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THE GEOGRAPHY OF AUGUSTUS BETWEEN PERSISTENCE  
AND EVOLUTIONARY DYNAMICS  
THE PHLEGRAEAN FIELDS BETWEEN THE AUGUSTAN REFORM  
AND CURRENT FUNCTIONAL REORGANIZATION<sup>1</sup>

*1. General framework.* – At the end of the Republican era, thus on the eve of the territorial reorganization issued by Augustus, Italy was divided into more than four hundred local communities, which were self-governed with a high degree of autonomy and with their own magistrates, senates, and political assemblies.

The magistrates were vested with jurisdictional powers, even if somewhat limited regarding the nature and value of disputes; the senates dealt with administrative and judicial issues; the local magistrates were elected by the *comitia* who were authorized to introduce certain restricted legislation.

The unifying mantle of granting Roman citizenship to all the inhabitants of what we today call Italy had blurred any differences and softened any diversities, and all municipalities were obviously subject to laws and to Roman law.

Rome was the center of power, the place where the constitutional bodies of the State, the magistrates, the Senate and *comitia* were located and where their meetings were held; the arena in which «national» political life was carried out.

Laws and common law were the founding values of a unitary frame within which each individual authority maintained mediated relations with the central power (Laffi, 2007).

The Augustan territorial reorganization, which may be seen as based on a flexible pragmatism from the point of view of what would be a substantive approach, was engaged in this *status quo*.

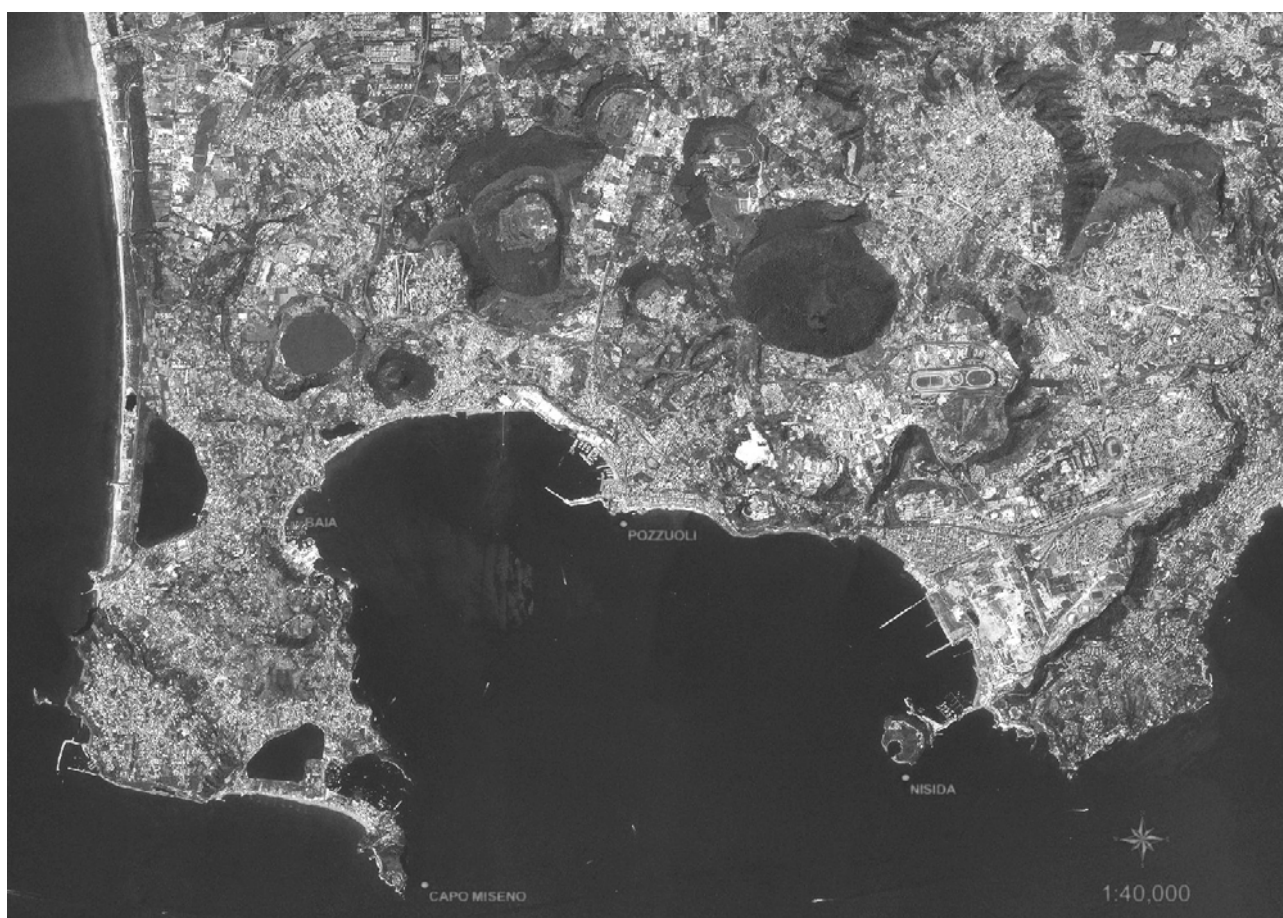
Pragmatism lay in the ability to perceive the differences existing between the various communities and to acknowledge the different and multifaceted reasons and the morphological and socio-economic dynamics to which each Italian community was subjected.

