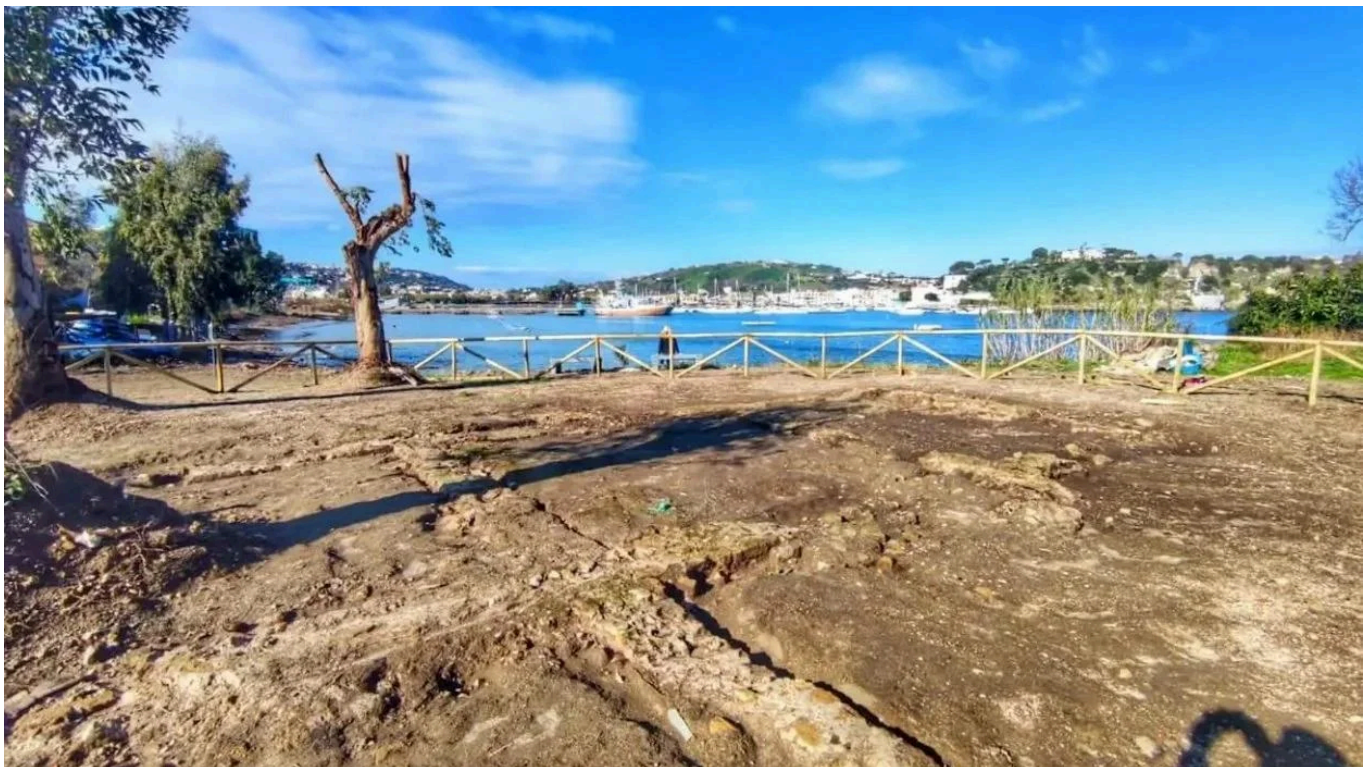




Remains of a monumental Roman villa linked to Pliny the Elder discovered at Miseno

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A team of researchers working on the urban regeneration project in Bacoli, near the northwestern end of the Bay of Naples, has uncovered the remains of a monumental Roman villa believed to have connections with Pliny the Elder.



The villa, dating back to the 1st century CE, was discovered during the revitalization efforts that aimed to recover and enhance the area formerly occupied by the illegal Lido Piranha.

The ancient city of Misenum, known for its significance during the Roman period, served as the primary port for the Classis Misenensis, the senior fleet of the imperial Roman navy. Pliny the Elder, the renowned author of *Naturalis Historia*, was the praefect in charge of the naval fleet at the time of the catastrophic eruption of Mount Vesuvius in CE 79.

Pliny played a tragic role in leading a rescue mission across the bay but succumbed to asphyxiation due to the noxious gases emitted by the volcano.

The recent excavations at Bacoli have revealed a villa complex with about ten large rooms dating to different construction phases. The villa features opus reticulatum walls, a distinctive form of Roman brickwork using diamond-shaped bricks of tuff, known as cubilia.

The complex extends seamlessly from the shoreline to the beach, with portions now partially submerged, possibly due to local volcanic bradyseismic activity altering the geology of the peninsula.

The excavation was part of the broader urban regeneration initiative by the Municipality of Bacoli, supported by the ABAP Superintendence for the Naples Metropolitan Area. The project aimed to reclaim the area from the former Lido Piranha, an illegal structure causing archaeological and environmental degradation. The remains of the Roman villa were discovered during landscaping operations, thanks to the archaeological assistance provided by the Protection Office.

The villa's proximity to Punta Sarparella, overlooking the inner basin of the Roman port, suggests its connection to the organizational dynamics of the logistical base and

communication routes of the ancient city.

The Ministry of Culture, in an official statement on its website, acknowledged the importance of the find and its connection to the Prefect of the ancient Roman fleet of the Tyrrhenian Sea, possibly Pliny the Elder. The Superintendent for the metropolitan area of Naples shared the announcement on social media, underscoring the collaborative efforts between governmental authorities, researchers, and the local community in preserving and unraveling Italy's rich archaeological heritage.

While the identification of the villa as Pliny the Elder's residence remains speculative, pending extensive excavation and contextual enhancement projects, the perimeter of the rooms has been identified and fenced off. Explanatory panels are set to be installed soon, enabling the public to learn from this extraordinary archaeological find.