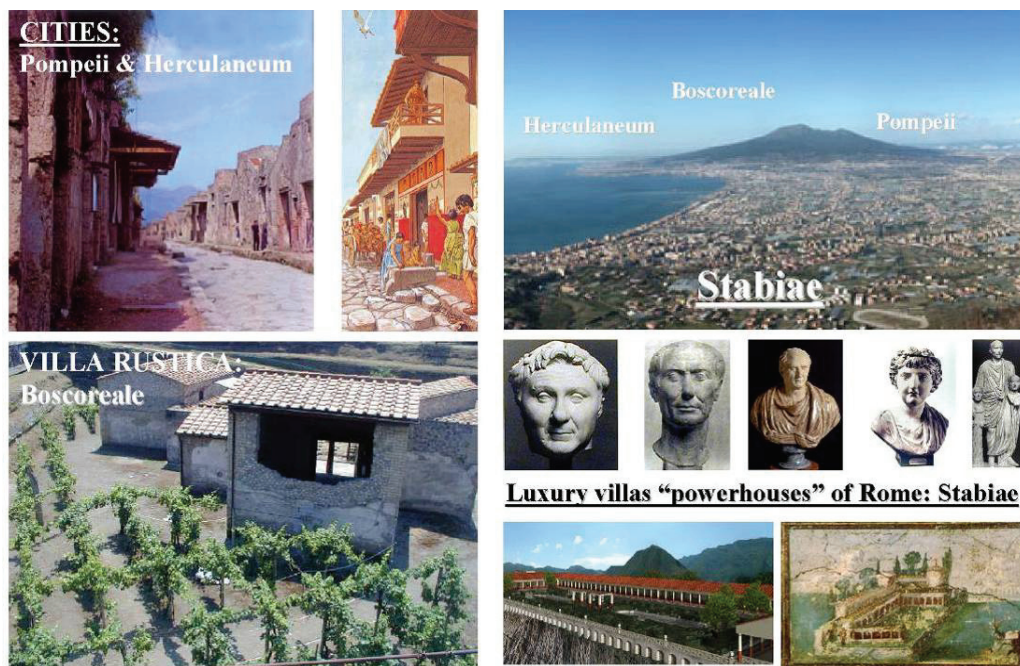


Fig. 15: Pompeii, Herculaneum, Boscoreale, and Stabiae with its powerhouses of the Roman Elite will be able to present an almost complete panorama of all classes and aspects of the Roman society of 2000 years ago

The park at Stabiae is potentially one of the largest archaeological projects in Europe to date; quite innovative in its integration of an archaeological site with the urban fabric of the modern city and the tourist amenities of the surrounding region (Fig.16).

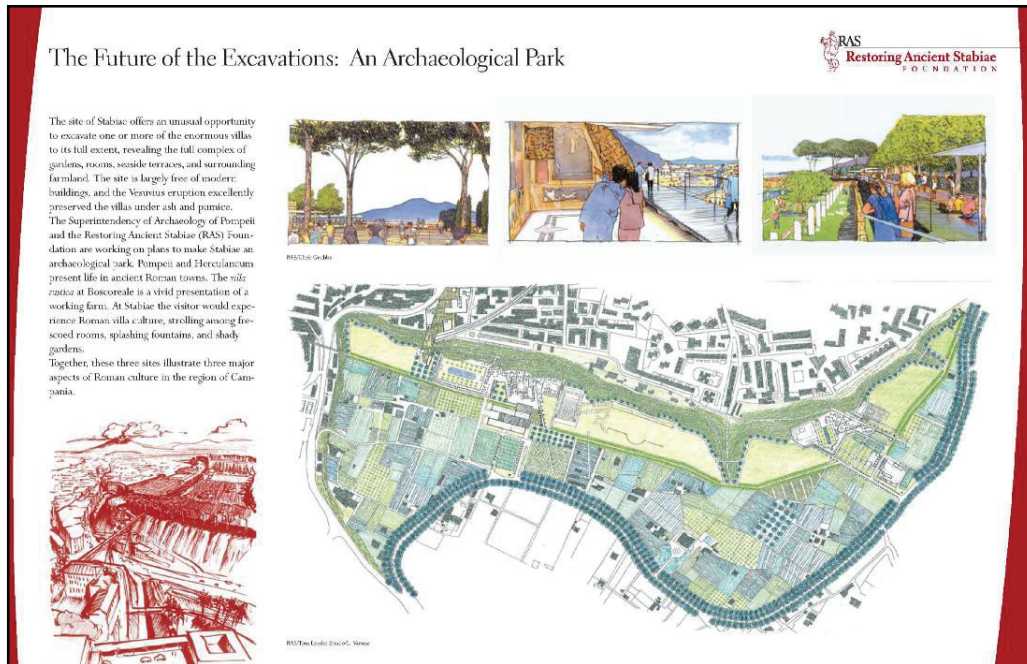


Fig. 16: The archaeological park of Stabiae is becoming one of the most innovative pilot-project in implementing the integration of an archaeological site with the urban fabric of the modern city and tourist attractions of the surrounding region [RAS]

Award-winning concept projects of the University of Maryland School of Architecture and Planning have been revealing ways in which the park can stimulate other cultural/economic projects, to revive the modern City of Castellammare and create a world-class resort (Fig.17).

In recent years, the RAS endeavor has grown as a unique "pilot project" - jointly promoted and monitored by the Italian and American governments - that is changing modern archaeology; it may serve as a future model for the international management of Italian cultural patrimony.



Fig. 17: Concept projects by RAS and the University of Maryland School of Architecture and Planning joint-teams have been revealing ways in which the park can become integrated with the modern city, stimulate other cultural/economic projects, and revive the modern City of Castellammare while creating a world-class resort [RAS]

Brought about by an innovative and historical Italo-American cultural agreement and exchange, the RAS Foundation is among the first and most innovative international non-profit cultural foundations, with board representation from both Italy and the U.S.; its primary mission is the preservation of the Roman seaside villas and the creation of the archaeological park at Ancient Stabiae, while assisting the Italian government in the development of Italy’s most spectacular cultural treasures and historical sites.

Chapter 2: Ancient Stabiae and its Roman Seaside Villas

Recovering the Total Villa Environment of the Roman Elite

At the foot of the Sorrento Amalfi Peninsula, where the southern corner of the spectacular Bay of Naples meets the Lattari Mountains; in this convergence of sea plain and mountains lies a little-known traveler's treasure and archaeological jewel: the ancient Roman site of Stabiae (Fig.18-20).



Fig. 18: Aerial view of the Bay of Naples, with Mount Vesuvius (foreground), the Roman archaeological sites, Stabiae and the Sorrento-Amalfi Peninsula (background)

Ancient Stabiae is the largest concentration of excellently preserved, enormous, elite seaside villas in the entire Roman world. Ancient Roman Stabiae (modern Castellammare di Stabia) is very different from nearby Pompeii or Herculaneum. It was buried in the same cataclysmic eruption of A.D. 79 and like those sites, is also

gorgeously preserved by the volcanic ash and cinder. But those sites were small bustling provincial port towns; Stabiae on the other hand was not a town at all (with



Fig. 19: Satellite map of the Bay of Naples showing location of Stabiae



Fig. 20: Aerial view of Stabiae and the plain between Castellammare and Pompeii, with Mount Vesuvius in the background

the exception of a village at one end) but rather a series of enormous, elite sea-view villas built directly next to one another along the edge of a sea-cliff for at least 1.8 km. Some were up to 12,000-14,000 sq. m. (c.140,000 sq. ft.). In the summer months of the first centuries B.C. and A.D. the Roman capital virtually moved to the great villas of the Bay of Naples. Sulla, Hortensius, Lucullus, Caesar, Caesar's father-in-law Calpurnius, all had villas in the Bay of Naples area. Cicero, far from the richest of senators, had three. A friend of Cicero, Marcus Marius, owned one of the villas at Stabiae (as yet unidentified). Augustus may have built twelve on Capri and another at Sorrento. The reclusive Tiberius literally moved the seat of government to his villa in Capri. The great villas of the Bay of Naples were not just places of ostentation and retreat. They were places for this elite to entertain and negotiate (Fig.21). Some of the most crucial events of the late Republic occurred in these villas. When the eighteen-year-old Octavian (later Augustus) learned in April 44 B.C. that he was Caesar's heir, he came first to the Bay of Naples, not Rome, to solidify his support.

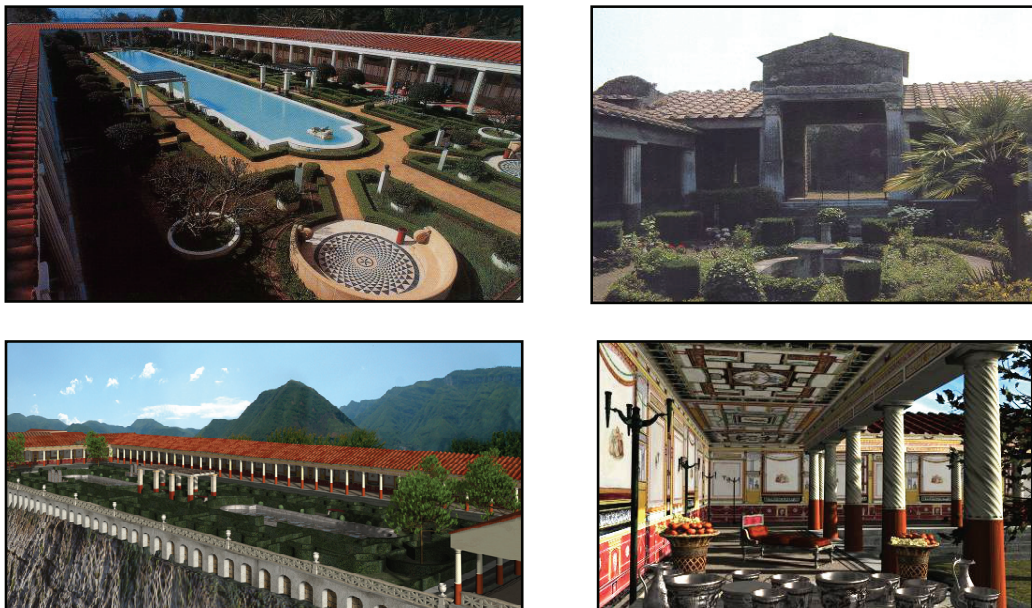


Fig. 21: Images of the great villas owned by the Roman social elite in the Bay of Naples

These great seaside display villas were new phenomena in world architecture in the first century B.C.; inspired by Greek and Hellenistic public buildings and civic places, these villas generated ideas that will characterize future Roman Imperial architecture (Fig.22).

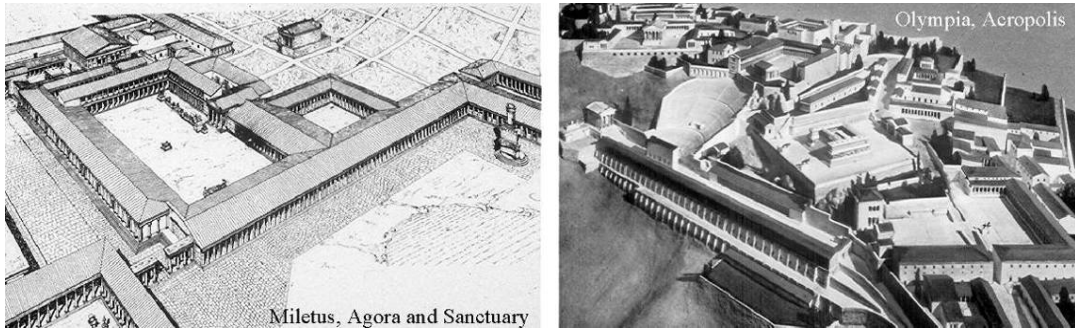


Fig. 22: Romans borrowed ideas from civic architecture of Hellenistic and Greek cities, which became models for *Luxuria Privata* (private luxury dwelling)

They featured numerous dining rooms with calculated panoramic views of sea and mountains, private heated baths, art collections and libraries, cooling fountains and gardens, huge colonnaded courtyards (Fig.23) as large as football fields built for no other purpose other than to have a place to stroll in after dinner...and hundreds of meters of brilliant frescos, often imitating famous works of Greek art. These “super – villas” were stage sets for their elite owners, environments where they could entertain guests while surrounded with the aura of a living in a “Golden Age.”

Not only did many of the most important events leading to the creation of the Roman Empire occur in these villas, but also some of the most important features of Imperial art and architecture were generated here. Hardly ever was there an architecture so powerfully oriented to its environment; which, surprisingly enough, is still mostly preserved today at Stabiae.

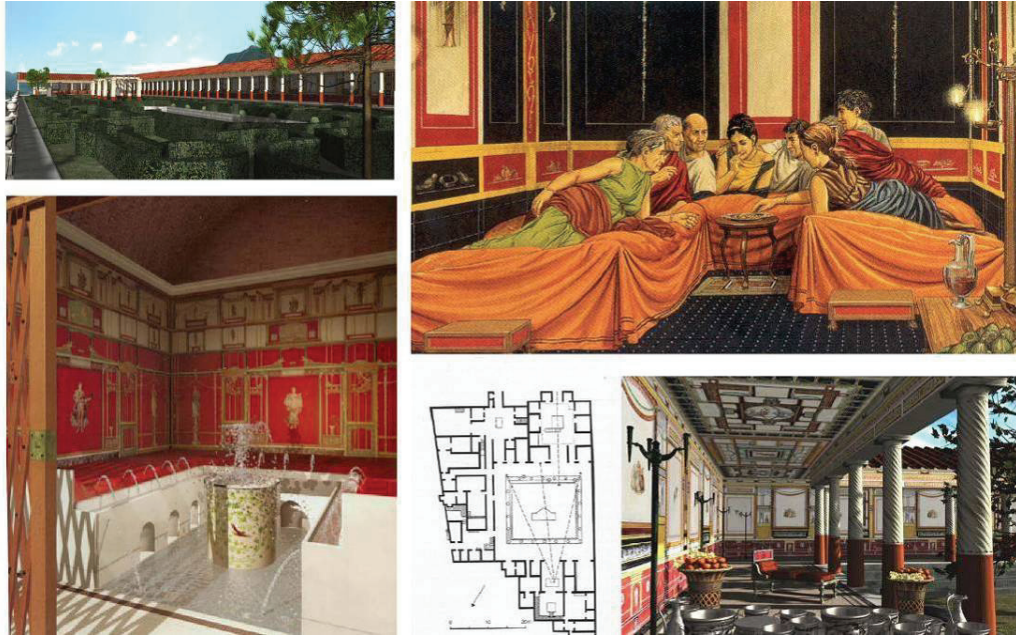


Fig. 23: The great villas of the Bay of Naples featured numerous dining rooms with panoramic views of sea and mountains, and a strong relationship with its surrounding landscape and gardens. Above some examples: Connolly's reconstruction of a Roman dinner (top right image); computer-generated reconstructions by Capware.

And the only place in the Bay of Naples - or in fact in the whole ancient world -

where villas like these are well preserved in their total context is Stabiae.

Only here, where the site is still largely free of modern buildings, can one excavate several entire complexes to their full extent (which is rare in modern archaeology), and only here do well-preserved villas still enjoy the view of the Bay from the hillside (Fig.24). Only here can one stand in a frescoed ancient Roman sea-view *triclinium* (dining room), and feel the cooling breezes and admire the view of the fields and mountains of the Sorrento peninsula behind, just as one could two thousand years before.

Furthermore, the Stabiae site offers great excavation and discovery opportunities; and it will be probably the only site in the Vesuvian region featuring for large-excavations in the next decade!



Fig. 24: View of the main garden of Villa San Marco, with its pool and panoramic dining rooms oriented towards the Bay of Naples

Eruption and Excavations: Twice-Told Tales

Stabiae was buried in the same cataclysmic eruption that buried Pompeii and Herculaneum on the 24th of August, A.D. 79 (Fig.25). Pliny the Elder died on the beach at Stabiae by the villa of his friend Pomponianus when the sixth and last fiery pyroclastic surge swept across the Bay on August 25th. The site was buried under about 3.5 meters of volcanic cinder and ash, excellently preserving the buildings.



Fig. 25: View of Mount Vesuvius erupting (XVIII century painting, anonymous)

The first excavations at Stabiae (1749-82) stand at the very beginning of modern archaeology, along with those at Pompeii and Herculaneum (Fig.26). Under Charles III Bourbon of Naples extensive areas of several villas and a small town were dug by means of low tunnels that followed the walls in order to find and remove sections of frescoes.

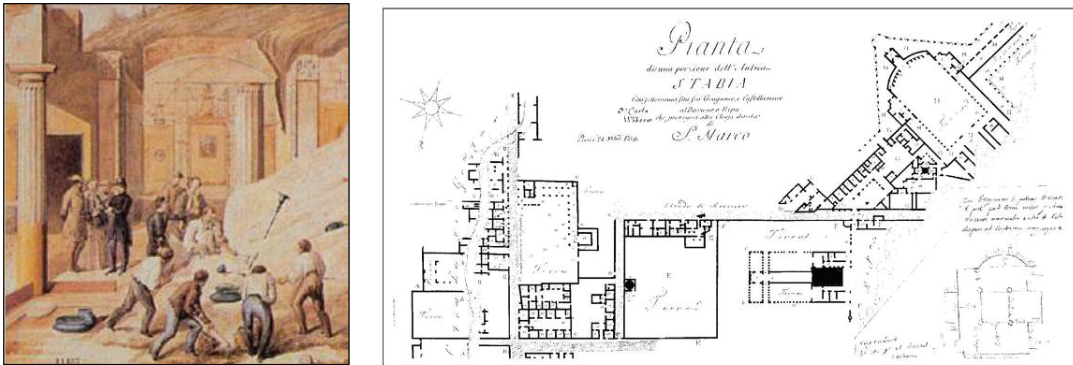


Fig. 26: The first excavations at Stabiae (1749-82) and Pompeii (left) stand at the very beginning of modern archaeology. The Swiss engineer Karl Weber, under the orders of Charles III Bourbon of Naples, drew very accurate plans of the villas at Stabiae and ancient city (right)

Once a plan was drawn, the site was backfilled and its location completely forgotten until 1950. In that year the principal of the local high school “Stabiae,” Libero D’Orsi, discovered the site and reopened excavations with volunteers (Fig.27 and 28), including one of his janitors and an unemployed mechanic.



Fig. 27: Principal Libero D’Orsi (left) and local farmers helping with the excavation of the near-by farm Villa of Carmiano [Archivio Comitato di Stabia]

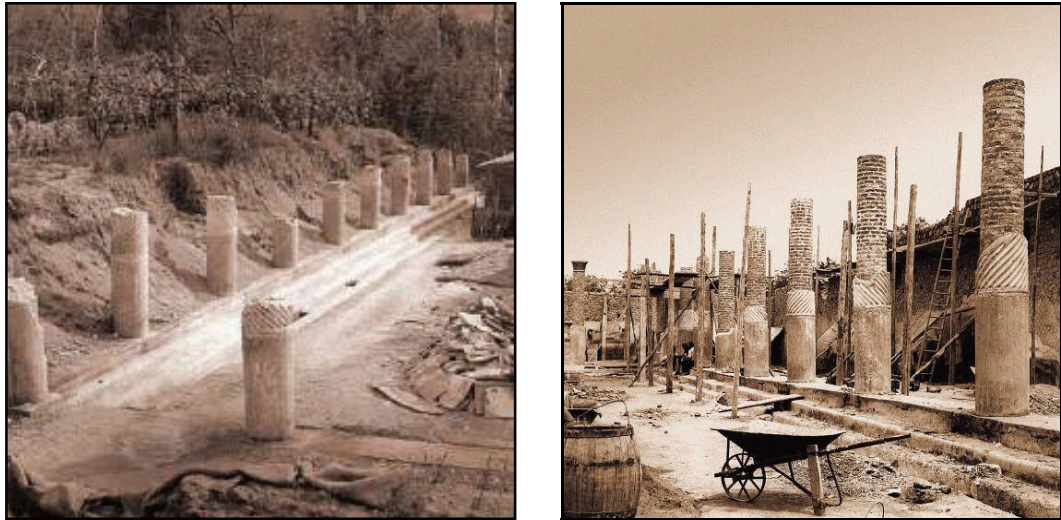
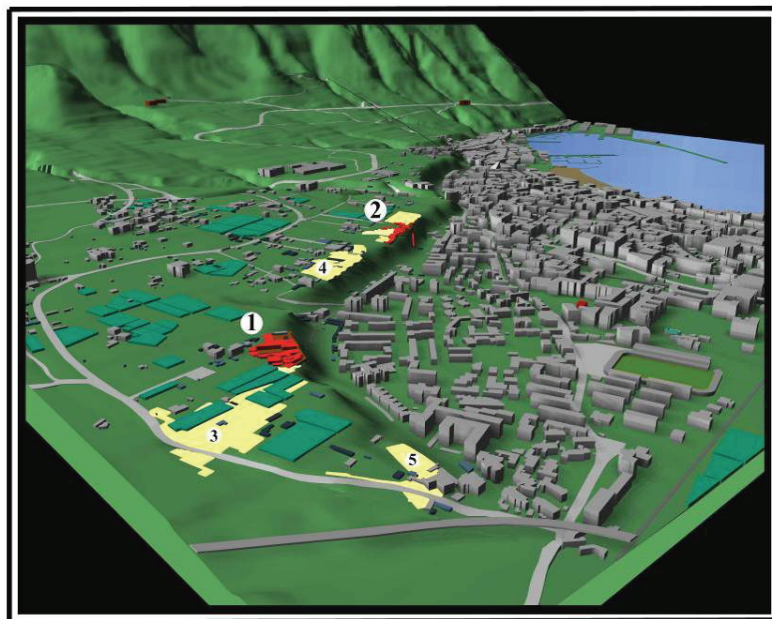


Fig. 28: 1950 mages showing the first excavations of the villas at Stabiae done by Principal Libero D'Orsi with the help of one of his janitors and an unemployed mechanic [Archivio Comitato di Stabia]

Only a small part of what was found in the eighteenth century (shown yellow in the plan below, Fig. 29) has been re-excavated and is currently open to the public (shown red in the plan below, Fig. 29). The vast majority of the hilltop has never been explored. At least six villas and an ancient town are buried under the ashes, awaiting to be brought back to light.

Major new excavations are planned to recover at least two or three of the enormous complete villa complexes, as part of the RAS Master Plan and project.



1) Villa S.Marco 2) Villa Arianna 3) Ancient City 4) Villa del Pastore 5) Villa Cappella S.Marco 6) Antiquarium

Fig. 29: 3D computer generated site plan (top) and bird-eye view (bottom) of the Stabiae site, showing location of the ancient villas and town (excavated in red, buried in yellow) built along the edge of the cliff, overlooking the modern city of Castellammare and the Bay of Naples [L.Varone]

The Roman Culture of Power and Luxury: Villas as Entertainment Complexes and Political Meeting Places for the Elite

The main period of the great villas of Stabiae was very brief: all were built between 89 B.C., when the small town of Stabiae was destroyed during the Social War by legate general Lucius Cornelius Sulla, and the eruption of A.D. 79. These were the tumultuous decades when the later Roman Republic was being transformed into the Roman Empire. During this period the site of Stabiae was rebuilt as a continuous string of villas - a virtual resort - on the cliff-edge overlooking the sea. The villas of the Bay of Naples were complex and pivotal phenomena of Roman culture (Fig.30).



Fig. 30: Images of famous Romans who owned several villas in the Bay of Naples and its surroundings

Many social classes surged through them under the control of their patrons and hosts, and the patrons used the talents of many different types of people to create remarkable stage sets for their activities. The great villa owners usually had several, and moved between them as national business required. Cicero called his villa at Formiae “not a villa, but a public lounge.” In the early first century A.D. another rush

of great villas was built around the Bay of Naples by the “nouveau riches” that made huge fortunes under the new regime of Augustus. The Stabian villas represent the grandeur of the original elite villas, which are characterized not only by their much greater size, but also by their powerful orientation to the landscape (Fig.31).



Fig. 31: Bird-eye view of the large panoramic garden with three-sided portico of Villa San Marco at Stabiae, one of the largest seaside villas in the Bay of Naples (computer generated reconstruction by Capware)

At Stabiae, and only at Stabiae, are these villas so well preserved - thanks to Vesuvius - that one can stand in frescoed triclinium and enjoy sea views, mountain views, and cold summer breezes just as two thousand years ago. Only Stabiae offers the view from well-preserved Roman seaside villas. With full excavations and didactic displays, the archaeological park at Stabiae will become the definitive place to study the phenomenon of the elite Roman villa in its total context.

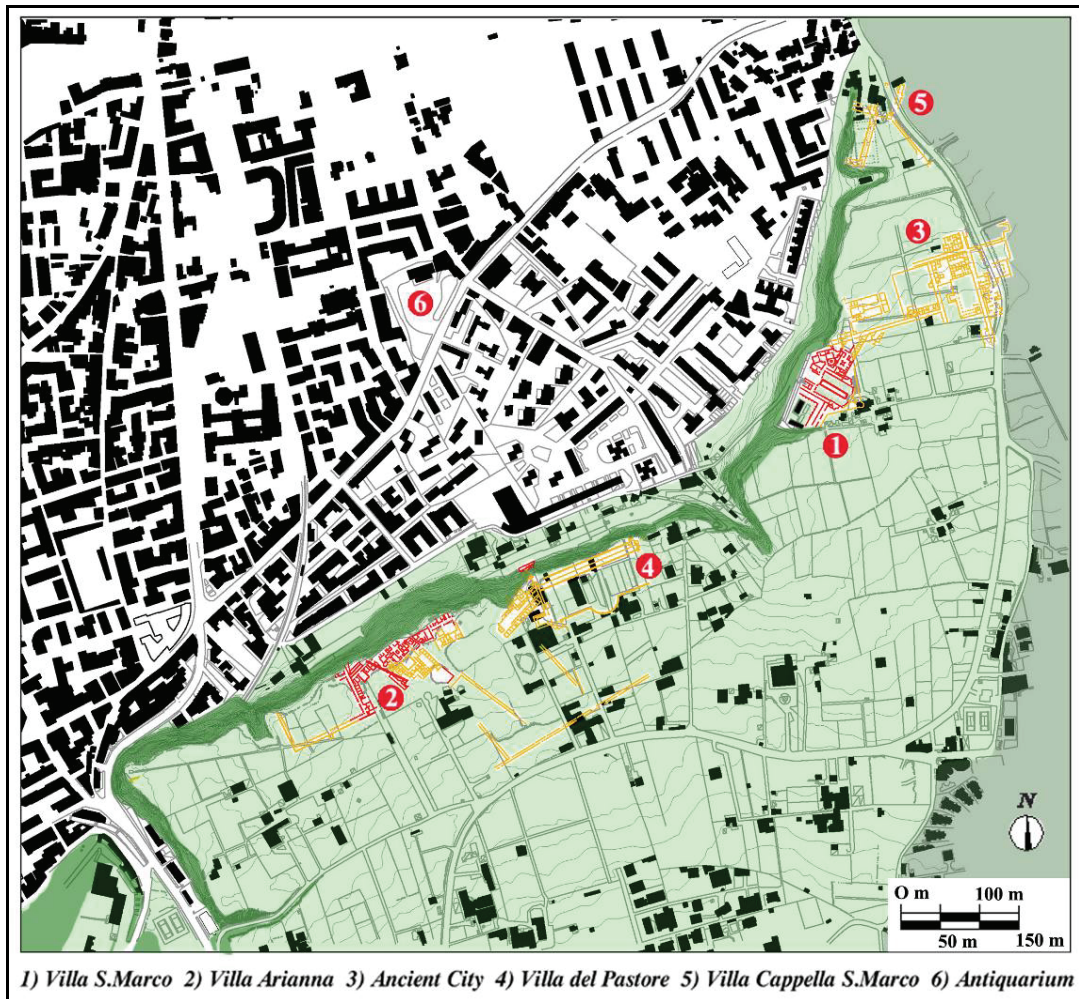


Fig. 32: Site plan of the Stabiae site, showing location of the Roman villas and ancient town (excavated areas in red, still buried in yellow); and their relationship with the cliff, the landscape (green) and the urban fabric of the modern city below [L.Varone]

The Great Sea-View Villas of Ancient Stabiae

At present, only two small sections of the enormous site are re-excavated and open to the public, the so-called Villa San Marco and Villa Arianna (number 1 and 2 in the plan shown above, Fig.32). The villas were very different from one another, and had many zones, sometimes combining agricultural and work areas with luxury. With full excavations, it will be possible to recover the entire machinery of these huge

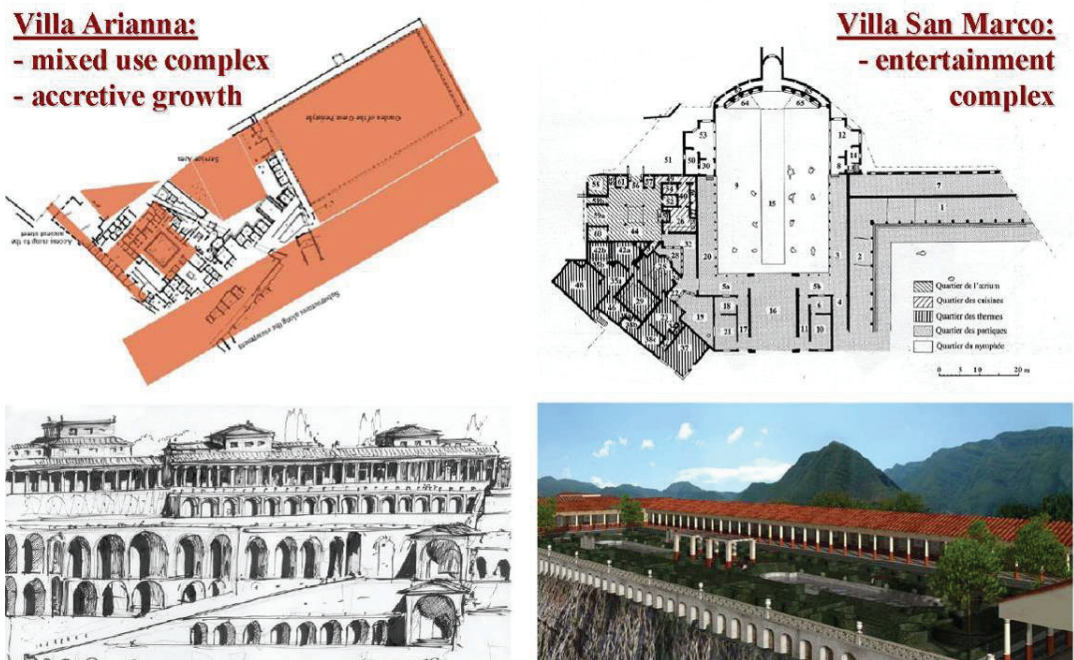


Fig. 33: Villa Arianna (left) and Villa San Marco (right) are very different in terms of overall building layout; but at same time share similar architectural features and articulated functional zones.

complexes, including the relation to the sea in front and the agricultural territory behind (Fig.33). The villas were usually occupied only a few weeks a year and owners moved their retinues from one to another. The first excavation plans were done in the eighteenth century by military engineer Karl Weber under extremely difficult conditions: tunneled excavations followed walls and plans were drawn piecemeal. They are nonetheless remarkably accurate. The town site is to the left and part of the Villa San Marco to the right (Fig.34). The plans were published only in 1881 by Pompeii Superintendent, Mr. Ruggiero.

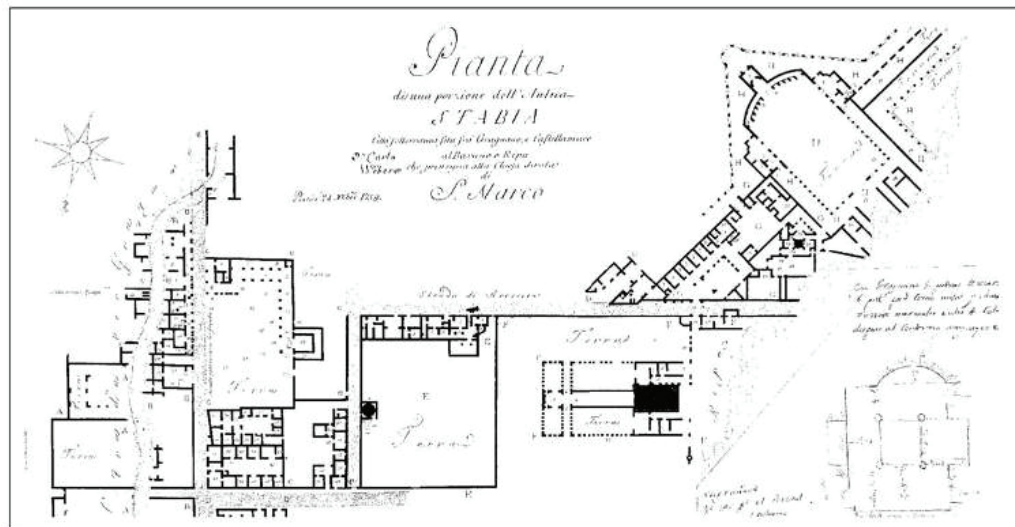


Fig. 34: Excavation plan done by Swiss engineer Karl Weber in 1759, showing the explored sections of the Villa San Marco complex (upper right) and several blocks of the ancient town (center and left). These plans were remarkably precise for that period, even if drawn under very difficult conditions while executing the excavations

The Stabiae villas were among the largest in the Roman world, up to 14,000 sq. meters, including gardens. In addition to a traditional atrium and service rooms of a typical town mansion (*domus*), they had numerous dining and sitting rooms (Fig.35),

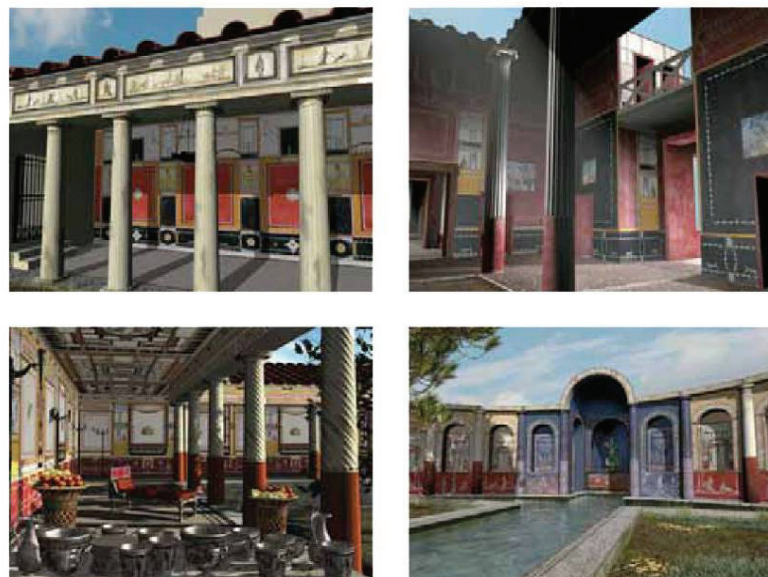


Fig. 35: Computer generated reconstructions showing some of the main architectural features of these entertainment villas [Capware]

sea and mountain views, frescoes imitating famous Greek paintings, private bath complexes, fountain courts with formal gardens and art collections, and “air conditioned” summer corridors (underground porticoes with cooling fountains called “*cryptoporticus*”). Pliny the Younger suggested that the huge courtyard gardens were built mainly as places to stroll and digest one’s meal while conversing after dinner (often with a hired philosopher). The frescoes of the Villa Arianna are particularly high in quality and exhibit a variety of architectural, dramatic and lyrical/classicizing styles.

“Villa San Marco”

The Villa San Marco, with a total surface area (including garden courtyards) of more than 11,000 sq. meters, is one of the largest among the seaside villas of ancient Campania. It stands at the eastern end of the cliff-edge of Varano hill, with a splendid panoramic view of the Bay of Naples, and directly next to the town site (Fig.36). The original shoreline may have been quite close to the foot of the hill.



Fig. 36: Bird-eye view of Villas San Marco (left); this villa features a spectacular location, a strong orientation, and several gardens including a large pool with panoramic dining rooms (right)

It consists of an original nucleus - an atrium and small entrance peristyle which leads off the street - a small but luxurious private bath complex, a large courtyard with pool, nymphaeum-fountain and sea-view *triclinia* (dining rooms), and an even larger sea-view colonnaded courtyard at a higher level. Several *cubicles* (multi-functioning private rooms) and a large kitchen lay right off the atrium (Fig.37 and 39).

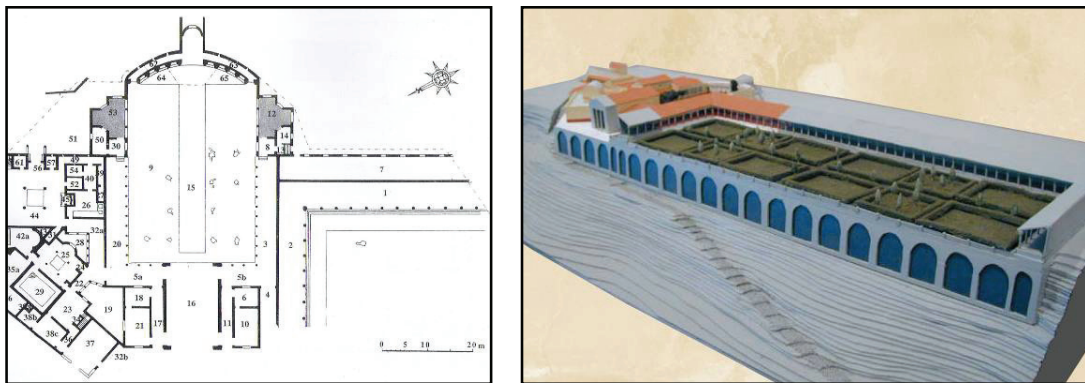


Fig. 37: Floor plan (left) and hypothetical reconstruction model of Villa San Marco (right) done by students at Southwestern University (Texas) under supervision of prof. Thomas Howe

Two completely enclosed internal gardens (*viridaria*) line the corridors from the atrium to the bath. The bath complex is entered through a miniature four column court, and has a *calidarium* (hot plunge bath), with floor and wall heating; a *tepidarium* with a similar heated floor, and an apsidal outdoors *frigidarium* (cold plunge bath).

The first large peristyle court contained a 30-meter long garden shaded by plane trees whose roots are still visible as plaster casts. At one end of the court is one of the most complex set pieces of any villa, an apsidal nymphaeum with illusionist stuccos, frescoes, glass mosaic, fountains, and a *cryptoportico*, a cool place for a summer walk.



Fig. 38: Images showing some of the interesting architectural features of Villa San Marco

On either side were beautifully frescoed multi-functioning *diaetae* (day rooms), with differing views of mountains and garden. At the other end are the three main sea-view *triclinia*, two smaller ones flanking an enormous central space (fig.38).

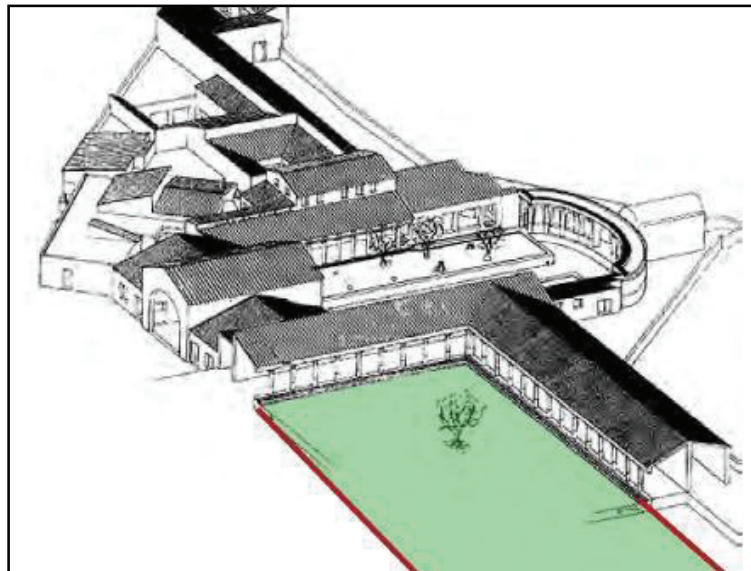


Fig. 39: Reconstruction drawing of Villa San Marco, showing the partially excavated upper peristyle garden (in green) [A. Barbet and P.Miniero]

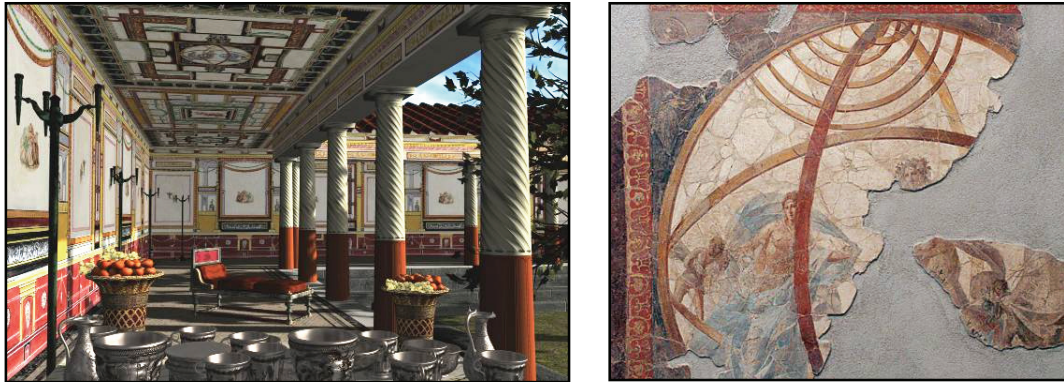


Fig. 40: Computer generated reconstruction of the upper portico of Villa San Marco (left, Capware); detail of ceiling fresco found during the 1950 excavations of the portico.

The upper peristyle was much longer, as much as 113 meters (355 feet), as indicated by RAS 2002 geophysical survey. It was surrounded by unusual spiral-fluted columns and had elaborate ceiling frescoes suggesting the cycle of the seasons (Fig.40).

“Villa Arianna” (of “Ariadne”)

The site of the Villa Arianna consists of two villas separated by a narrow alley. The larger, the Villa Arianna, is named after the big fresco in the main *triclinium*, tentatively identified as Ariadne discovered by a winged Dionysus on the island of Naxos. The other villa is commonly known as the "Second Complex."

The fact that the two villas are built directly next to one another and that the same situation occurs at the Villa San Marco, which fronts on a city street, is the best evidence that the entire ridge was densely built up with contiguous villas (Fig.41).