Flexibility lay in the ability to put these differences in a general framework of a territorial-administrative structure that was sufficiently homogeneous and featured with rather generalized and generalizing characteristics, within the possible choices of a large community provided with local governance organizations.

In terms of the practice of governance, therefore, the autonomy of Italian cities did not suffer any substantial limitation under Augustus. As for the various types of place, Augustus did not think to impose excessively uniform schemes for the magistrature; concerning municipal jurisdiction, he only rearranged and rationalized his present situation and impinged little upon the jurisdictional competences of the municipal magistrates, without subjecting them to any new limitation.

Roman Italy reassembled a country composed of various lands in which local interests produced not only emulation, but also competition and contentions. These are vital factors, yet causing divisions as well, which we will meet as the bequest of an ancient past in the more recent history of our country.

In short, the scenario of the jurisdictionally autonomous communities retained its different expressions, acknowledging the differences and enhancing the further peculiarities gained by each local community thanks to Augustus' actions on new socio-economic activities.



Pic. 1 Ortophoto of the *Campi Flegrei*. Source: Campania region, 2001.

2. *Augustus and the Phlegraean Fields*. – In the Phlegraean Fields, in line with what has been mentioned above, the different local entities (each with its own socio-economic features) had created a heterogeneous system of administrative structures in a relatively small-scale territorial microcosm; such a situation represented to perfection the previously referred to flexible pragmatism.

The different choices of attribution in the territorial-administrative order made within the Phlegraean Gulf confirm this Augustan flexibility: here, even before Augustus, a differentiation of urban and socio-economic character had created a territorial system characterized by profound diversity, leading to diversified choices of division and powers (Zevi, Johannowsk and Camodeca, 2003).

The territorial Phlegraean *milieu* had produced differentiated economic activities in the cities, yet all united by a stature of a high-level in terms of quality and quantity (Camodeca, 2000).

To this diversity, related also to morphological peculiarities, there corresponded, and would do so even more after Augustus' operation, differences in administrative attributions and, therefore, in subsequent powers.

During the Second Punic War, the center of *Puteoli* had begun to fulfill an important maritime and military function, when it was garrisoned against the occupation of the coastal ports by Hannibal. Once Hannibal was defeated, in 195 BC Rome raised a maritime colony as *Colonia civium romanorum* (Giamminelli, 1987) in the harbor of Puteoli, whose high strategic value had already been experienced.

The colony grew and established itself when the conquest of the East and the need to have an accessible harbor to the major stations of Greece, of the Anatolian coast, of Syria and Egypt, made Puteoli the Mediterranean port of Rome and the center of Roman political and commercial irradiation in the East (Quilici, 1969).



