

*Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali
Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei*

ANTIQUARIUM OF BOSCOREALE

Man and environment in the Vesuvian area



Open daily: 9.00 a. m. - 7.00 p. m. - Closed on January 1st, May 1st, December 25th

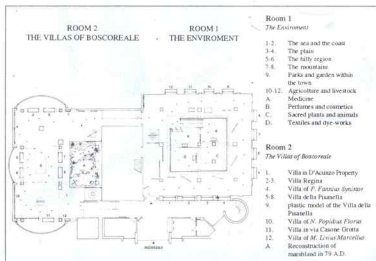
**Boscoreale, Via Settetermini 15
(Loc. Villa Regina)**

Welcome to the Antiquarium of Boscoreale

The National Antiquarium "Man and environment in the Vesuvian area" was opened in March 1991. Built close to the archaeological site of Villa Regina, it consists of two rooms: in the first one there is an exhibition of findings from the Vesuvian area useful for a reconstruction of the environment and the economy in the Roman era, before the eruption of the Vesuvius of 79 A. D. destroyed the centres of Pompeii, Herculaneum, Oplontis and Stabian villas; in the 2nd one we can see the main archaeological findings of the area of Boscoreale, where in the Roman epoch there were numerous farmhouses and elegant villas.

There is also a room dedicated to temporary exhibitions about the archaeological problems of Pompeii and its territory.

In the Antiquarium there is the "Sezione didattica" of the Soprintendenza di Pompeii which, if required, supplies teachers with documentary material and slides and organizes guided tours to the excavations of Pompeii, Herculaneum, Oplontis and Stabia not only on general subjects but also on specific ones.



Map of the Antiquarium of Boscoreale

Translation from Italian by Prof. Emilia De Paola within the convention drawn up by the "Liceo Calamandrei" of Naples and the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei.

Room 1: The environment



Reconstruction of a part of the mouth of the River Sarno

Thanks to two photographs by satellite, visitors will be able to see the Vesuvian area from above, characterized now as well as in the past by the high cone of the Vesuvius, enclosed in the ancient volcanic area of Mount Somma. The copy of a renowned Pompeian fresco shows the volcanic cone as it was before the eruption of 79 A. D.

The sea and the coast

In the 1st exhibition area (windows 1-2) numerous findings bear witness to the exploitation of the sea and of its immediate hinterland by man in the Roman era: various species of the sea fauna (mussels, limpets, sea urchins, mollusks of the *Cypraea* species and various fishes), used as food, tools and amulets; fishing tools (hooks, a fishing-net, fishing forks for nets); a fragment of a fictile amphora containing *garum*, the famous fish-sauce so much loved by Romans and made also in Pompeii; the remains of the botanical species which grew along the coast (pines, rushes, reeds). This section is completed by a fresco from Pompeii showing Venus in a boat, by a photo of a Pompeian mosaic with fish and by the pictorial reconstruction of the coastal environment.



Reconstruction of a part of the plain along the banks of the River Sarno

The plain

In the 2nd section there is a collection of all the findings of the territory at the foot of the Vesuvius.

The plain was crossed by the River Sarno, personified in a Pompeian wall portrayal and here exhibited in a photo. Its waters were once rich in shellfish (windows 3).

The land, which was very fertile, was cultivated with iron tools of different shapes and sizes such as shovels, spades, hoes (windows 4).

A wicker basket found at Herculaneum and a sample of grass, discovered in the garden of a villa at *Oplontis*, mowed shortly before the eruption of 79 A. D., give evidence of the existing vegetable species, shown together with the animals species in the pictorial reconstruction of the environment.

The land was divided into regular plots on the basis of an orthogonal grid of *cardines* and *decumani* by the *agrimensores*, who were the ancient agricultural experts; the tombstone of one of them, the Pompeian *Nicostratus*, on which his job tools, the *groma*, the surveyor's stakes, the plumb-line are engraved, is here displayed.



Reconstruction of the environment of the hilly region

The hilly region

The findings exhibited in the third section (windows 5-6) illustrate farming in the hilly region.

The slopes of the Vesuvius were mainly dedicated to wine-growing, as has already been exhibited in the Pompeian fresco with the Vesuvius and of which a detail is here highlighted.