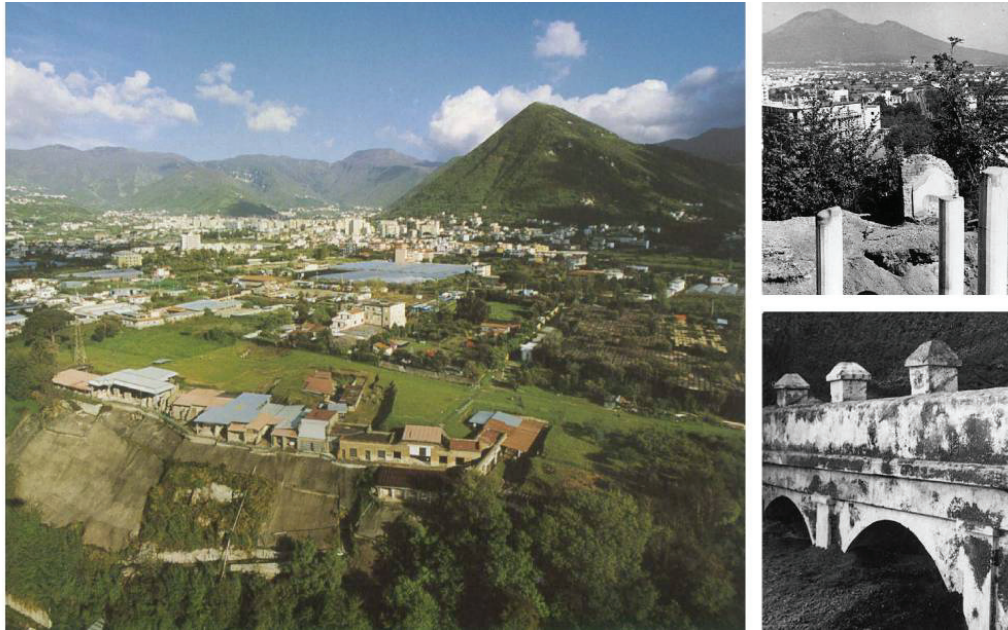


Fig. 41: Aerial view of Villa Arianna as it appears today (left), and in 1950 (right) when the first modern excavations by Libero D'Orsi began. Build on the edge of the cliff, this villa was conceived as a string of panoramic dining rooms, terraces and porticos with views on the seashore below and the Bay of Naples

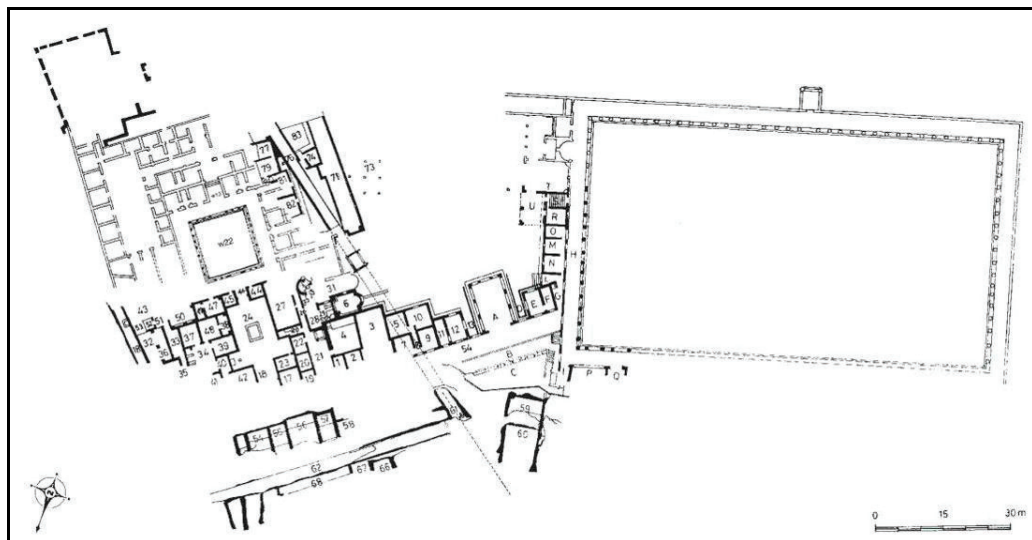


Fig. 42: Complete site plan of Villa Arianna (showing both excavated - solid hatch - and buried - double lines - sections of the villa); featuring also a football-size panoramic garden with three-side portico (right) and a private ramp along the cliff (bottom center), connecting the seashore below with the hilltop and passing under the villa

It is much more difficult to gain an impression of the form of these sprawling villas than at the Villa San Marco. The excavations are incomplete and have revealed only the front range of rooms and sections of courtyards behind.

The extent of the villas is unclear. Large parts of the front rooms have collapsed down the cliff edge and the terraces in front have not been fully archaeologically investigated.

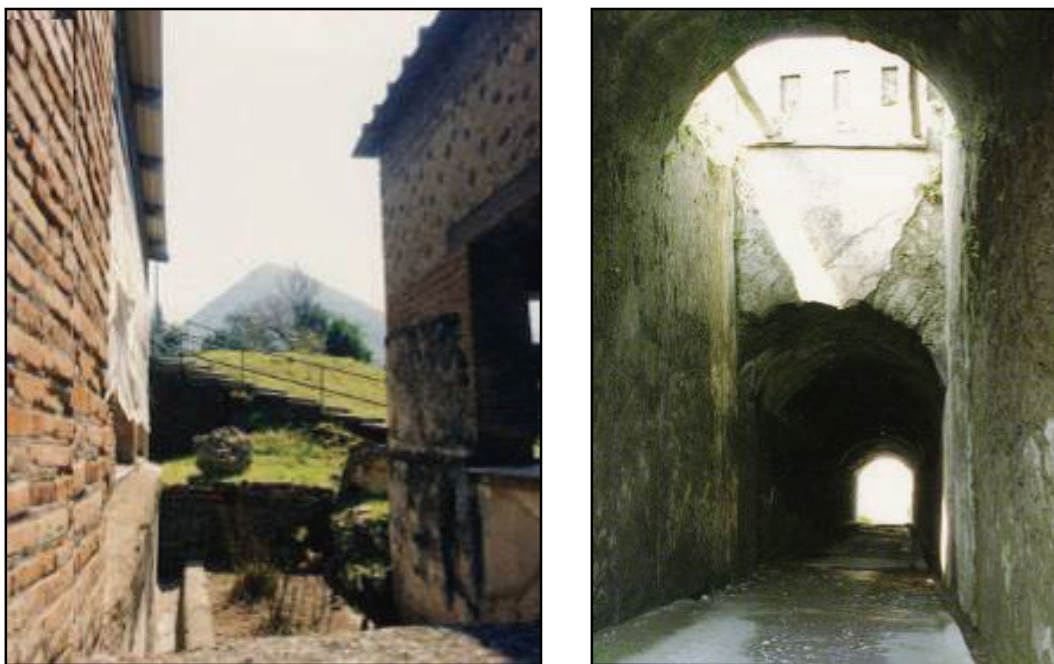


Fig. 43: Some images of excavated portions of Villa Arianna, with the cliff-side ramp (right), summer dining rooms facing the Bay, and small gardens built between providing views towards the mountains behind (left)

The plan of the Villa Arianna (Fig. 42) is especially complex because it grew incrementally over a century and a half with several major additions and modifications, including one of the largest courtyards in any Roman villa, equaling in perimeter to two full *stades* (stadium lengths).

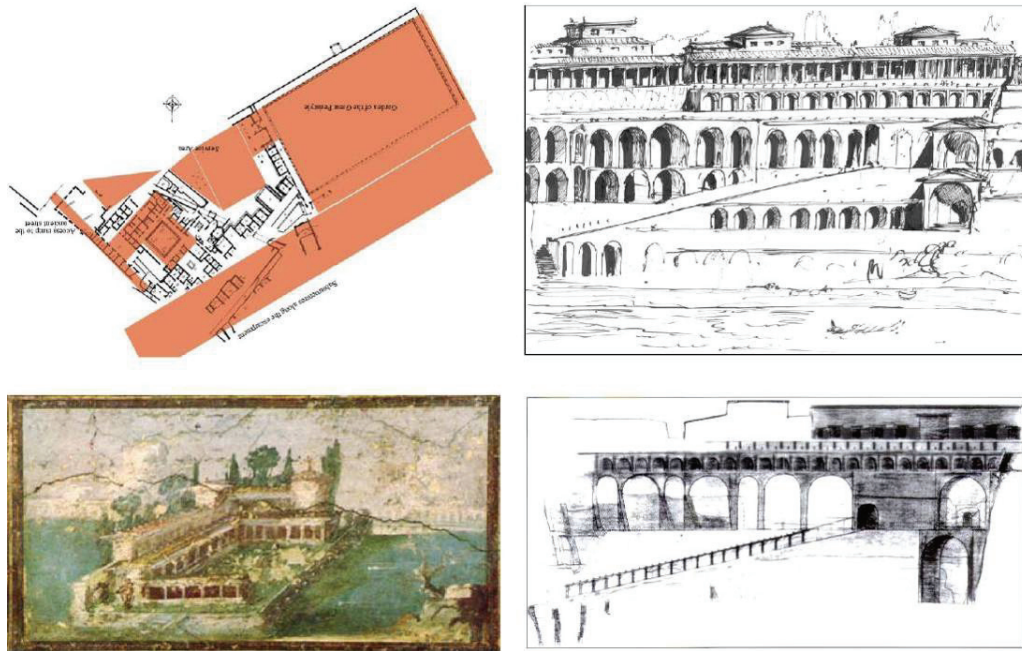


Fig. 44: Villa Arianna is considered a good example of Roman *Basis Villae* (fresco from Villa San Marco, bottom left), with its articulated system of multi-level terraces built to support the villa on the cliff edge (as shown in the reconstruction drawings on the right, T.Howe and A.De Simone). The red areas indicated on the plan (top left) represent the portions of villas still buried and to be excavated

The Villa Arianna originally must have been a spectacular example of a *basis villae* (Fig.44) supported by as many as seven levels of arched terraces and substructures (presently covered by vegetation and a protective layer of concrete). A private ramp passed underneath the villa and descended to the shore. The actual location of the shore is not known; it was probably only 100-200 meters away from the foot of the hill. The main range of decorated rooms was at the front of the top terrace; some dining rooms featured dual views both to the sea to one side, and to the mountains in the opposite direction (Fig.43).

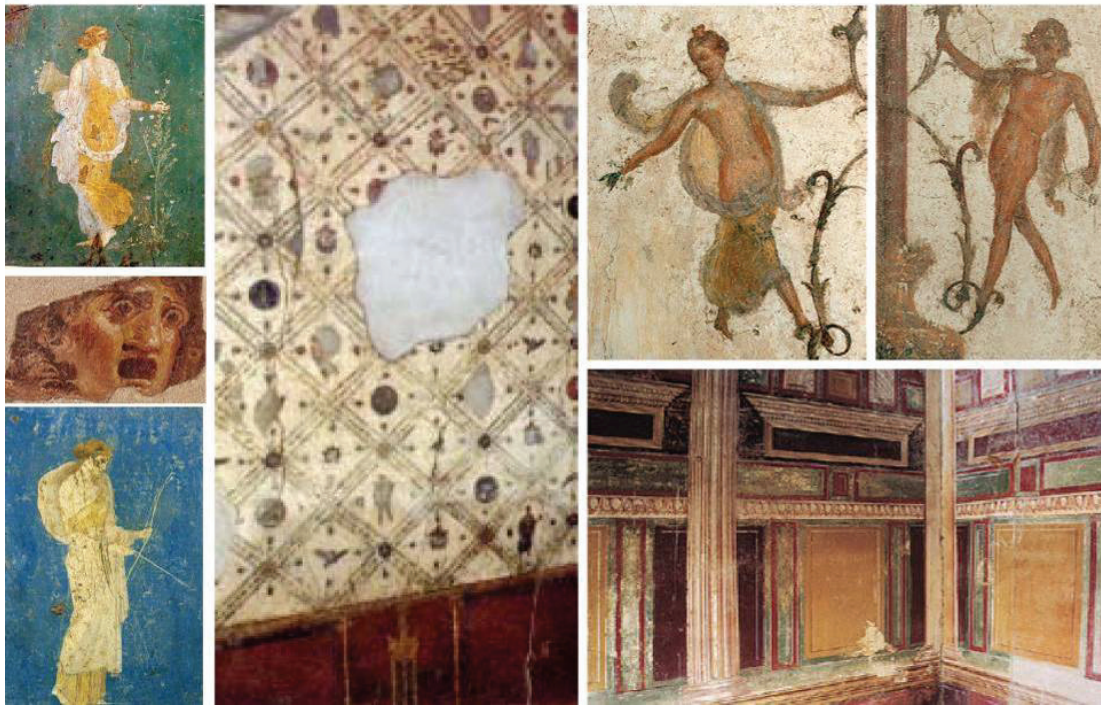


Fig. 45: Some images of fresco wall decoration at Villa Arianna, considered among the best examples of Roman painting ever found in the Vesuvian region

The frescoes, many of which are characterized by a suggestive airborne fluttering style, are among the best in Roman painting (Fig.45).

“Villa Pastore” (of the Shepard)

This third enormous villa (some 19,000 square meters, c. 204,514 square feet including the area of the garden courts) was rediscovered in 1967 through partial excavations, initiated after casual excavation for volcanic cinder building material, and reburied. Called “of the Shepherd” because of the fine small statue shown in Fig. 46, the villa was first excavated in the eighteenth century.



Fig. 46: The statue of the Shepard found by Libero D'Orsi (left), which gave the name to the villa; an image of the north wall with reversed arches as it appeared after the first excavations in 1950

It is an unusual architectural complex and consists of two *nuclei* built on different axes and at different times: the first is an elongated courtyard framed by another *cryptoportico* with windows looking out to the edge of the cliff, at the back of which was a long colonnaded portico and a garden with a wall topped by reversed (upside down) arches and a large hemicycle niche; at the west was another courtyard with

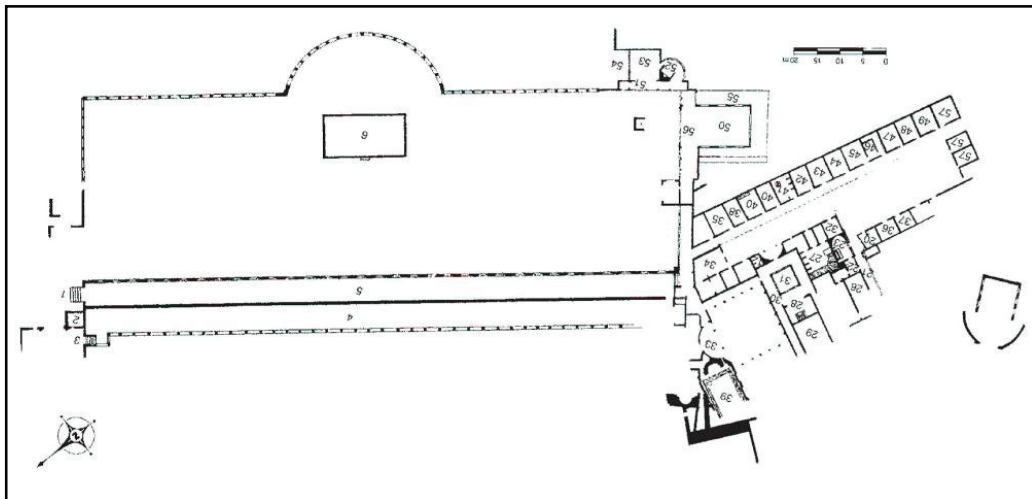


Fig. 47: Plan of Villa del Pastore, featuring two *nuclei* built on different axes and an enormous garden with colonnaded portico and fishpond in the center

many small rooms (perhaps slave/servants/guest quarters) and another large bath complex (Fig.47). In the middle of the large garden court was a presumed *piscina* (fishpond). The nature of this villa is highly debated. It seems to have no conventional residential center (the atrium) as far as it is excavated now. It has even been suggested that it may not even have been a villa but instead a *valetudinarium* (a health spa) with nothing but bath quarters, guest rooms, and a garden built to take advantage of the health-giving mineral springs of the area.

The Villa, still buried, will be excavated as part of the proposed Master Plan.

The Ancient Town Site

“The city of Stabiae existed in the Campanian plain until the consulship of Gnaeus Pompeius and Lucius Cato (89 B.C.), at which time the legate commander in the Social War, Lucius [Cornelius] Sulla, destroyed it on the 30th of April; since then it has been transformed into a place of villas.” (Gaius Plinius Secundus, *Naturalis Historia*, 3.9.70). “Pliny the Elder” was a scholar, held several procuratorships, was a member of the privy council of the emperors Vespasian and Titus, and was in command of the fleet at Misenum north of Naples, where he had a villa, when Vesuvius erupted.

The site of Stabiae is a small plateau approx. 50 m. above sea level lying at the foot of the mountains that form the spectacular Sorrento-Amalfi peninsula. The beach may have lain directly at the foot of the cliff, but its location is still not known with certainty. The bay has silted up since antiquity, in some places to the extent of more

than a mile. It had, and still has, a gorgeous panoramic view and always catches the cooling summer winds.

Stabiae had long been a small port town, but as early as the sixth century B.C. had been overshadowed by the Greek and Etruscan traders of the nearby town of Pompeii. After the town of Stabiae was destroyed by Lucius Cornelius Sulla on April 30, 89 B.C., the area developed quickly into a zone of both luxury and agricultural villas: “*id delevit quod nunc in villam abiit*” (that which was destroyed is now inhabited by villas), as Pliny says (3.9.70). The town also appears to have grown up again, although it had only the status of a “*pagus*,” village.

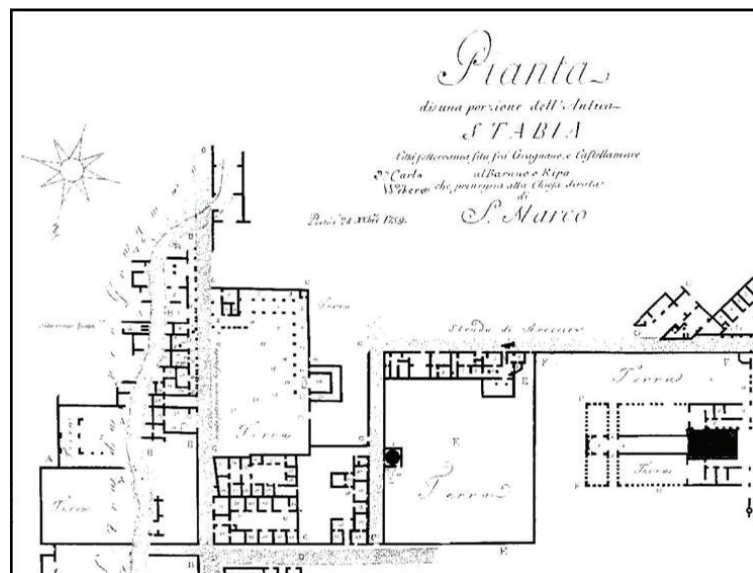


Fig. 48: Detail of the excavation survey and map done by Swiss engineer Karl Weber in 1759, showing explored sections of several blocks of the ancient town

The remains to the east of the Villa San Marco, partly explored in the eighteenth century (Fig.48), but now still buried, are almost surely this reborn town, although the date has not been yet stratigraphically determined. The villas continued to prosper into the first century of the Empire. After 89 B.C., as Pliny records, the area seems to

have been filled with panoramic villas creating a sort of Roman “high-rent district” where luxurious villas were built directly next to one another along the entire edge of the bluff, probably for a distance of some two to three miles (Fig.49).

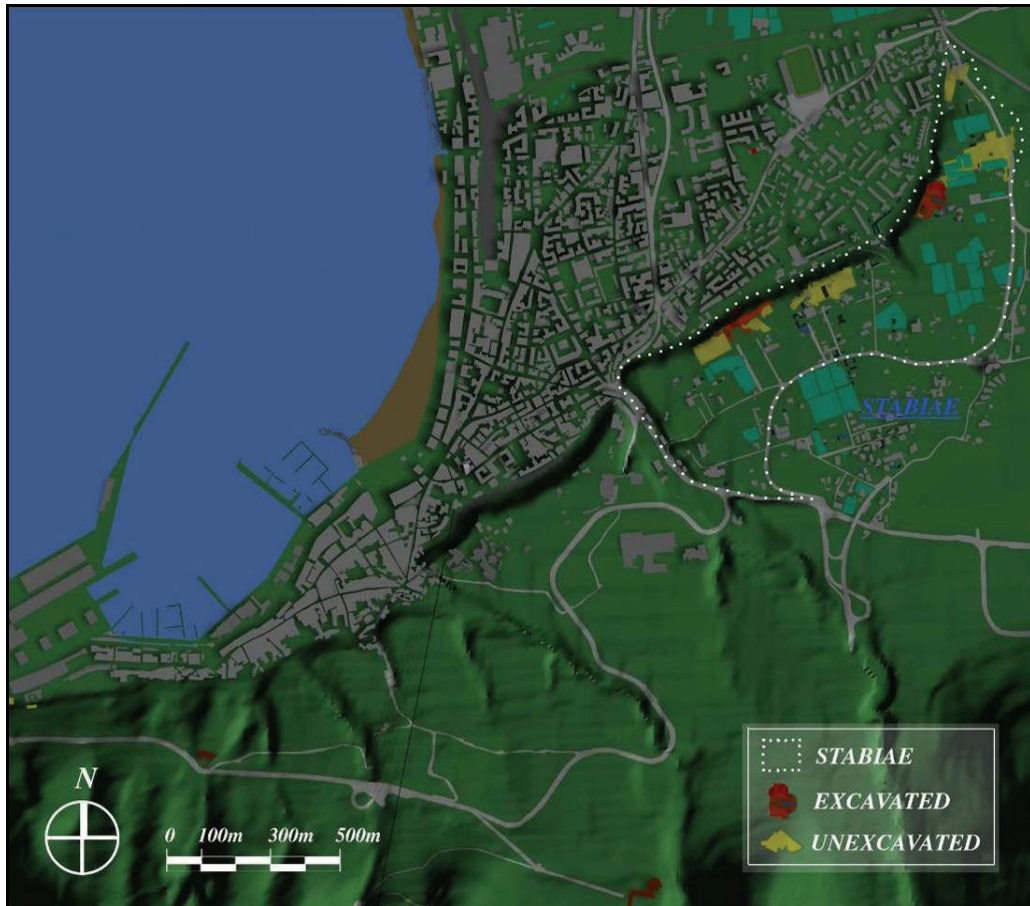


Fig. 49: Computer generated vicinity map showing the location of the Stabiae site and its villas, in relationship with the modern city of Castellammare and the landscape dominated by the seashore of the Stabian Bay and the foothill of Mount Faito [L.Varone]

The farm villas: “Villa Petrarò” and “Villa Carmiano”

The site of Ancient Stabiae was located in an area of the southeastern corner of the Bay of Naples, between the city of Pompeii and the foothill of the Lattari Mountains (Fig.49), renowned since antiquity for the quality of its volcanic soil and the richness of its farmland: it was called *Ager Stabiano*. Hundreds of farm villas and rural

settlements, focused on farming activities and on the production of wine and olive oil, were scattered trough this fertile plain (Fig.50); many of which in the vicinity of the Stabiae site, few hundred yards inland and away from the luxury sea-view estates built by the Roman elite on the cliff-edge of the Stabian plateau.

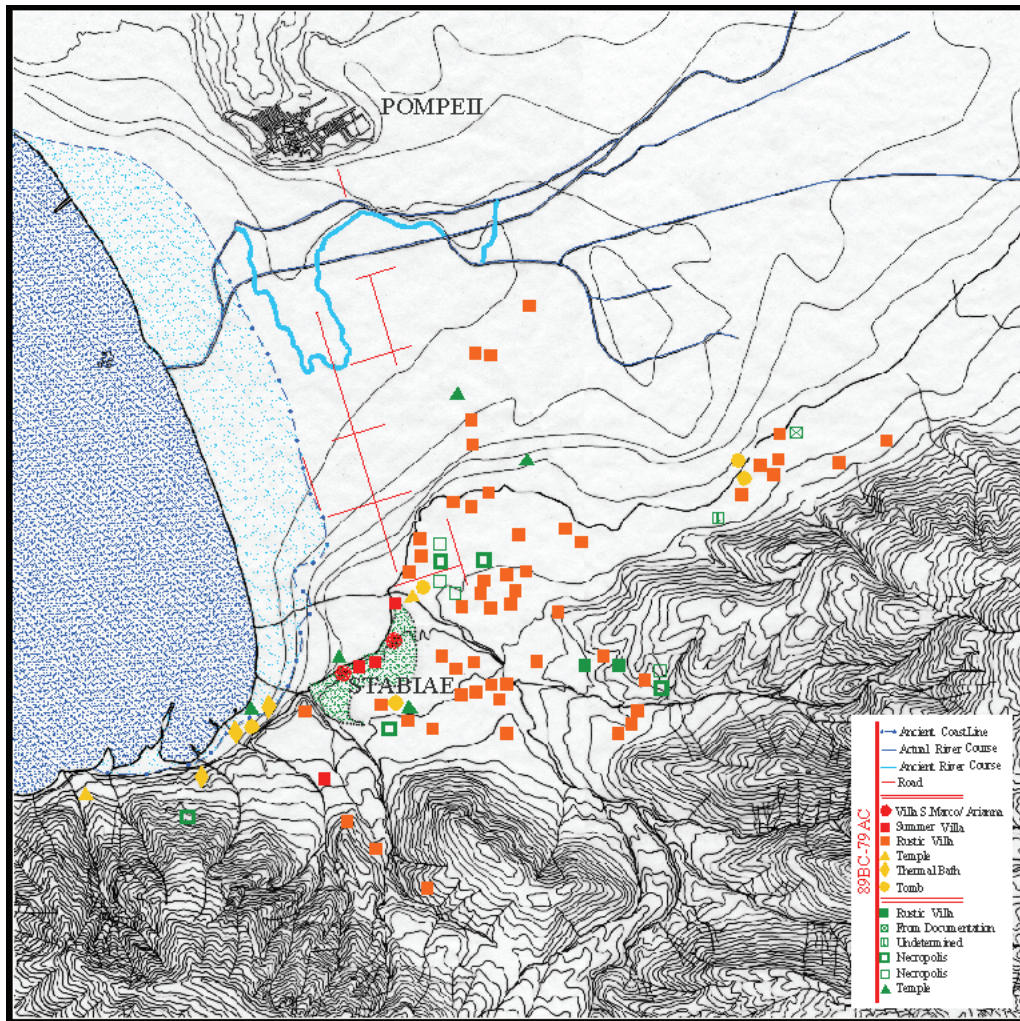


Fig. 50: Regional map showing the *Ager Stabiano* and the ancient shoreline of the Stabian Bay (blue dotted line) between Pompeii and Stabiae; along with indication of the many archaeological sites found in the area: farm villas, temples, small settlements and ranches represented by the different colored symbols on the map [L.Varone]

Furthermore, in the first century A.D. the example set by the Roman social elite with its luxury seaside estates and villas generated desire of emulation among middle and merchant classes. The luxury villas became imitated as a building model, creating the

so-called “trickle-down” effect (Fig.51); as result, many local businessmen and land owners started building their own town houses and countryside estates few hundreds away from their neighbor seaview villas, more modest in size and *luxuria* but still interesting in their architecture and decoration. Most of these smaller estates, especially the ones in the countryside, were dedicated to farming; nevertheless, they had features typical of the more sophisticated villas (like a thermal bath for example).



Fig. 51: The “trickle-down” effect: luxury estates become model for middle class town houses and countryside villas in the first century A.D.

In the last few centuries, and even more recently, many fortuitous discoveries have been made and archaeological findings surveyed. Among the most interesting and important ones, the discovery of two farm villas located southeast of Villa San Marco and the ancient town site: “Villa Petraro” and “Villa Carmiano” (Fig.52).

The *villa rustica* (farm or rural villa) at Petraro, discovered in 1957 in the Gargiulo farm, was another small villa of some 1000 sq. meters in total (including the open

courtyard space) with all the rooms, habitat and farm-related, arranged around the same courtyard (Fig.52, left).

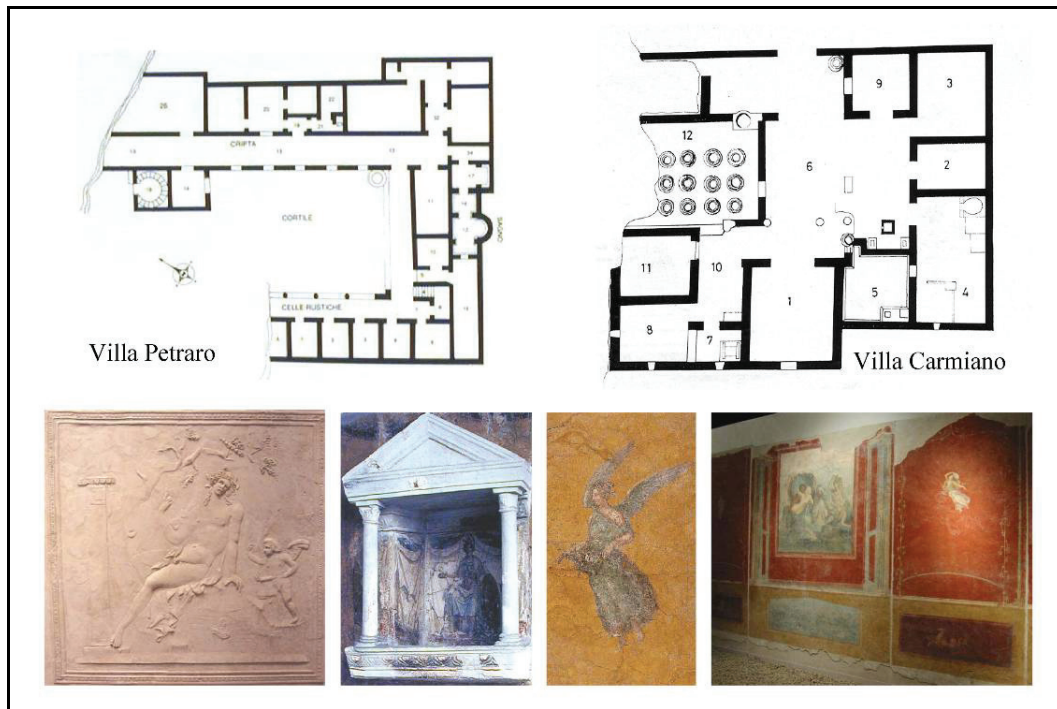


Fig. 52: Building plans and images showing the farm villas of Petrarò (left) and Carmiano (right), located in the hinterland only few hundreds yards southeast of Villa San Marco at Stabiae

On one side there was a crypto-portico, a somewhat luxurious feature to provide a cool space for escape from the summer heat. Several cubicles and apparent slave/workers quarters faced the same courtyard. Despite the mixed farm and residential character of the villa, on the east side of the courtyard was a fully equipped bath complex, with good stuccoes. The first phase of construction seems to have taken place in the Augustan age (c. 30 B.C. – A.D. 14), and the second was in course of completion when the eruption of A.D. 79 struck.

Several of the stuccoes show signs of incompleteness, as if the artisans were preparing to come back the next day.

The *villa rustica* of Carmiano is located about 1 km to the east of the major villas in the hinterland and is now reburied for safety after excavation in 1962. All of the major rooms, both those of farm production and those which were decorated and used for entertainment, were placed around the same central court (Fig.52, right). The decoration of the main triclinium is inspired by Dionysian imagery. The complex is datable to the last quarter of the first century B.C. The pictorial decoration is of the Flavian age (c. A.D. 69-79).

The Art of Ancient Stabiae: A “Museum” of Hellenistic-Roman Art

The decorative art of the Stabiae villas includes some of the finest of Roman fresco work, and a variety of other media. The frescoes represent a wide variety of styles: some in a “Baroque” Hellenistic style, probably imitating famous paintings of Greek masters; others in a unique, lyrical, classicizing style; others featuring vivid portraits,

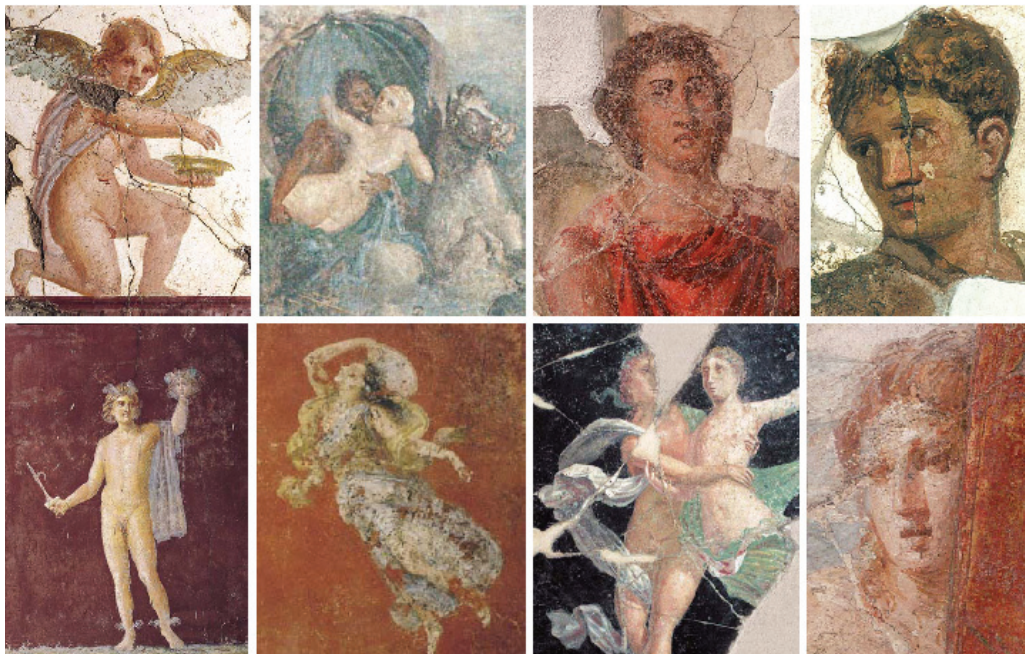


Fig. 53: The Stabian frescoes represent a unique and diversified gallery of Roman painting styles

architectural vistas or dreamy sacred fantasy landscapes (Fig.53). The Egyptianizing motifs on the obsidian cups found on site reflect a contemporary fascination with Egypt, after the defeat of Anthony and Cleopatra by Augustus.

The main period of the archaeological remains of Stabiae is that of the great seaside villas of the first century B.C. and A.D. (89 B.C. – 79 A.D.). The villas and their art represent the acme of the Roman villa culture, a culture of great wealth and power. The art and architecture which the owner of these villas commissioned to surround themselves and their highly political guests, with its numerous allusions to classical divinities and legends, was as much an assertion of their erudition, *dignitas* and sophistication (Fig.54) as were their libraries, their skilled cooks, their entertainers, their resident philosophers and poets, their exotic fishponds, and their jewels and silverware, which together created a fantasy of living in an *aureas aetas* (golden age).



Fig. 54: The owners of these villas commissioned the art and architecture to surround themselves and their highly political guests with numerous allusions to classical divinities and legends, almost as a statement of their erudition and social status

As it is to be expected for the décor of spacious seaside luxury villas, the frescoes of Stabiae are outstanding for their original subject matter, elaborate compositions, and high quality of execution. In many rooms, painted ceilings (they are among the few Roman painted ceilings that exist today) and floor mosaics survive together with the embellished walls, giving us a rare glimpse of the rich effects achieved in Roman interiors.

While the wall schemes conform to the tripartite, horizontal and vertical designs of the four styles common in Campania in the first century B.C. and A.D., in style, color choice, and light effects, the Stabian frescoes are distinctive. Red, black, white, and yellow predominate as color fields; unusual is the liberal use of expensive blues and greens within the fictive panels and for solitary figures.

The frescoes found in the luxury villas and the *villae rusticae* of Stabiae share a visual vocabulary with other Roman sites in Italy of the same period. However, they do manifest a peculiar local style and Stabiae assumes a place of great importance within the corpus of Roman paintings.

Conclusions

To summarize, Stabiae is the best place in the Mediterranean to recover the brilliant ambience and environment of the pivotal ancient social elite that created and ruled the Roman Empire in the first centuries B.C. and A.D. The great seaside villas of Stabiae are probably the best-preserved monuments of this type of architecture in the Roman world; and the only place where well-preserved villa complexes lie on an unencumbered site, and still maintain the sea-view and breezes for which they were created (Fig.55). At Stabiae therefore major excavations, as part of the overall plan to

create a modern archaeological park with enhanced visitor's facilities and articulated site displays, can uncover and properly present the entire environment of these remarkable monuments, while preserving this important and unique historical site for future generations to enjoy and learn from.

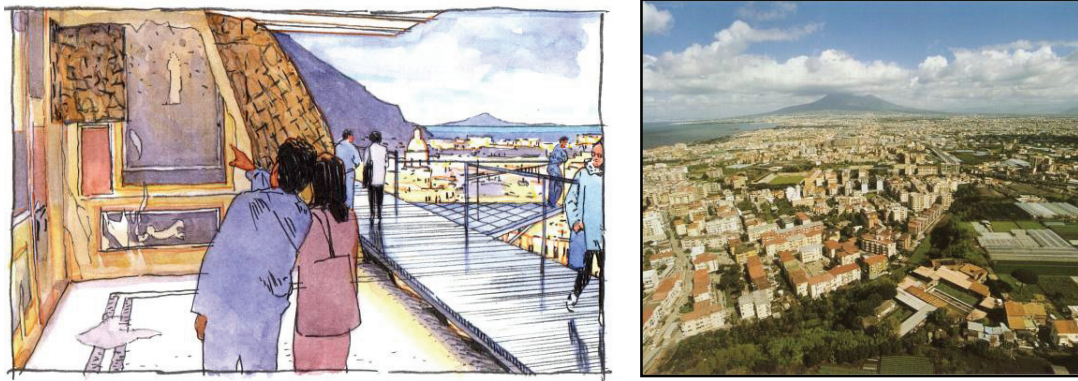


Fig. 55: Bird-eye view of Villas San Marco (right); vignette of proposed site and villa presentation as envisioned by the Master Plan (left, K.Crubs)

Chapter 3: The Modern City of Castellammare di Stabia

Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of Castellammare di Stabia today is its unique physical location. Castellammare sits at the center of one of the most scenic and picturesque areas of the Mediterranean; it can be described as the place where the south eastern corner of the Bay meets the Lattari Mountains (Fig.56 and 57).



Fig. 56: Panoramic view of Castellammare, Ancient Stabiae and the Bay of Naples with Pompeii and Mount Vesuvius in the background



Fig. 57: Satellite map showing location of Castellammare and the other sites in the Bay of Naples

In this convergence of the sea plain and the mountains of the Sorrento Peninsula is located a city rich with the layers of civilizations and potential for the future (Fig.58). Its strata of historical fabric are testament to the thousands of years of settlement by Greeks, Etruscans, Italics, and Romans; and are reminiscent of Arabic, French and Spanish dominations and influence.



Fig. 58: Panoramic view of the Stabian Bay and modern Castellammare, with the historical Bourbon shipyard in the foreground and Medieval Castle (on the right) giving the city its current name

The eruption of Mount Vesuvius destroyed the ancient city of Stabiae, along with Pompeii and Herculaneum; but differently from its more famous sister-cities, and because of its strategic location, Stabiae continued to be settled and developed in later centuries on the coast, in proximity of springs of mineral water, becoming an important port and center for commerce. Under the protectorate of the near-by city of Sorrentum and of the maritime trade republic of Amalfi, the city significantly grew during medieval times; a castle was built on the hillside dominating the Stabian Bay, to protect the population from the attacks of the Saracens and giving the city its modern name (Fig.59). In fact, Castellammare literally means: “Caste-on-the Sea;” it features two castles on the water, the earlier is an ancient Roman fortress (still standing today) built on a small island at the mouth of the Sarno river to protect the entry to the Pompeii lagoon. The town eventually became a fortified city, to defend itself from the always-growing attacks coming from the sea; and its economy was mainly based on fishing and trade.



Fig. 59: Historical images showing views of Castellammare through the centuries: the medieval castle on the hillside (left), the first engraved image of the city (center) and the Bourbon Royal Summer Palace (right)

In the following centuries, Castellammare became a popular seaside and mountain resort, thanks to the Bourbon dynasty that ruled Southern Italy and Naples in the eighteenth century. The Bourbon kings choose Castellammare as their summer retreat and residence, once again in history after the Roman Elite; here they built a summer royal palace on the hillside, the Reggia di Quisisana. The Bourbons brought many significant improvements to the city of Castellammare; building, among many other things, a royal theater, a spa (to exploit the plethora of mineral waters and thermal springs) and an important shipyard, where many battle ships of the Bourbon royal fleet were built. This world famous shipyard, which has become a historical city landmark, is still today operational and represents a prominent industry and source of jobs for the area. The presence of the Bourbon kings and the royal palace brought to Castellammare many dignitaries from all over Europe and overseas; the city became location of eighteen foreign consulates to the Bourbon kingdom (including the consulate of the United States). Many elegant villas were built on the hillside, around the palace and scattered along the foothill of Mount Faito; most of them are now privately own, but they still represent an important cultural and historical asset for the city. As result, Castellammare became a very active social and cultural center, especially between the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the

twentieth; as well as a popular resort, offering several beach retreats and spas along the coast, access to trails and natural areas of Mount Faito (Fig.60) which reaches 1,100 meters above sea level.



Fig. 60: Images of Castellammare today: the hillside villas, spas, seaside and mountain resorts

But after World War II, Castellammare suffered the post-war industrialization; which significantly altered its natural identity of resort town. Industries took-over the economy of the city, and its infrastructures occupied the most valuable land in town: the waterfront. In addition, pollution of the Bay, urban sprawl and the general neglect of recent years have had a negative impact on the amenities and on its economy.

Castellammare di Stabia today is a modern seaport and commercial town of approximately 65,000 people, gateway to the Sorrento-Amalfi Coast; it is strategically positioned and very well connected to the regional transit system (Fig.61). One can catch a ferry or hydrofoil and reach the islands of Capri or Ischia only one hour!