Pic. 2 Reconstruction plan of *Puteoli*, 100 AD<sup>2</sup>.

Source: Jean-Claude Golvin, Ministère de la jeunesse, de l'éducation nationale et de la recherche, Direction de l'enseignement supérieur, Sous-direction des bibliothèques et de la documentation



Pic. 3 *Tempe of Augustus* of *Rione Terra*, today the Pozzuoli's Duomo, *Puteoli*, 100 AD.

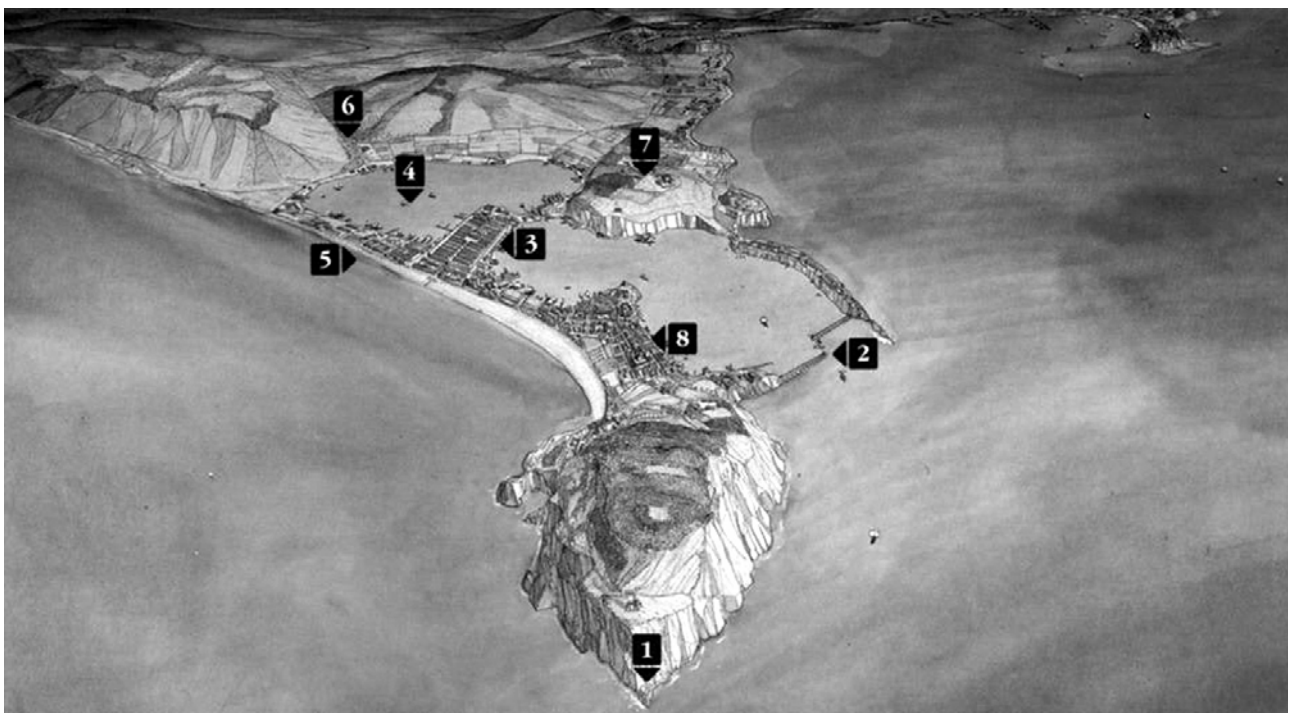
Source: Jean-Claude Golvin, Ministère de la jeunesse, de l'éducation nationale et de la recherche, Direction de l'enseignement supérieur, Sous-direction des bibliothèques et de la documentation

The hinterland of Campania, its agricultural and industrial products, its exchanges with overseas merchandise and its special customs tariffs, ensured for the port of Puteoli a preeminent role in the commercial and territorial organization of the Empire (Camodeca, 1979).

In addition, a multiple manufacturing activity became established in sectors related to building, glass and artistic production (Giamminelli, 1987).

