



AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE GAIOLA ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNDERWATER PARK AND THE POSILLIPO COASTLINE, BAY OF NAPLES (SOUTHERN ITALY)

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ABSTRACT:

The aim of this paper is to present ten years of underwater archaeology investigations in the Marine Protected Area “Gaiola Underwater Park” in Naples, Southern Italy since its institution in 2002. These results are at the basis of a development plan that is now the basis for new researches aimed to create a model of enhancement for the underwater archaeological heritage in the Mediterranean context. The project is developed by an interdisciplinary group of young researchers so that all the issues correlate to the marine environment can be taken in account.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Marine Protected Area “Gaiola Underwater Park” formally came into being with the interdepartmental ministerial order signed by the Italian Government in 7/8/2002. The Underwater Park takes its name from the two small islands a few meters off the Posillipo coastline in the Western part of the Bay of Naples, in Southern Italy. The local governmental authority in charge of the management of the area is the “Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei”. With its 41,6 hectares this Marine Protected Area (MPA) is the smallest in Italy and is unique not only for its archaeological and historical heritage but also its environmental riches (Simeone & Russo, 2005). It is divided into “Integral Reserve Area” (A Zone), which is under a strict preservation order, and a “General Reserve Area” (B Zone) where there are fewer restriction (Figure 1). Together with the Pausilypon archaeological Park* this MPA is a naturalistic and archaeological treasure and that is why it is so important to protect it.

The Posillipo coastline is in fact the only stretch of coastline for more or less 50 km (from the town of Castellammare to the town of Pozzuoli), which has preserved its original environment, while all around the landscape has been completely destroyed by decades of violent urbanization and industrialization. To preserve the area and its cultural heritage has been and is extremely problematic, the main reason being the Park’s difficult social and territorial background which affects it negatively due to the continuous and extreme anthropic pressure via both land and sea. Unfortunately, this problem is exacerbated by the lack of a adequate policy of management of the coastline. The aim of this paper is to explain how in the last ten years, a collaboration between the Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei and the Centro Studi Interdisciplinari Gaiola onlus (CSI Gaiola), a local NGO active on the territory, initiated an

important development and preservation process of this incredible area, demonstrating the significant role of scientific research and the use of technological instruments such as GIS and underwater surveys to obtain these results.

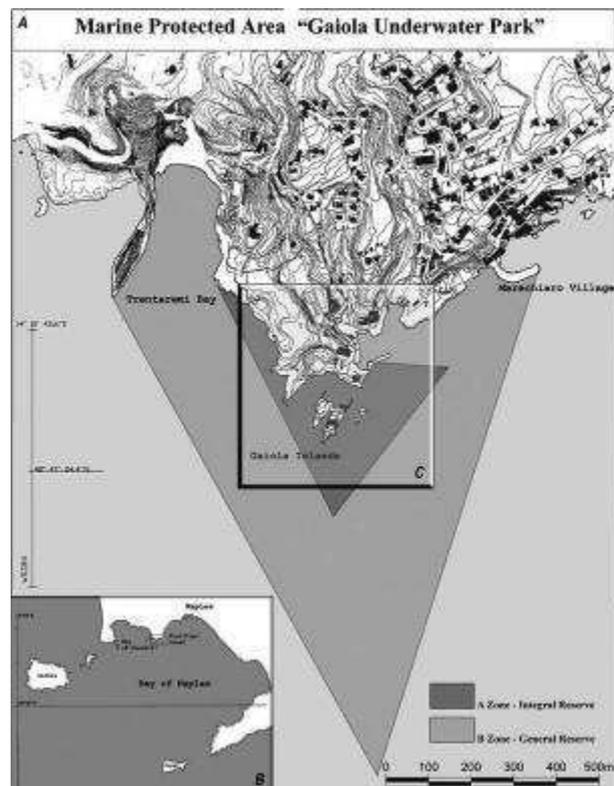


Figure 1 A) Studied area: MPA “Gaiola Underwater Park” ; B) Location of Posillipo Coastline in the Bay of Naples; C) Location of Studied Sub-Area.

* This paper will mainly focus on the problems connected with the management of the MPA “Gaiola Underwater Park”; but because the two are strictly connected it is important to at least mention the Pausilypon Archaeological Park.