A bunch of grapes, two specimens of wine amphorae, one of them for household use and the other for transport and a glass *oinochoe* also bear witness to wine-growing. Different varieties of vines were cultivated and the wines obtained from them, celebrated even by Latin writers, were different. On the slopes of the Mounts Lattari olives and fruit were cultivated as well. Various amphorae, specific glass containers and vegetable findings such as olive remains and a rare peachstone give evidence of this cultivation while a sample of grass found in Terzigno shows the existence of meadowland, which was rotated with other cultivations. The pictorial reconstruction of the environment shows the threshing-floor of a country villa in the Roman era, with farmyard animals and the surrounding landscape.



Reconstruction of a wood on the slopes of the Vesuvius

The mountains

The peak of the Vesuvius was covered with thick woods populated by wild animals such as deer, roe-deer, wild boars, birds and small mammals, as can be seen in the pictorial reconstruction of the environment; the exploitation of woods supplied local inhabitants with wood, mushrooms, berries, wild fruits and medicinal plants; hunting provided them with meat, bone and horn to make various tools such as amulets, furniture hinges, screw nuts, spindles, spoons (window 7).

Wood, obtained by cutting and pruning trees with bill-hooks, hatchets and iron axes, was also used on the basis of its specific characteristics. Two specimens of ancient wood are exhibited in window 8. The first one is a waxed writing tablet, found with others in a room of a building on the outskirts of Pompeii; a bookkeeping document has been written on its wooden, wax covered surface with a stylus. The other specimen is a fragment of a cypress trunk, buried by the lapilli of the eruption of 79 A. D. and found near Pompeii. The oak galls were used for skin tanning and dyeing.

Parks and garden within the town

Even in the town of Pompeii there was a close relationship between man and nature. Houses had open spaces of various size, consisting in simple kitchen or real gardens, with pets and marble furnishings, as is shown not only by the findings of window 9 but also by the pictorial reproductions of gardens, imitating real gardens, which decorate some walls of the Pompeian *domus*.

Agriculture and livestock

The main economic primary-activities of the Vesuvian area were farming and livestock. The findings exhibited in window 10 give evidence of the existence of poultry (eggs), ovines (bells, horns, cheese), bovines (horns, cow bells), equines (items of harnesses, forage and horse-shoes). Particularly noteworthy is the fictile container in the middle of the window: it is a *glirarium*, that is a cage for the rearing of dormice, rodents considered delicacies by Roman gourmets.

A cast of a pig from a country villa next to the museum and a plaster cast of a watchdog found in Pompeii (window 13-14) complete the section.

The other windows contain samples of the main vegetables cultivated in those times; corn, *Leguminosae*, vegetables and fruit, with some job tools and one loaves of bread found in a bakery in Pompeii.

Medicine

Glass bottles of various sizes were used to make dilutions for the composition of medicines of both vegetable and animal origin, obtained by crushing the components in marble mortars; a selection of bronze surgical instruments completes the window.

Perfumes and cosmetics

A woman's dressing table with a mirror, a comb, a pair of tweezers, some small spatules and a series of variously shaped glass balm containers for creams and ointments, made from vegetable and oils of different origin, has been reconstructed.

Sacred animals and plants

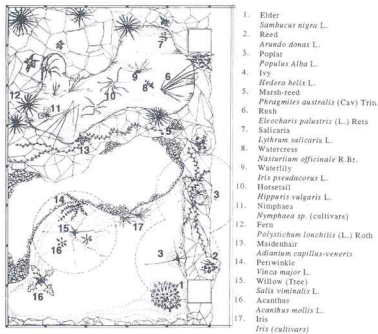
Plants were also used during religious ceremonies. This can be seen in the bronze portrait of a young man adorned with a flower wreath and a priestly headband and by a fictile vase decorated with plants and animals, found in a place of worship, the so-called "Complesso dei Riti Magici" in Pompeii.

Textiles and dyeing substances

Samples of textiles and vegetable and animal fibres, found in the Vesuvius towns are here on display. Various plants and a shell-fish, the *murex*, supplied the substances for cloth dyeing.

Reconstruction of marshland

The natural range reproduced in the greenhouse of the 2nd room shows what might have been a frequent environment along the banks of the River Sarno; it has been re-created on the basis of scientific data relative to the species widespread in the marshland of two thousand years ago.



Map of a greenhouse with marshland

Mediterranean flora in 79 A. D.