People of different cultures and faiths thronged the neighborhood of its maritime Emporium and established trading and transport companies there, setting up professional guilds for arts and crafts as well as religious associations: Greeks, Egyptians, Phoenicians from Tyre, Eliopolitans, pagans, Jews and Christians (Mazzacane, 1989).

*Puteoli*, at the time of Domitian, will be defined *litora mundi hospita* by Statius and, after a few decades, *Delus minor* by Lucilius.



Pic. 4 *Miseno*, 100 AD<sup>3</sup>

Source: Jean-Claude Golvin, Ministère de la jeunesse, de l'éducation nationale et de la recherche, Direction de l'enseignement supérieur, Sous-direction des bibliothèques et de la documentation

Being a Roman colony, formed by citizens from Rome who enjoyed civil and political rights, meant there was a direct link to the capital, which continued to exercise direct control over local administration, which, however was only moderate, due to the autonomy enjoyed by the city from its designation as a Roman colony (Buchner *et al.*, 1977).

The title of colony will be confirmed even at a later date due to the economic importance that the city will maintain for Rome: *Colonia Claudia Neronensis Puteolana*, by Nero, then *Colonia Flavia Augusta Puteolana* by Vespasian (Zevi, Johannowsky and Camodeca, 1993).

The center of *Baia*, its hills and coastline, placed along the arc of the Gulf of Pozzuoli, even at the time of the social war quickly began to be populated with sumptuous villas belonging to the Roman aristocracy and the richest citizens. For its climate and beaches, during the last period of the Roman Republic *Baia* became the favorite place and the largest *thermae* in ancient Italy (Anecchino, 1996).

Nevertheless, it will never be an independent town and will continue, in ancient times, to be part of *Cuma*, which will retain its administrative maintenance at least nominally.

The orator Licinius Crassus, as well as Gaius Marius, Lucius Lucullus, Caesar, Pompey, Varro, Cicero, and Hortensius had villas in *Baia* and along the nearby coast (Rakob, 1992).

Under Augustus, *Baia* became an Imperial domain and residence, and the ancient private villas became part of the property owned by the Caesars, thus under their direct power, which was exercised by an authorized officer (Zevi, Johannowsky e Camodeca, 1993).

The new Imperial *Palatium* stretches along the Baian Gulf, taking up over one million square meters without interruption (Demma, 2007).

The monumental and architectural appearance of *Baia* now looks even grander: the coast and the slopes of the hills become one large villa with piers, creeks, pools of fish and oyster productions, artificial pools, magnificent thermal buildings, porticoes and gardens. (Ostrow, 1979).

In 63 BC Cicero defined it “*pusillae Roma*”, and from Augustus to Alexander Severus traces and memories of the favor which *Baia* enjoyed with the Imperial dynasty could be found. Marcellus, the beloved nephew of Augustus, will die there; Claudio will issue edicts from the Imperial Palace of *Baia* (*in praetorio Baiano*); Nero will execute ambitious construction projects and in *Baia* his own mother, Agrippina, will pass away. Adriano will die in the old villa of the Caesars and Alexander Severus will create new magnificent buildings and thermal works there (Di Fraia, Lombardo and Scognamiglio, 1985-1986).

The dual harbor of *Miseno*, located on the more northwestern part of the Phlegraean Fields, in the Augustan age became the most important military base for the Roman Praetorian fleet in the Western Mediterranean basin (*Classis Misensis*). It was under the control and jurisdiction of a *Praefectus*, who acted as fleet commander and at the same time as chief of assets. Directly subordinate to him there was a *Sub Praefectus*, also of the Equestrian order.

The decision to allocate the military structure in that area was taken by Augustus after he realized that the former military port of *Portus Iulius*, also in the bay of Pozzuoli and used by Octavian in the war against Sextus Pompey (Suetonius, 49 AD), was impracticable.

The composite military harbor of *Miseno* takes advantage of a natural double basin: the innermost, over about three kilometers in circumference, called the Dead Sea or Lake *Miseno*, in ancient times dedicated to shipyards and naval maintenance; the outermost one, which is the actual harbor (De Caro, 2002).

