

**A project for the restoration and the development of the old San Nicola Varano's water airport area**

by Diego Barrasso

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Varano's lake is the biggest lake of Puglia and also the largest coastline's lake of Italy. Although it turns out to be an interesting natural resource, the area of Varano's lake is one of the least exploited natural areas in Italy. Being full of natural beauties, this place certainly plays a very important role among the historical and landscape sites of Gargano.

In this contest the site of San Nicola Varano takes on the potentiality to be a starting point towards the renewal of this lagoon area. San Nicola Varano is a wide area, which was already important during the tenth century because of the presence of a benedictine monastery that was a transit's place for the wanderings on the way from Rome to Citta'del Monte.

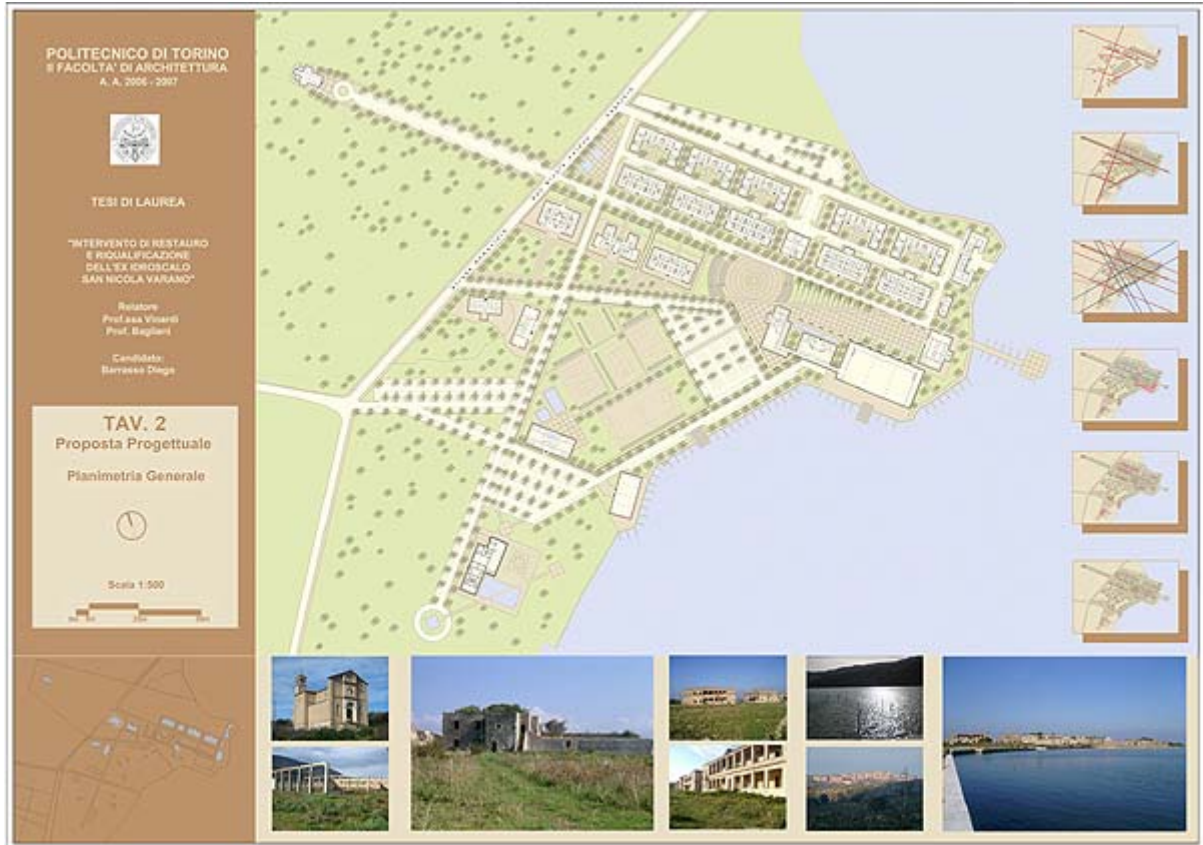
The relevance of this area increased during the first war world's years, when it was built in it a seaplane base which was a big settlement composed of few buildings, suitable for all the military activities and supplied with facilities such as dormitories, offices, infirmaries, kitchens and hangars for the seaplanes' shelter.

The water airport was operative during the conflict between Austria and Italy, and afterwards it continued to be operative during the second war world as unit of rescue. From that time on, it fell into disuse and today the structures of the base appear decaying and in a state of abandonment, even though they retain their architectural prestige.