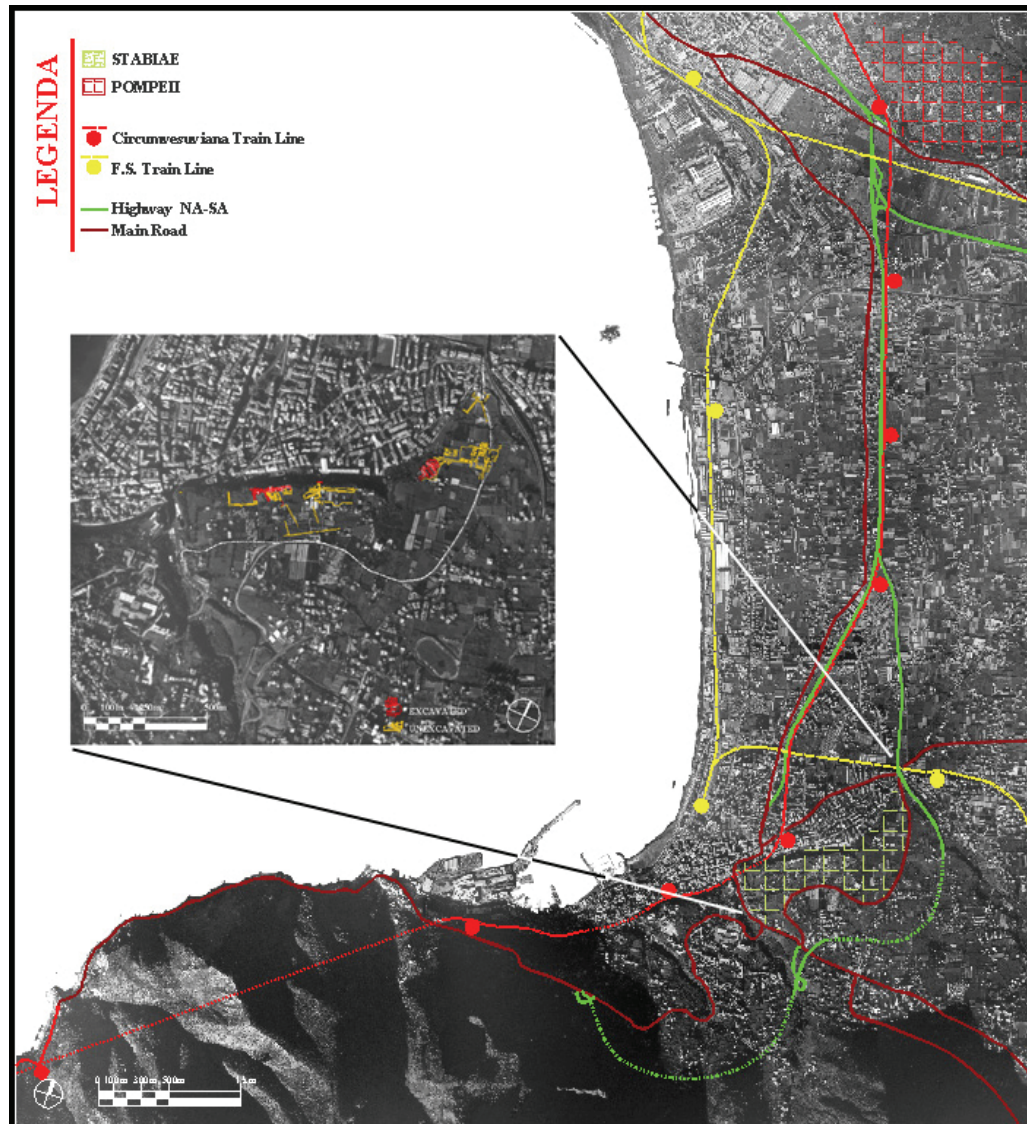


Fig. 61: Aerial image of Castellammare, showing location of Stabiae and Pompeii archaeological sites and the transportation network: main roads, highways, train lines and stations

The position of the city at the base of the mountains (Fig.62 and 63) is also the source of naturally occurring springs of mineral and curative waters, for a total of twenty-eight, which have given notoriety to the modern city and represent a hydro-geological wonder in Europe. Since ancient times, Stabiae was well regarded for its pleasant Mediterranean climate and for its mineral waters, a feature developed and exploited also by the Bourbon kings. Today Castellammare is also known as “The City of the

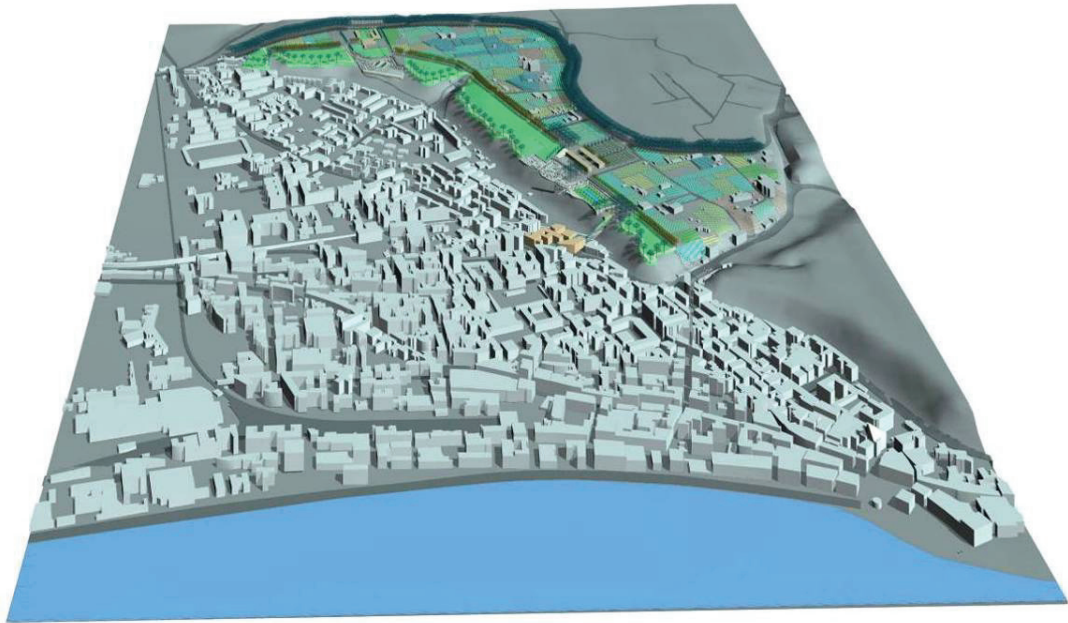


Fig. 62: Computer 3D model of downtown Castellammare, showing the main urban and natural features of the city and the proposed archaeological park [T.Leader, L.Varone]



Fig. 63: Computer 3D map of Castellammare, with location of Roman villas and archaeological site

waters;” various "chalets" or cafes along the Lungomare of the city offer a taste of the mineral waters, and a place to sit and watch harbor activity or the beautiful sunsets over the Bay of Naples. The city also boasts several spas in operation today, the oldest located along the waterfront with two newer locations on the hillside overlooking the city and adjacent to the archaeological site. The largest spa complex, "The New Stabian Baths," is also a year round facility offering massage therapy and physical regimens to promote health (Fig.64).

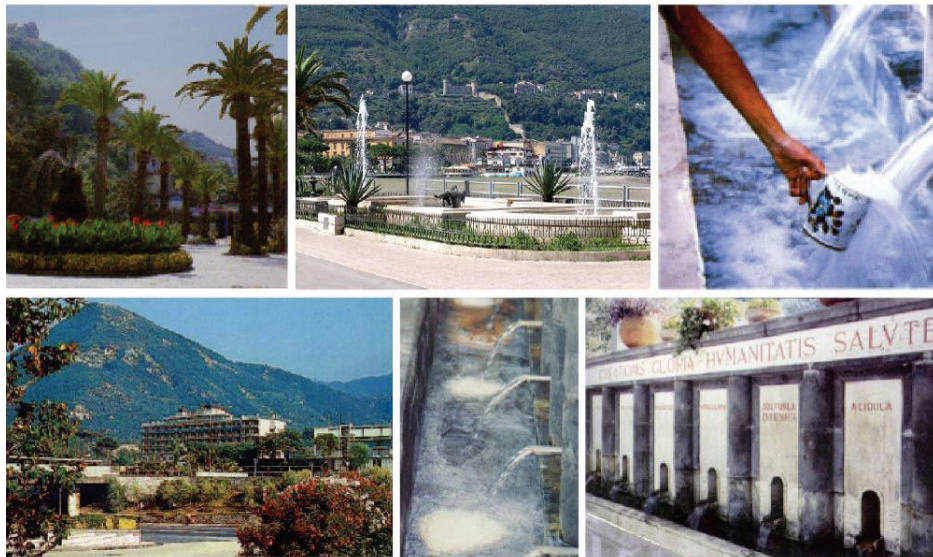


Fig. 64: Images of Castellammare today: the mineral spring waters, thermal spas and parks

The historical center of the city is a medieval fabric of tight streets and large palazzi. Some of the fabric was altered in the following centuries but remains largely intact (Fig.66). Its physical structure is described as a series of streets running parallel to the seafront and a group of four main streets diverging from a central point at the base of Monte Faito. Like many streets in the Medieval and Renaissance quarters, these streets were frequently built above small streams that run down from Monte Faito to the seafront.

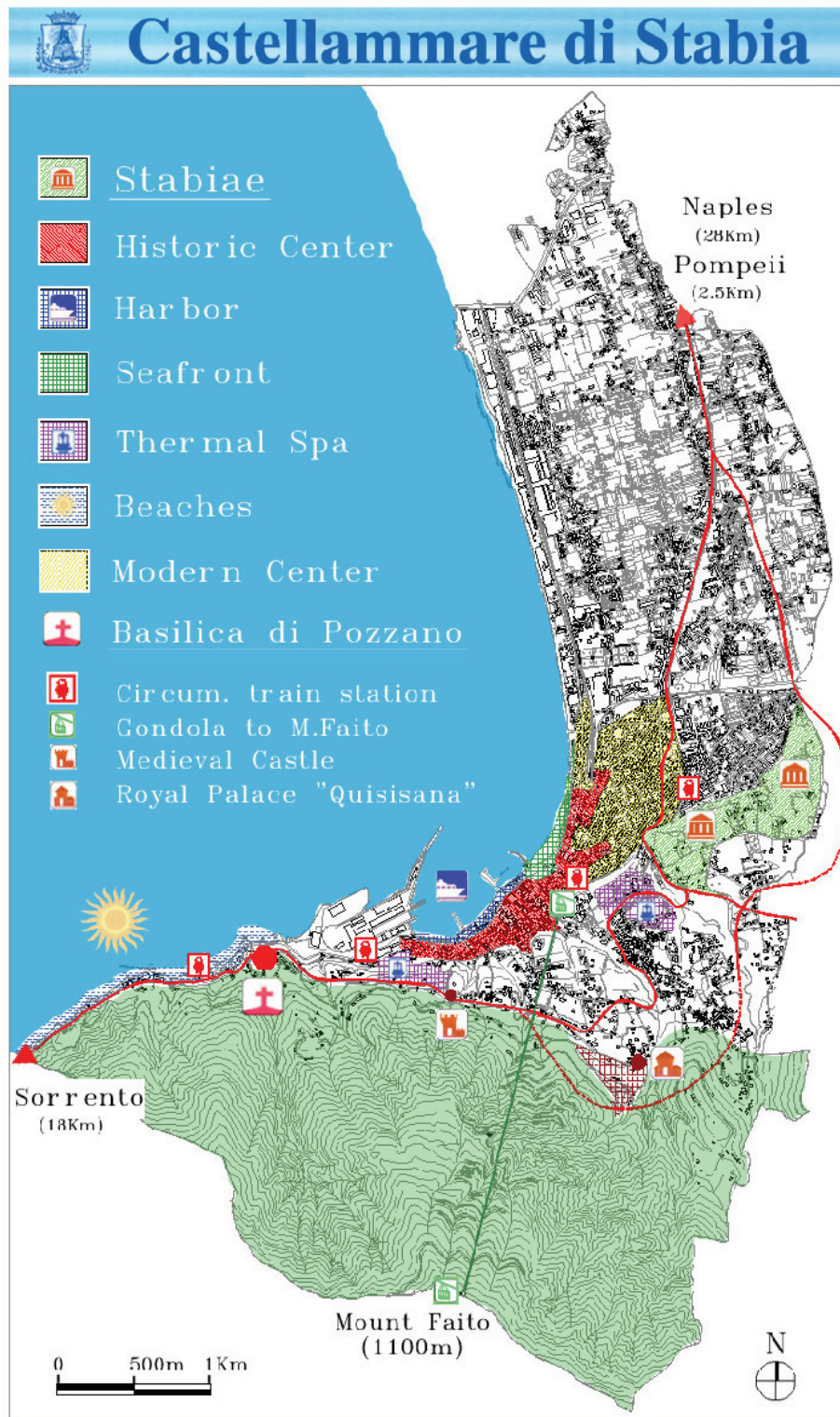


Fig. 65: City map of Castellammare showing its amenities and main attractions

Their presence provides the link from the Lungomare (seafront) up the various valleys and to settlements on the hillside, overlooking the city and Bay. Many blocks in the historic center were initially built with large gardens in their centers, but gradually over the centuries these gardens have given way to new constructions and infill, leaving today a dense fabric of buildings (Fig.67).

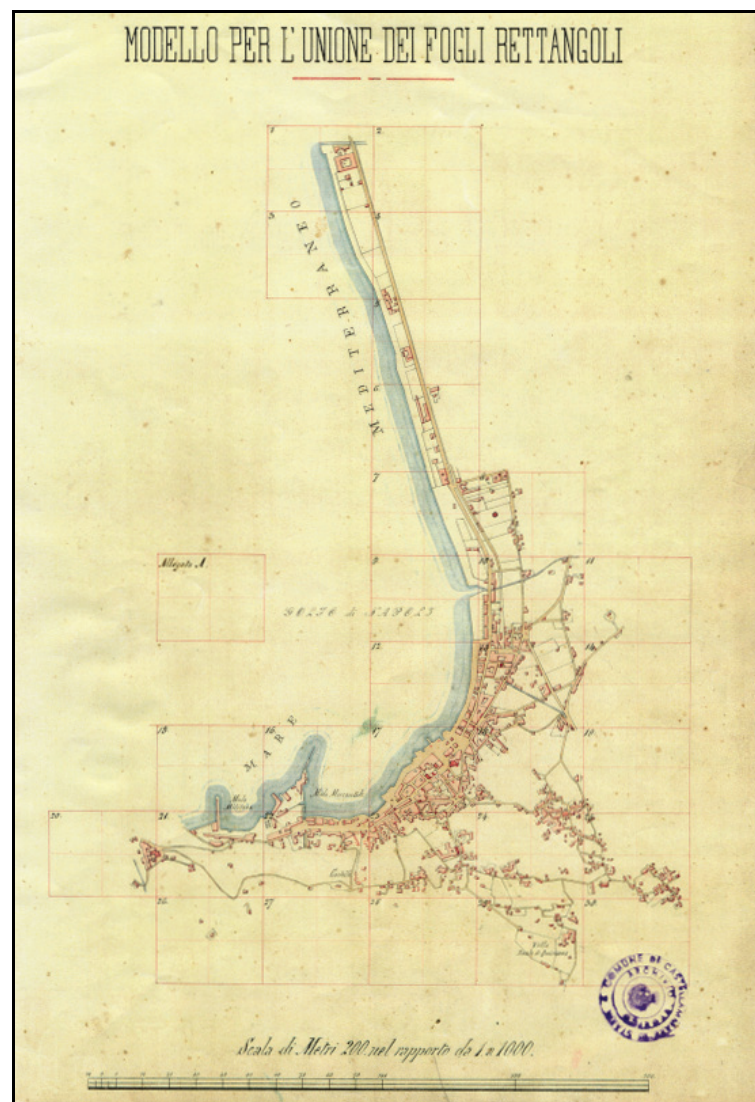


Fig. 66: Historical map of Castellammare drawn by Eng. Fantacchiotti in 1875, showing the original medieval core in the center, the hillside settlements, and the progressive urban expansion along the seafront and towards north



Fig. 67: Study diagram of Castellammare, showing the tight urban fabric of the medieval and historical centers compressed between seafront and hillside



Fig. 68: Study diagram of downtown Castellammare, showing the network of historical streets and piazzas along the seafront and their relationship with the landscape

The city also engages the waterfront with a network of piazze strung along the line of the lungomare (Fig.68). In key locations, such as the Piazza del Duomo or the Piazza Monumento, several key streets converge and the intensity of the city's relationship with the Bay of Naples, its visual relationship with the hillside and Mount Faito, all come into startling view. In addition to the monuments of the interesting historic center (Fig.70), Castellammare also boasts a very active downtown shopping district, a quite lively seafront and old marina animated by restaurants and bars. It has probably the largest volcanic beach in the entire Mediterranean (Fig.69). Later stages of settlement of the city find themselves along the line of roads built in ancient times and leading to other parts of the empire; or along more recently built rail lines and main roads (Fig.71).

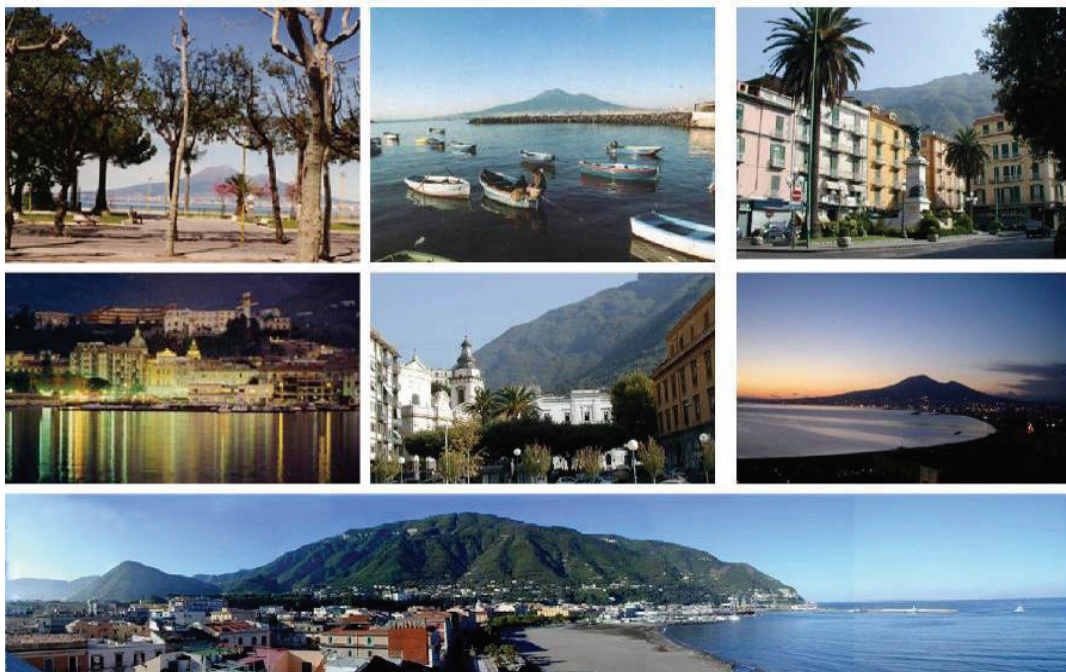


Fig. 69: Images of Castellammare today: the seafront, marina, and alive downtown



Fig. 70: Images of historic Castellammare: the medieval center and its monuments

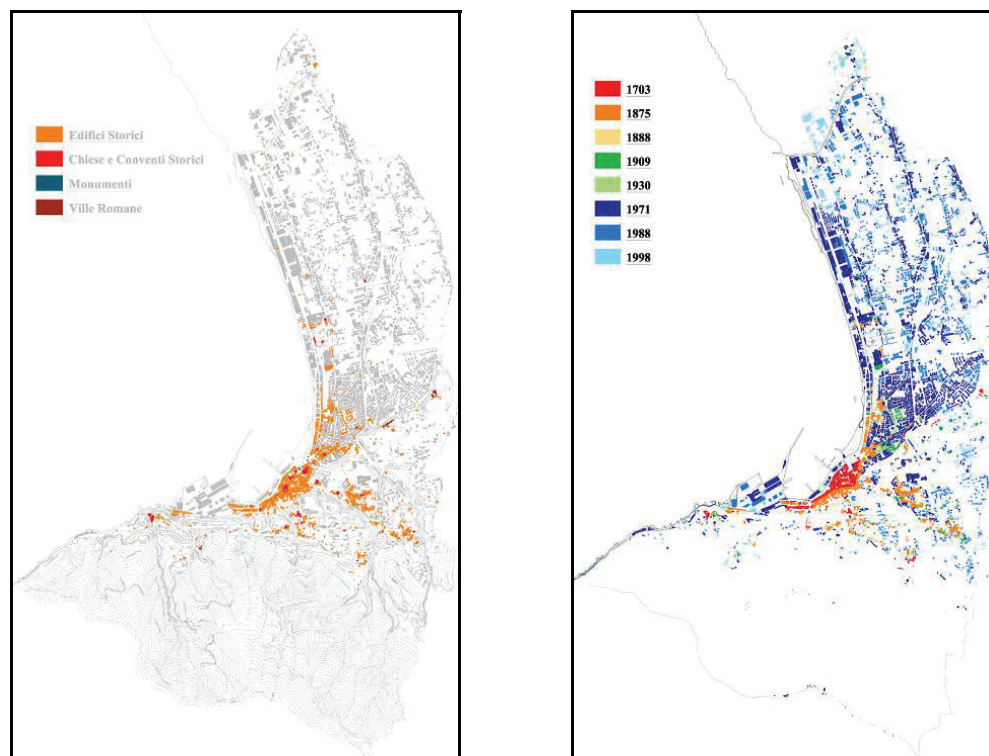


Fig. 71: City map diagrams showing the historical development of Castellammare through the centuries: the consistency and nature of the historical fabric (left) and the historical growth by year (right)

The physical boundaries of the urbanized area of Castellamare today are defined by the cliff of the Varano Hill to the south and southeast, the Bay to the west, and the F.F.S.S. State rail line to the north (Fig.72). Outside of these boundaries is a mix of small industrial concerns and suburban settlements, on the plain towards Torre del

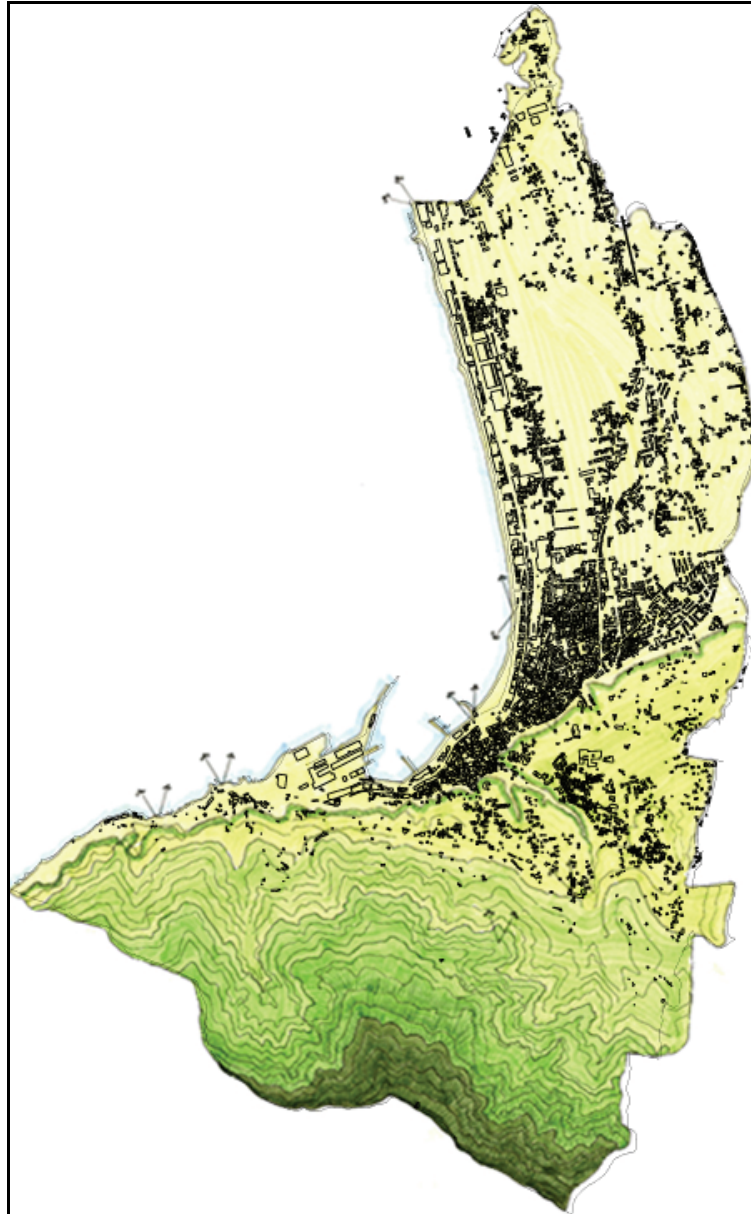


Fig. 72: Analysis city map showing landscape versus urban fabric, and how this latter has grown influenced by natural constraints and following more recent man-made barriers or infrastructures

Greco and Ercolano (to the north); and small settlements, villas and farms up the hillside towards the foothill of Monte Faito (to the south).

The post-World War II decades resulted in a less satisfying urban fabric of slab apartment buildings (Fig.73), and in a general lack of urban cohesion. Buildings with no particular orientation to the street have characterized recent expansions of the city, in contrast with earlier periods. In spite of those developments, the city retains a vibrant sense of urbanity and a culture of urban living that seems to transcend the anti-urban planning, sprawl and poor design of recent decades. Its compact organization, defined by natural and man-made elements, has helped to retain a coherent fabric, making the city easily walkable.



Fig. 73: View of modern Castellammare, dominated by slab apartment buildings lacking cohesion

The most important trace of the ancients that can be experienced today are the remains of the first century A.D. Roman villas, Villa San Marco and Villa Arianna, on the hillside of Varano, overlooking the modern city. The hillside of Varano and its archaeological remains at ancient Stabiae are one key to the transformation of the city from an industrial economy to one with a balance of commerce and cultural tourism. Such a transformation is the vehicle driving the master plan for the archaeological park and the Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” project described later in this document.

The region of Campania alone accounts for billions in tourism annually; the near-by sites of Herculaneum, Pompeii and the Sorrento-Amalfi Coast are some of the largest tourist attractions in Italy. Currently, there is little reason for anyone visiting those locations to stop and pay a visit to Castellammare di Stabia. But with proper planning and improvements, the site of Ancient Stabiae could become an important asset to the life and economy of modern Castellammare; instead of being an “historical curiosity.”

After a dramatic economical recession and many years of inactivity, the city administration is finally taking a positive step forwards; and is ready to start working towards the recovery of Castellammare’s identity of tourist resort and of its true cultural spirit. The city is developing new urban strategies and plans with the hope of revitalizing its once thriving seafront and to take advantage of its unique position in the very heart of the Bay of Naples.

Preliminary plans and ideas brought forward by the RAS Master Plan call for a new train station at the foot of the hill (Piazza “Libero D’Orsi), connections with the near-by spas and city amenities, cleaning up and enhancing the seafront, implementation of the spa facilities and parks, restoring the summer Bourbon palace on the hillside, a linear hillside system of urban parks, a network of museums and local markets, revitalizing the Medieval city center, several urban infill and renewal projects, reactivating the network of urban piazzas, inter-modal transportation projects, improvement of its beachside resorts, Agritourism and access to hiking trails to the Sorrento-Amalfi Peninsula, and completing the new large pleasure harbor which will boast new tourist developments along the seafront.

Finally, also the archaeological site and proposed park have been included in the city and regional master planning.

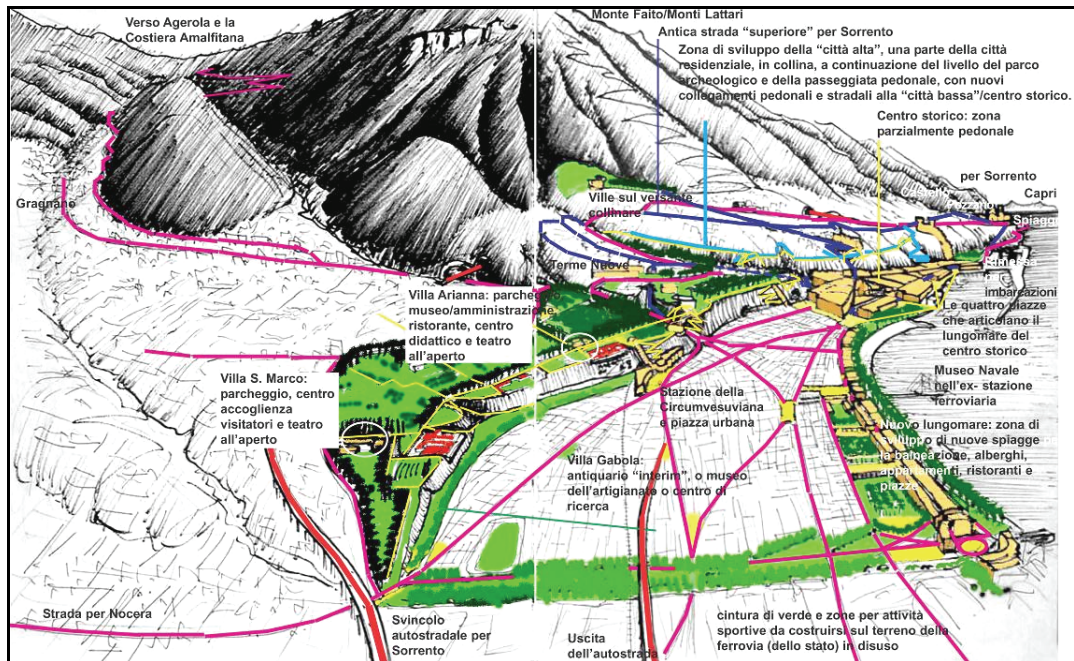


Fig. 74: Bird-eye-view diagram showing potentials for a cultural and tourist network of amenities, with the new proposed archaeological park acting as its pivotal element; this integrated system will revitalize Castellammare and help bringing back its true nature of resort [T.Howe]

The projects illustrated in this document, and in fact all of the following developments and urban studies undertaken by the University of Maryland teams as part of the RAS endeavor (described in the following chapters), represent attempts to recast the future of Castellammare di Stabia and to see the possibilities in the existing history, amenities, and city fabric of the place (Fig.74).

Chapter 4: The Master Plan for the Archaeological Park at Ancient Stabiae

The Site Today and the Scope of the Master Plan

The archaeological site is strategically located on a bluff overlooking the modern city, with outstanding views of the Bay of Naples and the gulf islands. It is surrounded by the modern city on the north side and by agricultural landscape at the south, towards the foot of Mount Faito (Fig.75). This area holds perhaps some of the most important treasures of the ancient world, yet it is still largely unknown in comparison with the famous excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum.

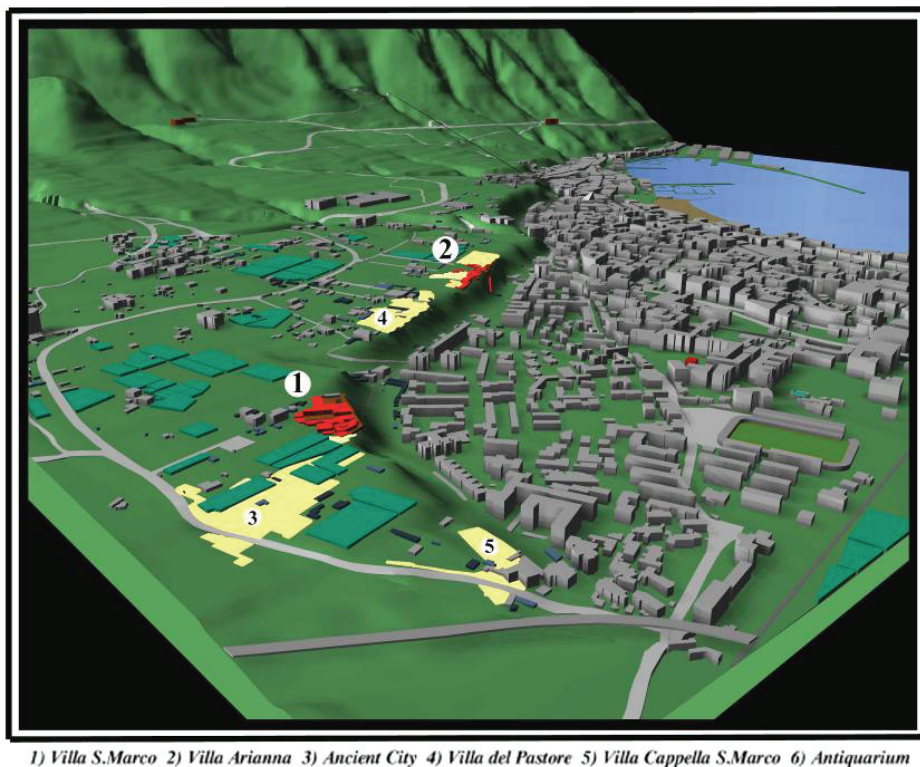


Fig. 75: 3D computer model of the Stabiae site, showing location of the ancient villas and town (excavated in red, buried in yellow) built along the edge of the cliff, overlooking the modern city of Castellammare and the Bay of Naples [L.Varone]

Several factors have contributed to this relative obscurity. First, the archaeological site, although adjacent to the modern downtown, is inaccessible from the center of Castellammare (because of the steep topography and the lack of direct connections and access). Instead, it must be approached in a roundabout fashion (Fig.76) either by car, bus or public transportation (from the countryside at higher elevation above the city). Secondly, the area is physically poorly defined and has no presence in the landscape. Finally, the visitor's experience is poor and without any sense of place, direction; made even more uncomfortable by the lack of welcome services.



Fig. 76: Site diagram map (left) showing location of the two visitable villas and the only current access at the rear of site from Via Passeggiata Archeologica; aerial view of the site and steep cliff facing the modern city below (right)

The objective of the Master Plan is to address the potentials of the park and how it could become the central feature to the city and realize its important role in the study and understanding of Roman ancient sites. The plan focuses on how to provide direct access to the site from the city and the region (especially from the existing railroad station); and on how to enhance automobile access to the park (from local roads and regional highways), while protecting the natural environment and the surrounding

landscape. The study focuses on location of accesses to the park, visitor circulation, internal site functional organization and programming, and preservation's of the landscape; with an urban design approach and for the integration of the site and future park within the city (Fig.77), including access by pedestrians, auto, and train (connected with the regional transit system).



Fig. 77: Aerial view of the proposed archaeological park integrated with the urban fabric [T.Leader]

The Master Plan also addresses current and future needs of the archaeological site and park (like new visitor's facilities, administration and laboratory/storage buildings, etc.) to accommodate the expansion of the excavations and the associated on-site activities. Including growing visitor's needs and services, parking, design of displays, and site presentation (Fig.78).

Among the activities envisioned and planned:

- Continuous scientific studies (archeological, geomorphologic, cartographic, hydrologic, paleo-agricultural, geological, landscaping, etc.);
- Advanced conservation (structures, decorations, landscape);
- Excavation of three (or more) large villas, and of the ancient city;
- Establishment of an on-site roofing lab and ongoing experiments on temporary and permanent roofing systems for archaeological sites;
- Didactic activities and displays, including: Visitor's Center (with temporary display and site orientation), Museum of the Villa Culture in the Bay of Naples, Museum of the Ancient Roman Agriculture;

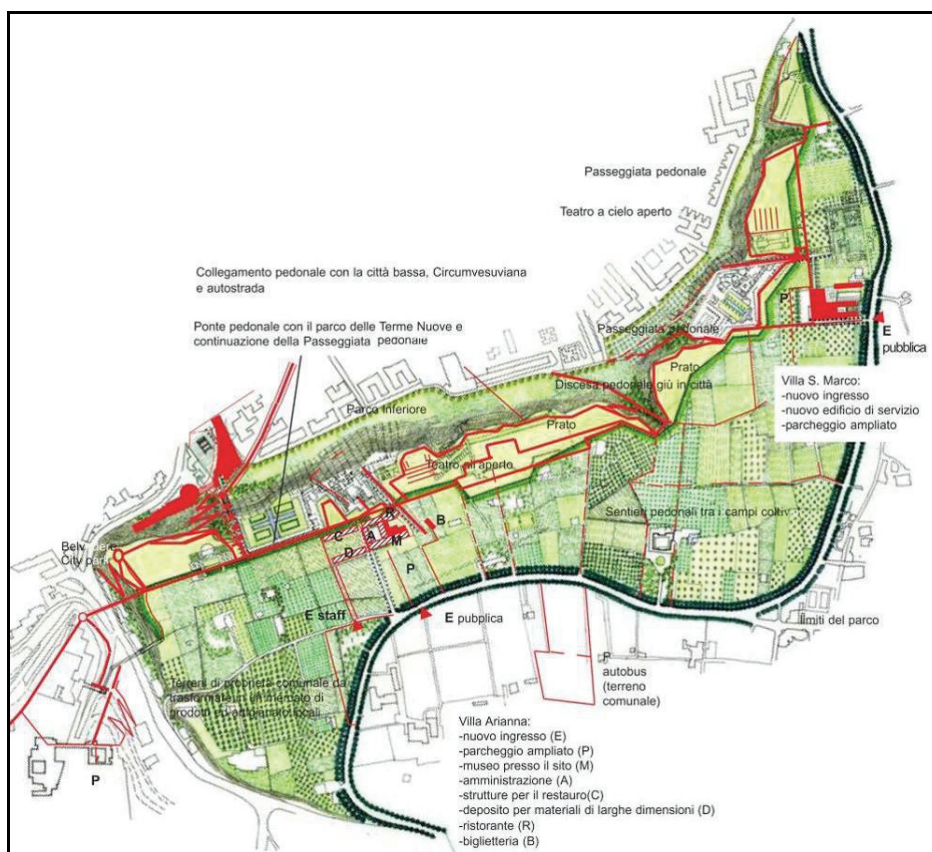


Fig. 78: Master Plan of the archaeological site with indication of program and circulation

- Outdoor panoramic theaters (to be used for classical music concerts, opera, plays and other performances);
- International residential study & research center for foreign universities;
- Associated urban projects and studies (at local and regional scales).

The park also aims to promote Archeo-Tourism as a source of economical development. The area is in fact a tourist Mecca thanks to the near-by Sorrento-Amalfi Coast sea-resorts, and the archaeological treasures of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Publicity resulting from the planning efforts will hopefully contribute to generating further interest and encouraging tourism to Stabiae; promoting the establishment of hotels, restaurants, and tourist-related services in the city.

Main Goal: Recovering the Total Environment of the Roman Elite.

Stabiae is the best place in the Mediterranean to recover the brilliant ambience and environment of the pivotal ancient social elite that created and ruled the Roman Empire in the first centuries B.C. and A.D.

The great seaside villas at Stabiae are probably the best-preserved monuments of this type of architecture in the Roman world; testament to a unique political and social strategy made of power display, art, architecture and engagement of the landscape.

Since the beginning of this project, Archaeology has been integrated with Architecture and Urban Design; with the belief that improved connections with the other near-by Roman sites of the Vesuvian region (only 3 miles divide Stabiae from Pompeii) will help creating a cultural network offering visitors and tourists a unique Cultural Panorama of Roman Life and Society 2000 years ago in the Bay of Naples:

the famous bustling small port towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum, the “rustic” working farm villas at Boscoreale, Poppea’s Villa at Oplontis, and the high-rent district of luxury seaside villas of the social elite at Stabiae (Fig.79).



Fig. 79: Pompeii, Herculaneum, Boscoreale, and Stabiae will be able to present, within only few miles of distance, a complete panorama of all classes and aspects of the Roman society of 2000 years ago

A Contemplative Visit to Stabiae: Roman Aristocratic Life in Context

A visit to the future archaeological park at Stabiae will be entirely different from the visit to the town sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Pompeii and Herculaneum represent small, bustling provincial port towns, crowded with streets, baths, markets, *fora*, temples, townhouses and shops...and some 2.5 million modern visitors a year! Tourists, overwhelmed and usually tired after few hours, tend to return as soon as possible to their hotels (usually in Naples, Sorrento or Rome). At Stabiae by contrast, one can be immersed in the total ambience of these great villas; with their frescoed walls, gardens and views still preserved. Differently from Pompei and Herculaneum - where the archeological sites are encroached by crowded modern cities - here at Stabiae the site still features the incredible panoramic views of the Bay that were among the main *rason d'être* of its villas.



Fig. 80: The visit at Stabiae will be quite and focused; one where visitors can feel immersed in the total ambience of these great villas, with their frescoed walls, gardens and views still preserved

Furthermore, Stabiae was like a Roman “Riviera,” a series of enormous villas owned by the social elite not just from Campania, but from Rome itself; the preserve exclusively of those who had their hands on the reins of power. The social machinery

of these villas was very elaborate and fascinating, and very different from the mansions of any other period in history. Even with 150,000/200,000 visitors a year, the archaeological park of Stabiae will remain a quiet, breezy cliff-edge promenade with a breathtaking panorama of the Bay of Naples, a place for a contemplative focused visit, allowing visitors to become fully immersed in the ambience of the villas of the powerful Roman social elite (Fig.80).

The Archaeological Park in the Modern Urban Fabric: Archaeology as Key to Cultural and Economic Revitalization.

The Archaeological Park will not exist in isolation from the city of Castellammare and the other modern Vesuvian cities, but in fact it will be the critical link in a series of urban nodes and regional interventions that could reshape and revitalize the entire area; with a focus on tourism and culture, key-factors for economical, social, and cultural revival.

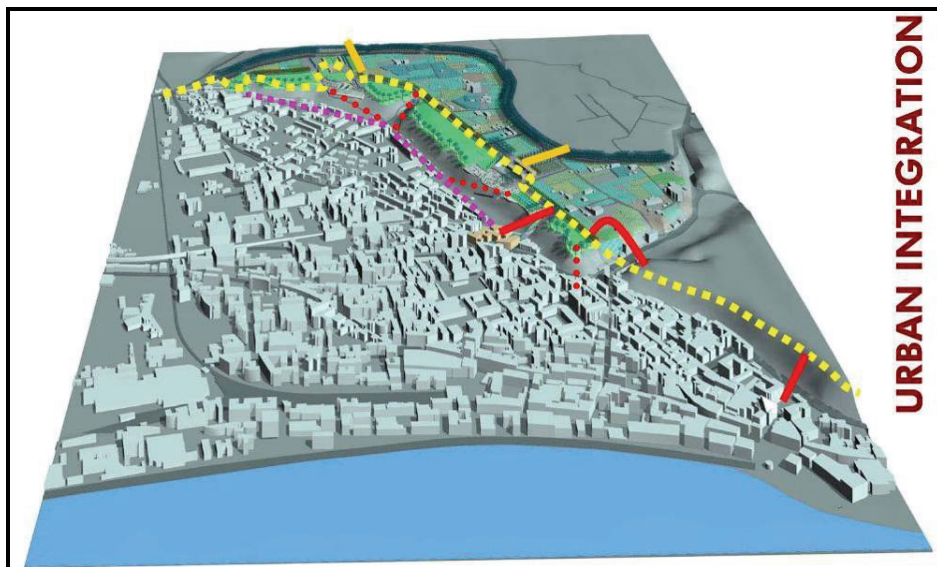


Fig. 81: The archaeological park will be an integrated feature of modern Castellammare, featuring several access routes and connections with the city and other attractions

At city level, the park would be connected with the other attractions of the modern city of Castellammare; functioning as a major urban park with amenities and services for visitors and citizen as well (restaurants, caf  s, farm market, belvederes, piazzas, gardens, outdoor theaters, etc.). The vision behind this approach is one of an archeological park fully integrated with these resources; becoming a powerful agent for the rebirth of modern Castellammare (Fig. 81 and 82).