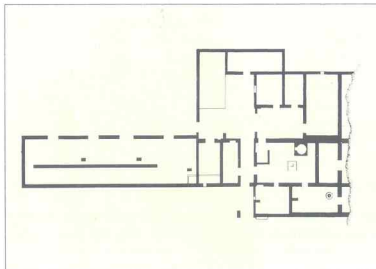
The green area of the Antiquarium shows samples of the most common plants in the ancient world. They are grouped into section according to their uses illustrated in the exhibition: medicinal, ornamental, textile, dyeing, fruit-bearing plants and extracts for carpentry use.

Room 2: The villas of Boscoreale

In the Roman epoch the hilly region north of Pompeii, which was then particularly fertile, was dotted with prosperous and productive settlements, where the residential dwelling of the *dominus*, the so-called *pars urbana*, was often wide and luxurious. Most of these villas had been subject to private excavations between the end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century; such excavations were carried out to bring to light furnishings and sometimes wall and floor decorations. Buildings were therefore generally recovered and almost nothing remains to be seen today. On the contrary, recent excavations, carried out according to modern, scientific criteria, have allowed the complete rediscovery of other archaeological sites and the reconstruction of the surrounding environment.

Villa in D'Acunzo property

Only partly excavated in 1903 and later recovered, the villa located on the outskirts of the present built-up area of Boscoreale, also has a selling point of the produce of the *fundus* and a refreshment area at the entrance. Among the findings discovered, particularly noteworthy are a series of bronze statuettes from the *lararium* and an interesting ring-shaped fictile vase, decorated in relief with berries and tree leaves.



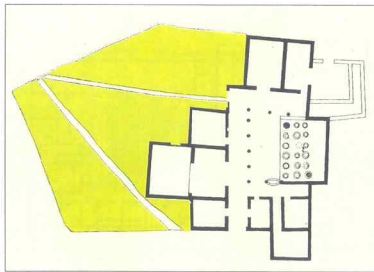
Map of the villa in D'Acunzo property

Villa Regina

Discovered in 1977 during some construction works, the villa has been subject to accurate excavations which were terminated in 1980. At the center of the small sized building there is a wine cellar containing 18 *dolii* which had been buried for the storage of the must obtained in the adjoining *torcularium* from the grapes grown in the vine surrounding the villa and of which it has been possible to reconstruct the original plan. The total capacity of the *dolii* was of about 10,000 liters.

The only elegant room of the *pars urbana* was the *triclinium* or dining room, decorated with wall paintings of the IV style.

Among the findings on display in windows 1 and 2, particularly noteworthy are a small marble herm of the God Bacchus, from the *lararium* of the porch-way, various tableware and kitchenware, some oil-lamps, among which one (Nr. 5) dating from the III-IV centuries A. D., bearing witness to the fact that the place was attended after the eruption of 79 A. D. In the villa also a carriage cart (*plaustrum*) and a pig, of which the plaster exhibited in the 1st room could be made, were discovered.

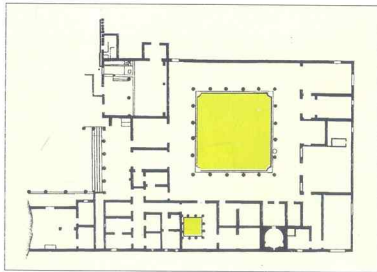


Map of the villa in loc. Villa Regina

Villa of P. Fannius Synistor

The villa, excavated between 1899 and 1902, is renowned for its wonderful wall paintings of the II style, dating from 50 and 40 B. C., and stored in various Italian and foreign museums. Some of these frescoes, such as those of *cubiculum* Nr. 9 now stored in the Metropolitan Museum of New York, are reproduced in life-size dimension; of great historical and artistic interest are also the frescoes of room Nr. 5, representing great mythical and historical characters referring to the birth of Alexander the Great and to the conquest of Asia, and of which the reproduction of a detail of a panel which is now stored in the Archaeological Museum of Naples is on display.

In the central window there is one of the findings discovered in this villa which remained in Pompeii: a fragmentary bronze vase reporting, on the inside rim, the indication of the capacity of the container as well as the name of *P. Fannius Synistor*, who was considered the owner of the rich residential dwelling.