Between the two basins, historians have imagined there to be the naval systems and the accommodation of the *Classis Misensis*, which are recorded to have had around 10,000 soldiers, including legionaries and auxiliaries.

Finally, continuing to travel along the Gulf of Pozzuoli, the citadel of *Miseno* emerges, which tangentially touches the impressive military base and would take on a real urban layout only when the Roman fleet was located there, although in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC many private villas with wide views towards the sea were built, (Annicchino, 1996).

As can be seen in numerous epigraphic documents, it is during the Augustan age that the municipal life of *Miseno* begins, when a large built-up area is constituted. This will include the whole area that extends between the southwest side of the Dead Sea and the whole of the current promontory of *Miseno*, which would later become a *municipium*, with its own magistrates and some administrative autonomy (D’Arms, 1970).

The center of *Miseno*, nonetheless, will never properly be a city and will always live in symbiosis with the adjacent harbor, taking advantage of the trade which a base and military garrison provide. Here there will be the *Schola Militum*, here soldiers will be headquartered, and here they will learn the tactics of naval warfare (Annicchino, 1996).

As already shown therefore, we are presented with a varied scenario of territories that present an exceptional and diverse morphological framework, although they are set in the relatively small geographical area of the Phlegraean Fields. In the Augustan age, this diversity is distinguished by the systematic deployment of economic, social and military activities, which are then implemented by the legislator, who makes diversified choices when dividing or giving administrative powers.

3. *A new functional model, with no territorial accordance.* – To reach the real turning point on which the current geographical structure depends, we must get to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when a process of substantial territorial replacement by a new model started. This model persisted for many years, and saw the Armstrong naval armaments industry set up along the coastal Puteolan area (Arbia, 1993).

Other intensive or extensive manufacturing-industrial initiatives will follow and will affect Pozzuoli as well as other parts of the Phlegraean coastal area: Baia will see shipyards and military industries installed, and Bacoli will host electronics companies.

The shape of this entire territorial context will radically change when the population of the Phlegraean Fields gradually increases and the residents begin to abandon their old professions. A new culture, typical of this area, will rise. This culture will be linked to the industrial system and marked by a peculiar relationship with the territory: a relationship between community and territory that was already strongly influenced by the volcanological nature of the environment (Cardone, 1993).

The transformations that will occur will be a result of what has already been said, and we will see a strong, yet increasingly tumultuous and disordered, growth of urban centers.

Indeed, the increasingly intensive consolidation and growth of the phenomenon, along with the expansion of manufacturing industries in the area, will, despite some vicissitudes, lead to the birth and affirmation of what Vallega in 2004 called a “regional sphere generated by a hub of territorialization”. In this case, it will build up from a composite industrial hub, where the geographical space will be governed by a set of related industries that influence the whole territorial organization, to shaping and determining its extension and evolution.

The Puteolan geographical area, nonetheless, was already marked by a previous process of territorialization, born and established over the centuries between the fall of the Roman Empire and the modern era. It was marked by choices of territorial use and settlement variables resulting from the profoundly different economic, social and cultural processes that had directly descended from an economy based on agriculture and fishing (Mazzacane, 1989).

Thus, when the manufacturing process was set up and had taken root, there followed a particular landscape with unique characteristics, which were the precise, historically circumscribed and contextualized outcome of that very process. The geographical setting of the Phlegraean Fields becomes a space in which the geophysical, as well as economic and cultural centrality of the area will lie in the setting of the factory, and all decisions about use of land or social and cultural activities will always be dependent on and related to the factory’s specific needs.

A specific urban space will be set, with rhythms and ways different from those of other cities, and different too from those found in the same city at an earlier time.

Apart from the physical-territorial dimension, even the symbolic-cultural dimension will be strongly influenced and conditioned by the immanent presence of factories, giving rise to what may be called a lived-in space. This is the result of the simultaneous co-presence of ordinary, individual living spaces and communal, social ones, where sites assume psychological traits that bind men through immaterial associations (Frémont, 1978). In Pozzuoli, these places will be first the factories themselves, then, the local branches of political parties and unions; later, the parishes, and finally the squares and streets.