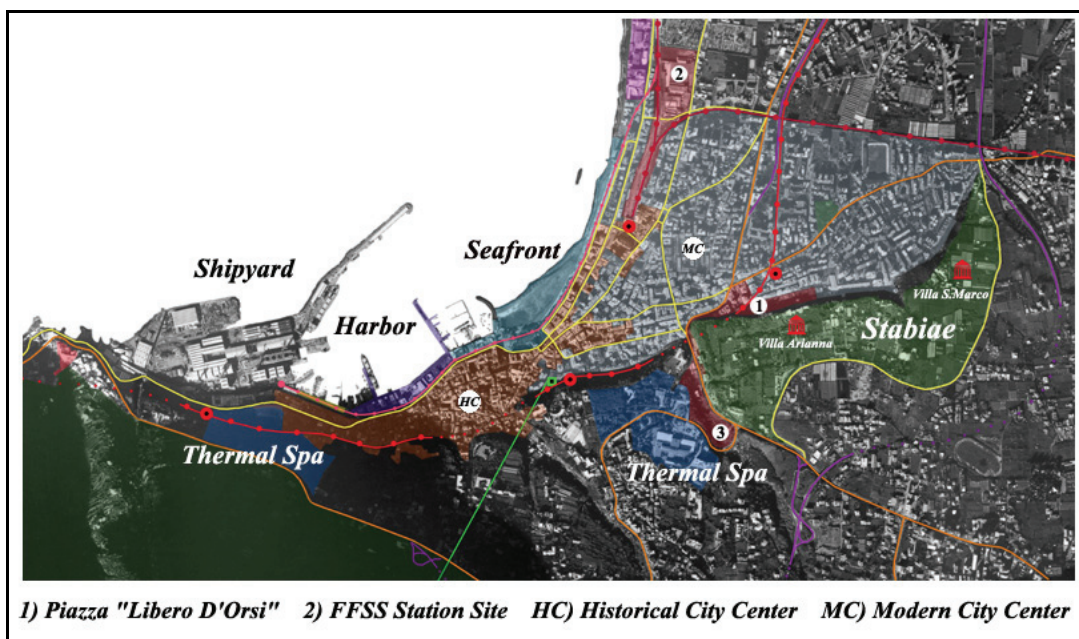


Fig. 82: Aerial diagram showing the network of cultural attractions and amenities in Castellammare.

The park at Stabiae will represent the “jewel in the crown” of Castellammare, key to other developments, several of which already started to be implemented at this time:

- the new yacht harbor and marina, with waterfront hotels and restaurants;
- urban commuter rails and infill projects;
- a series of linked urban parks and greenbelt;
- development of museums and markets of local culture;

- access to hiking and “Agri-tourism” opportunities on the mountains of the Amalfi-Sorrento peninsula;
- development of Castellammare’s traditional twenty-eight thermal springs and spas.

The archaeological park will succeed only if it will become an integral, living part of the city; I would say, almost like an organ in a living organism, where the “blood” (represented by the movement of people from, to and within the site) constantly flows between the organs (urban amenities) and the organism (the city as a whole).

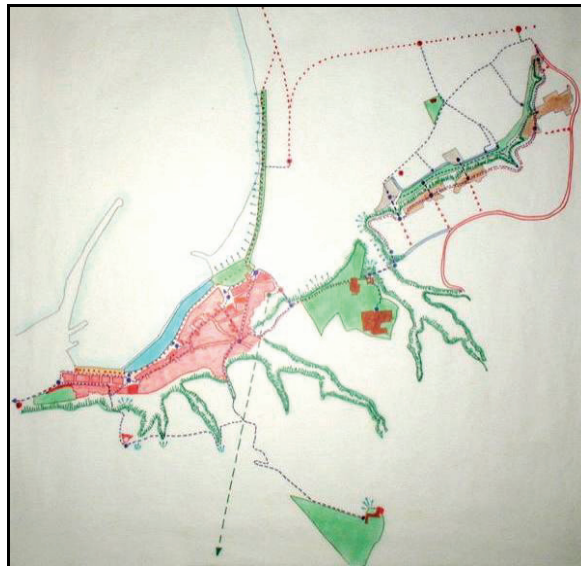


Fig. 83: Analysis city diagram, showing the potential one-day tourist circuit in Castellammare

The park can become a pivotal component of Castellammare’s “network of amenities” (Fig.82), represented by the system of cultural attractions and natural resources offered by the city. These amenities can be integrated and organized so that a potential visitor and tourists can come to Stabiae from Pompei in seven minutes; and spend one or more days visiting not only the Roman Villas, but also enjoying the many tourist attractions that the modern city will be able to offer (Fig.83).

The Design Investigation Process

Started with a comprehensive analysis at regional level (Fig.84), the investigation then moved to city scale - to study and better understand how the city works; finally, it zoomed-in and addressed the archeological site in greater details.

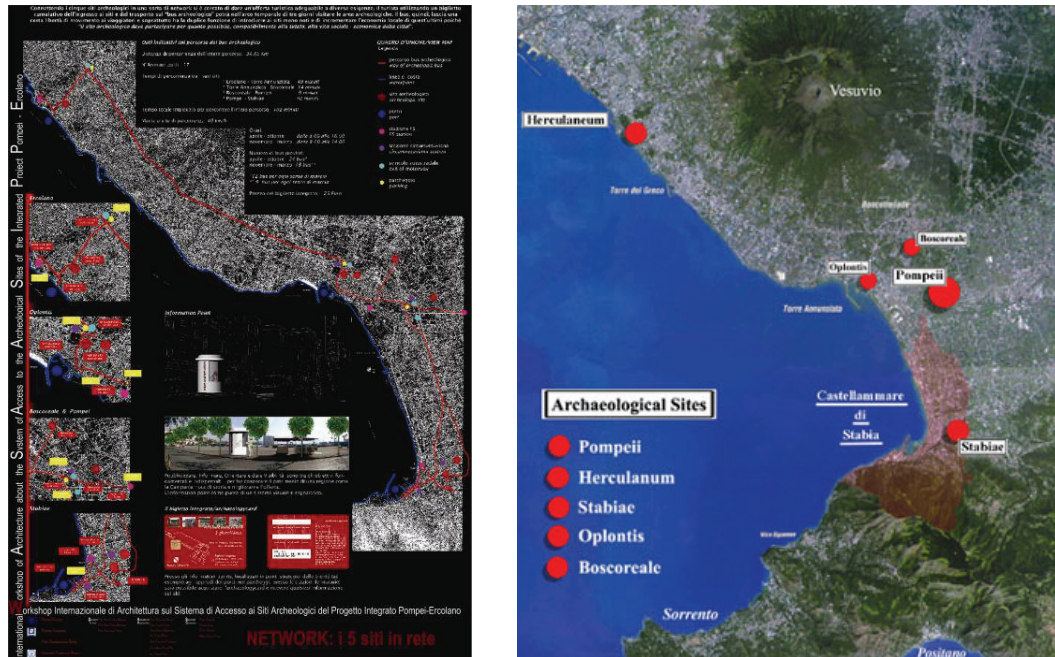


Fig. 84: Analysis drawings at regional scale, showing the network and potential connections between the archaeological sites of the Vesuvian region and the proposed park at Stabiae

In fact, as Leon Krier once told me and suggested during a design critique he gave me at studio, the challenge of the archaeological site should be addressed by making a step backwards, and starting the investigation at a larger urban scale. The first step would be the understanding of the main urbanistic issues, moving from regional to urban scale; and eventually challenging how the entire city works and looking at ways of improving its functionality, while finding the most appropriate solution for the organization of the archaeological site and its integration with the surrounding urban fabric. Although quite intimidating at that time, the subsequent developments

of the Master Plan project and the circumstances associated with the implementation of the much larger Restoring Ancient Stabiae endeavor (in particular with respect to the urban elements), have confirmed those visionary words pronounced by Leon Krier; and led to the development of the currently very strong urbanistic strategy and approach by the RAS design team; as well as of a deeper urban revitalization conscience within the local and regional administrations.

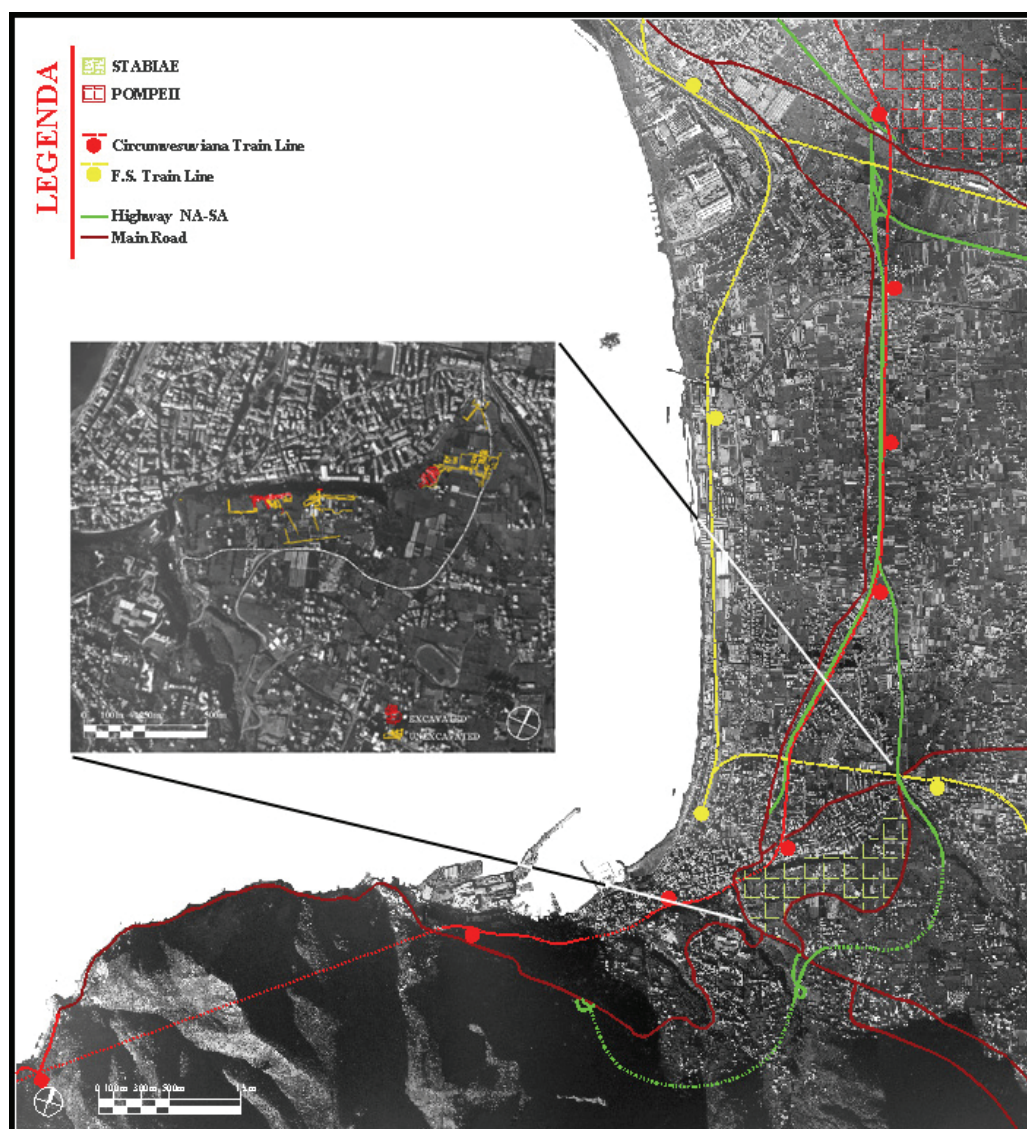


Fig. 85: Aerial image of Castellammare, with diagrams showing location of Stabiae and Pompeii and the transportation network: main roads, highways, train lines and stations

Many analysis drawings and diagram studies were produced as part of this design investigation; at regional, urban, and site scale. Some examples of these diagrams and maps are illustrated in this chapter, as well as in the previous one dedicated to the city of Castellammare (and in other sections of the present document). The first studies were focused on understanding the location and role of the Stabiae archaeological site with respect to the geography of the Bay of Naples, the natural landscape, and - above all - to the other near-by archaeological sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum to the north, and of Oplontis and Boscoreale at the foothill of Mount Vesuvius. Special attention was paid to the physical and functional relationship between Stabiae and Pompeii, this latter located only 3 miles northeast and connected to Stabiae by an already well developed transit system of railroads and highways (Fig. 85).

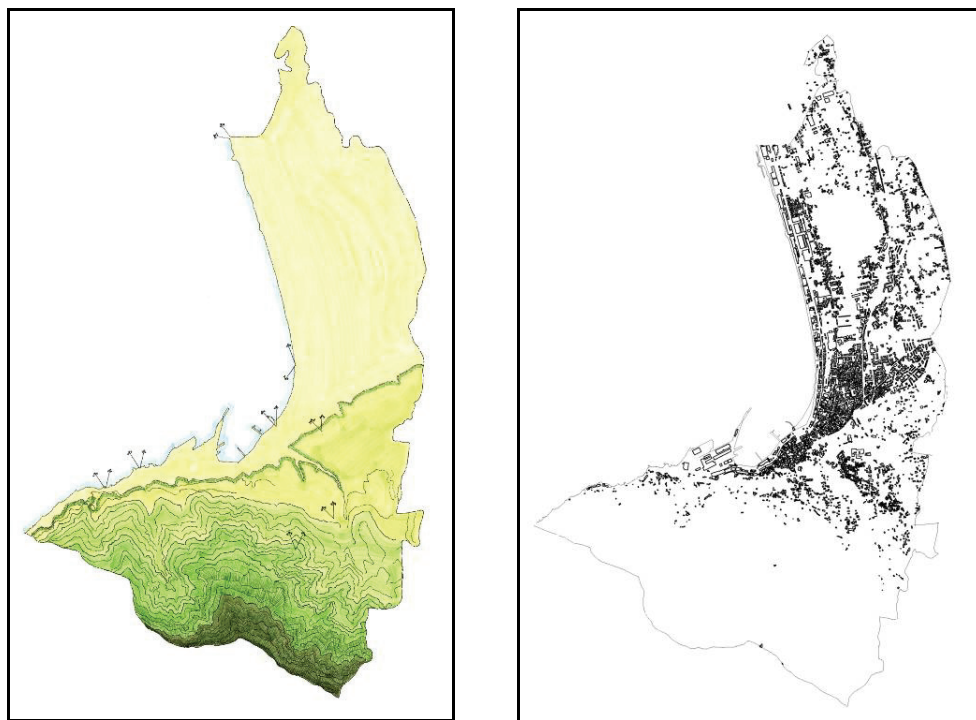


Fig. 86: Analysis drawings comparing the topography (left) and urban fabric of Castellammare (right)

At urban scale, the analysis and investigation process addressed the understanding of the physical constraints and pronounced topographical features at the sites; and how they have influenced the shape and urban fabric of the city (Fig.86 and 87).



Fig. 87: Analysis drawings showing how the natural topography, the shoreline, and the foothill of Mount Faito have played an important role in shaping the unique urban fabric of Castellammare and in producing its characteristic layout of tight blocks and narrow streets compressed between the sea and the hillside (the archaeological site - light green- and the villas - red - are indicated on the drawing on the right)

Several drawings were also produced to show the developed and growth of Castellammare through the centuries (Fig.89), and the interaction between natural and manmade components of the city. This analysis also included the physical definition of the historical nucleus and the medieval core (Fig.88, left); and how in the last century the historical center grew into a more expanded city fabric of large blocks, towards northeast and the archaeological site (Fig.88, right).



Fig. 88: Analysis drawings showing in red the medieval and historical nucleus of Castellammare (left), and the more recent expansion of the city with larger blocks towards the archaeological site (right)

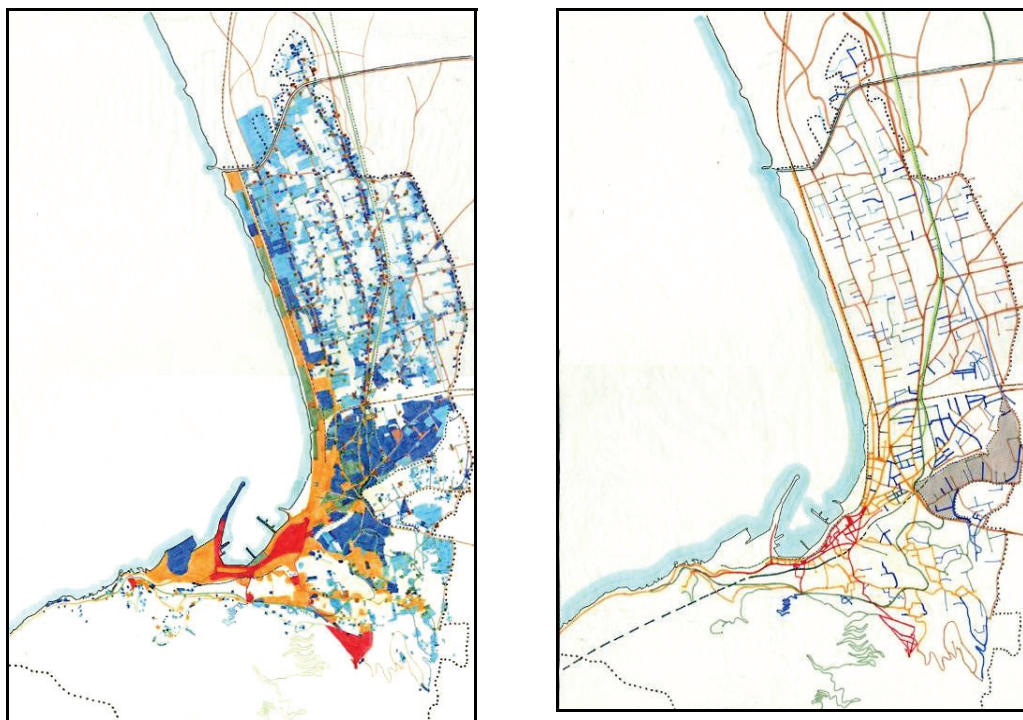


Fig. 89: Urban study diagrams showing the historical growth of Castellammare through the centuries: layering of the urban fabric (left) and development of roads and transit routes (right)

The following step was to analyze in greater detail the different aspects characterizing the city today, and its functionality: from prevalent land use and main circulation

(Fig.90), downtown and shopping areas (Fig.91), main urban districts (Fig.92, top), and finally the overall city *parti* and urban connectivity (Fig.92, bottom).

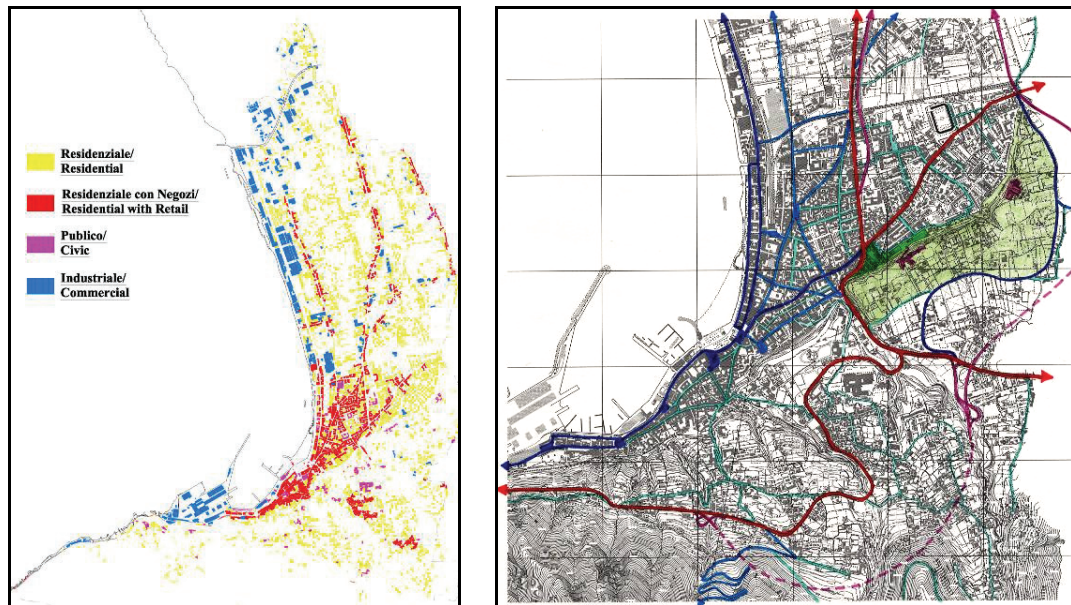


Fig. 90: Analysis drawings showing prevalent land use in the city (left) and main circulation at downtown and around the archaeological site (right)

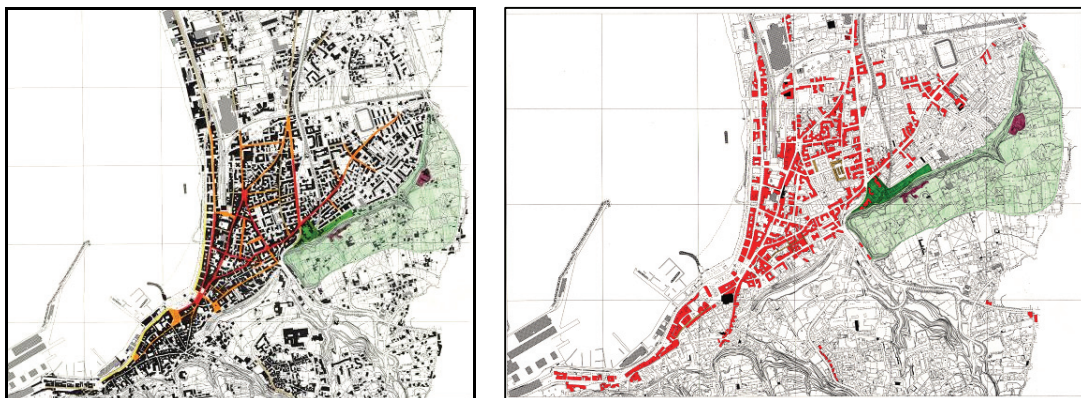


Fig. 91: Analysis drawings showing the main city shopping streets (left) and ground floor retail (right)

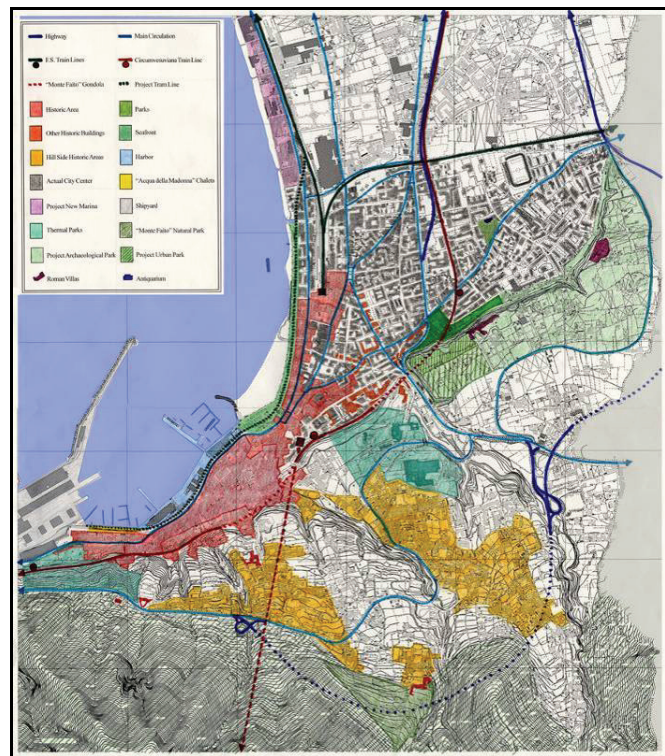
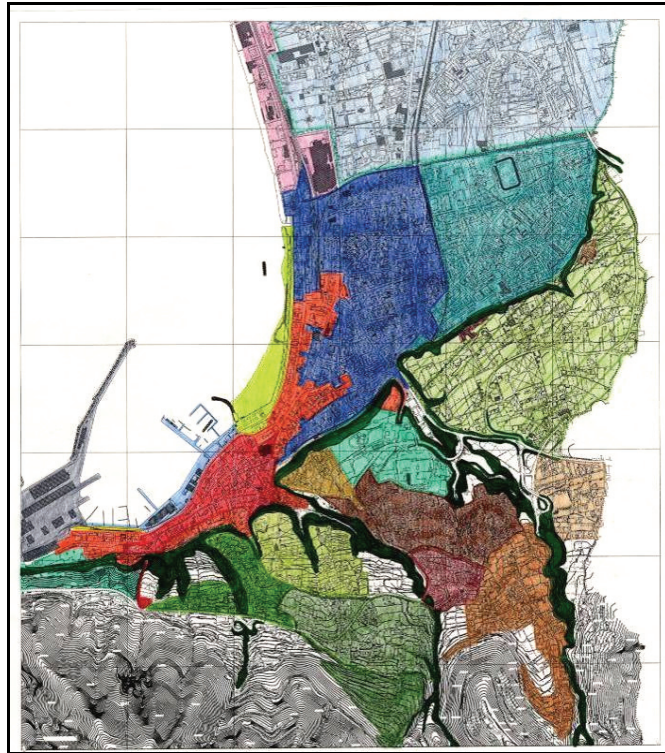


Fig. 92: Analysis drawings showing the different districts (top) and the main city *parti* and circulation as it appears today (bottom)

Additional investigation was done on the relationship between the archaeological site (as it appears today) and the other parts and aspects of the city; the urban analysis and data acquired on the functionality and infrastructures of the modern city (land use, circulation, city districts, etc.) were eventually put in a city-wide context and related to the specifics of the archaeological site, to understand the interaction and mutual influence city-site (Fig.93).



Fig. 93: Analysis diagram showing the main components of the urban fabric and their interaction at citywide scale

Once achieved a better understanding of the larger urban features of the modern city, the scale of the design investigation shifted; focusing on the specific aspects of the archaeological site and of the immediately surrounding urban context (Fig.94).



1) Villa S.Marco 2) Villa Arianna 3) Ancient City 4) Villa del Pastore 5) Villa Cappella S.Marco 6) Antiquarium

Fig. 94: Aerial image (top) and site map (bottom) of the Stabiae archaeological site and urban context; showing location and plans of the villas and archaeological remains (excavated areas indicated in red, still buried in yellow) [L.Varone]

A series of analysis diagrams and drawings was done, to obtain a more accurate picture of the site and its main features: land use (Fig.95), land ownership (Fig.96), historical growth (Fig.97), building consistency (Fig.98), building heights (Fig.99), illegal buildings (Fig.100), and vegetation map (Fig.101).

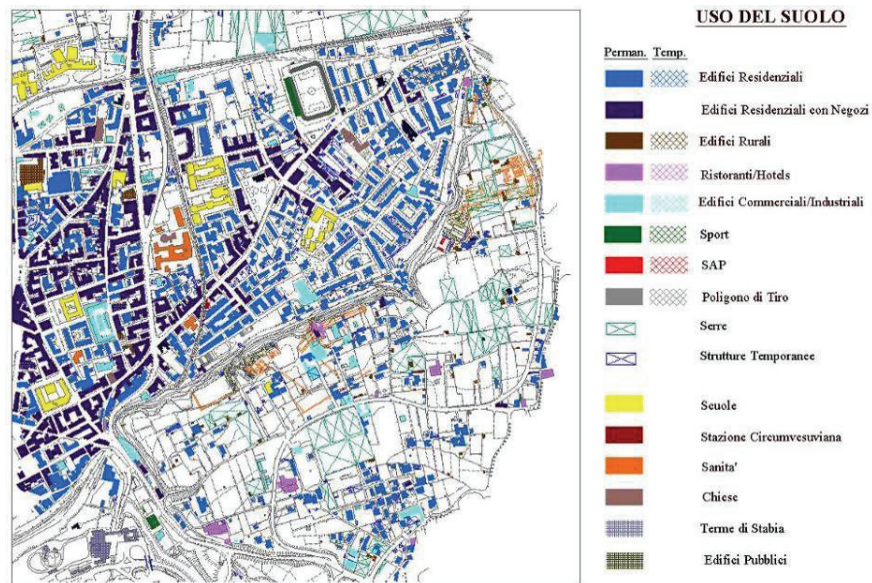


Fig. 95: Site land use map

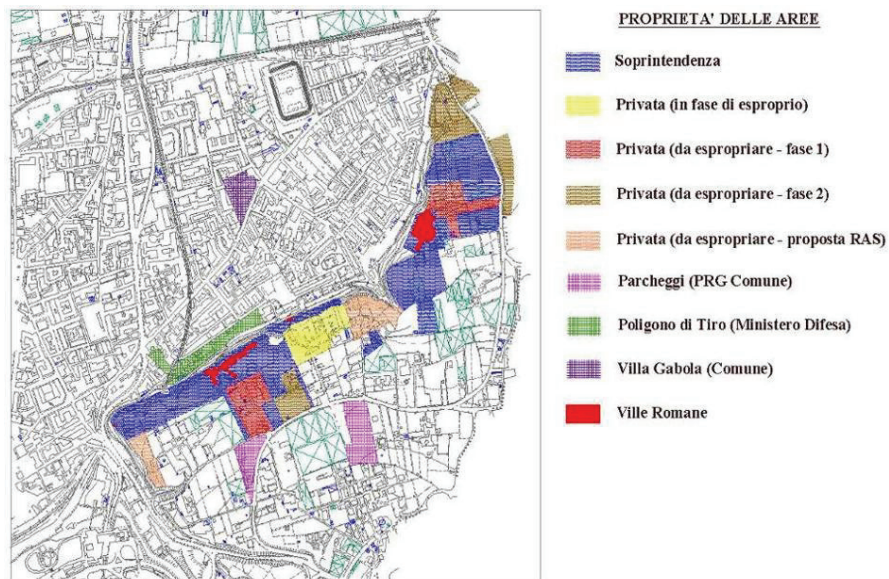


Fig. 96: Site land ownership map

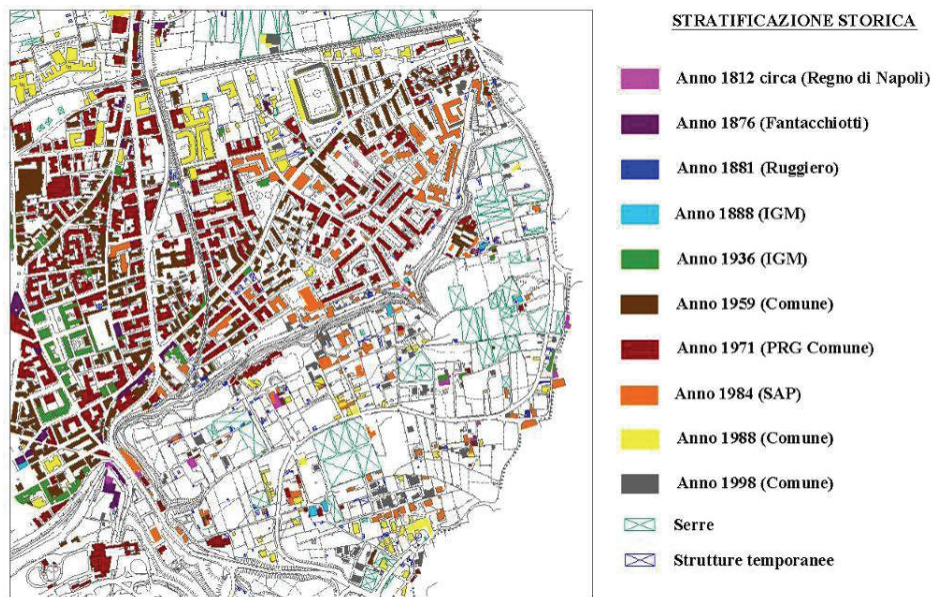


Fig. 97: Site historical stratification map

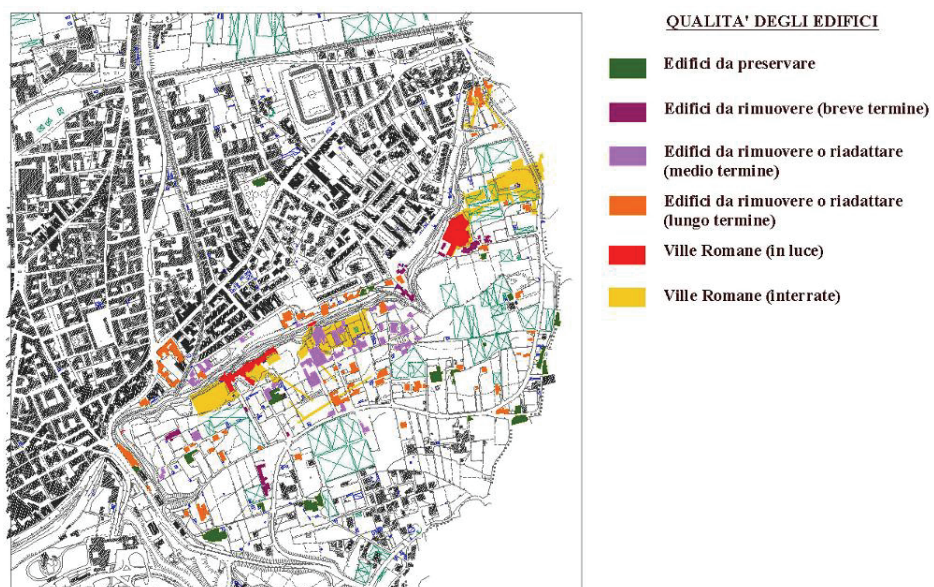


Fig. 98: Site building consistency map

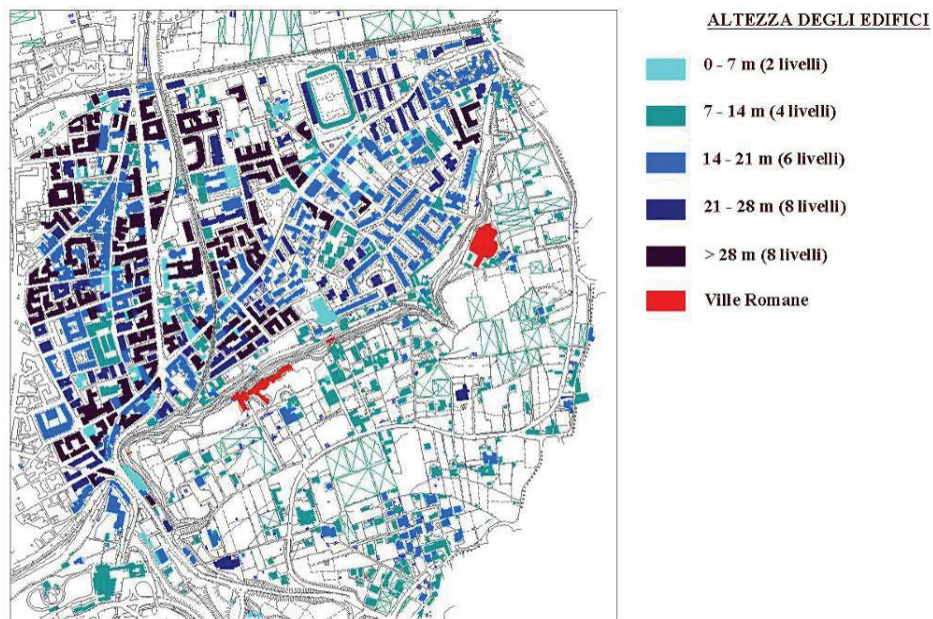


Fig. 99: Site building height map

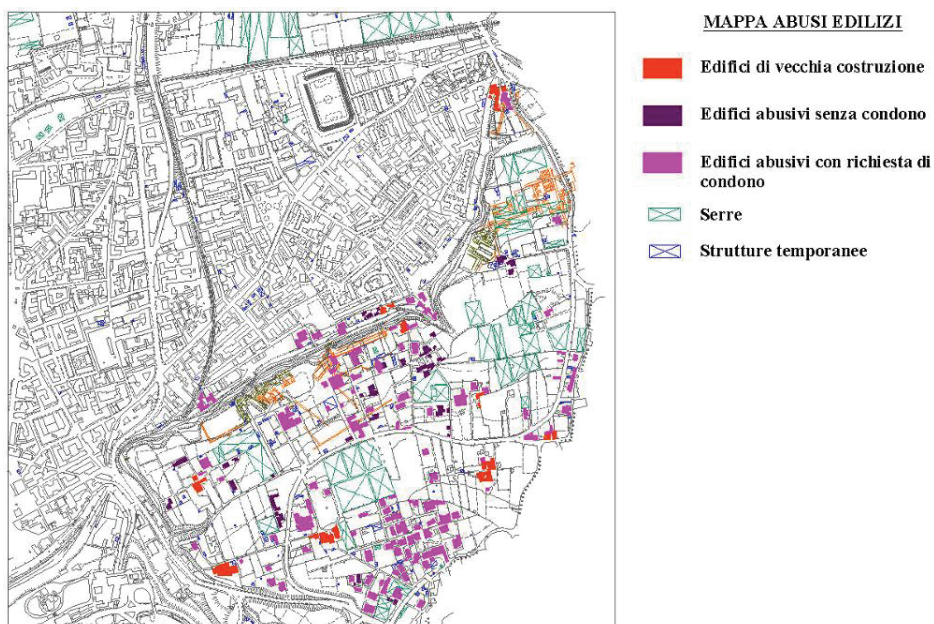


Fig. 100: Site illegal building map



Fig. 101: Vegetation map, with indication of the different planting and cultures on site

The following step was the development of several studies and Master Plan diagrams, showing different alternatives and functional organization for the site. The site itself is quite large (150 acres); in addition to the fact that the villas and archaeological

areas are located in different zones within the site. Consequently, an more articulated and coordinated system of controlled accesses and gates, connecting paths and promenades, and welcome services for visitors will be needed.

Some of the study and analysis diagrams developed - like the ones showing lines-of-sight, or relevant project sites and areas - are illustrated in the Fig.102.

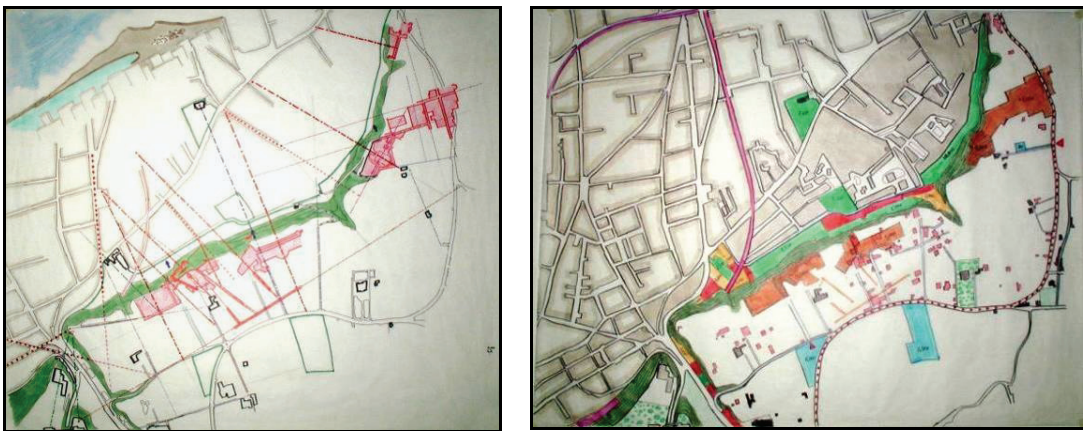


Fig. 102: Analysis site diagrams showing lines-of-sight and villa alignments towards the landscape and the Bay (left), and relevant project sites and areas (right)

The different possible approaches and solutions - in terms of access, urban connectivity and circulation to/from/within the archaeological site - can be summarized in five main schemes; each of the schemes proposes that the main service and access nodes will be located in different zones of the site, and/or at city level. Some of the drawings related to the above-mentioned Master Plan schemes are illustrated in Fig.103 and 104.



Fig. 103: Some of the diagrammatic schemes proposing different functional and circulation layouts for the proposed archaeological park, with main services and access nodes located in different areas of the site, and/or at city level

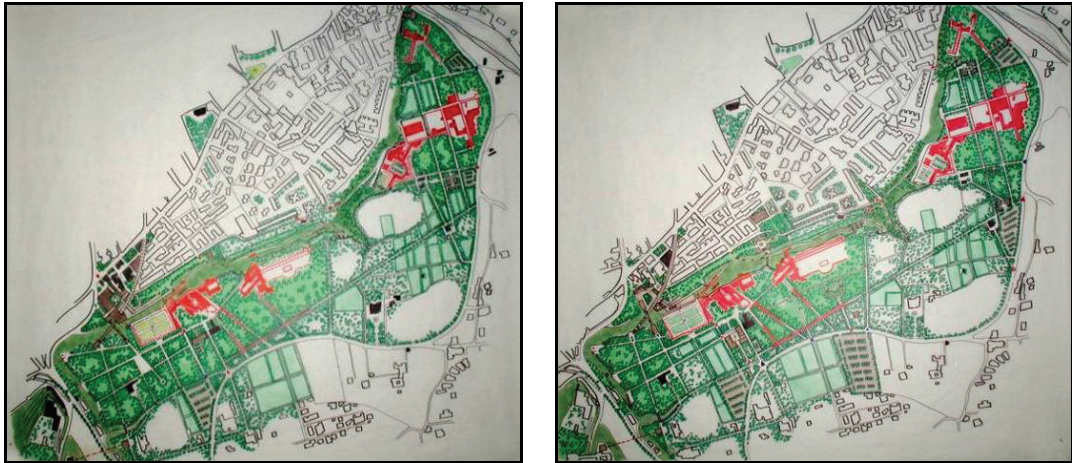


Fig. 104: Other diagrammatic schemes proposing different functional and circulation layouts for the proposed archaeological park

Main Principles and Features of the Archaeological Park

As suggested by many scholars and planners, a successful archaeological park should possess the following main characteristics and features: 1. a significant and coherent character; 2. being easily accessible; 3. a concentration of didactic and site presentation activities; 4. welcome services for visitors and support/administrative facilities for the staff.