The buildings of the water airport are a great example of the beginning's twentieth century's architecture. They have a style not always clear and plasters shaped with neoclassical motifs upon square section's pillars. Despite the clear eclecticism the buildings have structural features that can be identify as modern, such as the plane covering which was the innovation of the beginning's twentieth century's architectural language.

The constructional techniques of which has been made use are mainly two: reinforced concrete and tuff's bearing masonry. The front faces appear in a state of deterioration due to time and absence of ordinary maintenance. In some parts the plaster is detached or worn away and the masonry is damaged.



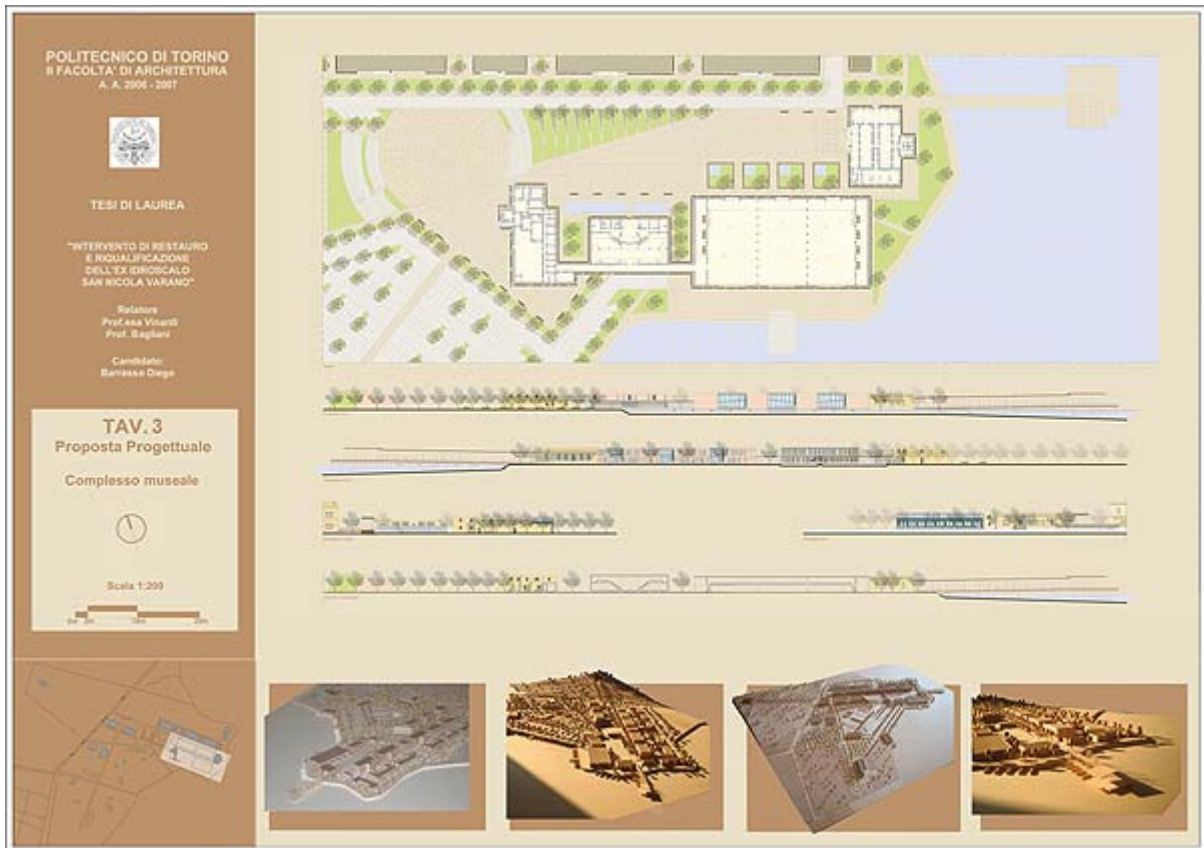


The northern part of the area will be occupied by accommodations for tourists' reception. The old monastery testifies of the ancient history of the place, as also the hangar symbolizes the technological evolution, and together they are an hint for the constitution of a museum dedicated to the water airport and unto its history. The museum will be developed trough the introduction of a new building which will serve as the core of the link between the two preexisting buildings.

The square and the new amphitheatre will be the most important places for the social activities, which will be supported by a restaurant created into the old infirmary's building. The southern part of the area will offer on its spot a green area where sports activities will take place outdoors, as also the sailing centre which has been projected in accordance with the structure's enlargement of the old bakery.

A new hangar will rise on the tracks of the historical one, near the slide where once the seaplanes were let down, and where the facilities for the lagoon's sports activities will be installed.

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