To sum up, the location of the Armstrong factory in Pozzuoli in 1884/1886 and the manufacturing activity that continues throughout the following decades generate a series of alterations in the previously harmonic structure. This gives rise to a series of new interventions that disturb the balance between the natural and the artificial human environments which had previously characterized and made the Phlegraean Fields renowned. In fact, in that period urban development and the use of its territory in terms of building had basically respected the geography of the places, of the natural environment in its general conformation, as well as the culture of the communities (Aveta, 2007; Galasso, 1985).

*4. The Phlegraean Fields, development perspectives and functional rearrangement.* – All that has been mentioned so far will produce the creation of a particular cultural melting-pot that will characterize this geographical area for several decades, until the early XXI century, when new plans for the use of the whole Phlegraean coastal strip will transform it all. Brought about by new general considerations concerning the sustainable and endogenous development of geographical areas, the new plans will propose a new economic exploitation of the Pozzuoli coastal area.

The new plans sprang from the concept that the renewed relationship with the sea represents a fundamental resource for a present-day city to find its own identity and increase the attractiveness of its urban space, by fueling new economic networks (Carta, 2009).

This is the case of the Phlegraean Fields, where the intervention, or the interventions, whether they be still hypothetical or underway, concern the core of the different cities, their actual position overlooking the water, as

is often the case with Mediterranean cities, where restoration often concerns the ancient port or areas close to the historic settlement, with considerable stratification of different ages.

In the Phlegraean area, removing physical barriers, thus allowing the urban settlements to be rejoined to the sea, can open up new perspectives, not only for waterfront areas but, more generally, for the regeneration of the cities, a regeneration which is mainly linked to tourism, culture and the environment (Savino, 2010).

The process of recovery and re-functioning of the urban waterfronts in Pozzuoli, Baia, and Bacoli is attributed to a general pattern in these cases. The Phlegraean area is so rich in history and archaeological remains and characterized by extraordinary geological and natural features, yet in the modern age its natural coastal environment has been degraded by various anthropic interventions, among which the most dramatic in terms of impact is the development of industrial areas along the coast.

This was a severe wound, one which denied the relationship between the urban dimension and the sea, if one takes into account the characteristics of the area, which are morphologically complex and endowed with great significance regarding its landscape.

However, as Giuliana Andreotti wrote on this very journal in 2014, “luckily, in spite of the remarkable transformation produced by modernity, it seems almost as if some of the places’ interiority persists [...] everything can reawaken imagination, stirring up the inclination towards sentiment and revealing the place and its genius [...]”.

As decades have gone by, the production and employment scenarios have progressively changed: whereas until the early ’80s half of the work force were employed in factories, later on there was a considerable reduction in that sector, linked inevitably to the dismantling of the major coastal manufacturing plants.

As has happened in other contexts, this has put the prospect of a new economic cycle back in central position; a cycle based on the exploitation of the remarkable potential for tourism, never actually taken advantage of before, and on the development of more compatible economic activities (Rapporto annuale Società Geografica Italiana, 2011).

Thus, a new territorial development in the Phlegraean area, in Pozzuoli, and in Baia/Bacoli, based on the strategic reopening of the cities towards the sea and on the enhancement of cultural, natural, and environmental resources. All this, in step with Franco Salvatori’s conception of “landscape as a cultural asset which cannot be ignored when it comes to development, and even more so when it comes to sustainable development” (2003).

The *general Masterplan of the coastline* (Eisenman, 2013) in Pozzuoli’s municipality can be provided as a valuable example in that it systematizes the planning which already exists and develops coordinated proposals on a wide range of topics: transportation systems, tourism and development of archaeological assets, parklands and public areas.

After all, culture is often the key factor in urban creativity, in particular in terms of cultural identity, which originated in history and projects its updated image into the future.