The Stabiae site not only can fulfill all of the above requirements; but in addition to that, the site is the right place to create an archaeological park, because: 1. it features several sites of great historical value and consistency, extremely well-preserved and characterized by an architecture and decoration of remarkable quality and importance; 2. it is mostly unencumbered by modern constructions and other physical obstacles; 3. it still preserves most of its original natural environment and connections with the surrounding landscape (Fig.105), in particular the views of the Bay (differently from the other Vesuvian archaeological sites).



Fig. 105: Aerial image of the archeological site, mostly unencumbered by modern constructions and other physical obstacles; and still preserving most of its original natural environment and connections with the surrounding landscape

The goals and design strategy adopted for the Master Plan are based on the following principles:

1. The architecture of the villas and their natural landscape should dominate the visual experience of the site (new on-site buildings should be located at appropriate distance from the ruins; their architecture and design features should be simple while modern, elegant while not competing with - or overwhelming - the villas, promoting the use of local materials);
2. Future excavations and didactic displays should enhance and clarify the spatial sequence of the villas and their orientation to the landscape and the Bay (new access to site and villas, parking and pathways, should all be designed to orient the visitor and make the important villa-landscape relationship evident and immediate; new excavations should aim to clarify the spatial sequence and function organization of the villas; new protective

roofing and landscaping features should make the site visible and recognizable from the city below, and also from Pompeii and even farther away);

3. The park will be organized in functional zones and integrated nodes, corresponding to the characteristics of the areas within the archaeological site (as explained in greater details in the following paragraphs);
4. The site will be accessible and well integrated with the urban fabric of the modern city, and with the regional transit system that provides access to the other archaeological and tourist sites of the Bay of Naples.

The Preferred Master Plan Scheme

Once acquired an overall understanding of the archaeological site, with its different features, issues of access and control, internal movement and functional needs; my attention shifted and started focusing on selecting a preferred Master Plan scheme, and on determining the best location for the main access node and connecting zone between the site and the modern city.

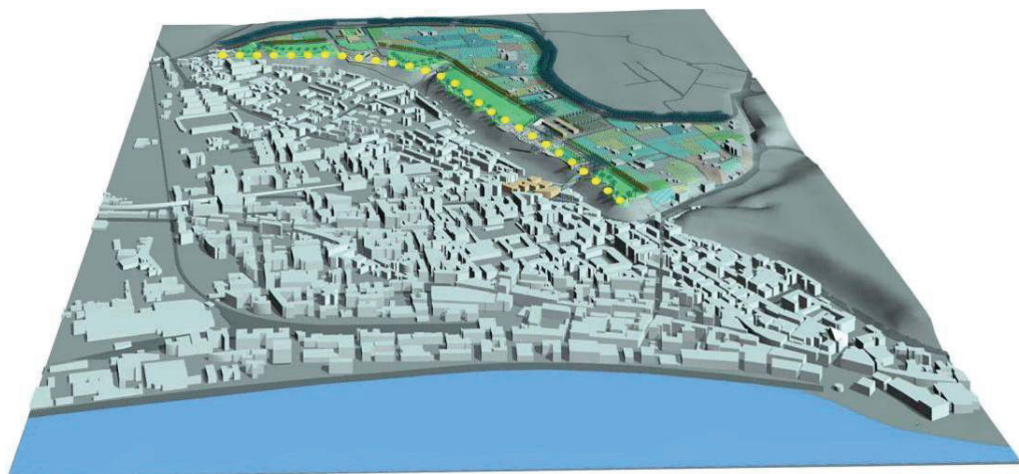


Fig. 106: Bird-eye view of the proposed archaeological park, with panoramic promenade along the edge of the cliff (yellow dotted line) connecting the various villa excavation sites and allowing continuous views towards the Bay and the city below [T.Leader, L.Varone]

The selected Master Plan scheme is based on the creation of a pedestrian panoramic promenade along the edge of the cliff, connecting the various villa excavation sites and allowing continuous views towards the Bay of Naples (Fig.106).

The park will be organized in six (6) separate functional zones, and will gravitate around two (2) principal access nodes and center of activities: the Villa San Marco and the Villa Arianna nodes (Fig.107-109).

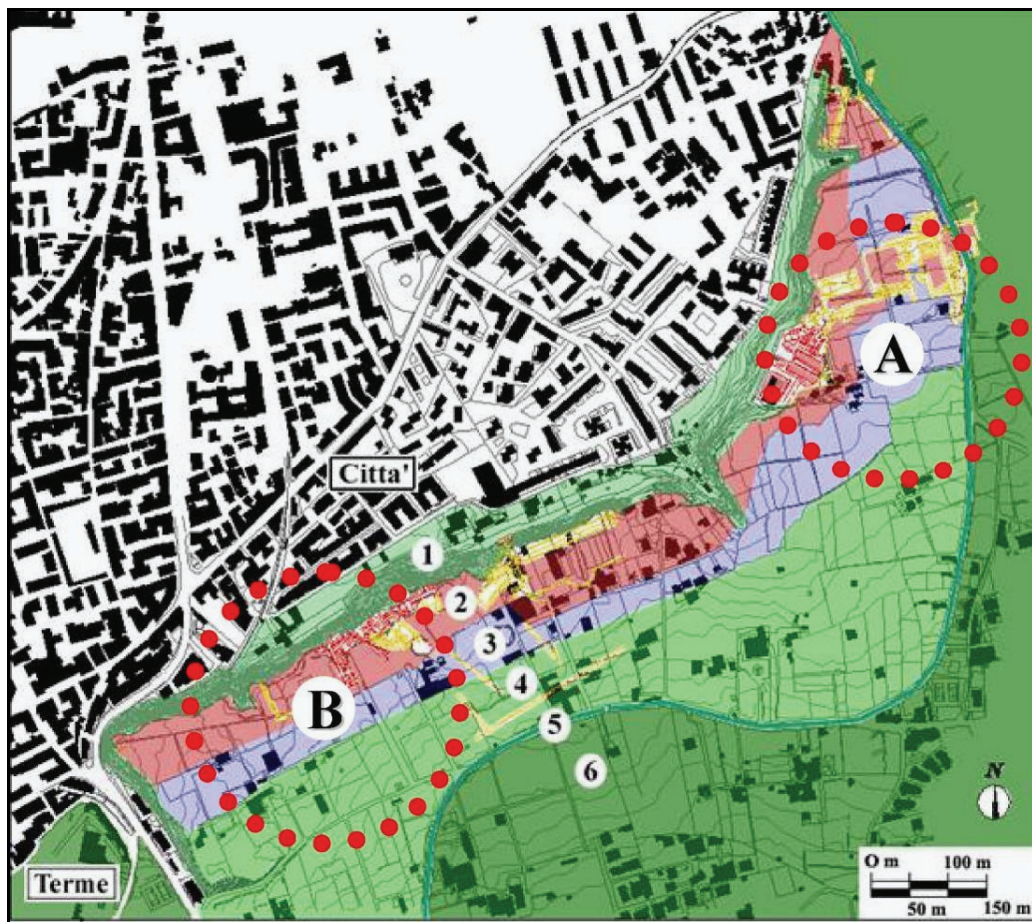


Fig. 107: The park will be organized in six (6) separate functional zones, and will gravitate around two (2) principal access nodes and center of activities: the Villa San Marco node ("A") and the Villa Arianna node ("B")

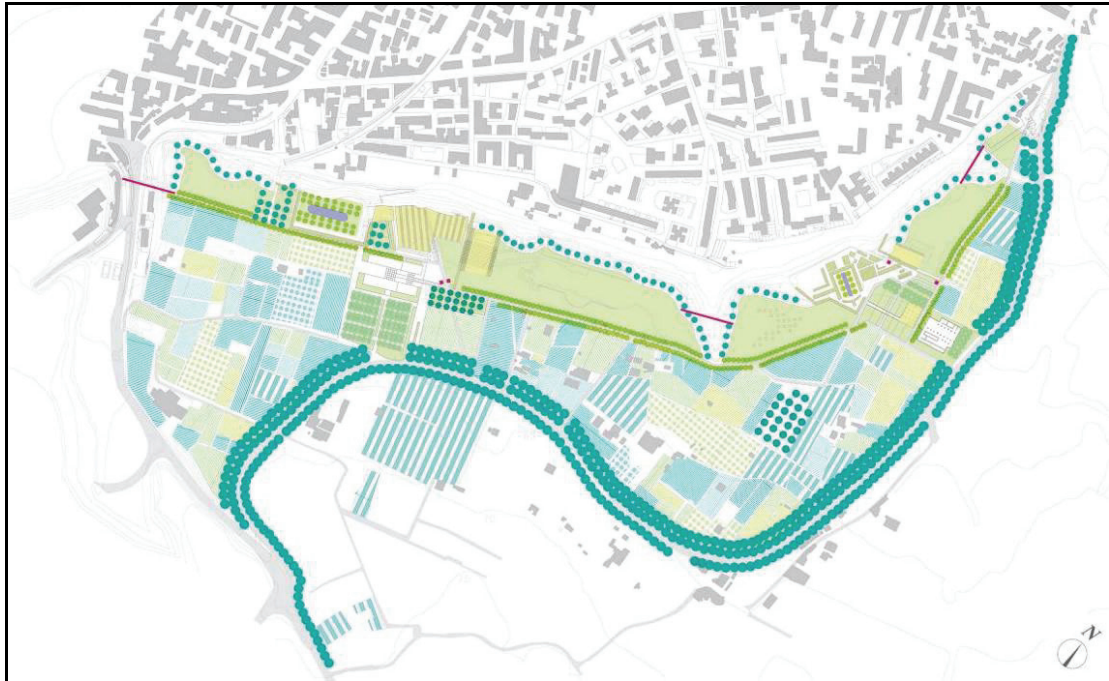


Fig. 108: Site plan for the archaeological park at Ancient Stabiae [T.Leader, RAS]

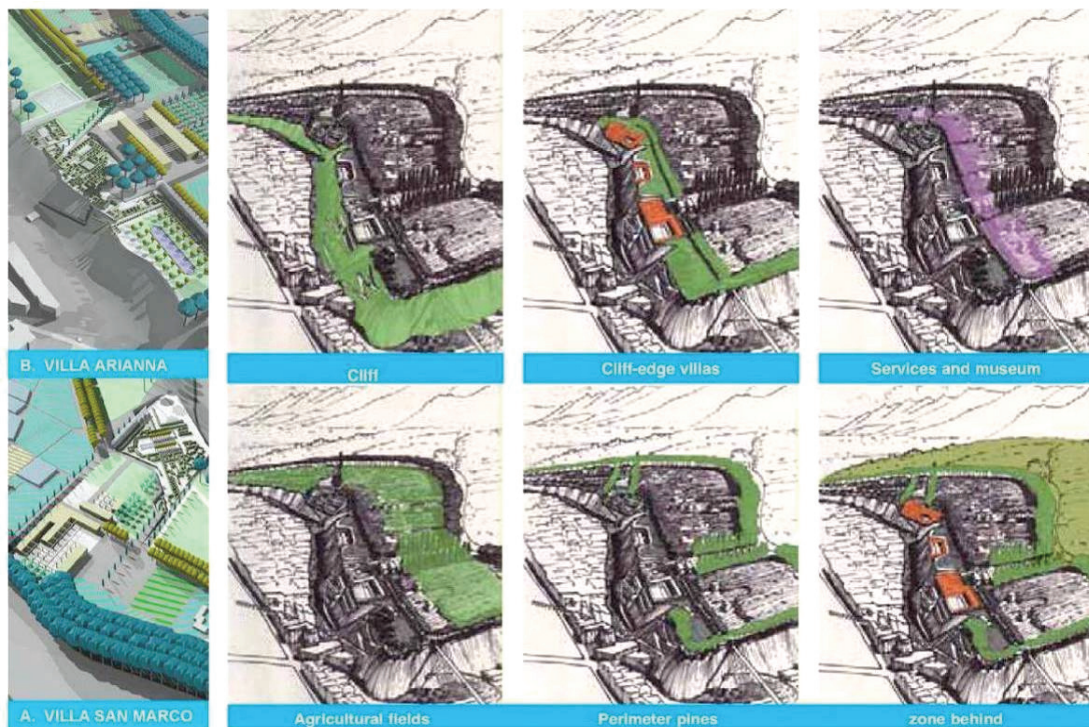


Fig. 109: The park will be organized in six (6) separate functional zones, based on the nature and proposed activities for each individual zone; and will gravitate around two (2) principal access nodes: the Villa San Marco node (“A”) and the Villa Arianna node (“B”), which will become the main centers of activities and services for both visitors and site staff

Zone 1: the cliff and the urban park at the foot of the hill:

The actual public shooting range located at the foot of Villa Arianna will be relocated outside the downtown; consequently, this important land (due to the presence of several archaeological remains and of the San Biagio grotto with its valuable early Christian wall paintings) can become available for the park.

The area at the foot of the cliff will be integrated within the archeological site, and transformed into an urban park open to the public; in addition, it will provide a buffer zone between the archaeological site and the curtain of modern buildings built across the site (with very poor architectural quality and facades). Furthermore, because of the presence of the original Roman ramp on the cliff side (providing access from the seashore directly to Villa Arianna in Roman times), this park can also provide an alternative access to the site (with proper security control and ticketing), once the

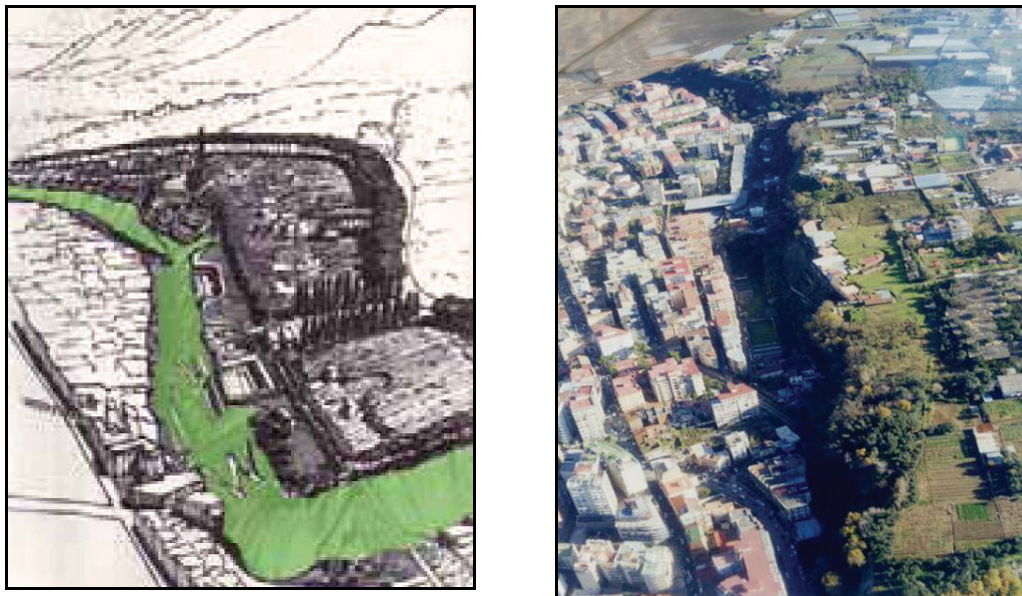


Fig. 110: Zone 1: the cliff and the urban park at the foot of the hill (highlighted in green)

ramp is rehabilitated for public use. The cliff itself features the remains of several and important archaeological structures; like terraced water *nimphea* and several arched multi-level terraces at Villa Arianna (in addition to other supporting structures at Villa del Pastore, east of Villa Arianna towards Villa San Marco). Finally, this park will be also integrated with the proposed Piazza “Libero D’Orsi,” as explained in greater details in the following chapter.

Zone 2: the Roman villas and the panoramic promenade at the edge of the cliff

The current experience of a typical visitor is one characterized by fragmentation and disorientation. There is no pedestrian or other direct connection between the two partially excavated villas; and in order to go from Villa San Marco to Villa Arianna, the visitor needs to drive thru winding and uncomfortable roads and dusty alleyways.

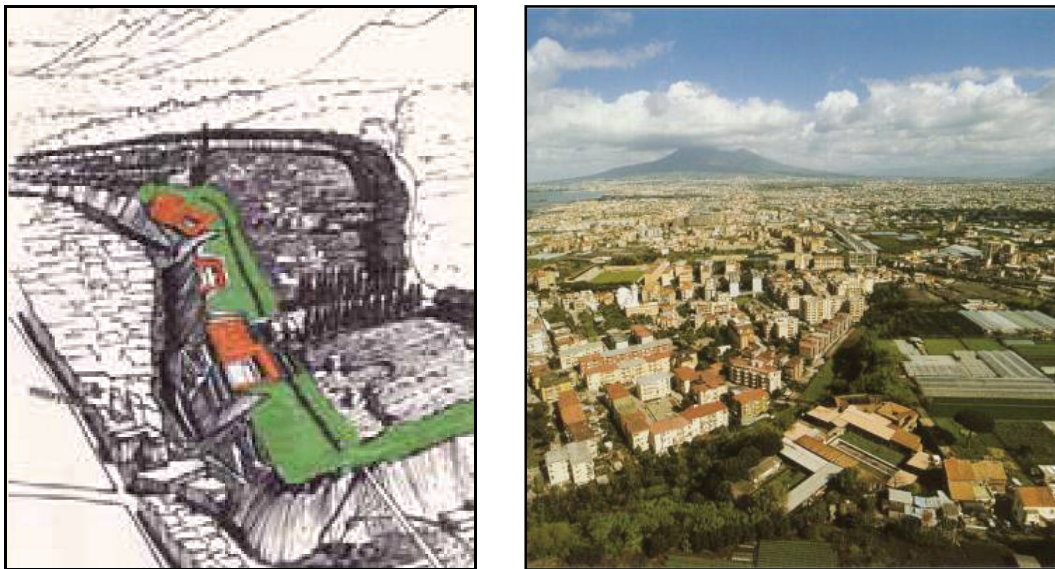


Fig. 111: Zone 2: the Roman villas connected by a pedestrian panoramic promenade at the edge of the cliff, providing continuous views of the Bay as well as immediate orientation

Once reached the sites, the views are usually blocked; and do not allow the visitor to be oriented and to have a general understanding of the boundaries of the site, or of the spatial articulation of the villas (with their important relationship to the landscape). To overcome these problems - and to provide an immediate visual connection to the landscape and the Bay - the two main villas need to be connected by a pedestrian panoramic promenade; located for the most part on the edge of the cliff and passing behind the villas, in order to provide orientation and to exploit the incredible view: the city and the Stabian Bay in the foreground; the plain of Pompeii, mount Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples in the background. This promenade can be accessible to the general public also when the strictly archaeological areas of the villas are closed.

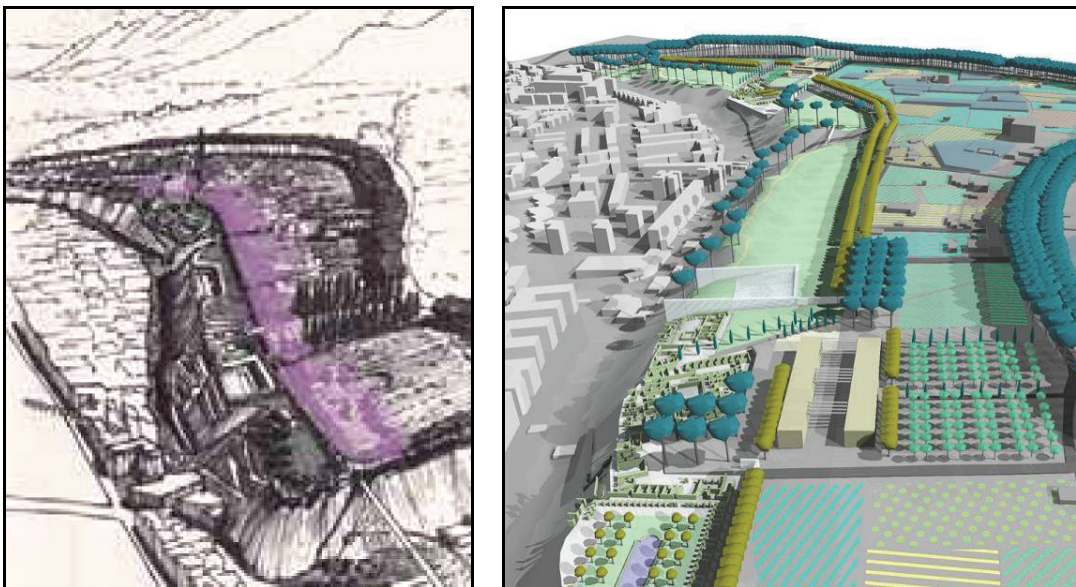


Fig. 112: Zone 3: the visitor's and service area behind the villas, providing welcome, didactic and support facilities

Zone 3: the visitor's and service area

This area, located behind the villas, will feature all the welcome, didactic and support facilities, as well as on-site activities that require new structures; which will be

located at proper distance from the archaeological remains (for protecting and avoiding their visual impact on the Roman villas). This area will also provide connecting paths and promenades to allow movement within the site and between the different zones; as well as resting areas and access to the on-site visitor's facilities; (shaded piazzas, cafes, visitor's center, parking, ticketing, restrooms, didactic exhibits and displays, museum, etc.). Finally, this area will also host all the administrative facilities and support services of the Superintendancy of Pompeii, to control and manage the site (new offices, security control room and guard's headquarters, archaeological storage, conservation labs, etc.); as well as scientific and study facilities for visiting scholars and research teams working on the site.

Zone 4: the agricultural land and natural preserve within the site

The agricultural land that surrounds the villas still preserves most of the features of the original Roman landscape and natural environment; it can be developed and used



Fig. 113: Zone 4: the agricultural land and natural preserve within the site boundaries

in connection with the park, while still left under private ownership or usage. A series of pedestrian promenades immersed in the landscape, and of characteristic pathways between the cultivated fields, will connect the cliff-edge panoramic promenade with the rest of the site; and will provide access to and from the site boundaries and the areas outside the park itself. Among the goals, preserving and promoting the continuation of ancient agricultural techniques typical of the *Ager Stabiano* and of the Sorrento-Amalfi Coast (still used today on the fields at the site); while establishing guidelines and requirements for the types of cultivation and methodologies allowed on site - and for the associated farm buildings, when reused or rebuilt - in accordance with the character of the site and the archaeological park. Finally, promoting and establishing - in selected areas of the park – experimental cultures for recovering and reproducing ancient farming and wine-production techniques; possibly associated with local farm markets open to locals and tourists (located near the site boundaries).

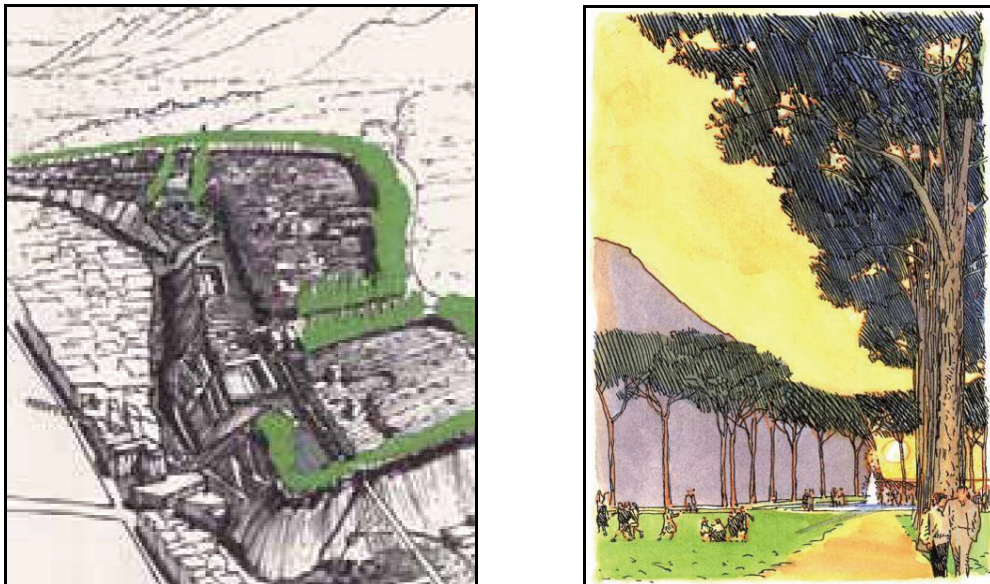


Fig. 114: Zone 5: ring of large Mediterranean Umbrella pines, providing visibility from great distance and clear site boundaries

Zone 5: Site Boundaries and Lighting

To create a well-defined boundary for the archaeological park, and to provide a visible feature immediately recognizable even from far away, several interventions are proposed: 1. a perimeter of large Mediterranean Umbrella Pines (Fig.114) to ring the boundaries of the site on Via Passeggiata Archeologica (the main road that defines the south and east edges of the site); 2. use of a different type of tree (possibly cypress) to define and announce the location of the main entries to the villas and the park (Fig.115, left); 3. new improved site and perimeter lighting (Fig.115, right). A possible third type of tree (may be a different species of Mediterranean pine) could be also used along the panoramic promenade at the edge of the cliff (on the south side of the main path, opposite to the view towards the Bay).

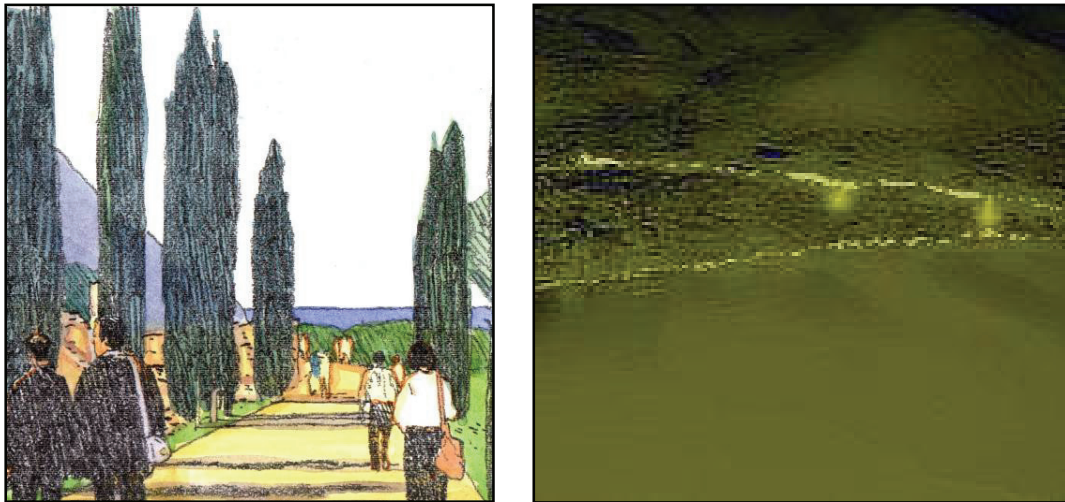


Fig. 115: Use of different tree species to highlight main pathways (left) and of architectural and site lighting (right) will enhance the overall visibility of the park, which will become a major feature in the landscape of Castellammare and of this corner of the Bay of Naples

The perimeter of large Mediterranean Umbrella Pines will give visitors a clear understanding of the limits of the park (something that is missing today); while in combination with new protective roofing and improved architectural night lighting of

the villas, it will make the site a recognizable feature in the landscape of Castellammare and of the south-eastern corner of the Bay of Naples (visible even from Pompeii and the main highway to Sorrento). Dramatic and architectural lighting are popular devices used in most European capital cities to enhance buildings and places; while proper lighting can also make the site accessible at night, for evening events. Special lighting can be used to enhance the architecture of the villas, highlight the new protective roofing and the panoramic terraces at Villa Arianna (for example); as well as used at the outdoor theaters. Umbrella pines are also a common and quite familiar feature within the natural landscape of the Bay, used especially to make higher grounds and specific locations more visible.

Zone 6: Agro and Archeo-Tourism zone - other areas outside the site boundaries

The same criteria and concepts described for Zone 4 (agricultural land within the site) can be similarly applied and proposed for the areas outside the archaeological park.

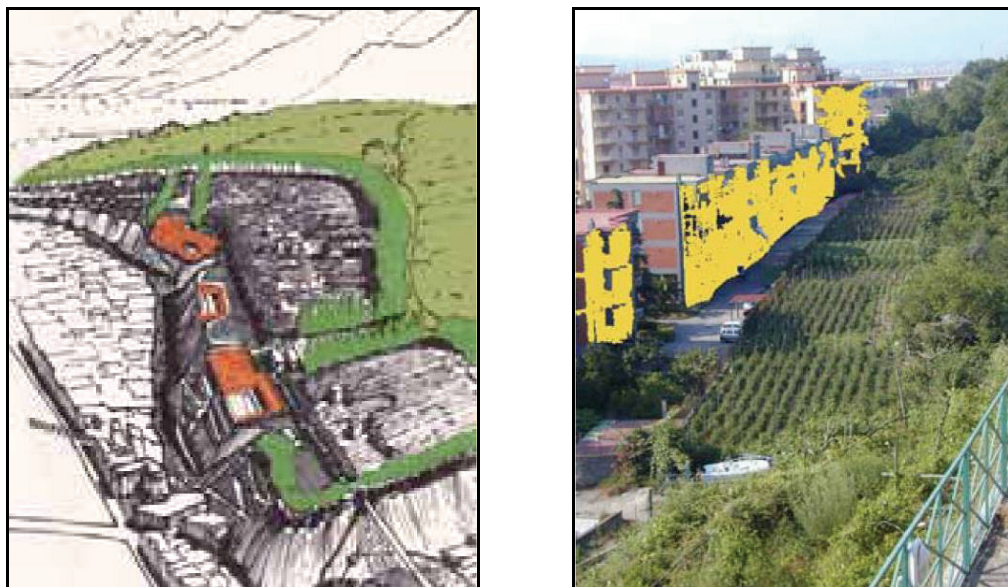


Fig. 116: Zone 6: Agro and Archeo-Tourism zone, and other areas outside the site boundaries

While leaving land ownership to privates, these areas surrounding the park - today characterized by a combination of farm land, low-rise residential buildings and single-family houses, arranged mostly without apparent urban planning and architectural quality - can be developed in relationship with the park, encouraging the use of a more traditional building typology based on local materials and consistent treatment of the facades (color, design and number of floors; Fig.116, right).

Following the above guidelines, small-scale developments focusing on welcome, free-time and tourist-related uses (small hotels, restaurants, cafes, local farm and crafts markets, sport centers, etc.) can be encouraged to support and exploit the activities associated with the park. At same time, the recovery of traditional farming activities can help preserving the natural environment around the archaeological site; by protecting and respecting the rural character of this area, reminiscent of the ancient Roman landscape. The establishment of bed and breakfasts and Agro-Tourism activities - in addition to exploiting the access to hiking trails connected with Mount Faito, the Lattari Mountains and the Sorrento-Amalfi Peninsula - can provide additional alternatives for tourists, which are compatible with and can significantly enhance the attractiveness of the park and of the modern city.

“Villa San Marco” Node

The first of the two main access nodes, where most of the visitor’s activities and support services for the park will be concentrated, is proposed near Villa San Marco, on the east side of the park (Fig.117 and 118). The main reason is because this villa

ticketing and welcome services, temporary exhibit and site orientation display, restrooms, indoor and outdoor café, and a new access to the villa (a new ramp will bring visitors from the ticketing area down to the Roman street and villa level, approximately 3.5 meters below the current grade). This access will be in connection with new excavations (Fig.118, left) which will bring back to light the original entry area of the villa (currently still buried under several meters of volcanic ash). The center will also host administrative offices and support services for the staff of the Superintendancy of Pompeii (including guard's quarters and security control room); as well as archaeological storage rooms and conservation labs, to protect and restore artifacts after being excavated.



Fig. 119: Drawings of proposed Stabiae Visitor's Center at Villa San Marco [RAS]

A specific area of the new building will be dedicated to study and research facilities for visiting scholars and international research teams working for the RAS project and

collaborating with the SAP/RAS staff of archaeologists and architects; these facilities will include computer rooms, equipment storage, archive, etc.

From Villa San Marco, visitors can begin their tour of the site and access the panoramic cliff-edge promenade; moving from one villa to the other. In addition, an outdoor theater – built with light, dismantlable structures – will be located on the lawn adjacent to the villa, on the north side of the site; and will be used for outdoor summer concerts, opera and other types of performances. The spectacular views of the Bay at sunset, along with dramatic night lighting of the Roman villas, can provide a wonderful setting for these events (Fig.120). Similar uses have been already allowed and successfully used at Villa Arianna; furthermore, visitor's parking and facilities for the archaeological site can be reused at night for these special evenings events and concerts. Potential sites at both Villa San Marco and Villa Arianna can handle between 200 and 600 attendees.



Fig. 120: The spectacular views of the Bay at sunset, along with dramatic night lighting of the Roman villas, can provide a wonderful setting for outdoor theaters proposed in the vicinity of the excavations sites at Villa San Marco and Villa Arianna

In summary, the Villa San Marco node will be initially the focus of the majority of the site, administrative and visitor's activities; for at least the first years of the development of the park. Until the other important node of Villa Arianna – closer to downtown and the regional transit system, but at the same time much less excavated today - will be further developed in the following years, by means of large-scale excavations, presentation displays of the villa, and new didactic activities.

“Villa Arianna” Node.

Villa Arianna is today much less excavated, and its site less developed (both in terms of support services and visitor's welcome facilities). Because much of the villa is still buried, it is quite difficult for the visitor to have an understanding of the architectural features and spatial organization of the Roman villa (Fig.121).

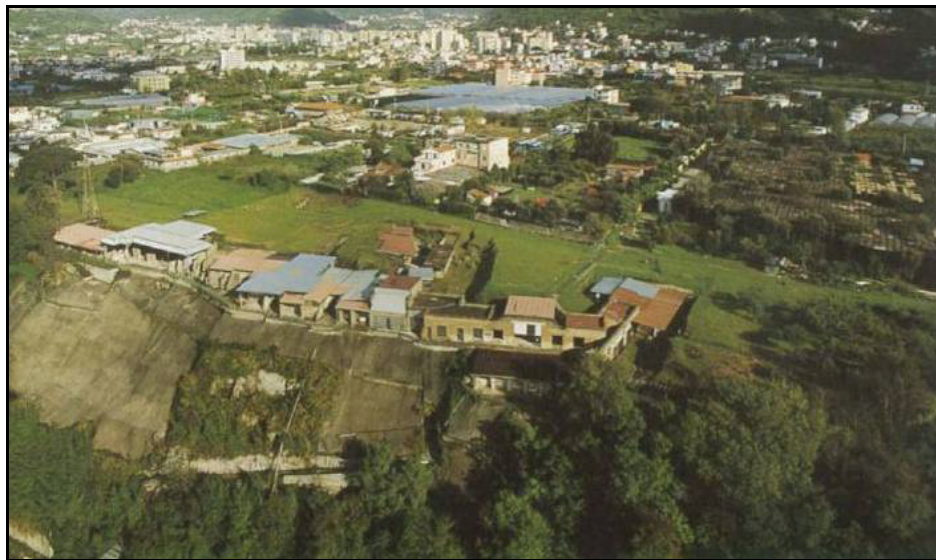


Fig. 121: Aerial view of the Villa Arianna site, which is today much less excavated and developed compared to Villa San Marco

[illegible]

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In fact, the Villa Arianna site is much closer to downtown Castellammare, its historic center, the hillside spa; and most importantly, to the Circumvesuviana regional commuter train line and to the exits of the main road to Sorrento (which serve and connect all the archaeological and tourist sites of the Bay of Naples). The first steps in achieving this goal is to overcome the obstacle represented by the 100-foot cliff (which acts as a physical barrier between the site on the hilltop and the modern city below); and to establish a direct and easy access to the site from the modern city and the Circumvesuviana. This specific topic will be the focus of the Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” project (illustrated with greater details in the following chapter).

In five years or so, the focus of the activities on the archaeological site - and its overall development - should be redirected from Villa San Marco to Villa Arianna, as the excavations of the villa progressively advance. This node will offer additional support and visitor’s facilities: new car and tourist bus parking, ticketing, welcome services, site orientation and display, café and restaurant, administrative offices for staff, guard’s quarters, etc. (Fig.123).

Similar to what has been proposed at Villa San Marco, a new access ramp will lead visitors down to the original Roman level and main entrance of the villa; while phased extensive excavations will clarify its spatial sequence and unearth its magnificent porticoes, multi-level cliff-side terraces, and spectacular panoramic garden (west side of villa). An alternative access to the villa can be provided via the original cliff-side Roman ramp, once restored and rehabilitated for public use (more details in the following chapter).

On-site Museum of the Roman Villa Culture of the Bay of Naples

In addition, the Villa Arianna node can host an important on-site museum dedicated to the display of the entire collection of archaeological artifacts recovered during past and future excavations at Stabiae; such facility is very much needed today, as Stabiae does not possess a permanent museum or building to properly store these artifacts (for many years, the basement of the “Stabiae” high school has been adapted as temporary depot, thanks to the efforts of Principal Libero D’Orsi). In particular, this new museum will focus specifically on presenting to the public the unique Roman Villa Culture of the Bay of Naples (as explained in greater details in previous chapters); it will operate in conjunction with a center for research and didactic activities, associated library and archive, additional archaeological storage and conservation labs (for SAP staff, visiting scholars and research teams). This facility will also host temporary exhibits, site orientation, and offer conference space; in addition, the site suggests the establishment of a center for experimental eco and paleo-agricultural research (to study ancient Roman landscaping, farming and wine-production activities); which could be integrated as part of the museum. This concentration of research and didactic activities is exactly what distinguishes an archaeological site from an archaeological park (as proposed in this document).

Existing buildings on the site, privately owned today, can be considered for a reuse compatible with the park; and could be adapted to host some of the components of the planned museum or of the research facilities. Access to the museum will be both at site level (in conjunction and integrated with the main entry to Villa Arianna, at the south side of site), as well as from the city down below; in fact, the museum entry can

be imagined as facing and sharing the same panoramic square and arrival belvedere of the hilltop station of the funicular, as proposed by the Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” project (more details in the following chapter).

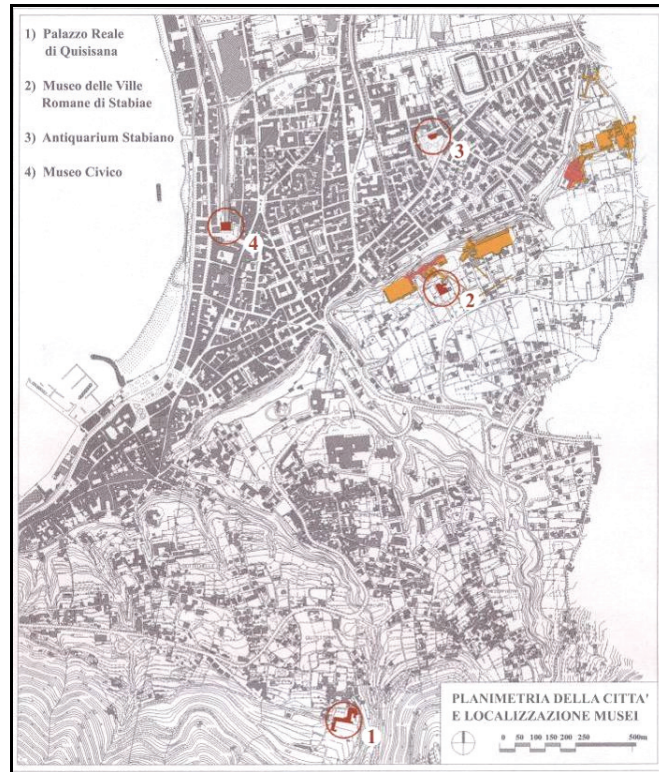


Fig. 124: City map with proposed locations for several museum facilities in Castellammare, which will be integrated into a network of local museums presenting different aspects of the history and traditions of the city

Finally, the proposed Stabiae on-site museum can work and be part of a potential network of local museums within the city of Castellammare (Fig.124); which might include a civic museum (featuring the history of the city), a museum dedicated to the historic Bourbon shipyard (and ship-building tradition in Castellammare), a railroad museum, as well as a regional museum or study center of the Bay of Naples (dedicated to the many traditions and cultural aspects of its millenarian history).

Several potential sites and existing historical buildings in Castellammare have been identified; which can be eventually restored and integrated into a network easily accessible to visitors and locals as well.

Urban Park at Villa Arianna

A quite large portion of the Villa Arianna site is free from archaeological structures (west of site), and can be the ideal location for an urban park and panoramic belvedere (Fig.125).

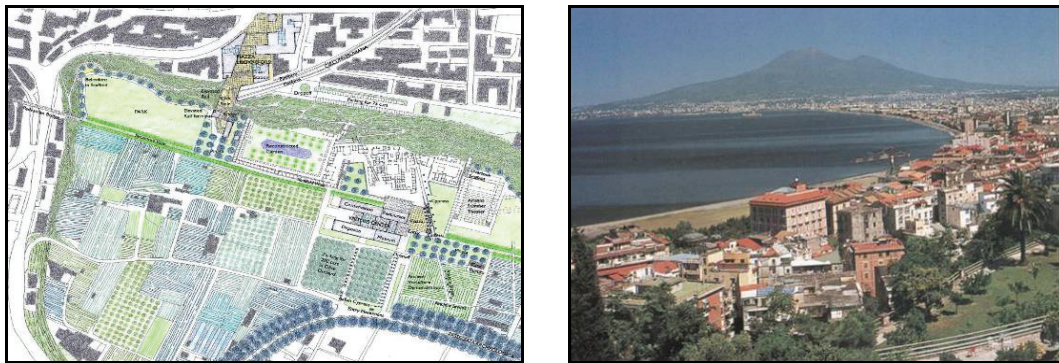


Fig. 125: Map (left) showing a large portion of the Villa Arianna site free from archaeological remains, which can become the ideal location for an urban park and panoramic belvedere (right), accessible also when the villas are closed and providing a much needed open space for the city and its citizen

In fact, the views towards the modern city below and the Bay are wide-open; with adequate and easy access from the city, this park can be integrated with the archaeological site, the near-by spa complex (on the other side of the gorge, facing west), the new Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” and commuter rail station. It can become an integral part of the urban fabric of Castellammare, like the Piazzale Garibaldi on the Gianicolo hill or Villa Borghese above Piazza del Popolo, in Rome.