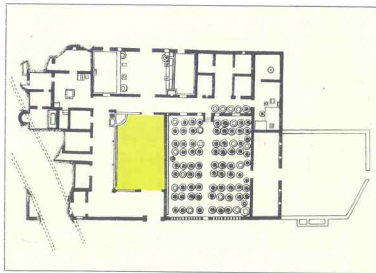


Map of the villa of *P. Fannius Synistor*

Villa della Pisanella

This is a very large well equipped villa excavated between 1894 and 1898, reproduced in a recently restored relief model, on display in the middle of the room. It is renowned for the rediscovery of the so-called "treasure of Boscoreale" consisting in 109 pieces of silverware, now stored in the Museum of the Louvre.

The structure of the villa dating from the beginning of the 1st century B. C. consist in the *pars urbana*, used as a sitting-room of the *dominus*, a small thermal area and a *pars rustica*, used for the processing of the produces of the farm. The servants' quarters included both the lodgings of the domestic staff and the rooms for the storage and the processing of produces: the bakery with the wheat grinder, the stable, the *torcularium* for wine, the *trapetum* for olives, the *nubilarium* for crops and finally, in the middle, the wine cellar for the storage of wine, oil and wheat. Among the findings on display in windows 5-8, particularly noteworthy are a series of bronze items of the *instrumentum domesticum* including various kinds of cookware and other pieces such as iron hoes, bronze buckles, a bone spindle, seals etc.



Map of the villa della *Pisanella*

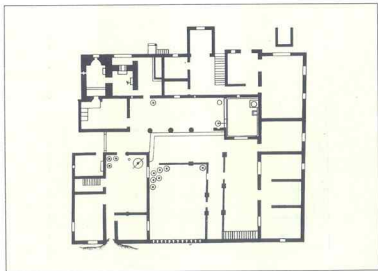
Villa of N. Popidius Florus

Excavated in 1906, the villa is located around a porch-way on which there are various rooms, either rural or elegant, on two floors.

The structure of the villa, of which only a part of the thermal area can be seen, dates from the 1st century.

Its walls, decorated with frescoes, reconstructed in the Antiquarium, have been recently purchased from the State; the paintings, coming from room Nr. 23, which was a *cubiculum*, are of the IV style and date from the half of the 1st century A. D., from the era of Nero.

In the *frigidarium* there was a mosaic representing a pair of wrestlers and on the threshold there was the welcoming inscription *HAVE SALVE* in white *tesserae* on a background in *cocciopesto* (a mixture of mortar and earthenware).



Map of the villa of N. Popidius Florus

Villa located in via Casone Grotta

One of the latests discoveries of the area of Boscoreale was of a Roman villa which took place in 1986 and of which only one room has been brought to light, that is the home *sacellum* equipped whit a *lararium*-niche.

In this niche there was the marble *simulacrum* of a female divinity shown in a banqueting attitude and adorned with precious, gold jewels in miniature; all the findings on display in the window were also found, besides a silver plate with a representation of the same divinity.

The main nucleus of the villa dates from the late republican age, after the first half of the I century B. C., whereas the *lararium* was added during the course of the I century A. D.. Even this settlement must have had a productive purpose like most of the others villas of the hinterland north of Pompeii.



Female divinity, Villa in via Casone Grotta

Villa of M. Livius Marcellus

Discovered in 1928, the villa has been attributed to the *gens Livia* on the basis of the finding of a seal with the name of *M. Livius Marcellus*.

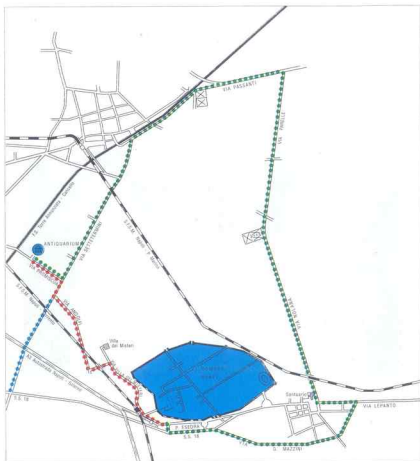
Among other findings, the villa, only partly explored, has also brought to light the small ivory plate with decorations in relief, exhibited in the panel.

How to get to the Antiquarium from the Excavations of Pompeii

..... Road

..... Bus (this route is closed on Tuesday from 7.00 a. m. to 2.00 p. m.)

..... Road and Bus



Photographs by Soprintendenza Pompei
Aiello, Boscoreale
Foglia, Naples
Graphics by E. Gallo
Tip, Varriale - Napoli