Richard Florida examined, on the level of the urban scale of contemporary cities, the relationship between transformations in the new *modus operandi* of capitalist production and high-tech companies, the spread of spare-time activities, the network of urban economies that develop from them, and consequently the new identities of the actors/citizens involved in the aforementioned transformations.

Thus, he could infer that changes in the city can be promoted and controlled by means of a closer relationship with the companies providing new technologies in the processes of economic and social growth and self-assertion, as well as having culture play a major role (Florida, 2002 and 2005).

5. *Final remarks.* – The dynamics of rendering the geographic Phlegraean area newly functional concern the processes of territorial changes that guarantee possible “new, strong urban forms undergoing organizational re-qualification through the de-industrialization, the re-industrialization and the shifting of the economic center of gravity towards the tertiary sector” (Conti, 2001).

Indeed, these geographical-functional dynamics, which today are hardly at their early stage and will predictably involve and be prominent in the whole territory of the Gulf of Pozzuoli, make us think again about the Augustan lesson concerning the territorial and administrative definitions of context, as well as those relating to similar territories.

To sum up, we have tried to understand how the persistence of morphological traits is sacrosanct to the cultural capital, today more than ever.

A mixture of the environmental and cultural heritage that seems to be yet again ready to accept changes and to plan new economic functions, starting from the Phlegraean landscape, which is where nature and culture meet. This landscape could once again be the key instrument for organically redefining the current territorial structures. The Augustan lesson itself can become a factor in the re-functionalization of the Phlegraean area, especially through the founding principles adopted by Augustus, such as *flexible pragmatism*, his fundamental principle for planning, which becomes protagonist if the implementation policies take historically established territorial inclinations as their starting point.

Let us consider the different production and settlement systems that had created places and specialized communities in the different centers and had begun various and differentiated processes of territorialization, originating in the Roman need to attribute territorial and administrative powers of government in a variety of ways. Nowadays, the fundamental approach may inevitably be arranged on the general process of socio-economic conversion affecting the whole area, which pushes towards homogeneity.

Once this unsettled state has been assimilated, here meant as territorial exploitation not being in harmony with the basic values of the context, new processes of territorialization will emerge, based on the territorial resilience of the context, which is more in harmony with the geographical values, the landscape and cultural *milieu* which characterize them.

In other words, in greater assonance with the *Genius loci* of the place.

In 2003, Joseph Rykwert wrote that “we should accept that our cities are malleable ... a city can never be utterly passive, and since there is a constant interaction between society, community, and urban fabric, we cannot think that we will get our hands on our cities without altering society, and vice versa”.

This seems to be the case of the Phlegraean Fields as well as of the numerous heavily-anthropized coastal areas in our country, actors aware of continuous transformations.

Therefore, the ancient administrative differentiation no longer makes sense in the Phlegraean area, and the local identity needs to be re-examined in the light of what has been said, while the general process of reconversion needs to be managed by means of a general approach. This approach views the Phlegraean area as a sole territorial aggregate, characterized by the same dynamics and, consequently, by similar needs and opportunities.

The dynamics, thus, lead to a necessary redefinition of the management of the aforementioned needs, to their downsizing in terms of possessions and administrative authorities, to the unescapable question of the minimum dimension of the local authority, here understood as a “sustainable” territorial partition, with regard to its functions and the minimum extent of ruling and decision-making powers (Ciampi, 2011).

Augustus’ great ability to respond to the different needs of even the smallest or neighbouring territories, with regard to their different socio-economic dynamics, should be applied also in the opposite direction, when territories with the same functional dynamics demand present-day geographical-administrative solutions that are both unifying and general.

A large part of our coastal municipalities seem to be characterized by similar issues and subsequent answers: their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats would call for a common intervention that is more stable and organic, not episodic, only linked to forms of circumscribed consortiums or to the recent possibility of management through the fundamental functions in an associated form.

The present-day experience of the Isle of Ischia is a valuable example. Divided into six different municipalities, it is up against a referendum aimed at uniting all the various local sections into a sole body, being aware that the economic and social dynamics experienced and shared by the different territorial realities of the island must be faced by a unitary approach which can be derived solely from the action of one unifying subject. In prime position, the matter of tourism development should be considered.