This park will be accessible to the citizen of Castellammare, also when the villas are closed to the public, and will become an important component within the park and

open space system of the modern city, today quite modest in size. The proposed park will operate in conjunction with a restaurant and outdoor café; and possibly with other activities. For example, its proximity to the modern city and easy access from the local roads seem to suggest that the Villa Arianna site could also become the right location for a local farm market, to promote local farming activities and economy. Finally, an outdoor theater (similar to the one at Villa San Marco) is proposed in the vicinity of the villa; to exploit the spectacular panoramas, and operating in locations chosen in accordance with the phasing of future excavations at the villa.

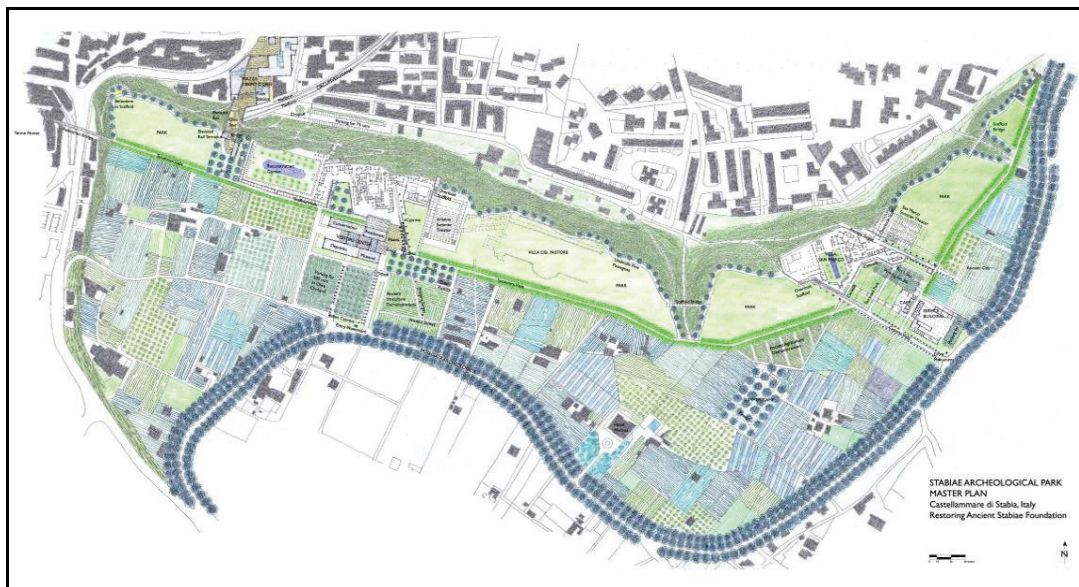


Fig. 126: Preferred Master Plan scheme for the proposed archaeological park at ancient Stabiae, showing overall site functional organization, access and circulation, connections with the city and regional transit system [RAS]

Summary of the Master Plan and its Main Features

The preferred Master Plan scheme (Fig.126-128) proposes the creation of pedestrian walkways and promenades between the excavated villas, bridges, terraces and



Fig. 127: Aerial view of proposed archaeological park and surrounding urban fabric [T.Leader]

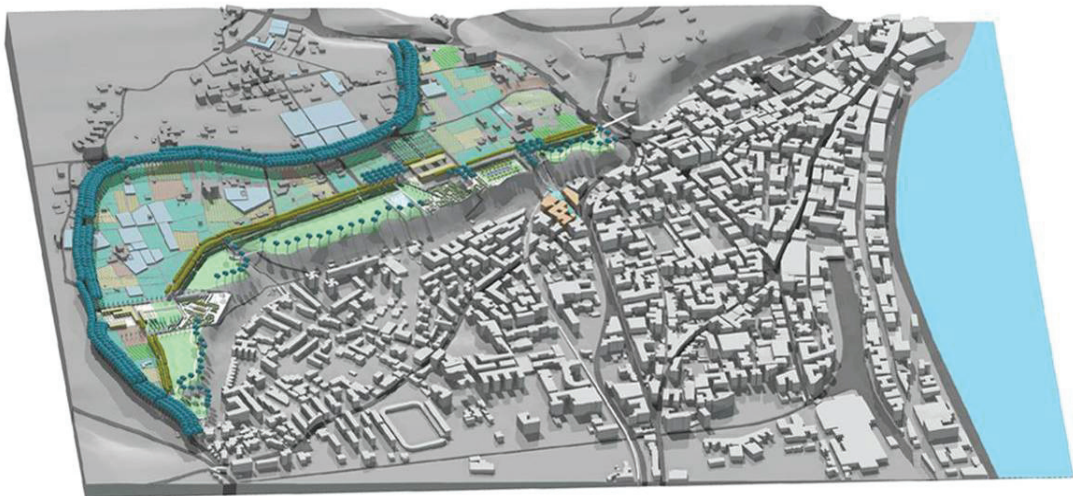


Fig. 128: 3D computer generated model of preferred Master Plan scheme for the archaeological park; showing its relationship with the landscape, topography, and its integration with the urban fabric of modern Castellammare [T.Leader, L.Varone]

and overlookings; as well as viewing platforms from which visitors can enjoy and study the site without impacting the delicate remains of the ancient ruins (Fig129). In places where the cliff-edge terraces have partly fallen away (like at Villa Arianna,

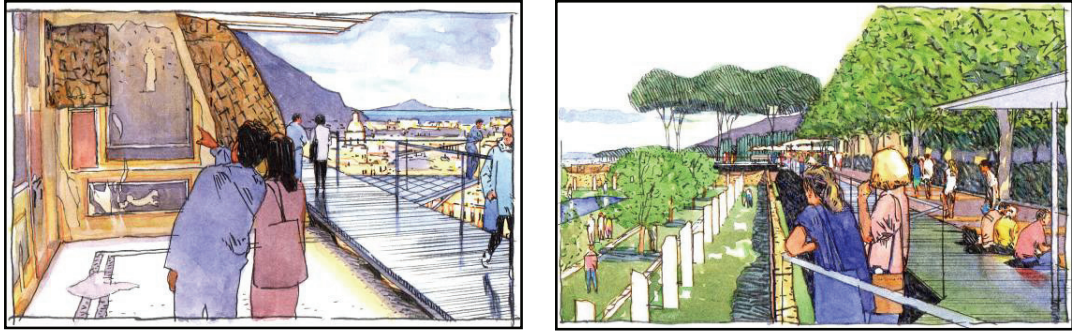


Fig. 129: Vignettes showing proposed pedestrian walkways and promenades between the excavated villas, bridges, terraces, overlookings and light scaffold-type structures where the cliff-edge terraces have partly fallen away (left); as well as viewing platforms from which visitors can enjoy and study the site without impacting the delicate remains of the ancient ruins (right) [K.Crubs, RAS]

which rests on as many as six levels of terraces, over one hundred feet high), their original existence can be suggested by light scaffold-type structures. Special didactic installations and displays will be organized through the site, enhancing the visitor's experience. Shadowed meeting places and piazzas will make the visit more enjoyable and relaxing (Fig.130).

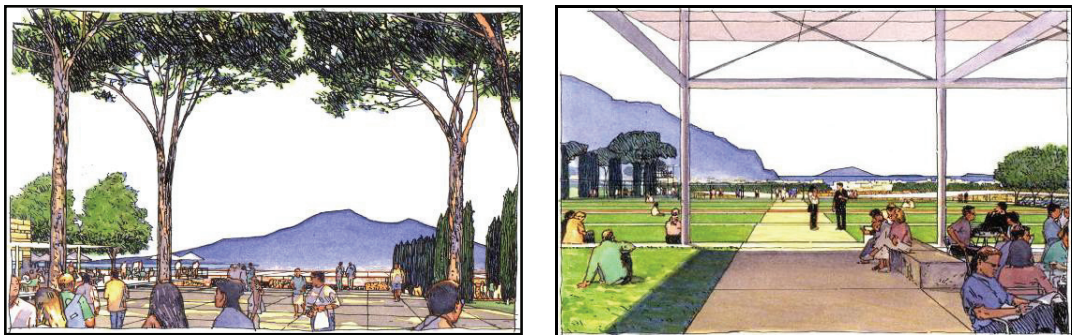


Fig. 130: Vignettes showing proposed shadowed meeting places, piazzas (left) and outdoor cafes that in conjunction with other welcome facilities, like the Villa San Marco Visitor's Center (right) will make the visit more enjoyable, interesting and relaxing [K.Crubs, RAS]

The park will be ringed by large Umbrella pines, while main access and connecting pathways will be made visible and lined up with different tree types (Fig.131); the site will be enhanced by special architectural night lighting, which will make it visible and recognizable even from Pompeii. New roofing and outdoor theaters –exploiting

the great views and sunsets over the Bay - will add to its overall visibility as part of the natural and urban landscape of modern Castellammare (Fig.132).



Fig. 131: Vignettes showing proposed landscape solutions for different locations within the site; the park will be ringed by large Umbrella pines (right), main access and connecting pathways will be made visible with different tree types (left), and the main promenade leading to the belvedere of the urban park near Villa Arianna will be lined up with larger trees (center) [K.Crubs, RAS]

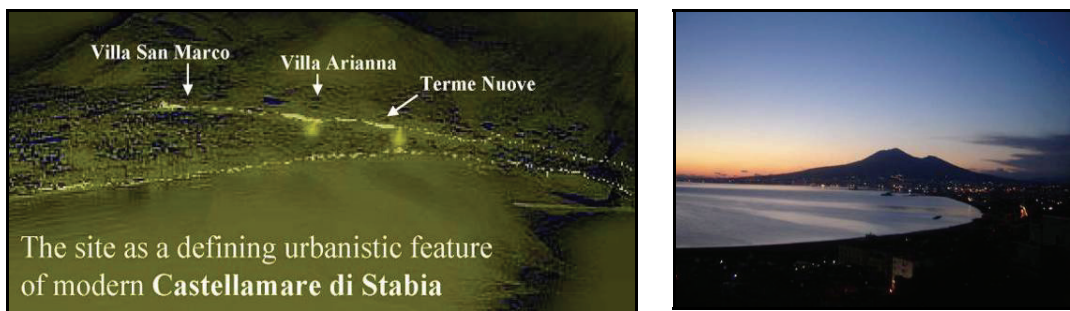


Fig. 132: Enhanced special night lighting will allow the site to be visible and recognizable even from Pompeii, as part of the natural and urban landscape of modern Castellammare (left); along with new roofing and outdoor theaters, which will also exploit the great panoramas (right)

The site would also be the obvious place and offers opportunities for a major museum of Roman Villa Culture; and could function as a city park and summer evening concert venue even when the villas are closed. The main access node would ultimately be the site at the Villa Arianna and the Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” below, where a funicular will connect the Circumvesuviana railroad station with the site; so that visitors could leave the front gates at Pompei and be at Stabiae in less than ten minutes (Fig.133).

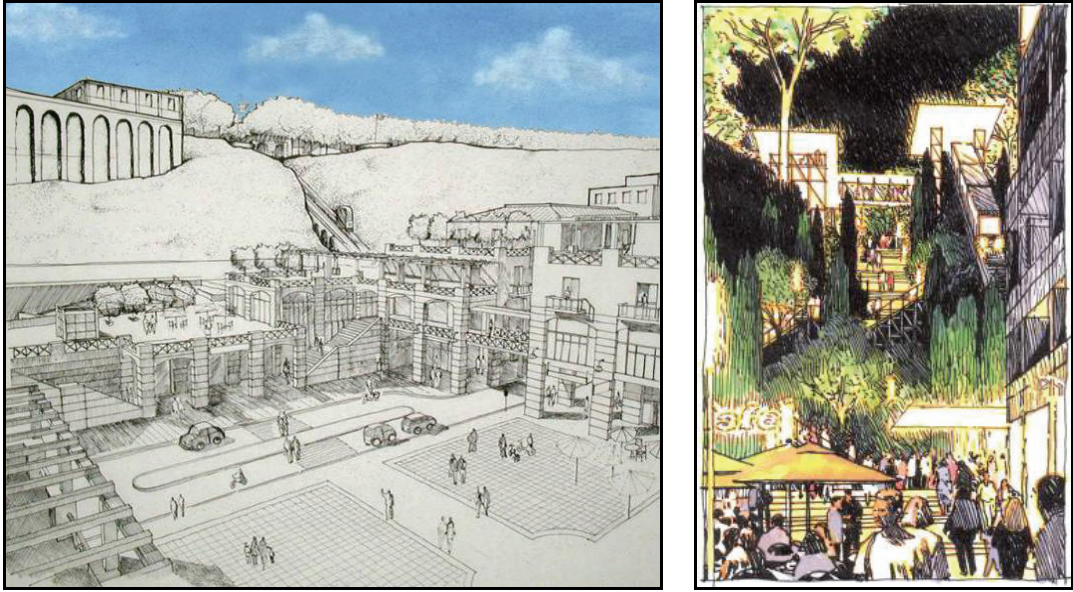


Fig. 133: Images of the proposed Piazza “Libero D’Orsi:” a new inter-modal, mixed-use development and urban gate providing local and regional access to the archaeological site at Stabiae

To help visitors finding the site, signage and directions will be improved; consistent, easily recognizable typology and system of signage should be developed, in addition to the establishment of well-defined pedestrian routes leading from the city and the rail road stations, to the site.

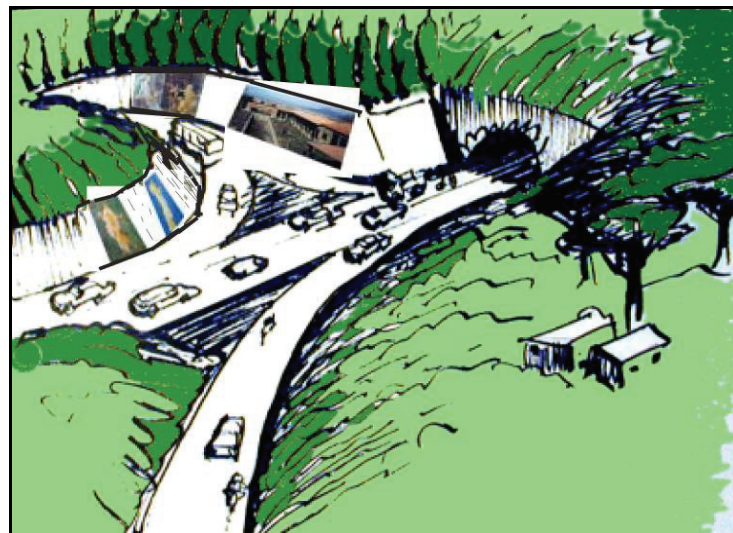


Fig. 134: Improved signage and colorful murals advertising the site will improve its visibility to visitors [T.Howe]

Colorful murals and promotional advertisement for the site should be placed at key intersections or highway exits with high volumes of vehicular and pedestrian traffic (Fig.134). Finally, opportunities for economical and business activities associated with the archaeological park can give a significant contribution in boasting the currently unstable economy of the city.



Fig. 135: Local farm markets, on-site experimental farming and wine-production can contribute to the local economy, while preserving the landscape and local traditions

Bookstores and gift-shops at the villas, restaurants and cafes (at several location within and adjacent to the site), outdoor theaters, local farm and craft markets, on-site museum and center for paleo-agriculture and wine-production, experimental farming (wine and olive oil), bed and breakfasts and possible on-site camping (in designated areas); all of the above can be considered and can produce substantial revenues, which will support the activities at the park and improve the local economy (fig.135).

Beyond the Archaeological Site: the Urban Hillside Promenade

The Villa Arianna node, and in general the overall archaeological site, can potentially be connected to the near-by thermal spa facility and park of the “Nuove Terme di Stabiae” (located on the continuation of the Stabiae plateau, just across the gorge on

the west side of the site); simply with the creation of a pedestrian bridge, which can also become a landmark feature to welcome visitors arriving into the city from the highway to the south (Fig. 136 and 137).

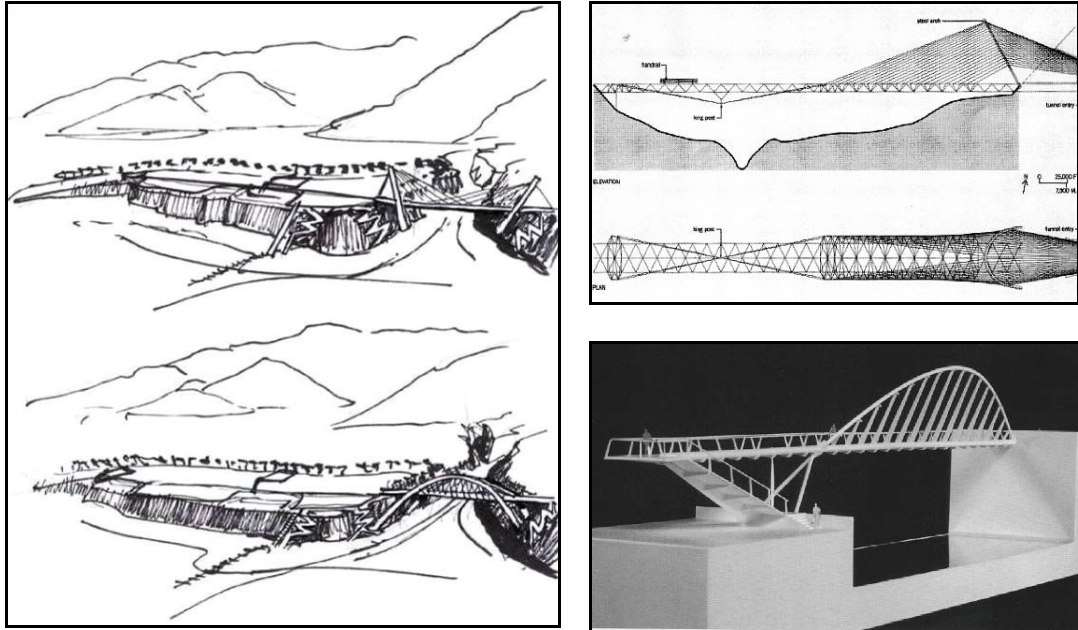


Fig. 136: Images of pedestrian bridge precedents by Calatrava (lower right) and Pei (upper right); study sketches (left) of possible connections and bridge between the west side of the archaeological park and the thermal spa on the opposite side of the gorge [T.Howe]

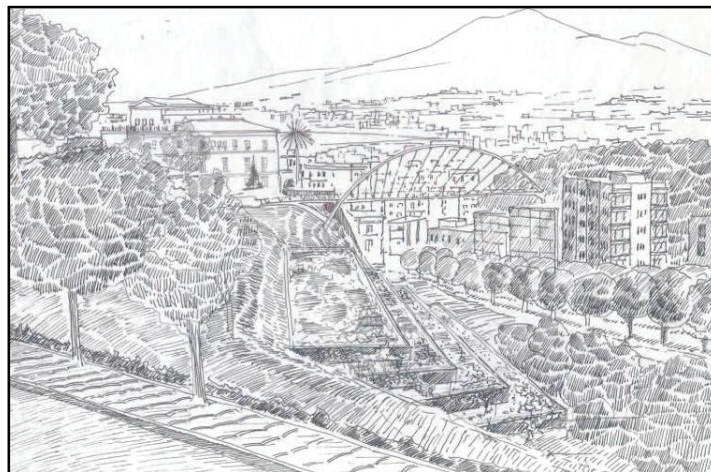


Fig. 137: Vignette showing the proposed pedestrian bridge, with views of Castellammare and Vesuvius in the background; the bridge can become a welcome landmark feature of the city for visitors coming into downtown from the highway to the south [UMD student-faculty design team]

The cliff-side panoramic promenade will then continue beyond the west edge of the archaeological site and the gorge, from Villa Arianna to the spa; and will eventually bring visitors either towards the hillside of Castellammare and the villages at the foothill of Mount Faito, or down below towards the historical city center, the modern downtown and the seafront (Fig.138).

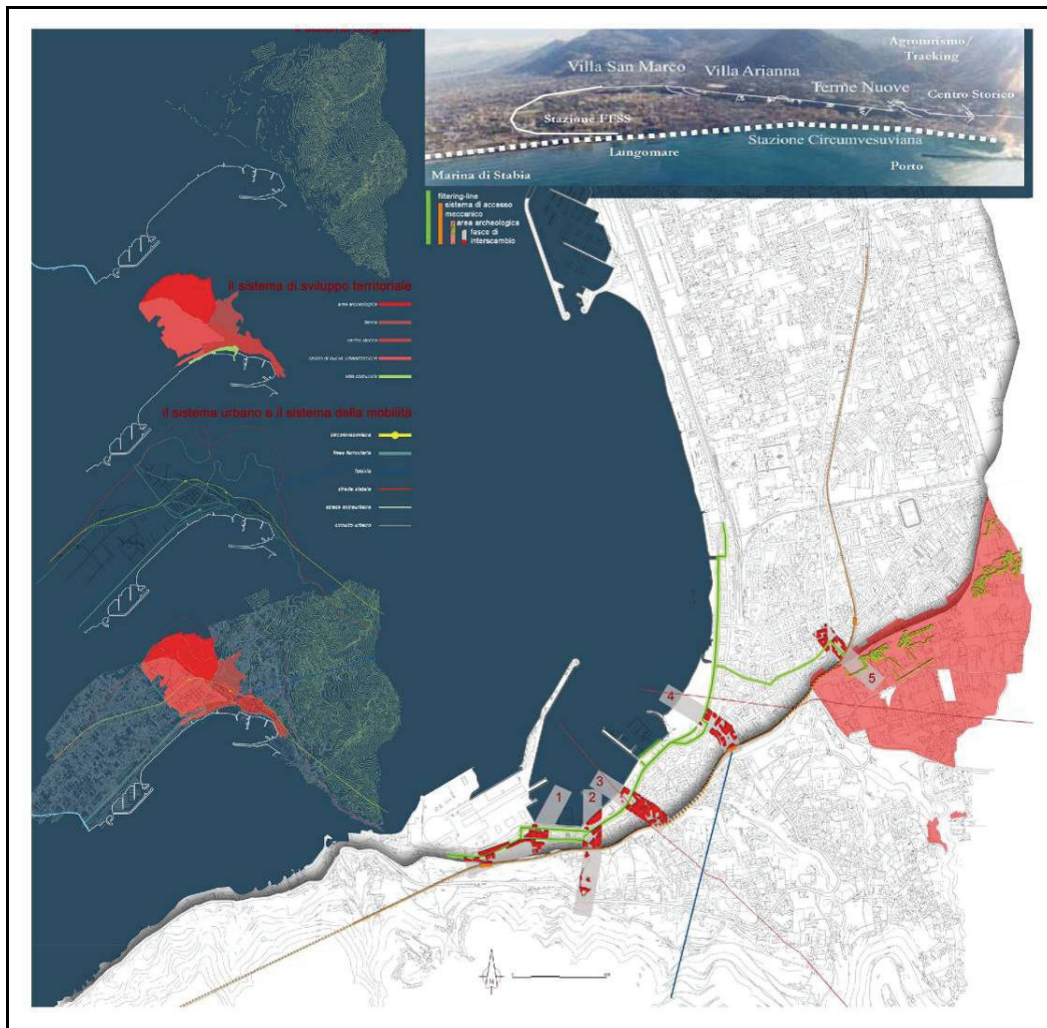


Fig. 138: Plan showing the panoramic promenade and its different vertical connections along the hillside, linking downtown Castellammare at sea-level with the gardens and villages at the foothill of Mount Faito [UMD-University of Naples]

As result, the entire hillside of Castellammare (with all its different settlements and amenities) will become integrated thanks to the panoramic promenade and several hillside vertical connections to downtown. Starting from the archaeological site and ending miles to the west at the medieval castle on the hillside above the historic center (alternatively at downtown, or at the seafront), this promenade will create one city-wide hillside system of gardens, sites, panoramic belvederes and pathways to enjoy the beautiful views of the Bay and the natural environs at the foothill of Mount Faito (Fig.139).



Fig. 139: Plan showing the pedestrian promenade, which creates a citywide hillside system of gardens, sites, panoramic belvederes and pathways to enjoy the beautiful views of the Bay and the natural environs at the foothill of Mount Faito [NYIT]

The promenade will reactivate several key-places downtown (Fig.140 and 141); while generating urban renewal interventions that can reshape important nodes in the city and promote economical and social development in the region.

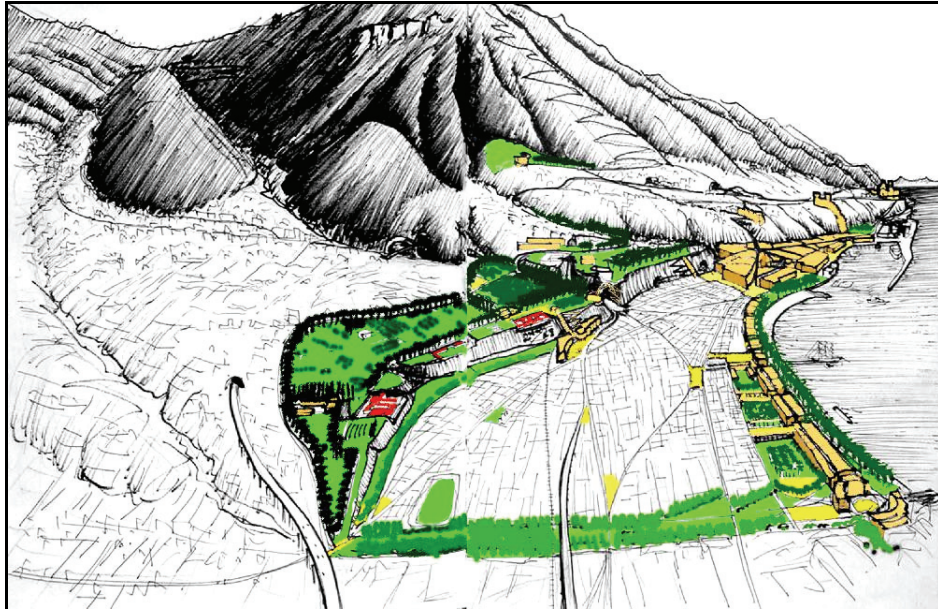


Fig. 140: Bird-eye view of Castellammare, proposed archaeological park, and network of amenities linked together by a citywide hillside panoramic promenade and system of urban connections within the city fabric, the seafront, and the regional transit system [vignette by T.Howe]

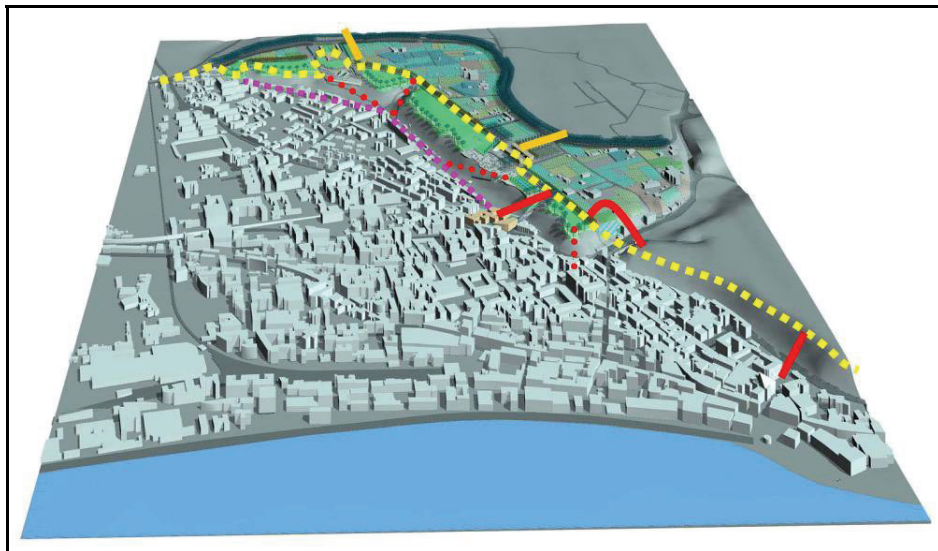


Fig. 141: The archaeological park as key cultural asset and integrated urban feature of modern Castellammare [T.Leader, L.Varone]

The same principles adopted for the archaeological park can be used and implemented at city scale: recovery and enhancement of Castellammare's strong orientation toward the landscape, the mountains, and the Bay; and improvement of the important visual and physical relationships between its different urban clusters and districts: the historical downtown, the hillside villages, the seafront, the archaeological park, the spas, and the modern downtown and shopping district (Fig.142).

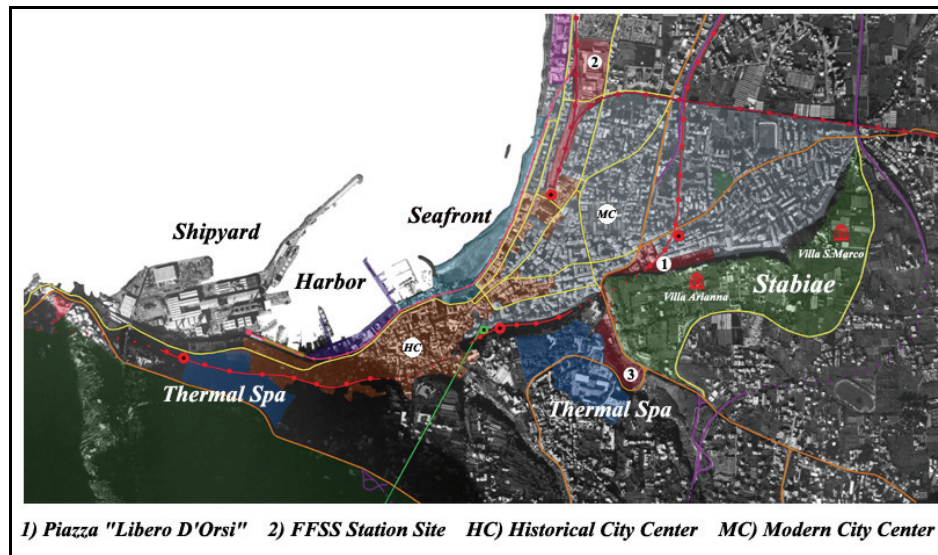


Fig. 142: The network of cultural attractions and amenities in Castellammare

Chapter 5: The Piazza “Libero D’Orsi.” A City Gate to the Archaeological Park at Ancient Stabiae

Introduction to the Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” Project

This project addresses the issues of approach, access, and re-connection between the archaeological site of Ancient Stabiae, the modern city of Castellammare, the regional transit system, and the network of tourist and cultural sites of the Bay of Naples; while proposing the redesign and revitalization of an existing (but poorly defined) city block, located at the foot of the Varano hill in the proximity of Villa Arianna. Among the principal objectives of this project, the creation of quality new urban spaces for the people of Castellammare; with a clear emotional, visual and physical connection with the archaeological site.

Piazza “Libero d’Orsi” is a new piazza in the historical fabric of the city of Castellammare that combines: a new station for the Circumvesuviana train line, connection via a funicular to the archeological park of ancient Stabiae and to the Thermal Spa Park beyond, a new district of restaurants, hotels, office and apartment buildings; while blending into a network of public spaces (as the Piazza itself), gardens, pathways along the edge of the cliff (as described in the previous chapter). The location chosen for the new Piazza and station gives the city the possibility to directly link the cultural and historic resource of the emerging archeological park at Ancient Stabiae (Varano hill) with the regional transportation network of the Circumvesuviana, stretching from Naples to Sorrento.

Visitors to the city will be able to get off at this station, and immediately ascend the hillside via the funicular to the new archeological park. Reaching the top of the ancient hillside, they will be presented with a spectacular panorama of the Bay of Naples and will be able to visit the ancient villas of San Marco and Arianna. After a morning or afternoon touring the sites, visitors will be able to browse at the visitors center and museum at the top of the hill; or descend, again via the funicular, to the vibrant Piazza “Libero d’Orsi” for a café, or check into one of the hotels surrounding the Piazza. Later, they may choose to visit one of the many restaurants at and then take a short walk after dinner to the beautiful Lungomare district.

Piazza “Libero d’Orsi” provides the essential link between the active and vital modern city of Castellamare and the tourist resource of the new archeological park.

The critical aspect of the development is the decision to combine the potential economic benefits of the archeological park with the Circumvesuviana train line.

Modeled on the station-archeological site relationships at Pompeii and Herculaneum, the urban design proposed here makes it possible for visitors to visit any of the traditional attractions of the region, such as Pompeii and Sorrento, and to just as easily plan a visit to Castellamare.

The chosen location also provides easy and direct connection to the regional highway network, which enters the city from the north and the south. Future planning

endeavors include also parking facilities adjacent to the new Piazza “Libero d’Orsi.”

The new piazza and train station complex becomes an important inter-modal transit center; where tourists, residents, and economic development conspire harmoniously for mutual benefit of all.

Context, Main Objectives and Design Principles

This project was conceived within the broader and comprehensive Master Plan for the archaeological site of Ancient Stabiae, which aims to enhance and transform the site of several Roman Seaside Villas and the earlier city into a coherent archaeological park, to promote culture and tourism. The Master Plan, which embraces and coordinates different elements and projects, has been developed with a view toward integration within the larger urban redevelopment plan of the modern city of Castellammare (Fig.143). In fact, the Park itself will be successful only if becomes an integral part of the city. This project represents in fact an important element of this broader vision toward urban connection and integration; and a key factor that will positively influence the revitalization and rebirth of modern Castellammare (from an economic, social and cultural point view).



Fig. 143: Computer generated 3D model of proposed Master Plan for the archaeological park [T.Leader, L.Varone]

Other relevant objective of this project, the emotional reconnection between citizen of modern Castellammare and their historical identity, represented by the archaeological site; as well as the recovery of the cultural identity of the city. The goal is to bring people as close as possible to the site and its villas- physically and emotionally - in order to stimulate their interest and foster their sense of belonging (Fig.144); while creating a warm, familiar urban feeling (due to the human and pedestrian scale of the project) that will facilitate the reconnection with the history of their place (*genius loci*).

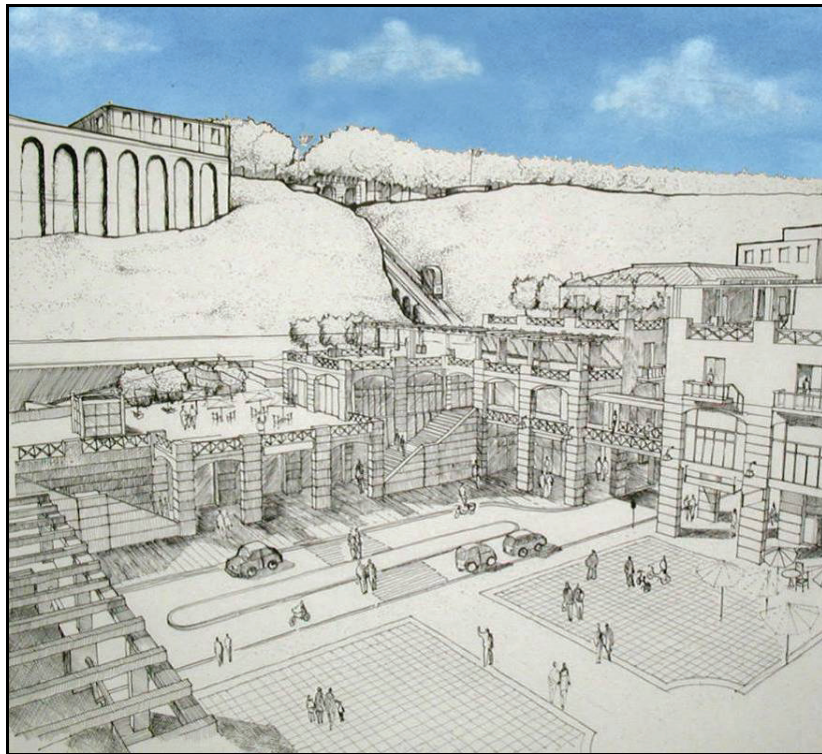


Fig. 144: View of the proposed Piazza "Libero D'Orsi," looking towards the hillside and the entry to the new train station

Additional and more specific goals for this project could be considered the following:

- To weave into the confines of the city a system of public places, pathways and parks that connect the lower modern city to resources of the upper city (including the Archeological Park, the Thermal Spas and other historic sites);
- To develop areas of the city currently underutilized, and transform them into significant public places and amenity;
- To provide new opportunities for housing, retail and cultural development in a city with few large build-able areas.
- To add this new Piazza into the inventory of beautiful public squares and places that characterize the modern and historic city of Castellamare di Stabia.

Some of the design principles informing the project are:

- Combining culture, commerce and transit in the development of Piazza “Libero d’Orsi.” Overlapping activities (such as dining, tourism and urban living) help to create and maintain vibrant urban districts;
- Retail is located at the ground level of the buildings towards the Viale Europa side of the Piazza;
- The transit center is also the location of public facilities, such as a conference center, exhibition center, or theater complex;
- Vertical connections between the lower and the upper town should be made as clear parts of the continuity of urban places in Castellamare;
- New buildings should be designed to help establishing a sense of place, in service of the making of an urban “place”. An urban code, showing façade types and

systems of organizations respectful of local traditions, will help to make a harmonious urban place;

- The organization of buildings frames a view of the Archeological Park and the Villa Arianna from the Piazza;
- Infrastructure for transportation needs design attention as much as individual buildings;
- Automobile access should be carefully controlled, to contribute to a positive pedestrian experience;
- New places in the city need to be programmed, to service the emerging cultural and tourist economy of the region;
- The development is phased, so that people currently residing on the site will not be relocated elsewhere.

Design Approach

The Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” project represents the logical conclusion of a series of extensive urban analysis and preliminary design studies (Fig.145), aiming to improve visitor’s experience, internal organization and functionality of the archaeological site; as well as its connectivity with the modern city and with the regional network of tourist and cultural sites of the Bay of Naples.



Fig. 145: Examples of study and analysis diagrams, at urban and site scales (from previous chapters)

From these analysis and studies, the need for a strategic access node to the park (at local and regional scale) emerged. The most appropriate location for the Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” project was identified, which makes the Piazza an important urban space within the city fabric and the main gate to the archaeological site (Fig.146).

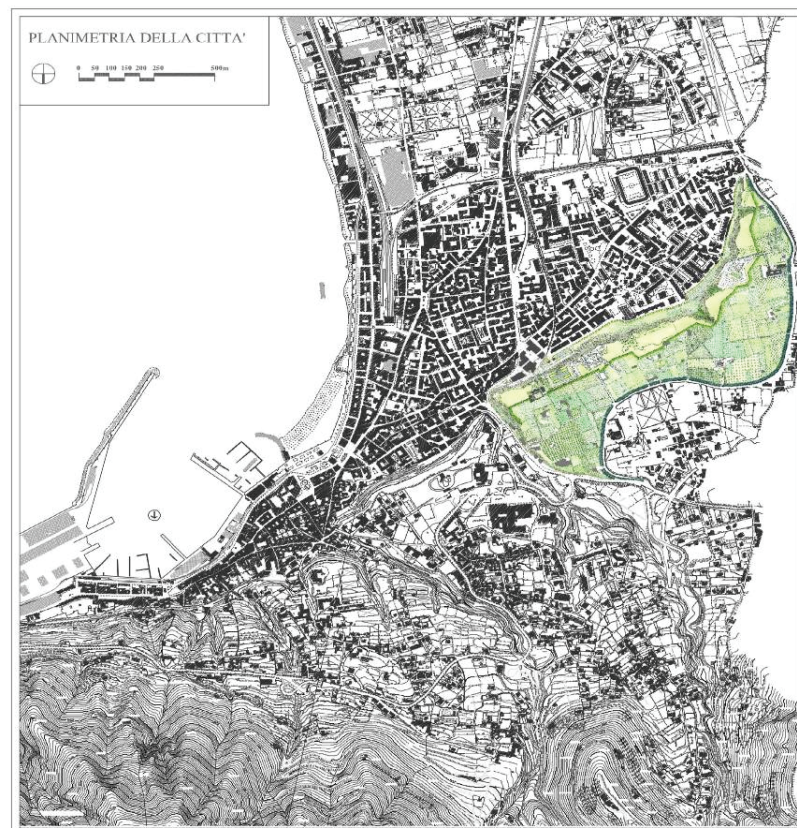


Fig. 146: Site plan of the archaeological park integrated with the urban fabric

As result of this approach, the new Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” square was conceived as an inter-modal urban project; which not only provides an articulated system of transportation and movement (from the region, to the city, to the site), but also improves and revitalizes a busy, poorly defined key city-node by providing a better urban space for the community (with emphasis on pedestrians) and by introducing new functions and mixed-use programs (a common and essential feature of most urban spaces in Italian cities). A regional commuter train line and station, combined with a funicular, ramps, pathways, escalators and elevators along the cliff-side – well integrated within a small network of piazzas, gardens, terraces and promenades - will facilitate the movement and attract both tourists and locals toward the archaeological park; while cafes, restaurants, hotel, retail, visitor’s center, residential and institutional buildings will generate that articulated and vital atmosphere typical of an urban environment (Fig.147).

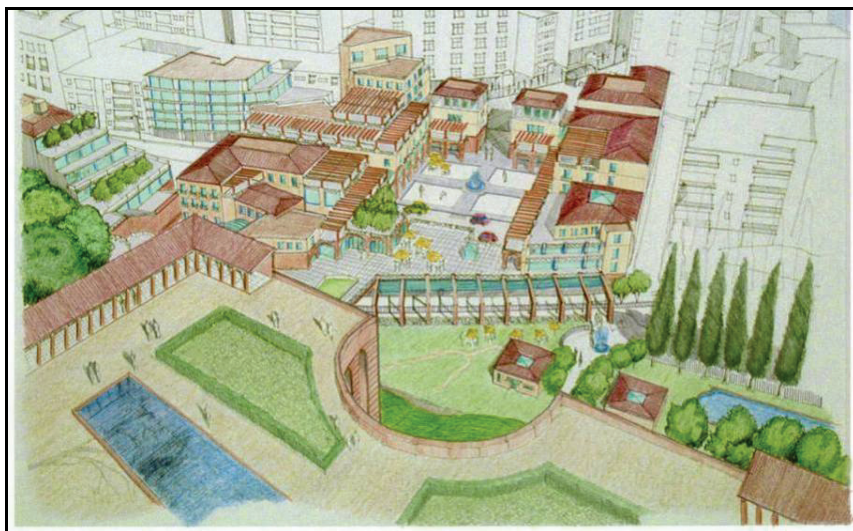


Fig. 147: Bird-eye-view of the Piazza from the hilltop at Villa Arianna

The piazza itself is conceived as an arcaded urban space surrounded by restaurants and shops at the ground level, and hotel rooms, offices and apartments on the upper floors. Access to the train line is accommodated at the ground level of the piazza, and includes a drop-off for taxis and other vehicles. The upper floors of the station building provide access to the funicular and to terraces for viewing the hillside and the villas. The former shooting range is converted to a public garden, and serves as the entry point to the park from the lower hillside area towards east.