The same administrative unification and simplification should be applied to the Phlegraean reality, in the light of the shared destiny concerning the re-modulation of various economic systems that experience the same transition from a manufacturing secondary economy to a tertiary one based on tourism.

Therefore, an even wider and more general reflection can be redefined around the possibility to reconsider new local territorial bodies, aiming at a greater respect for morphological, functional, and cultural peculiarities that distinguish the different territorial sections of our country, especially when it comes to coastal areas.

A re-consideration and update of what was experienced with the “mountain area authority” may prove useful in order to achieve, for example, a new proposition of “coastal area authorities”, marine or lake authorities,

endowed with increased functions and powers, such as to be able to substitute, in the full functions of territorial government, the numerous small municipal authorities into which our coastal territories are fragmented.

Such territories have often been through chaotic stages of anthropic exploitation, little consistent with the geographical values of which they are guardian. The major fragmentation they have experienced were produced mainly by the aforementioned choices in terms of industrial-manufacturing settlements, today largely dismantled. The territorial resilience of these places needs to be supported, their aptitude needs to be understood and followed, by proposing administrative rationalization and unification.

Therefore, intervention should not only concern the narrow areas of the single municipal authorities in order to promote new exploitations of the areas, if there are more than one, attuned to each other and in harmony with the places' ultimate values.

In Engineering, the factor affecting the increase of resilience values of a mechanical piece lies in its morphological structure and size (Caligaris, Fava, and Tomasello, 2005). Likewise, the size and structural diversification of the territory are relevant factors in the carrying-out of new processes of territorialization, and their intrinsic territorial resilience proves particularly useful.

This is a further lesson taught by Augustus with the case of the Phlegraean Fields, where a vast territory was divided into sections with a very varied organization, in terms of economic, social, and military activities, but in which every single section was complementary to one another, from an economic and urban point of view.

Each of the aforementioned activities had a value of its own, yet at the same time it acquired systemic significance, as it quantitatively and qualitatively fostered, and increased, the socio-economic activities that took place in the different Phlegraean cities.

Pozzuoli's commercial port was the dock that supplied the goods coming from the East. The Emperor and the Roman aristocracy owned sumptuous villas on the coast of Baia: they represented the main market for manufacturing and artistic production in Pozzuoli, where the masses living in the area used to work. The military installations consumed the Phlegraean goods and promoted their growth.

The needs of the single activities and the single city centers induced the central government in Rome to invest in the area in order to raise the qualitative and quantitative level of infrastructure: roads, aqueducts, places devoted to social leisure activities such as baths, stadiums, and amphitheaters that sprang up and took root there.

Likewise, today's rationalization and the subsequent government approach to the Phlegraean territory would also allow diversified choices of functional differentiation in every single area, linked to one another and able to support each other, in a process of general and harmonious territorial transformation. The approach should be geared towards the promotion of a new and prevailing tertiary sector, but also towards the creation of complementary activities, with a functional differentiation in the single Phlegraean contexts, where every activity should have a systemic relevance, updated to comply with contemporaneity.

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#### Notes

1 This paper, though being the result of a joint consideration, presents paragraphs organized thus: paragraph 2 and 3 are by Giacomo Bandiera, paragraph 4 is by Simone Bozzato. Paragraphs 1 and 5 are jointly written.

2 1. Minor Amphitheatre; 2. Major Amphitheatre; 3. Theatre; 4. Regio Decatriae /The Genius Coloniae;  
5. The Macellum, the so-called Serapis Temple; 6. Public Baths, the so-called Temple of Neptune; 7. Emporium;  
8. The Temple of Augustus; 9. The Caligula Pier.

3 1.Cape Miseno; 2. The Harbour of breakwaters; 3. The stationing of the fleet; 4. The Dead Sea (building sites and repairs); 5. beach; 6. Cuma Street; 7. Piscina Mirabilis; 8. The town.