Selection of Project Site

Starting from the framework established by the Master Plan, and as the result of a series of design analysis and hypotheses focusing on the overall functional organization of the archaeological site and on the study of appropriate internal and external connections; the area adjacent to Villa Arianna (Fig.148-151) emerged as a key element to achieve the desired connection between the archaeological site, the modern city and its “network of amenities.”

Furthermore, this area could become easily accessible also in terms of regional context (Fig.149), by enhancing and developing existing infrastructures (the Circumvesuviana commuter train line and the regional highway).



Fig. 148: City map showing location of project site (in red)

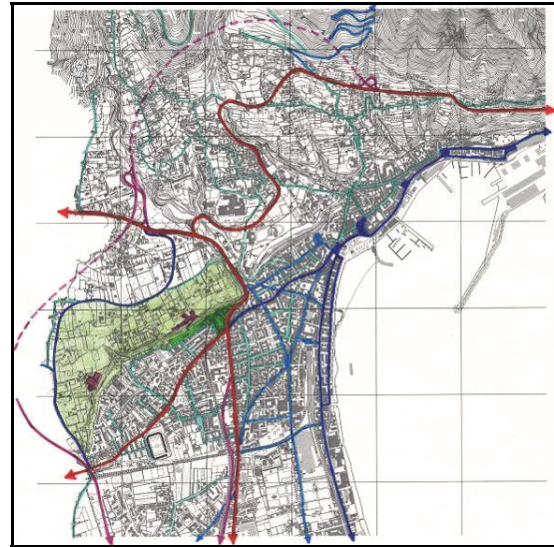


Fig. 149: Circulation diagram of downtown Castellammare



Fig. 150: Site map showing the archaeological park and location of the proposed Piazza "Libero D'Orsi"

The main reasons behind the choice of this area for the location of the new proposed Piazza – located at the foot of Villa Arianna, between the north edge of the archaeological site and a busy city intersection – are the following:

- Proximity to the existing Circumvesuviana train line: this local and regional commuter train line connects Castellammare with Pompeii, Herculaneum, Naples, Sorrento and the other cities along the Bay; it is highly used by tourists and locals as well, to commute and visit the region;
- Proximity to the highway exits, which connects the region to the Amalfi-Sorrento Coast and the city of Castellammare. In fact, the project site is located between two exits: the first on the hillside (to the south of the archeological site, few hundred yards away from Villa Arianna); the second one at city level, providing direct access to downtown Castellammare;



Fig. 151: Site map showing the Master Plan integrated with the proposed Piazza “Libero D’Orsi”

- Pivotal location with respect to the archaeological site and to the city center, the hillside thermal spa facility and park, the proposed panoramic promenade along the edge of the cliff (connecting the park with the other amenities and districts of Castellammare);
- Availability of buildable sites (Fig.152) like: the area at the intersection of Viale Europa and the shooting range at Via Grotta San Biagio (city level); and the area adjacent to Villa Arianna (hillside), currently owned by the Archaeological Superintendancy of Pompeii.



Fig. 152: Detail of 3D computer model with location of project site

Current Conditions of Selected Project Site

The archaeological site is today very disorienting and hard to find; but ironically, the local railroad lies just at the foot of the hill! Especially around Villa Arianna, the condition that better describes the status of the overall site (Fig.153-156) is one of a complete separation from the city below, especially in terms of access.

A simple funicular, integrated with the commuter train-line, will allow even the most timid tourist to leave Pompei and be in Stabiae in only seven/eight minutes.



Fig. 153: Site plan with location of proposed Piazza (area in dark red, left); images of current site conditions (right)



Fig. 154: Aerial photos of selected site, with indication of project boundaries (in red, central photo)

The current access to the two villas is from the rear of the site; furthermore, there is no internal connection between the two villas, neither between the site itself and the city. The cliff clearly represents a physical barrier (Fig.155). Nevertheless, the archaeological site has great potentials for an easy access and for both internal and external connections, as illustrated earlier in this document. In fact, remains of the original Roman pathways and streets still remain; as well as a ramp serving Villa Arianna, which once granted access to the villa directly from the shore below. All these elements can be rehabilitated to their original use and enhanced in order to connect again the site with the city below.

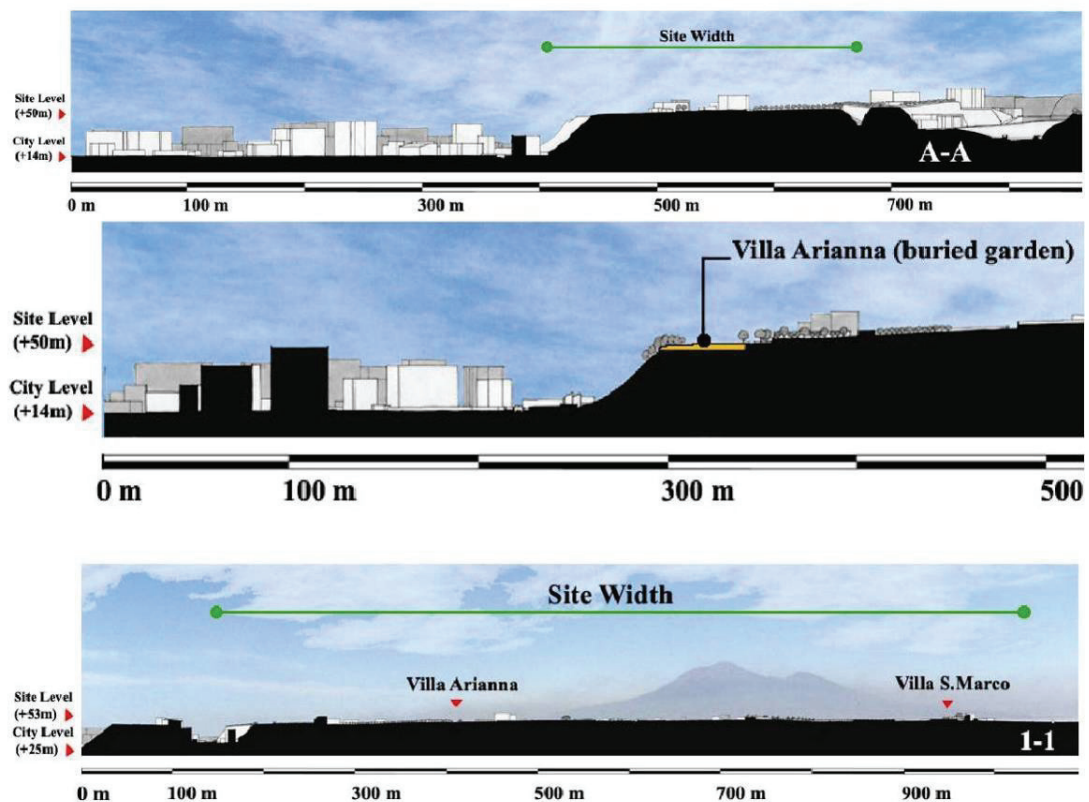


Fig. 155: Site sections at different locations along the cliff and the site, current conditions

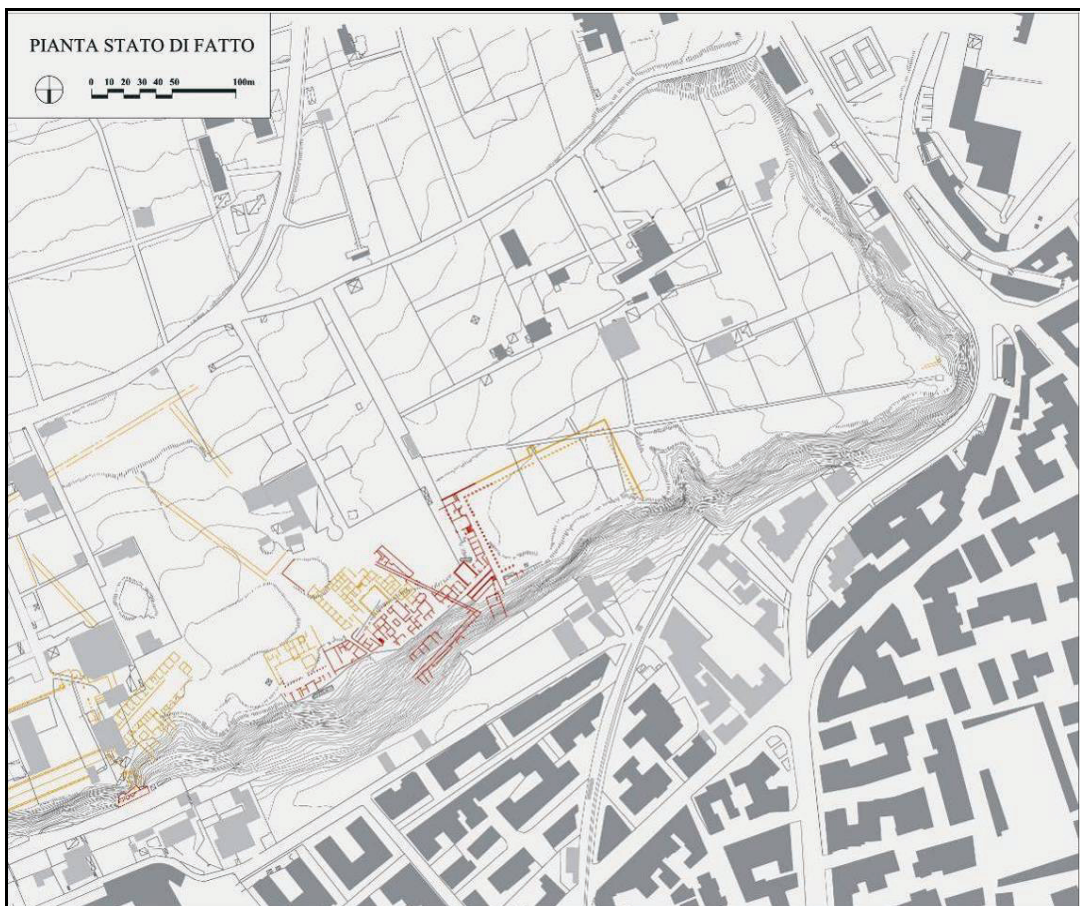


Fig. 156: Site plan (bottom) and model (top) of current conditions at selected project site

Design Investigation and Process

As explained before, the process of investigation started at a regional scale (to understand the archaeological site in a broader context); focusing especially on the relationship and connections with the near-by tourist and archaeological sites (Pompeii, Herculaneum, Naples, Sorrento, etc.). The analysis eventually moved to a more urban scale, to understand how the project site relates to the city.



Fig. 157: Some examples of site analysis diagrams: building construction year (top left), land-use at ground floor (top right), current building use (bottom left), building height (bottom right)

Once acquired a better understanding of the urban context - and addressed, at a larger scale, more specific aspects pertinent to the overall organization of the archaeological park - the focus of the design investigation shifted to select a potential project site where establishing the main connecting “feature” and urban “gate” to the archaeological park.

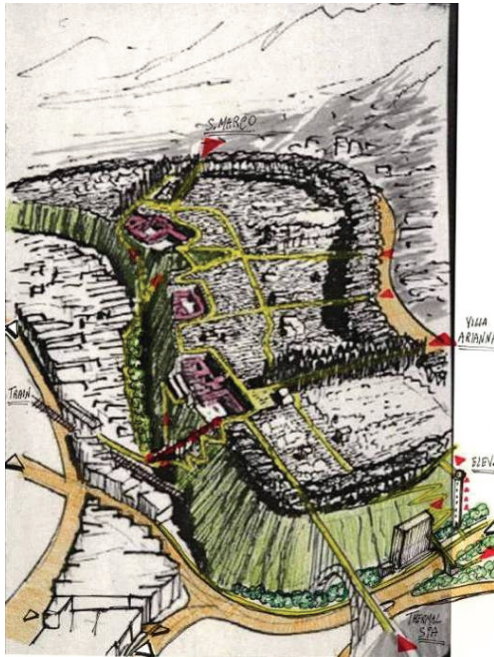


Fig. 158: Study sketch of possible site connections and links

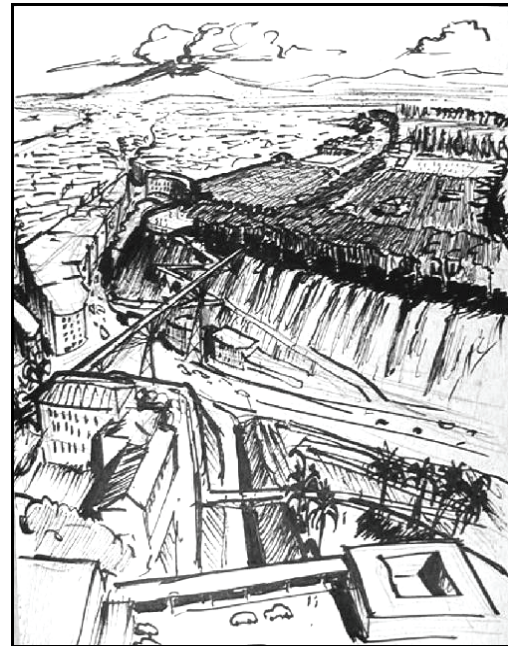


Fig. 159: Study sketch for a pedestrian bridge [T. Howe]

Some of the strategic choices and design features characterizing the Piazza project could be summarized as follow:

- Relocation and redesign of the existing - but inadequate - station of the Circumvesuviana commuter rail line; the train tracks will be kept in their current location;

- A new funicular station, interconnected with the train station, which will provide immediate access from city to the archaeological site (specifically, to the Villa Arianna site);
- Enhancement of the existing access to Villa Arianna from the rear of the archaeological site, on the hillside (used mainly by visitors coming by car or tourist bus from the regional highway);
- New public urban space featuring a sequence of piazzas, parks, gardens and terraces integrated into a system of movement; which also provides different opportunities to access the archaeological park, as well as other near-by sites;
- Land use promoting mixed-use functions (refer to the architectural program later in this chapter);
- Replacement of several existing structures - old and without any architectural and historical relevance - with new buildings.

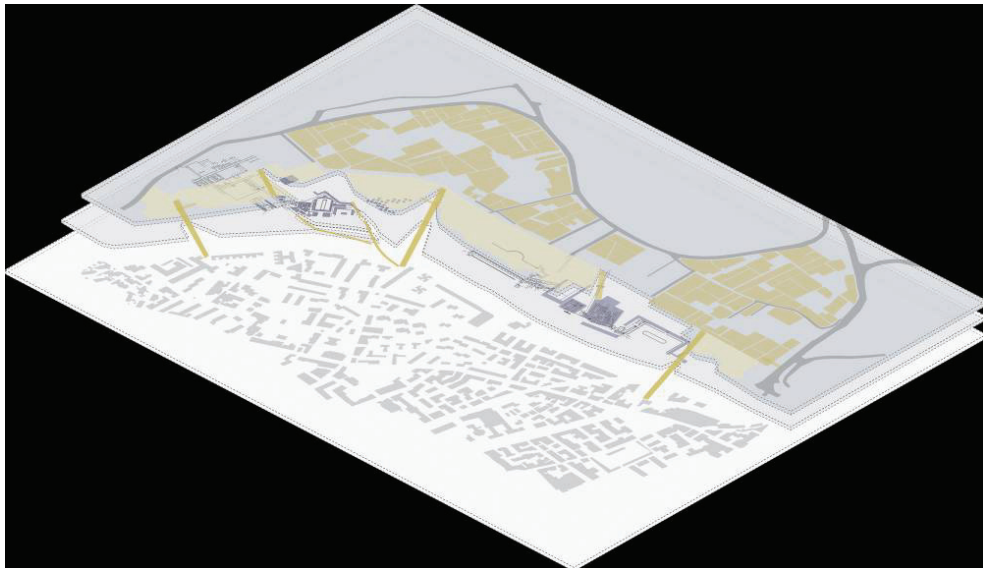


Fig. 160: 3D study diagram showing site layers and possible connections along the cliff



Fig. 161: Some examples of study models built to test different layouts and schemes for the Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” project

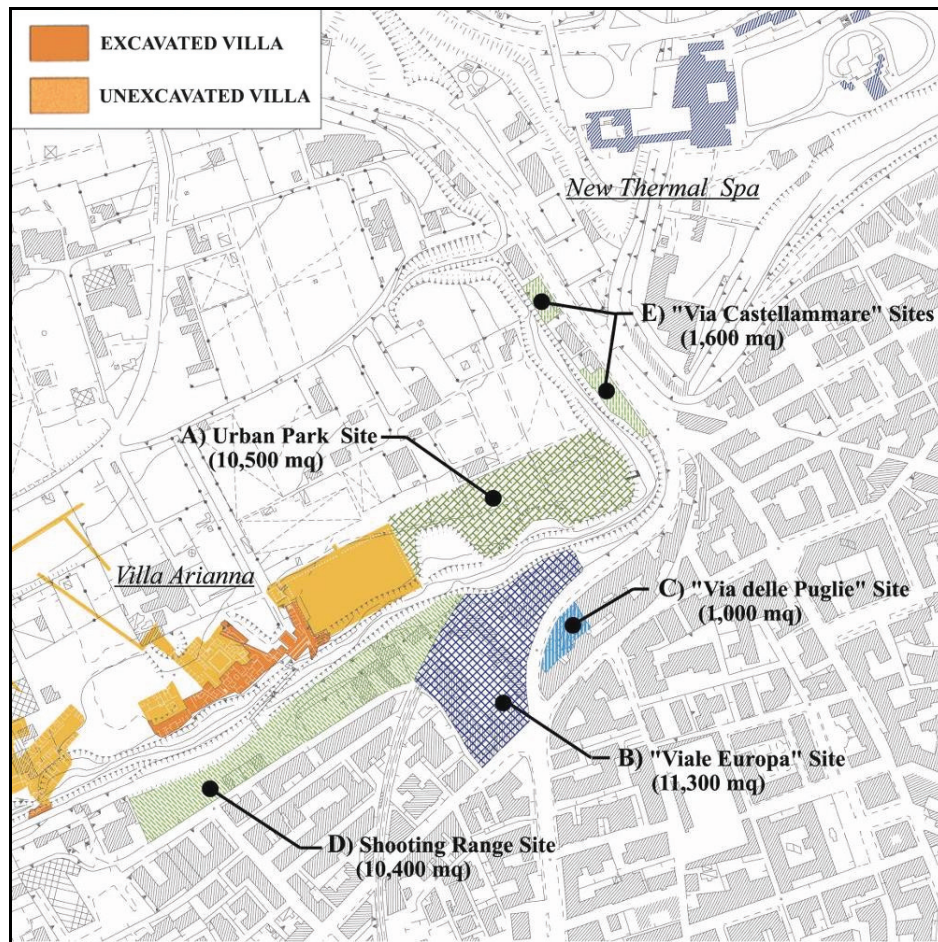


Fig. 162: Site plan with indication of selected project sites and their relative sizes and data

Key Features of Proposed Design and Site Access

The key element of the proposed design is obviously the relocation of the existing Circumvesuviana train station; from its actual address at Via Nocera to the foot of the cliff, in the proximity of Villa Arianna. This new proposed location (Fig.163) is without any doubt, much more accessible and closer to the archaeological site; more easy to use for potential users, and more visible in general. The new redesigned station not only will provide a quite larger (1,600 square meters), more modern and functional facility than the current one (the existing station resembles more a

temporary structure than a permanent station); but it is also more adequate to exploit the potentials offered by the Circumvesuviana train line (used by thousands of tourists to move around the region every year).

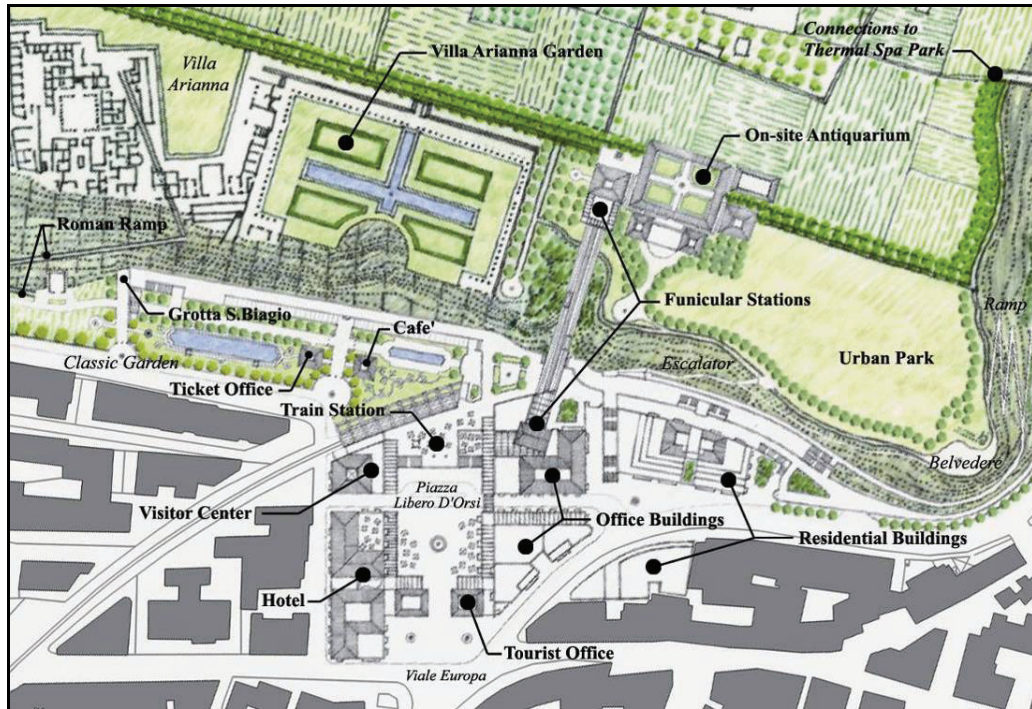


Fig. 163: Site plan of proposed Piazza "Libero D'Orsi" showing land-use and program

Furthermore, the new station is directly connected (internally and externally) to a new funicular station. The funicular, which exploits the dramatic difference of grade between the city and the archaeological site above, takes the visitor up to the hilltop in only few seconds. Tourists and locals can now easily access the archaeological site; and once arrived in the vicinity of Villa Arianna - where the funicular lands – can immediately and comfortably start the tour of the Roman villas.



Fig. 164: Site plan (bottom) and model (top) of the proposed design for the Piazza “Libero D’Orsi”

The funicular is not only a familiar feature in the regional landscape (other examples of funiculars can be found in Naples, Capri, Positano, etc.); but offers visitors also the opportunity, during the ascension, of having a first look at the site and the dramatic cliff where the Romans built their luxurious seaside villas. This initial visual approach to the site is quite important, as it helps visitors understanding the orientation and layout of the archaeological park.

The funicular, on the other side, is not the only choice offered to visitors to reach the hilltop; an integrated system of ramps, stairs, pathways and terraces along the side of the cliff - as well as escalators and elevators - give the possibility of choosing different ways of reaching the plateau and beginning the tour of the archaeological site. These features also animate the cliffside itself; and give life to a landscape - today completely covered by dense vegetation - which was once the stage of the great villas and its ingenious system of panoramic terraces. The proposed restoration of the original Roman ramp will also allow the recovery of the original route used by the Romans to reach the villas, when coming by boat. These elements, within the overall integrated system of movement, represent a key feature for the re-organization and connection of the different zones of the archaeological site, as proposed in the Master Plan.

For visitors coming by car or tourist bus, the more convenient way to approach the site is from rear of the site itself. In fact, the exit of the regional highway to Sorrento is located few hundred yards from the existing entry of Villa Arianna, to the south;

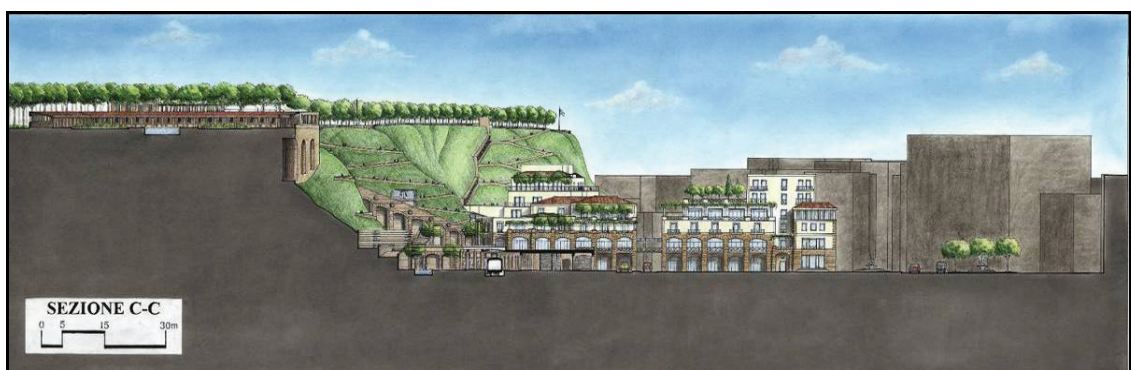
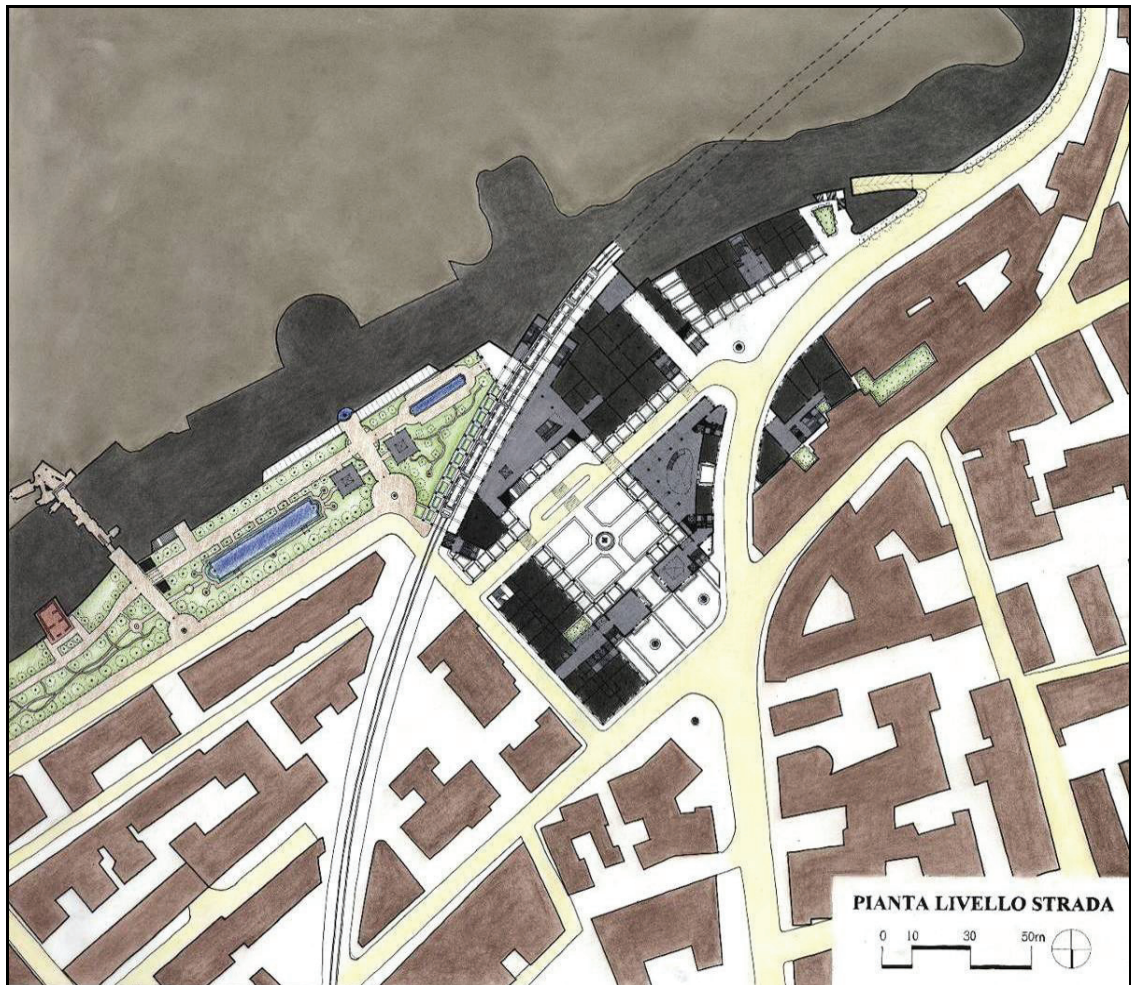


Fig. 165: Ground Level plan (top) and north-south section (bottom) of the proposed Piazza

with this approach, it is possible to avoid entering the busy downtown and to reach the archaeological sites directly from the main highway. By enhancing existing facilities and providing new welcome services—new parking, visitor's center, ticket office, cafes, restaurants, etc. - visitors will be offered a much easier access to the Stabiae site, and a more enjoyable visit and cultural experience.

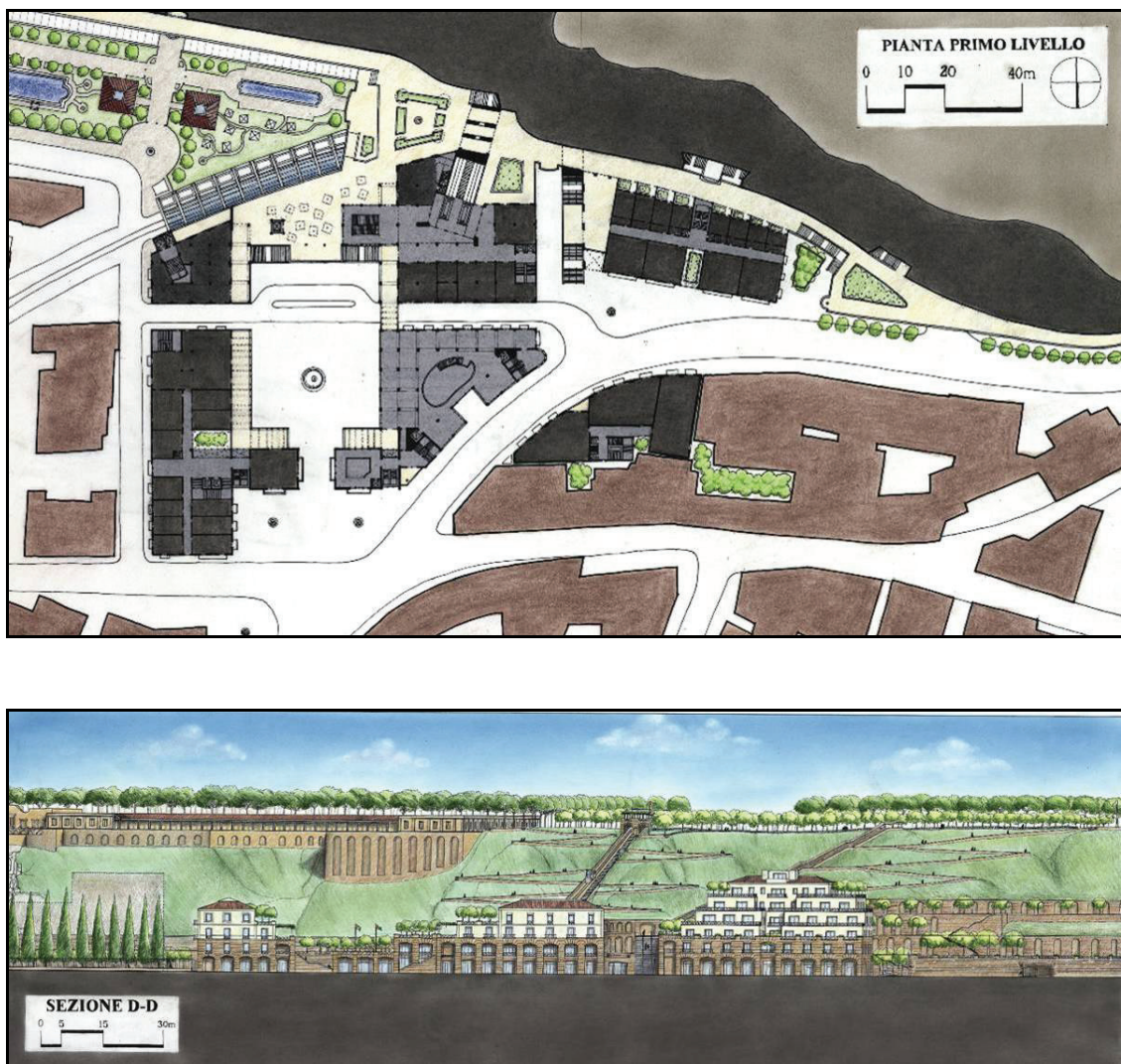


Fig. 166: Second Level plan (top) and east-west section/elevation (bottom) of the proposed Piazza

All the above, if implemented, will represent a major improvement to the site; also in consideration that today not only is impossible to enter the site from the city below, but it is also difficult for tourists just finding the entry to the archaeological areas.



Fig. 166: Third Level plan (center) and north-south section (bottom) of the proposed Piazza

Architectural Layout and Site Circulation

The adopted layout creates an enclosure and inner square - the so-called “Piazza Libero D’Orsi” - which becomes the pivotal public space of the entire project. The pedestrian Piazza is detached from the congested intersection at Viale Europa by



Fig. 168: View of the outer square at Viale Europa, with views opening up towards the inner square - the Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” - the cliff, and Villa Arianna (in the background)

an outer but smaller public space, functioning as a “gasket” or foyer for the main Piazza (Fig.168); this smaller outer enclosure not only welcomes visitors, but also creates a new pedestrian space open to the city and providing at same time relief from the busy and “compressed” city intersection.

Once visitors are inside the main inner Piazza (Fig.169), they become part of a more calm and quite urban environment – away from the traffic and confusion of the downtown (fig.171); here the open and clear views of the dramatic cliff (Fig.170) and of the impressive terraced structure of the panoramic garden of Villa Arianna (fully excavated and philologically reconstructed in its missing portions), become the true “highlights” of the scene that opens up before the eyes of visitors (while the Piazza

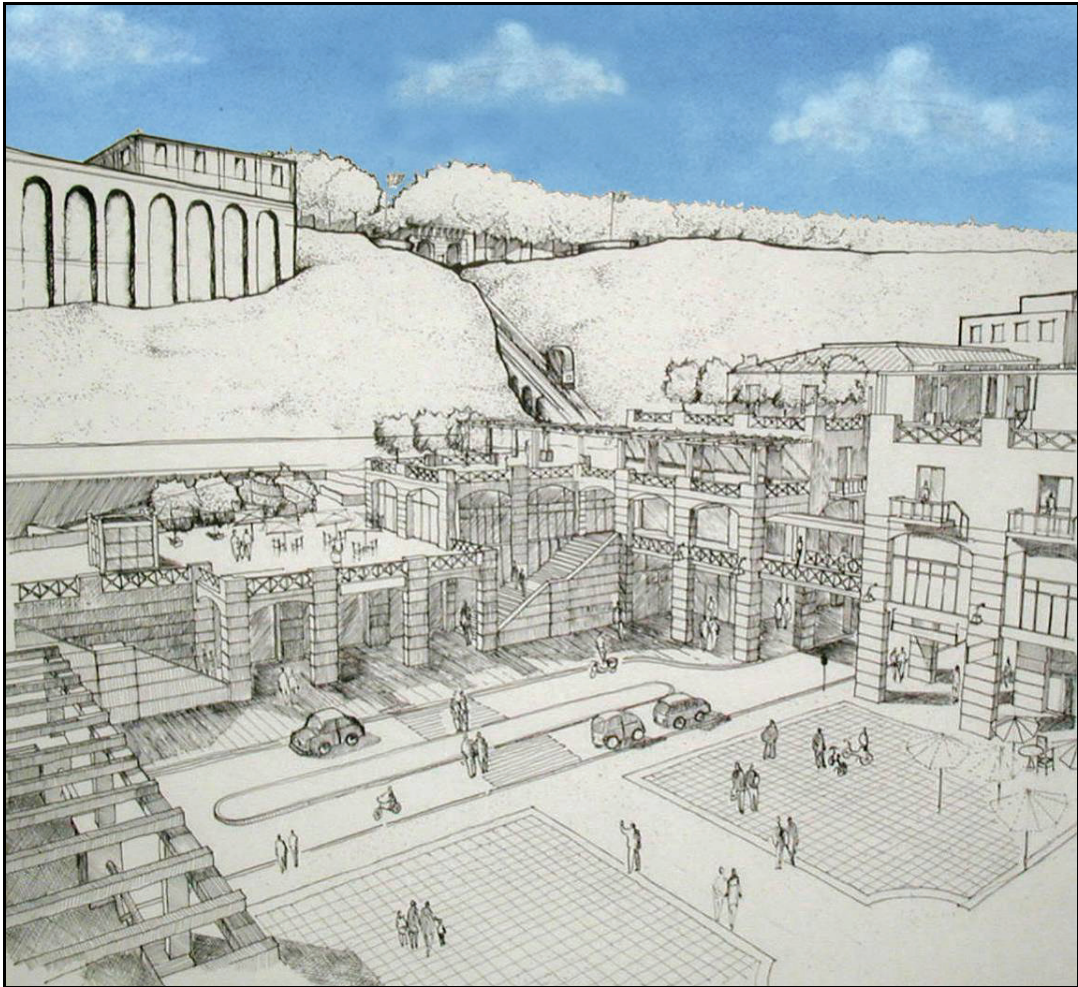


Fig. 169: View of the Piazza "Libero D'Orsi," looking towards the train station and the funicular ascending the cliff and landing in the vicinity of Villa Arianna and its excavated garden

itself becomes the "platea" from which it is possible to admire the breathtaking view). Once visitors have ascended the cliff and reached the hilltop, the views from the garden of Villa Arianna towards the Bay are breathtaking: Mount Vesuvius, the Gulf of Naples, the islands and the plain of Pompeii in the background; the Stabian Bay and the city of Castellammare in the foreground (Fig.172).

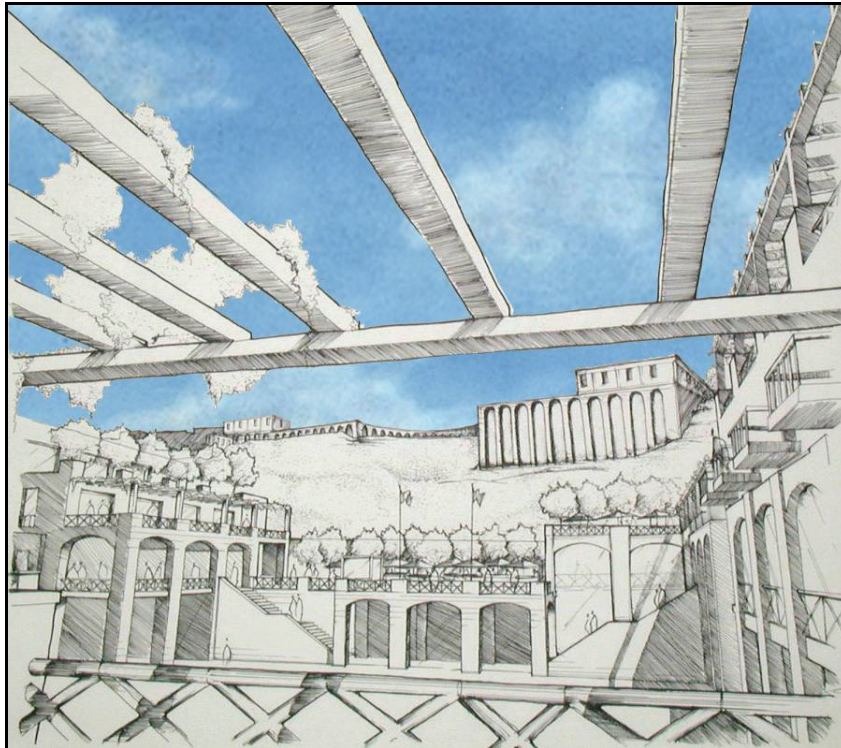


Fig. 170: View of the Piazza, looking towards the train station entry and the cliff

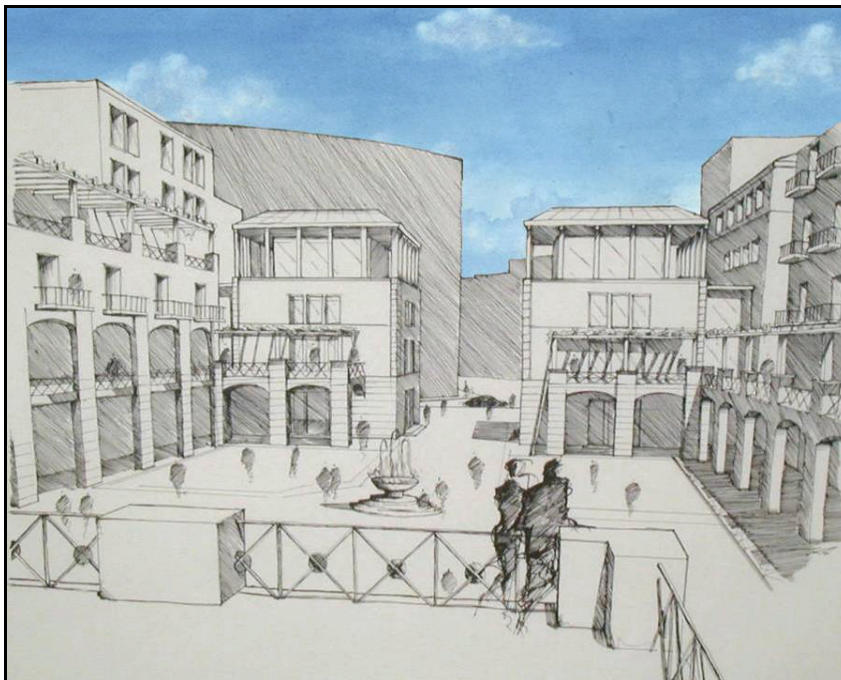


Fig. 171: View of the Piazza, looking back towards Viale Europa and the city

This panorama brings back memories from an ancient time, reminding visitors how much that view meant to the Roman Elite that dared to build these incredible villas on these dramatic sites. Now the roles are completely switched: like a theatrical performance, the dramatic panoramas of the Bay of Naples become the true “stars” on the stage; while the garden of Villa Arianna represents the “gallery” from where, exactly as happened 2,000 years ago in Roman time, visitors can admire and enjoy the enchanting and dramatic views towards Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples, just like having a “*Cubiculum* with a View.”



Fig. 172: Bird-eye-view of the excavated panoramic garden of Villa Arianna at the edge of the cliff (foreground), with breathtaking views of the city below, the Bay of Naples and Mount Vesuvius (background)

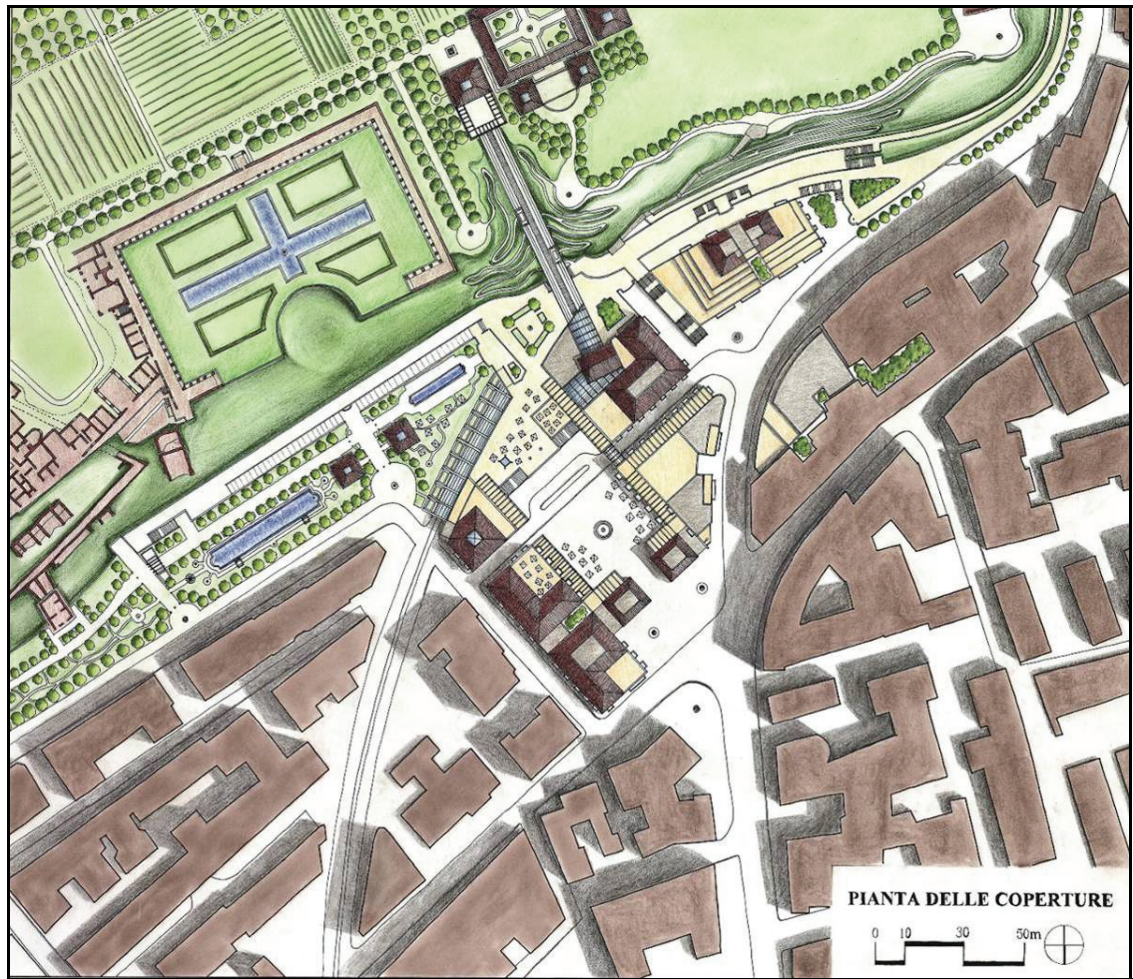


Fig. 173: Roof Level plan (top) and east-west section/elevation at Viale Europa (bottom) of proposed Piazza

Alternative Site Access and Movement

Visitors are also offered alternative options to ascend and access the archaeological site (Fig.174 and 175); this aspect is probably among the most interesting features of the proposed design. In fact, people can postpone the tour of the Roman villas, and decide to spend more time in the Piazza, strolling between shops, bars and cafes, or relaxing at one of the newly designed gardens and terraces, at the foot of the hill; or visiting the Stabiae Visitor Center, gathering useful tourist information about the city and its attractions at the new local branch of the City Tourist Office.

The funicular - which connects the Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” and the Circumvesuviana train station with the area immediately adjacent to Villa Arianna and to the new proposed on-site museum on the hilltop - represents the main device connecting the city and the archaeological site.

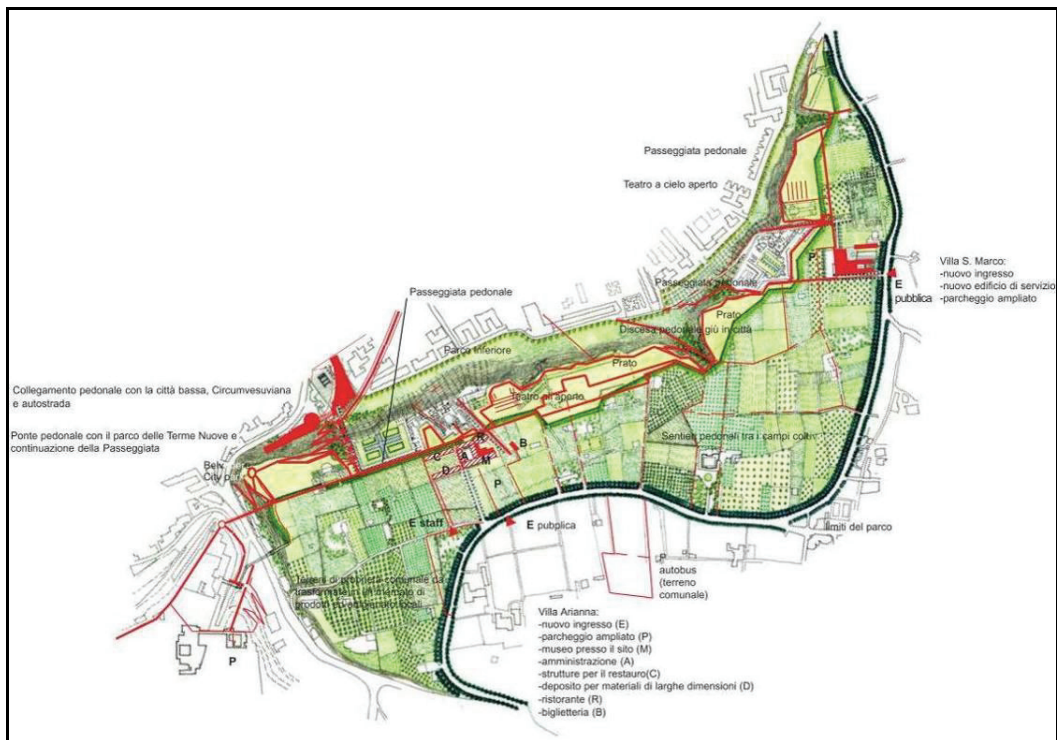


Fig. 174: Master Plan of the archaeological site with indication of alternative pathways and circulation

Once arrived on the hilltop with the funicular, visitors are presented with different options: they can immediately start the tour of the villas, entering the protected archaeological area at Villa Arianna or moving towards Villas San Marco (east side of the park); or they can decide to visit the on-site museum first, where not only they can admire the artifacts recovered in the villas, but also get oriented and receive an overview of the archaeological park, the history of the villas and their layout (which is particularly useful at the beginning of the tour, in order to better understand such a complex site like Stabiae).

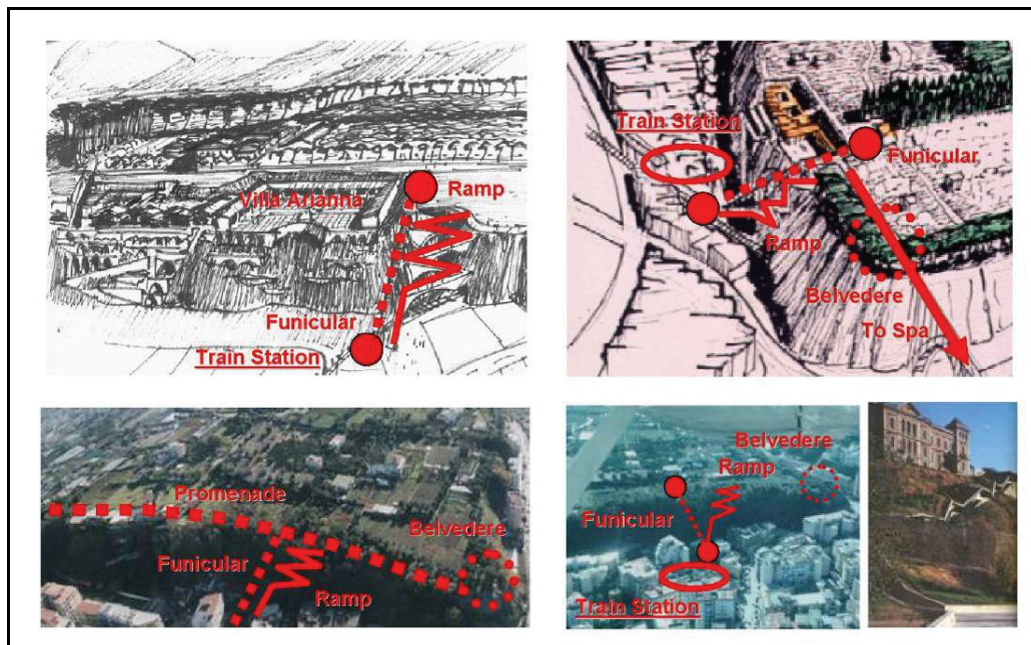


Fig. 175: Diagrams showing alternative pathways to the hilltop and connections to near-by sites

An alternative option for visitors is to postpone the visit of the villas, and instead to spend some time at the new urban park, located on the hilltop at the northwest corner of the plateau. From there, they can admire the panorama of the city and of the Bay unfolding from the Belvedere; or move to the other side of the hilltop beyond the gorge (Fig.175) and visit the thermal spa complex, and eventually going back to

downtown and the historic center (or continuing strolling along the panoramic hillside promenade, enjoying the views towards the Bay).

An other option, coming either from the Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” or directly from the train station, is to enter the Classic Garden located at the foot the cliff, on the opposite side of the train tracks (corresponding to the current location of the shooting range, which will be relocated to a more appropriate location outside the downtown). This newly designed classical park, accessible also from the street at Via grotta San Biagio, not only functions as a “gasket” and filter space between the curtain of modern buildings facing the cliff and the northern boundary of the archaeological park; but in addition, it allows access to the San Biagio grotto (V cent. A.D.) that represents one of the major attractions of the park (featuring important and very interesting early Christian wall paintings). The garden provides also a new – and very much needed - green public space for the city; furthermore, it revitalizes and gives justice to an important zone of the archaeological site (the layered foothill of the Varano hill), which has always been neglected even at the present time. This area and the garden give visitors the opportunity of relaxing before or after the visit to the park; in addition, a small café and a ticket office/information center will offer basic services to visitors. After the visit of the San Biagio grotto, visitors can either continue their tour walking through the garden and - using a rehabilitated pathway along the lower cliff-side - slowly ascending towards Villa San Marco; or, by using the restored original Roman ramp described earlier, they can reach Villa Arianna and start the tour of the Roman villas from there. From the Piazza and the terraces at the foothill, an interconnected system of pathways and ramps along the north side of the

hillside (including a covered escalator) will provide a third option for reaching the hilltop. At the west side of the hill, two ramps and an elevator will connect a smaller public garden (at city level) to the Belvedere and the urban park at the northwest corner of the hilltop.

Hillside Panoramic Promenade and Network of Amenities

The role of the connections on the west side of the Varano hill is of a great importance; especially in consideration of the broader urban context in which the park will be integrated (Fig.176).

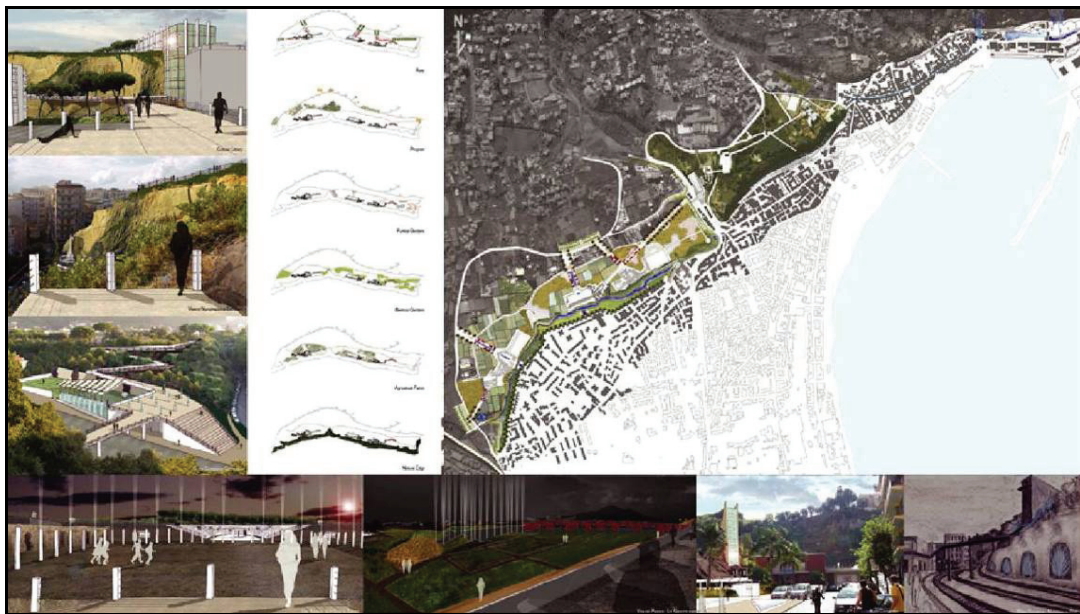


Fig. 176: Panoramic promenade of gardens and belvederes along the hillside of the city [NYIT, 2005]

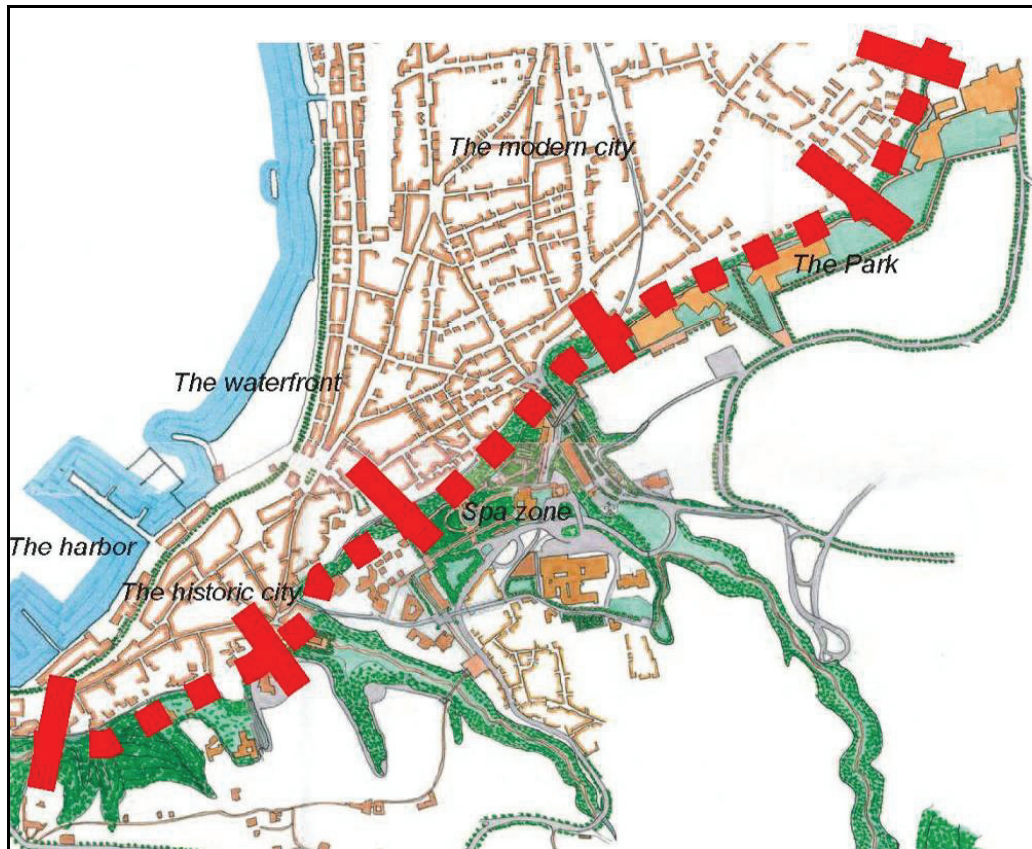


Fig. 177: Diagram of the panoramic promenade connecting the hillside with the city below

In fact, this small garden - located at the west side of the hill along Via Castellammare, and currently occupied by a temporary building and parking lot – not only will allow public access to the archaeological site and the urban park on the hilltop from a different location; but will also provide the opportunity of linking the archaeological park with the thermal spa complex, at the opposite side of the gorge. Visitors, using an elegantly designed pedestrian bridge above Via Castellammare and a system of stairs and escalators connecting the garden to the hilltop, can easily reach one of the two parks directly from downtown Castellammare; and from one site move to the other.



Fig. 178: Site plan showing the network of proposed key-places and new connections between the panoramic promenade, the hillside and the lower city

Furthermore, as described earlier, visitors can continue the tour of the city using the hillside panoramic promenade (Fig.177 and 178); which will connect the archaeological site with thermal spa complex (on the opposite side of the gorge), the historic center of Castellammare, the hillside, the medieval castle, the old thermal spa, the seafront and the old marina. In practical terms, with the creation of few strategic vertical connections between key-sites within the city (the archaeological site, the

thermal spa parks, the historic center, the seafront, etc.), it will be possible to progressively weave and establish the “network” of amenities illustrated earlier in this document (Fig.179).



Fig. 179: Aerial view of Castellammare, with the proposed panoramic hillside promenade and the integrated system of amenities and attractions

Land Use

One of the key features of this project is the proposed land use, based on mixed-use developments and integrated functions (Fig.180). The assumption that has driven the proposed design is that variety of functions and activities - cafes, restaurants, hotels, retail, residential, office and institutional buildings, etc. - will generate an animated and articulated urban environment, while assuring a vital atmosphere that will attract both locals and visitors. Consequently, this new urban Piazza will feature different uses and functions, constant activity and movement of people; all these aspects are typical characterizing features of any Italian city, piazza, or urban space. The Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” is also a pedestrian-oriented space, which will provide additional open and green spaces, as pleasant oasis away from the city traffic and congestion;

while offering visitors a typically urban experience and, above all, connections to other significant sites within the city and easy access to regional transportation.

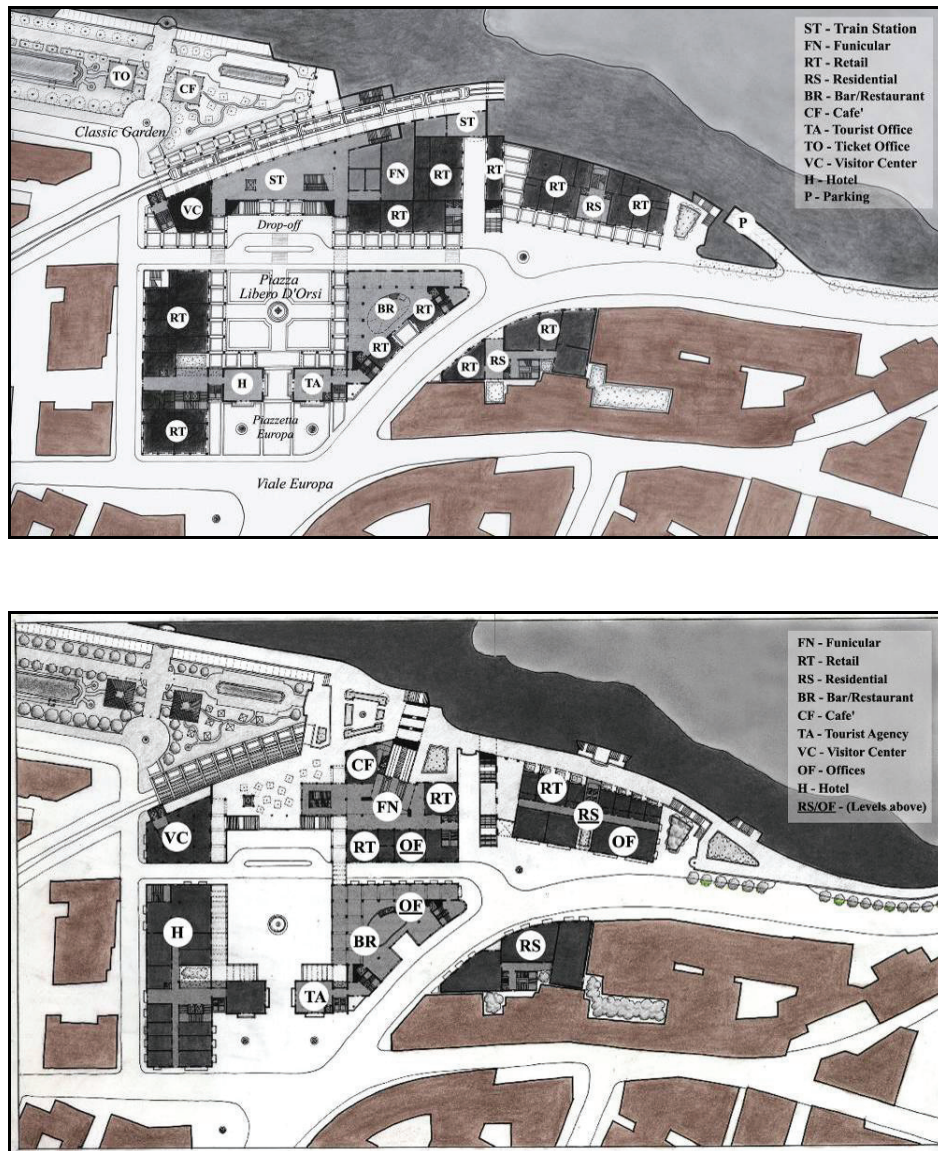


Fig. 180: Ground Level (top) and Second Level (bottom) land-use plans and program

Although the Piazza is primarily pedestrian, a new secondary road will provide not only a drop-off for the Circumvesuviana train and funicular stations; but also an

easier way of moving through and around the new Piazza (without significantly impacting the main pedestrian character of the urban space).

Architectural Program

The detailed architectural program (Fig.181) and corresponding areas for the proposed project are illustrated below and grouped as follow: total area of intervention (1); total area of proposed new edification (2); area breakdown by land use and function (3).

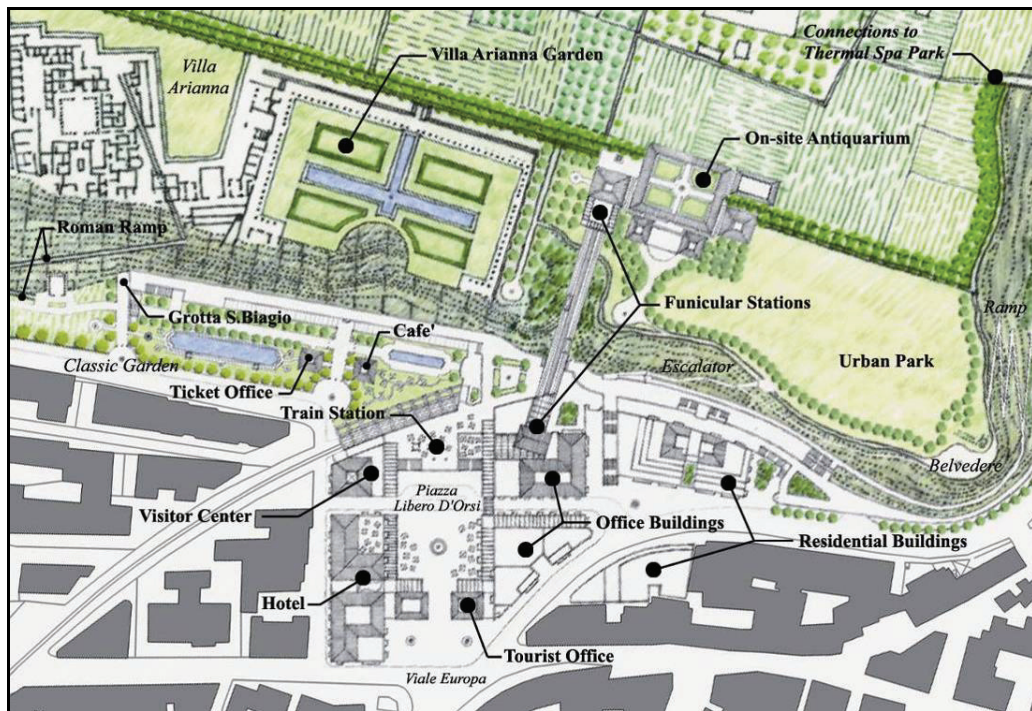


Fig. 181: Site plan of the proposed Piazza "Libero D'Orsi," with associated land-use and programs

1) Total area of intervention: 24,400 mq (2.4 hectares):

A. proposed urban park, northwest corner of hillside (10,500 mq); B. proposed Piazza "Libero D'Orsi," Viale Europa (11,300 mq); C. proposed residential building, Via

delle Puglie (1,000 mq); D. proposed Classic Garden, shooting range site (10,400 mq); E. proposed small garden, Via Castellammare (1,600 mq).

2) Total area of proposed new edification: 11,000 mq (1.1 hectares):

A. proposed Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” (8,700 mq); B. proposed residential building, Via delle Puglie (790 mq); C. proposed on-site museum, Villa Arianna site (1,100 mq); E. proposed funicular (hilltop station), Villa Arianna site (350 mq).

3) Area breakdown by land use and function: 28,600 mq (2.8 hectares):

A. Circumvesuviana train station: (1,500 mq); B. Funicular station (1,000 mq); C. Residential (6,500 mq); D. Office (4,300 mq); E. Retail (4,200 mq); F. Hotel (6,000 mq); G. Bar/Restaurant/Café (1,900 mq); H. Visitor Center/Ticket office (2,200 mq); I. City Tourist Office (800 mq); L. On-site museum at Villa Arianna site (1,100 mq).

New hilltop urban park and gardens (total area of 20,500 mq):

M. proposed hilltop Urban Park, Villa Arianna site (8,500 mq); N. proposed Classic Garden, shooting range site (12,000 mq); O. proposed small garden, Via Castellammare (1,600 mq).

Architectural Approach and Principles

Few words should be finally spent on describing the basic criteria and principles that have influenced the architectural design and the facades of the proposed Piazza.

Site Plan. The basic layout and orientation of the buildings aim to blend into the urban fabric and adjacent city blocks, by using existing alignments and adjusting the orientation of new buildings to the axes indicated by the surrounding blocks and

existing buildings; and by balancing them with the more articulated geometries suggested by the villas and the morphology of the cliff-side.

Elevations. The proposed buildings aim to establish a dialogue and balance with the surrounding existing fabric, in terms of building heights and volumes; furthermore, they try to blend-in with the architecture of the Roman villa and the character of the landscape, dominated by the presence of the cliff. This latter aspect is even more evident in the articulation and layout of the terraces at the different levels, in the rhythm of volumes and heights of the proposed buildings, and in the use of landscape features and other architectural elements.

Architecture and Building Facades. A more simple, elegant, and contextual architectural language has been chosen for the proposed buildings and architectural elements of this project. This approach seemed more balanced and appropriate to the presence of the near-by Roman villas; and reminiscent not only of the basic architectural features of the villas, but also of the character of existing buildings within the city fabric and the historic center. Examples of typical architectural features recurring in the local urban fabric could be: the well-defined base; a clear rhythm and simple articulation of openings (2/3 ratio of voids and solids); the use of balconies, terraces, narrow passageways, galleries; the use of traditional materials (like volcanic and local stone, limestone, tufa brick, terracotta roof tiles, etc.).

The Goal. The overall design objective is the reconnection and balance between the ancient site, the landscape, the local and traditional architecture, the fabric of the modern city, and the new architecture for the proposed Piazza; while creating that warm, familiar and recognizable urban feeling, based on human scale, pedestrian-

oriented approach, and contextual design. This design strategy will contribute and help people re-connecting themselves with the history and identity of their place.

Following Developments and Ongoing Urban Studies by the School of Architecture and Planning at University of Maryland

The Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” project serves also as a model for how the lower city of Castellamare should connect to resources and attractions not located in the lower city. For example, other vertical connections to the spa complex just to the west of the archeological park or to the Villas at Quisisana should be developed. These nodes should be planned as important public places in the network of public spaces in Castellamare di Stabia.

Since 2000, and in conjunctions with the success of the Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” and archaeological Master plan projects, the faculty and students of the School of Architecture and Planning of the University of Maryland have done a continuing series of design and urban concept studies in areas adjacent to and outside the park. These study projects - some of which have been implemented thanks to collaborations with other partner universities, local authorities and professionals – have not only generated valuable design ideas; but have also started serious planning discussions among local authorities, and the involvement of citizen and local architects that represent crucial factors for the success of any planning process (Fig.182). This has been proven to be a very successful approach; not only in establishing a fruitful collaboration with the Italians; but also in developing didactic and cultural exchanges.



Fig. 182: Posters advertising some of the urban design studies and projects by student-faculty joint teams from the University of Maryland

These projects are having a real effect on actual development. In 2001, a study for an infill project and adaptive reuse of the area of the soon-out-of-use F.F.S.S. State railroad station was developed by a team of students and faculty of the University of Maryland (Fig.182, left). The project proposed the reconnection and revitalization of the residential zone behind the tracks to the seaside quay. This proposal attracted the attention of the city planning office; and in 2004 was awarded the national first prize for faculty-student joint project by the prestigious Congress for the New Urbanism in the USA.



Fig. 183: Images of UMD student-faculty teams presenting design options to city officials and local professional from Castellammare

At the same time, the present Master Thesis project for the Piazza "Libero D'Orsi" generated great interest among the mayor of Castellammare and the city planning department (Fig.183); as a result, this interest led in 2002 to the awarding of a design consulting contract from the City of Castellammare to the University of Maryland (Fig. 182, right), for an advanced concept study focused on implementing the Piazza "Libero D'Orsi" project and explore viable, concrete ways to actually built the proposed Piazza and associated train station and funicular (Fig.183).

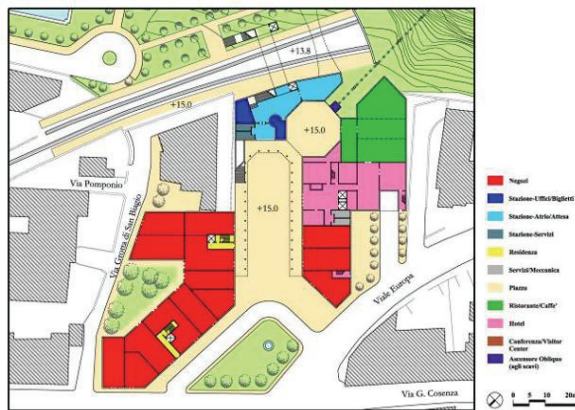
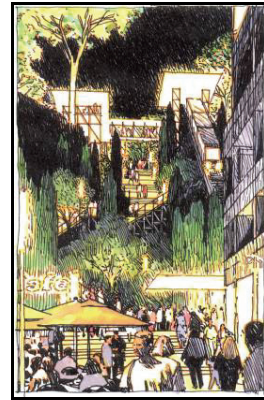


Fig. 184: Images of the schematic options for the Piazza "Libero D'Orsi," part of the advanced study done by the UMD design team and presented to the city planning office in 2002

In 2005, a regional study and booklet were produced addressing the issues of access, visitor's experience and integration among the five archaeological sites of the Vesuvian region. This latter study, later in 2005, was implemented and led also to the organization of an international urban design seminar in Castellammare – "Le Porte della Storia"- managed by the University of Maryland, the RAS Foundation, the City of Castellammare and the University of Naples (Fig.185). The seminar, which included a 10-day workshop in Stabiae, coordinated four American and four Italian architecture schools (for a total of well over 120 people among students, faculty,



Fig. 185: Promotional flyer and images from the 2005 Castellammare International Urban Seminar “Porte della Storia”

professionals and city officials) which developed proposals to improve access to and connections among the major archaeological sites in the Vesuvian region (Pompeii, Herculaneum, Oplontis, Boscoreale and Stabiae); and also ways to improve the visitor’s experience at each site, while integrating them with their individual urban contexts and modern cities. All these concept projects and studies are currently influencing the development of Castellammare.

Chapter 6: The Restoring Ancient Stabiae Foundation:

Changing International Archaeology

Although the site of ancient Stabiae was declared a protected archeological zone by the Italian government in 1957, local resources since then have been focused on the complex preservation challenges at Pompeii and Herculaneum. The site is currently managed by the Superintendancy of Archaeology of Pompeii, which operates under the Ministry of Cultural Properties of the Italian government. In the absence of resources, much of what was re-excavated at Stabiae in the 1950's and 1960's is exposed to perilous environmental conditions and is rapidly deteriorating. No new excavations have been undertaken to recover the other buried villas, and no action plan for preservation designed. Furthermore, the pressure of modern illegal building is intense. In five to ten years the last opportunity to save the villas may be lost forever.

To remedy these alarming circumstances, the Restoring Ancient Stabiae Foundation was formed in 2002 to serve as an arm of the Archaeological Superintendancy of Pompeii in the creation and management of an archaeological park at Stabiae.

The Restoring Ancient Stabiae Foundation is among the first and most innovative non-profit cultural foundations in Italy and in the U.S.; with board representation from both Italy and USA: the Superintendancy of Pompeii, the School of Architecture Planning and Preservation of the University of Maryland, and the Committee of Stabiae Reborn (representing local cultural and economic interests). Its mission is to transform the 150-acre archaeological site of Stabiae in one of the largest and most

innovative archaeological park in Europe to date; and to implement the Master Plan for the site by working with the Superintendancy on seeking resources, coordinating the execution of the Master Plan, and managing the site in effective and sustainable ways.

The archaeological park at Stabiae will bring to light one of the richest and most powerful social elite in history; and present to the public the Ancient Roman Villa Culture of the Bay of Naples. As illustrated in the previous chapters, there is an enormous opportunity to create a remarkably coherent site and park at Stabiae. The entire front edge of the hill could become a continuous string of excavated villas, panoramic promenades between them; and behind, rich agricultural lands and mountain views of the Sorrento peninsula.

Changing International Archaeology: A New Type of Foundation and a Park Integrated with Ancient Pompeii and Modern Castellammare di Stabia

Since the inception of the Restoring Ancient Stabiae project, archaeology has been intimately integrated with architectural design and local urbanism. The site is very difficult to reach today, but with one simple connection (a funicular connected to the local commuter rail station, as previously illustrated in the Piazza “Libero D’Orsi” chapter) it could be reached by tourists from Pompeii in less than ten minutes. The site is still largely unencumbered with modern buildings; and could function as a major urban park, even when the villas are closed (which could be the key to the economic and cultural revival of the entire region).

Working in collaboration with its Italian partners, and starting from the Master Thesis project illustrated in this document, the RAS Foundation has implemented the Master Plan to address a broad scope of near and long-term goals that will save the site for future generations, care for its villas and frescos, create a modern archeological park, and make the site more accessible and enjoyable to the public.

The global budget for property acquisition, excavation, conservation and construction on the archaeological park is tentatively estimated at approx. 140 million Euros, to be funded mostly by the Italian Government and the European Community. A project of this scale requires a new approach, rethinking how modern international archaeology is done.

The RAS project was created at the invitation of the Superintendancy of Archaeology of Pompeii in 1998, and officially presented a Master Plan in 2001. The RAS Foundation is now (since February 2002) an innovative non-profit cultural foundation in Italy; and since 2005, it is also recognized here in the U.S. (incorporated as 501-C3 non-profit foundation in Washington, DC). The RAS Foundation is quite unique in its nature, structure, and mission. Pietro Giovanni Guzzo, Superintendent of Pompeii, has described it as one among the first experiments in sharing the management of a major archaeological site with an international entity, with the intent that this might become the model for the future development of European archaeology. The RAS Foundation is in effect not a “foreign” project in Italy, but an international non-profit cultural foundation with the ability to receive and spend both state and private funds from the US and Italy; this represents a key-aspect for making the Foundation a more flexible arm of the Pompeii Superintendancy.

Projects and Achievements since 2001

The Restoring Ancient Stabiae Foundation is structured to organize many activities, in addition to the development of the park itself. Some of the activities illustrated below have been instrumental to raise awareness about Ancient Stabiae and to implement the archaeological park project.

In Stabiano Exhibit. The four-year tour of the exhibit “*In Stabiano: Exploring the Ancient Seaside Villas of the Roman Elite*” represents the fulfillment of an historic international cultural exchange and agreement: it is the first long-term loan of Italian cultural properties under the Italian-U.S. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of 2001, which allows the long term loan of cultural properties to U.S. institutions that participate in the excavation and maintenance of Italian sites.



Fig. 186: Images from the 2004-08 US Tour of the *In Stabiano* exhibit

Almost three million visitors saw the exhibit at the Smithsonian in Washington D.C.; and subsequent openings in several other U.S. cities have broken local records for attendance (Fig.186).

Large-scale Excavations Are Underway. The first two excavations, funded by European and Campania Region funds, have been planned by the RAS Foundation in collaboration with the Superintendancy of Pompei; and are due to begin in early 2007. The first excavation will bring back to light the original entrance courtyard of Villa San Marco, while creating a new entrance. The second one instead will liberate the fragile multi-media nymphaeum-fountain in the center of Villa San Marco lower peristyle courtyard. Only few months ago, great discoveries and results emerged from the first exploratory excavations done at Villa San Marco (Fig.187).



Fig. 187: A selection of images showing the recent exploratory excavations and exciting archaeological discoveries at Villa San Marco

High-Tech Surveys. Geophysical and geomorphologic surveys led in 2002 by an international team from the U.K. and the U.S. (using ground penetrating radar, resistivity, and magnetometry) revealed that the portico at the upper peristyle courtyard of Villa San Marco (Fig.188) extends up to 113 meters (353 feet).



Fig. 188: Aerial map produced by the RAS geophysical survey (left); virtual reconstruction of the upper peristyle portico of Villa San Marco (right, Capware)

First On-site Projects and Buildings. 4.5 million Euros were awarded to the Superintendancy of Archaeology of Pompei - under the RAS Master Plan of 2001 - for a series of projects aimed to rapidly improve the access to the site. They include the first two excavations at Villa San Marco, a new parking area for Villa Arianna, improvements at Villa Arianna's great panoramic peristyle, and several other conservation projects.



Fig. 189: Images of proposed Stabiae Visitor's Center at Villa San Marco [RAS]

In 2004, 500,000 Euros were also awarded by the Region of Campania to promote the “In Stabiano” exhibit at the Smithsonian, in Washington DC. Recently, additional 600,000 Euros were awarded to RAS by the Italian Bank Association (ACRI) to build the first phase of the new Stabiae Visitors’ Center at Villa San Marco (Fig.189), illustrated with greater details in the previous chapter dedicated to the Master Plan.

***Otium Ludens* Touring Exhibit.** The Restoring Ancient Stabiae Foundation offers the field of archaeology the extraordinary opportunity to convene and exchange between different cultures. With this spirit, RAS is organizing another major exhibition, *Otium ludens*; a touring exhibit that will reach the audience of the most important museums in Europe and in the world (Fig.190).

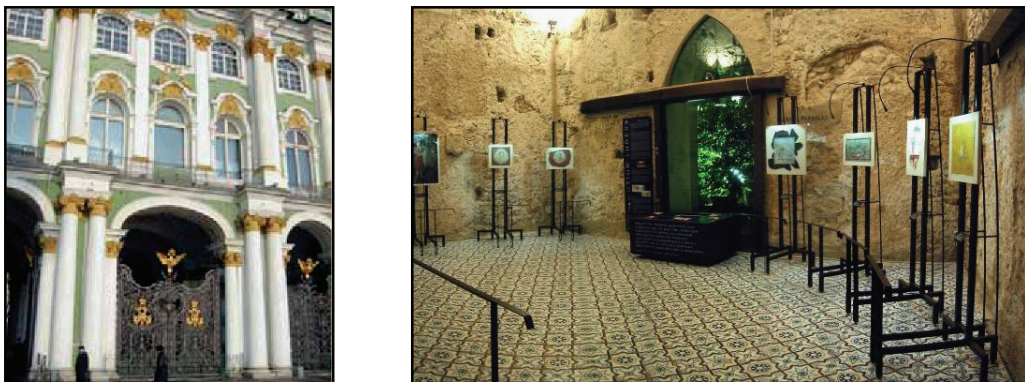


Fig. 190: Images of *Otium Ludens* installation in Ravello (right) and the Hermitage Museum (left)

Otium Ludens is an exhibition of huge proportions and importance, including almost 300 pieces, most never shown to the public, that are among the most beautiful found in the seaside villas of Stabiae. The first venue of the world tour will be in the splendid setting of Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, starting in late 2007. The exhibition might then continue its tour and travel to China, Japan and Australia.

Next Challenge: RAS Priority projects 2006-2008

The RAS Foundation has recently started implementing a number of essential studies and projects to initiate the activities and large-scale archaeological work on the site. Among these projects: conservation survey and master plan, “Adopt a Fresco” program, integrated databases (archaeological 3D GIS database, architectural and engineering 3D database, virtual reality database for historical reconstruction), precision cartography and 3D survey, extended geophysical and geomorphological surveys.

The Vesuvian International Institute for Archaeology and The Humanities: an Historic Opportunity for World Scholarship and Academic Research

The last endeavor illustrated in this document represents probably the ultimate challenge undertaken by the RAS Foundation. The archaeological park could become catalyst for much more than the study of Roman archaeology; the Bay of Naples, once the end of the Grand Tour in the eighteenth century and one of the greatest centers of European culture, today it is very little exploited and still one of the least studied by scholars and student groups, in part because there are almost no study or residential facilities. But a new generation of scholars and artists is just beginning to appreciate and work in this area. The RAS Foundation is now launching an international residential study center for undergraduate, graduate and advanced research focused on the Bay of Naples area; based on the concept and models of the numerous international academies in Rome (which house classicists, historians, musicians, artists and architects).



Fig. 191: Proposed location for the International Vesuvian Institute in Castellammare

The Foundation has in fact purchased a fully equipped beautiful 120,000 square-foot residential school complex from the Salesian Fathers; located close to the Stabiae site, overlooking the Bay of Naples (Fig.191). Prestigious academic institutions in Italy and in the U.S. have expressed great interest in this major cultural endeavor; which, if successful, will represent the natural conclusion and most rewarding accomplishment of the academic, scientific and cultural adventure started in 1998 with the Master Thesis described in this document. Thank you.



Fig. 192: Leo Varone defending his thesis (left) and the vision for the archaeological park (right)

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